

A Study on Teachers' Attitude Towards Inclusive Education Among Primary School Teachers in Cachar District

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to look at primary school teachers' opinions of inclusive education and their overall attitudes towards inclusion in the Cachar district. The study was done on primary school teachers to investigate their attitudes towards inclusive education in order to promote inclusive education practices, improve educational quality, and ensure that all children have equal opportunity to learn and achieve. For the current study, the researcher employed the Descriptive Survey Method. The current study's researcher used the Teacher's Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE-SA). It was found from the present study that the attitudes of male and female primary teachers, as well as teachers with experience of more than 10 years and less than 10 years, towards inclusive education are the same. However, when comparing the attitudes of urban and rural primary teachers towards inclusive education, urban teachers were found to be more favourable than rural teachers. The study's consequences include providing useful insights into the obstacles and possibilities of implementing inclusive education in elementary schools, as well as informing the creation of policies and initiatives to promote inclusive practices in the region.

Keywords: *Inclusive education, Primary school teachers, Descriptive survey method, TASTIE-SA.*

1. Introduction

Inclusive education is an approach that aims to give all students, regardless of their abilities or origins, an equal chance to study and participate in the classroom. In India, where there is a rising realization of the necessity of ensuring that all children have access to quality education, inclusive education is an essential notion. In India, numerous inclusive education practices are being adopted to promote a more inclusive learning environment. The use of technology is a crucial practice in inclusive education in India. Many schools are utilizing technology to make learning more accessible and inclusive. Peer learning is another major inclusive

education practice in India. This strategy fosters a sense of community while also assisting students in the development of interpersonal skills such as communication, negotiation, and leadership. As stated in international human rights laws such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, inclusion is seen as a basic right for every child. The National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF-2005) recognizes the importance of inclusive education and advocates for the development of a learning system that is responsive to the needs of all students. The recently issued National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) emphasizes the importance of excellent education that is inclusive and egalitarian. Despite these efforts, learning results in India continue to be poor, particularly in rural and marginalized groups. As a result, the necessity for inclusive education becomes even more essential. In this context, it is critical to understand primary school teachers' perspectives towards inclusive education, as they are the major actors in establishing inclusive practices in the classroom.

The study of primary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Cachar area is critical for various reasons. To begin with, as they are responsible for establishing a pleasant and inclusive learning environment for their pupils, primary school teachers play a vital role in supporting inclusive education practices. Secondly, the research can aid in determining the elements that impact teachers' views towards inclusive education. Thirdly, the study might shed light on the readiness of Cachar district primary schools to apply inclusive education practices. Lastly, the findings can help the policymakers of Cachar district to make judgements on inclusive education.

A number of studies have examined the attitudes of teachers toward inclusive education. However, no research study on 'Inclusive Education' in Cachar district has been found by the researcher. To have a conceptual and empirical understanding of the issue, some literature related to the subject has been read by the researcher. Among them, a few of the significant evaluations of the prior literature addressing the issue under research are included below.

According to Sharma *et al.* (2019), teachers who participated in an inclusive education professional development programme expressed more favourable attitudes towards inclusion and improved confidence in their capacity to educate students with impairments. Teachers claimed that a lack of support from school officials and insufficient resources, such as assistive technology and classroom modifications, were key challenges to adopting inclusive education in research conducted by Kallimani and Singh (2021).

Giving teachers the assistance and tools help them overcome these challenges and develop more favourable attitudes towards inclusive education. In a research conducted by Ahsan *et al.* (2020), teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education were shown to be impacted by factors such as their personal ideas regarding disability, their level of experience, and their training and support for inclusive practices. Peer support has been proven in studies to improve socialization, reduce negative behaviours, and promote academic performance among children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms (e.g., Cushing, Kennedy, & Humphries, 2016; McConnell & Savage, 2015). Peer support programmes can also help all students by encouraging empathy, tolerance for diversity, and good attitudes towards people with disabilities (Hughes & Guralnick, 2013). Kheirallah and Almaharmeh (2019) discovered that instructors in Jordan had a favourable attitude towards inclusive education. Teachers, on the other hand, acknowledged feeling unprepared to educate pupils with impairments and lacked the essential training. In Israeli research, Gindis *et al.* (2018) discovered that teachers' views towards inclusive education were impacted by their degree of experience, personal ideas about inclusion, and perceived capacity to educate students with disabilities. Experienced instructors were more optimistic about inclusive education than rookie teachers. Furthermore, instructors who had personal contact with people with disabilities, either via family or friends, were more supportive of inclusive education. Pham and McLeod (2019) discovered that earlier experiences and exposure to inclusive practices impacted teachers' views towards inclusive education in Vietnam. Teachers who had prior experience teaching children with impairments viewed inclusive education more positively than those who did not. Sandoval-Lopez *et al.* (2020) discovered that instructors in Mexico showed a negative attitude towards inclusive education. Teachers reported feeling overwhelmed by the demands of inclusive education and being unable to address the needs of all pupils due to a lack of training and support. Saloviita and Kauko (2018) discovered that instructors in Finland had a favourable attitude towards inclusive education, but this attitude was impacted by their cultural ideas about individualism and equality. Individualistic teachers were more likely to be enthusiastic about inclusive education, but those who emphasized equality were more likely to be negative. In Pakistan, Naeem and Azher (2019) discovered that societal norms and cultural beliefs affected teachers' views towards inclusive education. Teachers reported feeling divided between traditional attitudes about impairments as punishment or a curse and more progressive beliefs about the significance of inclusive education.

The current study is motivated by the above-mentioned studies, and the study is taken as “A Study on Teachers’ Attitude Towards Inclusive Education Among Primary School Teachers in Cachar District”.

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study:

- i. To investigate the attitudes of male and female primary school teachers towards inclusive education.
- ii. To investigate rural and urban primary teachers’ attitudes towards inclusive education.
- iii. To investigate the attitudes of primary school teachers with more than ten years of experience and those with fewer than ten years of experience towards inclusive education.

3. Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses of the present study are:

- i. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female primary school teachers towards inclusive education.
- ii. There is no significant difference in the attitude of rural and urban primary teachers towards inclusive education.
- iii. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers having experience of more than 10 years and less than 10 years towards inclusive education.

4. Method of the Present Study

The present study falls under Descriptive Method. Considering the objectives of the present study, the researcher has selected Descriptive Survey Method for appropriate investigation of the study.

5. Population and Sample of the Study

For the present study, the population comprises all the teachers of the Primary school with at least one student with special needs enrolled in the school in Cachar district. There are 1063 such schools in entire Cachar district.

In the present study, mixed random sampling has been applied for the selection of the sample, which is a combination of stratified random sampling and simple random sampling (Lottery Method).

The researcher has selected 30 primary schools, out of which 15 schools are situated in urban areas and 15 schools are situated in rural areas.

From the 30 sampled schools, the researcher has selected 60 teachers, out of whom 30 are male and 30 are female. Again, 30 male teachers have been taken in such a way that 15 male teachers belong to urban area schools and 15 male teachers belong to rural area schools. Similarly, 30 female teachers have been taken in such a way that 15 female teachers belong to urban area schools and 15 female teachers belong to rural area schools.

6. Tool used in the Study

The researcher, for the present study, has taken Teacher's Attitude Scale towards inclusive education (TASTIE- SA), standardized and validated by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr. Arti Anand.

7. Results and Discussion

The aim of the present study is to determine the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education. This investigation has been conducted in the Cachar district of Assam. This study covers 30 primary schools where at least one CWSN student is there, from where 60 primary school teachers were selected from Cachar district. The researcher in the present study has analyzed the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education based on male and female; urban and rural; and teachers with experience greater than 10 years and less than 10 years.

Hypothesis Wise Interpretation

The researcher has analysed the raw data obtained as per hypothesis.

7.1 T-RATIO BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE PRIMARY TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

H_0 : There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

To verify the hypothesis, t-Ratio was computed between the mean scores of attitudes of male and female primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

Table 1: Mean Scores of Attitudes of Male and Female Primary School Teachers Towards Inclusive Education.

Male primary school teachers N=30	Female primary school teachers N=30
Mean scores = $3395/30 = 113.17$	Mean scores = $3382/30 = 112.73$

Table 2: t-Ratio for Comparison Between Attitude of Male and Female Primary School Teachers Towards Inclusive Education.

Sl. No.	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-Ratio	Level of significance (At 5%)
1	Male teachers	30	113.17	10.48	58	0.1462	Not Significant
2	Female Teachers	30	112.73	12.41			

Interpretation

Table 2 shows that t-value between mean scores of attitudes of male and female primary teachers towards inclusive education is 0.1462. The t-value at 58 df in order to be significant at 0.05 level of significance should be 1.672. Obtained value is less than this, hence it is not significant. This shows that there is no difference between attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusive education.

Hence, hypothesis H_0 "There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female primary school teachers towards inclusive education" is accepted.

7.2 t-RATIO BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL PRIMARY TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

H_1 : There is no significant difference in the attitude of rural and urban primary teachers towards inclusive education.

To verify the hypothesis, t-Ratio was computed between the mean scores of attitudes of urban and rural primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

Table 3: Mean Scores of Attitudes of Urban and Rural Primary School Teachers Towards Inclusive Education.

Urban Primary school Teachers N=30	Rural Primary school Teachers N=30
Mean scores = $3462/30 = 115.40$	Mean scores = $3315/30 = 110.50$

Table 4: t-Ratio for Comparison Between Attitude of Urban and Rural Primary School Teachers Towards Inclusive Education

Sl. No.	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-Ratio	Level of significance (At 5%)
1	Urban Primary teachers	30	115.40	12.03	58	1.6927	Significant
2	Rural Primary Teachers	30	110.50	10.33			

Interpretation

Table 4 shows that t-value between mean scores of attitudes of urban and rural primary teachers towards inclusive education is 1.693. The t-value at 58 df in order to be significant at 0.05 level of significance should be 1.672. Obtained value is greater than this, hence it is significant. This shows that there is difference between attitude of urban and rural teachers towards inclusive education. The above calculated mean shows that the mean scores of urban primary teachers is greater than that of rural primary teachers. So, it can be interpreted that the urban teachers' attitude towards inclusive education is more positive in comparison to rural teachers. This might be due to the fact that the urban teachers are more aware about inclusive education because in urban schools all teachers use internet and media more than rural teachers which makes them more aware than rural teachers.

Hence, hypothesis H_1 "There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female primary school teachers towards inclusive education" is rejected.

7.3 t-RATIO BETWEEN PRIMARY TEACHERS' ATTITUDE HAVING EXPERIENCE GREATER THAN 10 YEARS AND LESS THAN 10 YEARS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

H₂: There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers having experience of more than 10 years and less than 10 years towards inclusive education.

To verify the hypothesis, t-Ratio was computed between the mean scores of attitudes of primary school teachers having experience of more than 10 years and less than 10 years towards inclusive education.

Table 5: Mean Scores of Attitudes of Primary School Teachers Having Experience More Than 10 years and less than 10 Years Towards Inclusive Education.

Primary school teachers having experience more than 10 years N=27	Primary school teachers having experience less than 10 years N=33
Mean scores = $2980/27 = 110.37$	Mean scores = $3373/33 = 114.33$

Table 6: t-Ratio For Comparison Between Attitude Of Primary School Teachers Having Experience More Than 10 Years And Less Than 10 Years Towards Inclusive Education.

Sl. No.	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-Ratio	Level of significance (At 5%)
1	Experience greater than 10 years	27	110.37	12.03	58	1.3276	Not Significant
2	Experience less than 10 years	33	114.33	11.05			

Interpretation

Table 6 shows that t-value between mean scores of attitudes of male and female primary teachers towards inclusive education is 1.3276. The t-value at 58 df in order to be significant at 0.05 level of significance should be 1.672. Obtained value is less than this, hence it is not significant. This shows that there is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers having experience of more than 10 years and less than 10 years towards inclusive

education.

Hence, hypothesis H₂ “There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers having experience of more than 10 years and less than 10 years towards inclusive education” is accepted.

8. Findings and Conclusion

In the following paragraphs, the scribe makes an attempt to extract the findings of the study conducted on attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

Findings

Some important findings of the study are summarized below:

- i. It is found from the study that there is no difference in the attitude of male and female primary teachers towards inclusive education.
- ii. It is found from the study that there is difference in attitude between urban and rural primary teachers towards inclusive education; the urban teachers’ attitude towards inclusive education is found to be more positive in comparison to rural teachers.
- iii. It is found from the study that there is no difference in the attitude of primary teachers having experience of more than 10 years and less than 10 years towards inclusive education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study on primary school teachers’ attitudes towards inclusive education revealed several interesting findings. The findings show that, while the majority of teachers have a favourable attitude towards inclusive education, some have negative attitudes and beliefs that may inhibit the successful implementation of inclusive education in schools. The findings also imply that teacher education and professional development programmes should focus on building positive attitudes towards inclusion, as well as equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge essential to establish an inclusive classroom environment. The report also emphasizes the significance of developing a supportive school culture that supports inclusive education and facilitates cooperation among teachers, parents, and administrators.

It is clear that implementing inclusive education in schools necessitates a collaborative effort from all stakeholders. By recognizing and addressing primary school teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about inclusive education, we

may establish an inclusive educational environment that meets the needs of all children, including those with disabilities and special needs. As a result, it is critical to continue conducting research on this issue to guarantee that all kids have access to excellent education and equal learning opportunities.

9. Fundings

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11. Competing Interests

The author declares that there are no competing interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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