

Classroom Management in Integrated School Setup

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ABSTRACT Classroom management is largely the responsibility of the general teachers and it is his/her duty to ensure that the classroom norms are effectively implemented. An effective classroom management is built on the set of class rules, facilitating learning process, devises for learning, reinforcement and rewards practiced, impact of incentives being used, and the level of consistency maintained. The goal of promoting order in the classroom is to help students to have an identity of their own irrespective of the fact that he/she is normal or disabled and help them develop appropriate behaviour. Hence the present study was undertaken to study the classroom management and the inappropriate behaviour of the visually impaired children in the regular classroom environment. The sample for the present study consisted of 80 general teachers (42 female and 38 male teachers) teaching in integrated schools. The methodology used for the study was the pre-test and post-test method with an intervention programme. Purposive sampling method was used to select the samples for the study. The samples were drawn by contacting the National Association for the Blind (NAB). The attitude scale and check list developed and standardized by the investigator were used for the study. The study revealed that there is a significant difference among the male and female respondents in the pre- and post-test, towards aspects of classroom management. Further, the study indicates a non-significant difference between the respondents of private and government schools in the aspects of classroom management practiced by them in the regular classroom environment. The intervention programme was found to be effective in bringing about a desired change among the respondents with respect to the classroom management and handling inappropriate behaviour of the Visually Impaired Children (V.I.C). The present study highlights and emphasizes on factors such as the need for sensitizing the general teachers in handling and interacting with the impaired children in an integrated setup. By establishing positive rapport, by making learning process interesting, manifestation of warmth and friendliness, understanding the problems and shortcomings of the impaired children and the practice of reinforcement system will help in bringing about a desirable attributes in the general teachers to establish a conducive classroom environment.

INTRODUCTION

Education in the present day is a powerful instrument of social change, and often initiates upward movement in the social structure, thereby helping to bridge the gap between the different sections of the society. Integrated education is an educational system catering to the educational needs of both, students with Special Education Needs (SEN) and children without SEN under the same roof. It is a system, which brings 'all' children to a common platform, called regular classroom learning, which is often thought as the better option. The inclusive school is said to be effective school when it organizes itself, in the time table and delivery of curriculum, teaching - learning material, nurturing all aspects of personality, helps in developing pedagogical skills and management of behaviour among children in the classroom.

School is a central organizing experience and exposure in most children's lives. It offers opportunities to learn, receive and exchange

information, helps to refine and shape behaviour, master new skills and sharpen old ones; to participate in extra curricular and co-curricular activities; to explore vocational choices and to be with friends. The variables which largely determine the nature of this learning environment are subsumed under the heading '*classroom management*'.

Effective classroom management revolves around the teachers' attitude, desire, setting of expectations, and positive action. To improve classroom behavior and student social skills, teachers must conceptualize the process of teaching and understand classroom management principles for making professional decision on class management. A well- managed classroom should strike a balance between consistent discipline and praise.

Classroom management and management of student behaviour are skills that teachers should acquire and fine-tune over time. Effective teaching requires considerable skill in managing the myriad tasks and situations that occur in classroom every

day. Skills such as effective classroom management are central to teaching and require the power of discretion, consistency, a sense of fairness, and courage. These skills also require that teachers understand, in more than one way, the psychological and developmental levels of their students, both the visually impaired and the sighted children.

The skills associated with effective classroom management are acquired with practice, feedback, and a willingness to learn from mistakes. Sadly, this is often easier said than done. While there is no one best solution for every problem or classroom setting, teachers with experience should contribute to an understanding of what works and what doesn't work in managing classrooms and the inappropriate behaviour of students. Idol (2002) speculates that teachers have "looming fears" related to educating and managing diverse student groups. For example, teachers believe that including students with special needs will force them to drastically change their teaching format; that students with disabilities will require extensive diversion of their time and resources away from other students; and students with special needs will require behaviour management practices that are unique, complicated, and never ending.

The effective use of behavioural and cognitive strategies in the classroom may appear daunting even to experienced teachers. However, changing one's behaviour and strategies is often the most efficient and effective means of improving all types of classroom behaviours, both disruptive and non-disruptive. Through practice comes proficiency. The building block of emotions and behaviour contains the largest and most diverse set of problems encountered in the classroom.

Integrated education can be made possible only if the general teachers are sensitized to the causes and problems of disability, the need for education under the umbrella of *universal education*, the need for adaptations in the curriculum, facilitating teaching – learning process, behaviour and adjustment of the disabled in the classroom and the attitude of peers etc. Marzano et al. (2003) highlights the quality of teacher-student relationships as the keystone for all other aspects of classroom management. They describe effective teacher-student relationships as having nothing to do with the teacher's personality or even whether the students view the teacher as a friend. Rather, the

most effective teacher-student relationships are characterized by specific teacher behaviours: exhibiting appropriate levels of dominance; exhibiting appropriate levels of cooperation; and being aware of high-needs of the students.

Firstly, understanding their problems and seeing the world through the eyes of the visually impaired student, definitely brings down the degree of the demarcation between the special and normal children and also towards their education. In addition, developing a set of intervention strategies to handle the classroom behaviour of the visually impaired child is a challenging task for the general teachers. By doing so, the general classroom teachers can make the regular classroom the best suitable environment for learning to take place for both the sighted as well as the visually impaired children. Hence, an attempt has been made in the present research project to study the classroom management and the inappropriate behaviour of visually impaired children in the integrated schools.

SAMPLE PROCEDURE

As the project focused on the classroom management and identifying the inappropriate behaviour of the VIC in the integrated classroom environment, the Principals of the identified integrated schools from the selected districts of Karnataka state both Government and Private schools were contacted through letters of permission. The schedule for administering the tools was fixed with help of the general teachers, itinerant teachers and the school authorities.

Eighty general teachers, 38 male teachers and 42 female teachers, in the age bracket of 25 to 34 years, teaching children in the integrated schools (both in Kannada and English medium) from the selected districts of Karnataka were selected. A personal rapport was established with the general teachers in the first session of half-an-hour duration and the purpose of the research was explained. The main idea of this session was to elicit accurate information.

The methodology used for the present project was the pre-test post-test method with an intervention programme. Further, the respondents were instructed not to discuss with their fellow teachers about the techniques of classroom management being practiced by them, the measures followed and practiced to correct the

inappropriate behaviour of the VIC that is observed in the regular classroom environment. The tools were translated into Kannada to evoke a better response.

The intervention programme was planned to develop appropriate strategies for enhancing the general teachers approach towards the techniques of classroom management and identifying the inappropriate behaviour of the V.I child in the integrated classroom environment. The intervention programme was conducted in both Kannada and English language to make it effective and to bring about a desirable change.

Tool Used

The general teacher attitude scale developed and standardized by the investigator comprised of base-line information about general teachers, aspects on facilitating learning, classroom instructions, behaviour consequences in the classroom, classroom reinforcement, behaviour and adjustment in the classroom.

A three point rating was used to rate each statement which was provided with a three point continuum - "Always", "Sometimes" and "Never". The three point continuum was given positive and negative values. The positive values being '3', '2' and '1' and negative values being '1', '2' and '3' respectively. The sum of the numerical scores assigned to all the separate items gives his/her total score.

Inappropriate behaviour checklist was also used to observe and identify the behaviour of the VIC in the regular classroom by the general teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Managing behaviour in the classroom in order to increase student learning should always be of concern to teachers and education personnel (Lewis et al. 2005). It is important that the teacher provides an equal amount of appropriate assistance to each child in her/his class (Whyte and Scratchley 2000). The teacher should involve children with disabilities in all areas of the class curriculum, for which they need to plan in advance to ensure students have appropriate learning objectives (Schragg 1993).

A cursory glance at the Table 1 and Figure 1 depicts the results of the pre-test and post-test scores of the male and female respondents in the

area of classroom management. The results further indicate a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores with respect to the various aspects of classroom management between the male and female respondents.

Teaching is a process through which the educational goal is achieved. In the area of classroom instructions, one of the prime aspect of classroom management, there is a significant difference in the post test scores (1% level, 't' – 4.1941**) between the male and the female respondents, with the latter practicing very clear, precise, and step by step classroom instructions to both the VIC and the sighted children and practice the feedback session through the concept of recapitulation. In this light, content management "does not refer to skills peculiar to teaching a particular subject but rather to those skills that cut across subjects and activities" (Froyen and Iverson 1999). Doyle (1999) has stressed that the core of instructional management is gaining and maintaining student cooperation in learning activities (as cited in Froyen and Iverson 1999).

Further the present study reveals that in the area of classroom reinforcement the male respondents practice the art of using reinforcement (rewards) such as positive comments (social rewards), edible reinforcements (primary rewards) tangible reinforcements and also by giving an identity and responsibility of the class and the group as the leader. Whereas the female respondents practice rewarding of children with materialistic rewards such as school supplies or toys.

Under the aspect of behavioural consequences in the classroom the female respondents are more precise and clear in establishing the norms/rules when required and to be followed by their students in the class in comparison to their male counter parts. They further minimize disruptions and delays, encourage independent responsibility and effort and also provide cue and try to reinforce appropriate behaviour. This was found to be significant at 5% level.

Regarding cooperation and listening skills of the VIC, the female respondents are more empathetic, consistent and focused in nature and their approach to the impaired child in the class when compared to their male counter parts. In the area of attention and tactfulness of the VIC in the regular classroom environment the male respondents support, encourage and motivate the

VI to have more pleasing behaviour and also practice the art being attentive in the class. Keeping students focused on the learning task is important for two reasons: first, time on task is highly correlated to achievement (Ornstein and Lasley 2000; Good and Brophy 2003); and, second, time on task reduces classroom misbehaviour (Kounin 1970; Good and Brophy 2003). The keys to focusing student time on task behaviour are instructional strategies (i.e., differentiation, cooperative learning, jigsaw methodology, scaffolding, and assessment) and within lesson communication.

Teacher's can also set up peer tutoring groups where one student who is familiar with a topic assists another student (Schragg 1993). This is valuable for both students as the process of teaching a concept helps to ensure it is understood thoroughly, and the student experiencing difficulty has one on one attention to learn a concept.

It was found to be non-significant in the aspects of organization skills and completion of assignment which clearly indicates the zeal and commitment with which both the respondents aimed to strive and achieve in harmony of both the VI and sighted children. On the whole the additional support and assistance provided by the general teachers enables the VIC to cope along with their sighted peers.

Hence, the post intervention results shows a significant difference between the male and female respondents in practicing the different aspects of classroom management and thereby suggesting a desired and effective change towards the aspects of classroom management.

Table 2 and Figure 2 reports the mean and standard deviation of scores on the pre- and post-test of the respondents of both private and government schools. It is observed that there is an increase in the mean score from pre- to post-test. This increase is statistically not significant between the respondents of both the school set up. The non significance could be attributed to the factors of being a good facilitator to the children by adapting the strategy of teaching – learning process effectively, use of reinforcements techniques such as token economies, rewards to the VIC, and advocating the positive aspects of behaviour and adjustment among both the VI and the sighted children irrespective of the home and school environment in a very congenial way. The respondents of both the

school are successful as teachers by practicing the art of rhythm in their day-to-day school and class activities and trying to aim at achieving the individual learning propensities. Further the respondents are also very keen to introduce and practice novel method of teaching such as puzzles, word building and quiz etc. The Jigsaw method is particularly efficient and effective in group learning and help students master curriculum material by encouraging teaching, listening, engagement, and empathy within work groups (Leighton 2003).

Whereas a significant difference was observed among the respondents of government schools in comparison to the respondents of private schools in the aspects of following the classroom instructions. The significance of 5% could be attributed to chance fluctuations in scores.

The sensitization of the respondents to the intervention programme on 'Handling classroom behaviour with the visually impaired child' has broadened their horizons by helping the respondents to develop a wide spectrum of classroom management strategies.

Inappropriate Behaviour Identified and Observed in the Regular Classroom Environment

Behaviour plays a vital role in the regular classroom environment. For teaching to be effective and efficient there should be proper coordination in the classroom, including the behaviour of the children both normal and the disabled. Behavioural problems hinder the impaired children's academic achievement and leave a negative effect upon their acceptance by others. Student classroom behavior is of great concern to teachers, parents, and the general public (Brown and Beckett 2006). Behavior that are disruptive to the classroom such as inattention, over activity, and non-compliance are the most common complaint of teachers (Goldstein 1995). Hence it is important to manage these inappropriate behaviours very tactfully. The analysis based on the inappropriate behaviour observed and identified by the male and female respondents (100%) in the regular classroom showed that most of the VIC exhibited odd behaviour such as laughs to self or laughs inappropriately, talks to self etc. The respondents further expressed that such behaviour of the VIC

Table 1: Comparison of pre-test and post-test between male and female respondents on the different aspects of classroom management

Area	Pre-test		Post-test		Significance of t-value
	Male teacher (n=38)	Female teacher (n=42)	Male teacher (n=38)	Female teacher (n=42)	
Facilitating learning	12.21 ± 2.52	11.52 ± 1.34	20.55 ± 0.92	24.00 ± 0.00	24.3300 **
Class room instructions	12.57 ± 1.28	11.93 ± 1.48	18.36 ± 0.99	19.76 ± 1.83	4.1941 **
<i>Class Room Reinforcement</i>					
(a) Positive comments	8.05 ± 0.51	10.30 ± 1.65	17.02 ± 0.16	16.00 ± 0.00	41.4634 **
(b) Activity	6.00 ± 0.00	5.95 ± 1.59	11.81 ± 0.57	10.52 ± 0.80	8.2322 **
(c) Tangible	7.00 ± 0.00	6.11 ± 0.32	9.57 ± 0.64	12.00 ± 0.00	24.6450 **
(d) Edible	4.00 ± 0.00	6.97 ± 0.26	9.00 ± 0.00	8.00 ± 0.15	41.1522 **
Behavior consequence in the class room	10.85 ± 3.75	15.00 ± 1.01	23.00 ± 0.00	23.59 ± 0.79	4.6021 **
<i>Behavior and Adjustment in the Class Room</i>					
(a) Cooperation	8.76 ± 0.75	10.00 ± 0.00	8.55 ± 0.50	9.00 ± 0.00	5.8441 **
(b) Attention	12.02 ± 1.65	12.00 ± 0.00	13.00 ± 0.00	11.00 ± 0.23	53.6193 **
(c) Organization	10.86 ± 1.47	8.00 ± 0.00	11.00 ± 0.00	11.00 ± 0.00	0.0000 NS
(d) Completion of assignment	8.68 ± 0.66	8.57 ± 1.12	10.00 ± 0.00	10.00 ± 0.00	0.0000 NS
(e) Tacfulness	8.84 ± 1.36	9.00 ± 0.00	8.07 ± 0.27	7.00 ± 0.00	25.7211 **
(f) Achievement	6.00 ± 0.15	7.00 ± 0.00	7.48 ± 0.18	8.00 ± 0.00	28.2608 **
(g) Listening skills	9.39 ± 0.67	9.00 ± 0.00	9.03 ± 0.27	13.00 ± 0.00	88.8143 **

**Significant at 1% level; *Significant at 5% level; NS: Not Significant

Table 2: Comparison of pre-test and post-test between the respondents of private and government schools on the different aspects of classroom management

Area	Pre-test		Post-test		Significance of t-value
	Private teacher (n=41)	Government teacher (n=39)	Private teacher (n=41)	Government teacher (n=39)	
Facilitating learning	11.67 ± 2.37	11.90 ± 1.75	22.51 ± 1.71	22.20 ± 1.97	0.7529 NS
Class room instructions	12.22 ± 1.47	12.07 ± 1.70	19.05 ± 1.63	19.30 ± 1.48	2.0593 *
<i>Class Room Reinforcement</i>					
(a) Positive comments	9.40 ± 1.59	8.85 ± 1.67	16.48 ± 0.55	16.48 ± 0.50	0.0000 NS
(b) Activity	5.92 ± 1.11	6.07 ± 1.24	11.05 ± 0.67	10.82 ± 0.94	1.2658 NS
(c) Tangible	6.50 ± 0.50	6.57 ± 0.50	10.90 ± 1.28	10.76 ± 1.28	0.4891 NS
(d) Edible	5.45 ± 1.55	5.53 ± 1.46	8.46 ± 0.50	8.48 ± 0.50	0.1788 NS
Behavior consequence in the class room	13.12 ± 2.04	13.62 ± 2.38	23.02 ± 0.51	23.33 ± 0.62	2.4486 *
<i>Behavior and Adjustment in the Class Room</i>					
(a) Cooperation	9.48 ± 0.67	9.28 ± 0.99	8.82 ± 0.38	8.69 ± 0.46	1.3815 NS
(b) Attention	12.02 ± 1.12	11.97 ± 1.15	11.95 ± 1.01	11.97 ± 1.01	0.0885 NS
(c) Organization	9.40 ± 1.76	9.28 ± 1.77	11.00 ± 0.00	11.00 ± 0.00	0.0000 NS
(d) Completion of assignment	8.92 ± 0.85	8.30 ± 0.92	10.00 ± 0.00	10.00 ± 0.00	0.0000 **
(e) Tacfulness	8.95 ± 1.12	8.94 ± 0.75	7.58 ± 0.63	7.48 ± 0.50	0.7843 NS
(f) Achievement	6.52 ± 0.50	6.52 ± 0.50	7.48 ± 0.50	7.51 ± 0.50	0.2683 NS
(g) Listening skills	9.12 ± 0.46	9.25 ± 0.54	10.95 ± 2.02	11.05 ± 2.02	0.2214 NS

**Significant at 1% level *Significant at 5% level NS: Not Significant

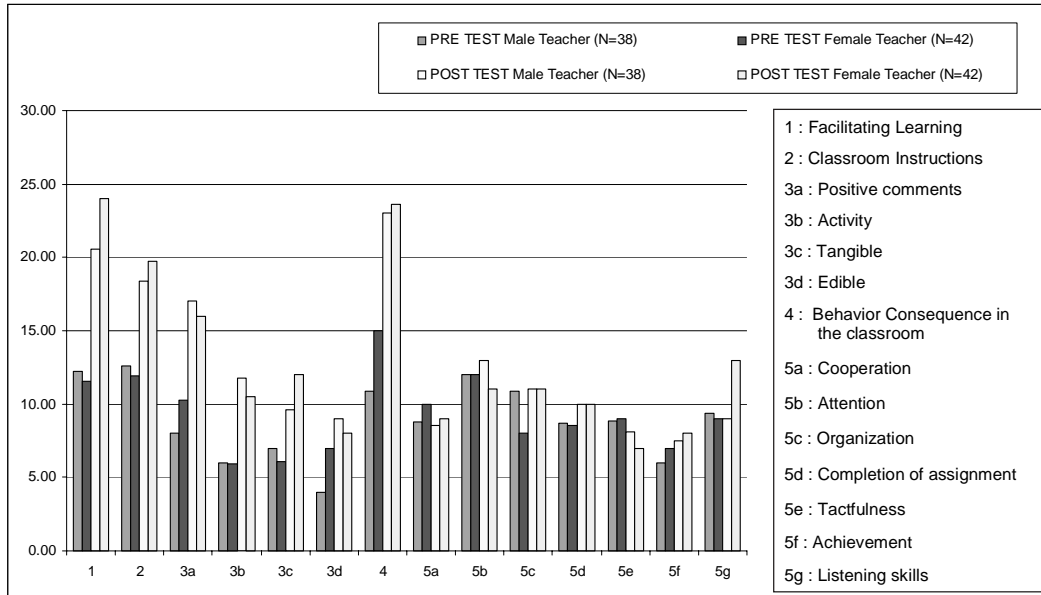


Fig. 1. Comparison of pre-test and post-test between male and female respondents on the different aspects of classroom management.

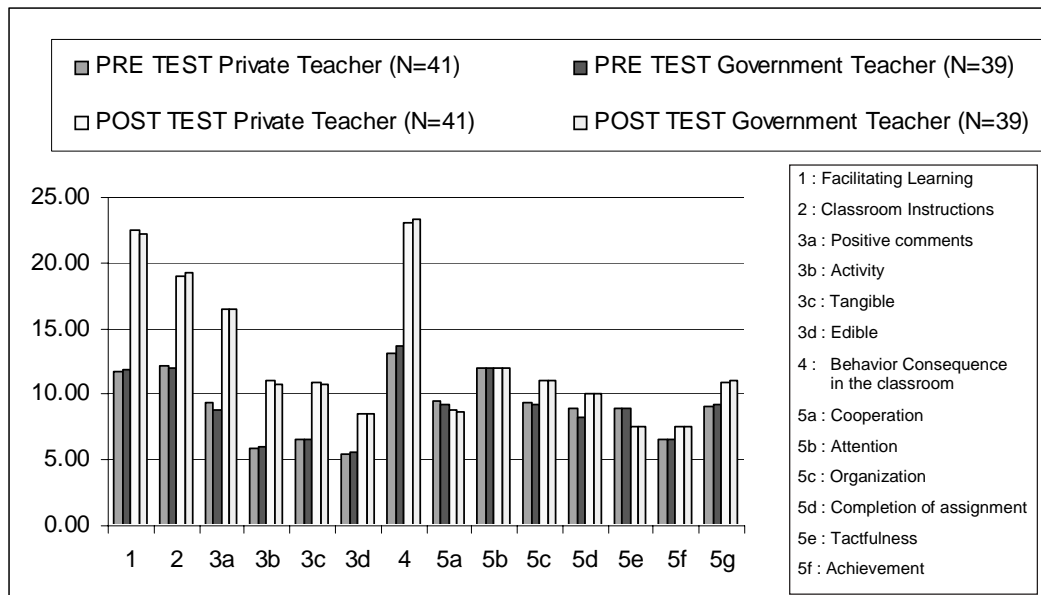


Fig. 2. Comparison of pre-test and post-test between the respondents of private and government schools on the different aspects of classroom management.

would cause distraction in the classroom and results in a chaotic atmosphere. The reasons for inappropriate behaviour could be attributed to the factors such as lack of skill among the VIC, attention seeking due their impairment, lack of involvement in the class, lack of concentration due to impairment, made to sit idle in the class and being easily distracted and bullied by the fellow peers. The respondents expressed their difficulty during the pre-test, in developing the guidelines and to maintain discipline among the VIC.

During the intervention programme, the respondents were sensitized to some of the mandatory attributes which they need to practice as a regime for classroom teaching such as supervisory skill, teaching skills with an impaired child, listening skills, group involvement and group discussion, guidance and assistance to the impaired children, interactive sessions, various teaching methodologies, communication skills etc. Further, the skills instilled confidence among the respondents in handling the impaired child in a very empathetic manner at the time of post-test session, wherein the respondents used some of the strategies such as incentive, reward and positive reinforcement to enable the children to develop more appropriate, pleasing and acceptable norm of behaviour. The concept of 'time-out' as a reinforcement is helping the VIC to have a control over their inappropriate behaviour. The behaviour observed by the respondents during the pre-test such as odd behaviour and misbehaviour by the VIC had slowed down or was rectified and corrected at the time of post-test session (100% of the respondents).

This summarizes the fact that inappropriate behaviour among the VIC arises as a result of negligence, cannot take initiatives, lack of complete involvement in the class activities and in not being treated on par with the sighted children in a regular classroom environment. Richmond (1997) is of the opinion that there should be a connection between the inappropriate behaviour and outcomes that follow from clear understanding of rights, rules and responsibilities. All inappropriate behaviour must have direct, immediate and related consequences.

In the present study no differences in the inappropriate behaviour were observed and identified by the male and female respondents and also the respondents of private and government schools.

CONCLUSION

Education of the visually impaired children has undergone periodical changes. Many new methods are being developed in educating the visually impaired children. They are trained to be independent so that they are better accepted by the society. The integrated system of education has made a major break-through in the education of the visually impaired children.

Integrated schools play a significant role in bridging the content management, conduct management, and procedural management which is the core of classroom management with impaired children. Good schools are identified by teacher effectiveness and student achievement under the umbrella of building a strong interpersonal skill. In this light, teacher and student relationships are essential to ensure a positive classroom environment. Classroom management should be dealt either on an individual basis (between teacher and visually impaired children) or by group problem solving (class meetings). An effective conduct management in the regular classroom environment should focus on acknowledging the responsible behaviour of the visually impaired children, correcting their irresponsible and inappropriate behaviour, ignoring, proximity control, gentle verbal reprimands, delaying, preferential seating, time-out, notification to parents, written behavioral contract, setting limits outside the classroom, and introducing reinforcement systems. Token reinforcers are generalized conditioned reinforcers that are exchangeable for a reinforcer of value to a student (Alberto and Troutman 2006).

The ability of teachers to organize classroom and manage the behaviour of the students is critical in achieving positive educational outcomes. Although sound behaviour management does not guarantee effective instruction, it establishes the environmental context that makes good instruction possible. Reciprocally, highly effective instruction reduces, but does not eliminate, classroom behaviour problem (Emmer and Stough 2008).

The findings of the present study highlights the significant differences between the male and the female respondents on the aspects of classroom management such as facilitating learning among the visually impaired children through adaptation in the teaching-learning process, content of the curriculum to be taught, the classroom instructions to be followed and the beha-

viour and adjustment in the classroom. The study also highlights on the practice of class-room reinforcement and the significance of contingencies to be followed by the general teachers in order to help the visually impaired children inculcate good and pleasant mannerisms. Further, the study focused on the involvement of the visually impaired children by the general teachers in all the classroom activities in order to increase their attention span, classroom participation, create a sense of belonging and to minimize the inappropriate behaviour in them.

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