KNOWLEDGE, CONCERNS, AND ATTITUDES OF HIGHER/SENIOR SECONDARY TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT
Inclusive education (IE) is a new approach towards educating the children with disabilities with that of normal ones within the same roof. It seeks to address the learning needs of all children with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. However, Inclusion being a national agenda, but, in the field of education, teachers are viewed as the primary agents in the implementation of the philosophy of inclusive education. Their perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, concerns, values, professional competence, knowledge of inclusive education may influence their behavior toward and acceptance of children with special needs in regular classroom. It is argued that successful inclusion is possible when teachers display reasonably positive and accepting attitudes towards children with disabilities and to the basic principles of inclusion.

This study explored the nature and relationships between knowledge, concerns, and attitudes, of teachers, regarding inclusive education. A total of 300 higher/senior secondary teachers were asked to complete a four-part questionnaire including background information and three standardized measurement scales. Overall the teachers were found to have little knowledge of inclusive education, and generally have low concerns about it, and hold relatively positive attitudes toward inclusive education. The teachers, who had reasonably good knowledge of inclusive education, were likely to have relatively low concerns about it, and hold relatively positive attitudes toward inclusive education whereas those who had less knowledge of inclusive education were likely to have high concerns about it and negative attitudes toward inclusive education.

KEYWORDS: Inclusive Education, knowledge, children, concerns, and attitudes.