




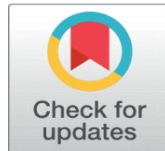
ATTITUDE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education aims to ensure the participation of all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, in mainstream education systems. Teachers play a pivotal role in implementing inclusive practices. Inclusive education is a crucial aspect of educational equity, and understanding teachers' perspectives is essential for effective policy implementation. This study explores the attitudes of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education, with a focus on how these attitudes vary based on geographic location and gender. Inclusive education, which promotes the integration of all learners—regardless of abilities or backgrounds into mainstream classrooms, relies heavily on the perspectives and readiness of teachers to implement inclusive practices. The research investigates whether differences exist in the attitudes of rural and urban teachers, as well as between male and female educators. Findings reveal that there is a noticeable difference in attitudes based on location, with urban teachers generally demonstrating more favorable views toward inclusive education compared to their rural counterparts. Although this difference is evident, it is moderate in strength and not consistently significant at more stringent levels of analysis, indicating that while place of service may influence teacher attitudes, it is not the sole determining factor. In contrast, gender differences in attitudes toward inclusive education are more pronounced and consistent. Female teachers exhibit a significantly more positive outlook on inclusive education than male teachers. This suggests that gender plays a substantial role in shaping perceptions and openness toward inclusive teaching practices. The study highlights the importance of addressing these attitudinal differences through targeted professional development, training programs, and institutional support. Encouraging positive attitudes among all teachers regardless of their background or gender is essential for the successful implementation of inclusive education. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders aiming to foster inclusive learning environments in secondary schools.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Secondary School Teachers, Teacher Attitudes, Special Needs Education, Inclusive Practices

1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a transformative approach that aims to provide equitable learning opportunities to all students, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or learning needs. It emphasizes the integration of children with special needs into mainstream classrooms, fostering a culture of acceptance, diversity, and mutual respect. In this context, the role of teachers becomes paramount, as their attitudes significantly influence the success and sustainability of inclusive practices. At the secondary school level, where academic demands and classroom diversity are high, teachers' perceptions, preparedness, and openness toward inclusive education determine how effectively inclusive policies are translated into action. The attitude of teachers toward inclusive education is shaped by various factors, including

professional training, teaching experience, available resources, institutional support, and personal beliefs. A positive attitude can lead to greater willingness to adapt teaching strategies and create a supportive learning environment for all students. Conversely, negative or indifferent attitudes may hinder the inclusion process and reinforce existing educational inequalities. Research indicates that teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education are influenced by multiple factors. For instance, a study in Mumbai, India, found that prior acquaintance with a person with a disability significantly affected teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Similarly, a meta-analysis covering studies from 2000 to 2020 revealed that teachers' attitudes have become more favorable over time, particularly in countries with higher Human Development Index scores. However, challenges persist, such as inadequate training and resources, which can impede the effective implementation of inclusive practices. Understanding and analyzing the attitudes of secondary school teachers toward inclusive education is crucial for policymakers, school administrators, and teacher educators aiming to promote inclusive schooling practices. By identifying key enablers and barriers within the secondary education system, stakeholders can develop targeted interventions to support teachers and enhance the inclusivity of educational environments.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of inclusive education has gained significant momentum over the past few decades, with global shifts toward educational equity and the integration of students with diverse needs into mainstream classrooms. The attitude of teachers towards inclusive education plays a pivotal role in its successful implementation. [UNESCO \(1994\)](#) emphasized the necessity of inclusive education in the Salamanca Statement, advocating for schools to accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. Following this, a number of empirical studies have explored teachers' perceptions and readiness for inclusive practices.

[Avramidis and Norwich \(2002\)](#) conducted a comprehensive review, concluding that teachers generally hold positive attitudes toward the principles of inclusion. However, their willingness to implement inclusive strategies often depended on the nature and severity of students' disabilities, available resources, and professional training.

[Sharma et al. \(2006\)](#) found that teachers with prior exposure to inclusive settings and adequate training tended to have more favorable attitudes. Their study across India and Australia indicated that professional development significantly influenced the confidence and competence of teachers in handling inclusive classrooms.

[Kumar and Mohanty \(2011\)](#), in their study of secondary school teachers in India, observed that while most teachers were theoretically supportive of inclusive education, practical challenges such as large class sizes, lack of teaching aids, and insufficient training hindered effective implementation.

[Mittler \(2000\)](#) highlighted the importance of attitudinal change among educators, asserting that without positive teacher attitudes, inclusive education cannot be sustained. Similarly, [Forlin \(2010\)](#) emphasized the emotional and cognitive burden on teachers, advocating for institutional support and in-service training.

Recent studies, such as [Singh \(2019\)](#), continue to reiterate that teachers' attitudes are shaped by multiple factors including gender, years of experience, and

school environment. Positive administrative support and peer collaboration were also found to be critical enablers of inclusive practices.

In sum, the literature underscores the complexity of teacher attitudes towards inclusive education, revealing that while there is a general consensus on its value, successful implementation is contingent upon training, resources, and systemic support.

2.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To examine the attitude of rural and urban secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.
- 2) To examine the attitude of male and female secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.

2.2. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- 1) There is no significant difference in the attitude of rural and urban secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.
- 2) There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative research approach to investigate the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education. This approach is appropriate for measuring attitudes, identifying patterns, and testing hypotheses using statistical techniques.

- 1) **Research Method:** A survey method was used to collect primary data. This method was chosen because it allows for the collection of standardized information from a large population, facilitating comparative analysis across different demographic groups.
- 2) **Population:** The population for the study comprised all secondary school teachers working in government and private schools in both urban and rural areas in Moradabad district of U.P.
- 3) **Sample and Sampling Technique:** A sample of 200 secondary school teachers was selected from 20 schools (10 urban and 10 rural) using the stratified random sampling technique. Stratification was done on the basis of location (urban/rural) to ensure proportional representation from both strata. Within each stratum, schools and teachers were randomly selected to minimize sampling bias.
- 4) **Research Tool:** The data were collected using the ‘**Teacher Attitude Scale Towards Inclusive Education**’ (TASTIE) developed and standardized by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr. Arti Anand. This scale is designed to measure various dimensions of teachers’ attitudes towards inclusive education and has demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity.
- 5) **Data Collection Procedure:** Permission was obtained from school authorities prior to data collection. The researcher personally visited the selected schools and administered the TASTIE scale to the participating teachers with clear instructions. Anonymity and confidentiality of the responses were ensured.

- 6) **Statistical Techniques Used:** Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test) were used to analyze the data and test the hypotheses.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the attitude of rural and urban secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.

Table 1

Table 1 Presentation of Significant Difference in the Attitude of Rural and Urban Secondary School Teachers Towards Inclusive Education

Group of sec. school teachers	Number of sec. school teachers (N)	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Obtained value of - t	Degree of Freedom (df)	Level of significance (0.05)	Level of significance (0.01)
Rural	100	119.35	11.48	2.48	198	1.97	2.6
Urban	100	123.08	9.67			rejected	accepted

Hypothesis 1 To examine whether there is a significant difference in the attitude of rural and urban secondary school teachers towards inclusive education, an independent t-test was conducted. The analysis involved two groups: 100 rural teachers and 100 urban teachers (N = 200). The mean attitude score of rural secondary school teachers was found to be 119.35, with a standard deviation of 11.48. The obtained t-value was 2.48, and the degrees of freedom (df) was 198. At the 0.05 level of significance, the critical t-value is 1.97. Since the obtained t-value (2.48) is greater than the critical value (1.97), the null hypothesis is rejected at the 0.05 level, indicating a statistically significant difference between the attitudes of rural and urban teachers. However, at the 0.01 level of significance, the critical value is 2.60. As the obtained t-value (2.48) is less than 2.60, the null hypothesis is accepted at the 0.01 level. This suggests that the difference is not significant at a more stringent significance level. There is a significant difference in the attitude of rural and urban secondary school teachers towards inclusive education at the 0.05 level, but the difference is not significant at the 0.01 level. This implies that while there is some difference in attitudes based on location, the strength of this difference is moderate.

Figure 1

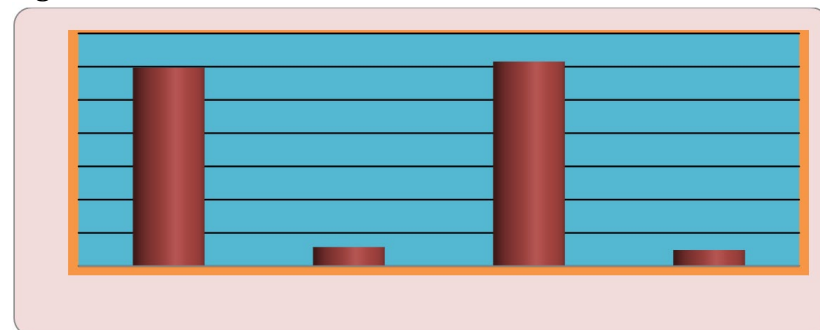


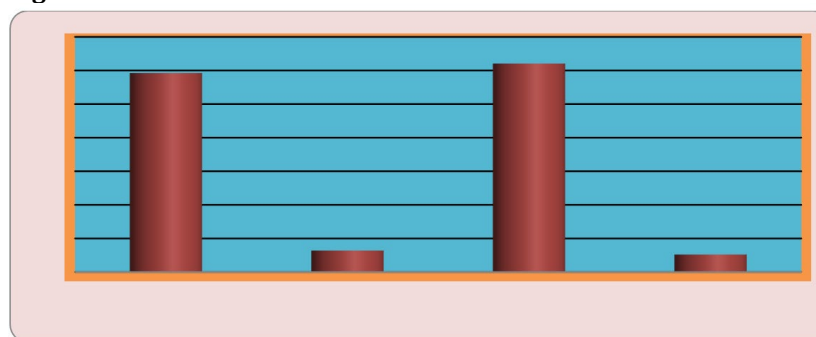
Figure 1 Graphical Representation of Mean and S.D. Of Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.

Table 2**Table 2 Presentation of Significant Difference in the Attitude of Male and Female Secondary School Teachers Towards Inclusive Education**

Group of sec. school teachers	Number of sec. school teachers (N)	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Obtained value of - t	Degree of freedom (df)	Level of significance (0.05)	Level of significance (0.01)
Male	100	118.52	12.78	3.47	198	1.97	2.6
Female	100	124.16	10.41			rejected	rejected

Hypothesis 2 To test whether there is a significant difference in the attitude of male and female secondary school teachers towards inclusive education, an independent t-test was applied. The sample included 100 male and 100 female teachers (N = 200). The mean attitude score for male teachers was 118.52, with a standard deviation of 12.78. The obtained t-value was 3.47, with 198 degrees of freedom. At the 0.05 level of significance, the critical t-value is 1.97, and at the 0.01 level, it is 2.60. Since the obtained t-value (3.47) is greater than both the critical values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels, the null hypothesis is rejected at both levels of significance. There is a statistically significant difference in the attitude of male and female secondary school teachers towards inclusive education at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. This indicates a strong and consistent difference in attitudes based on gender.

Figure 2**Figure 2** Graphical Representations of Mean and S.D. of Hypothesis 2.

5. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the critical role of teachers' attitudes in the successful implementation of inclusive education at the secondary school level. By examining variations in these attitudes based on geographic location and gender, the research provides valuable insights into the complex factors influencing educators' readiness to embrace inclusive practices. The findings reveal that while urban teachers tend to hold more favorable attitudes toward inclusive education compared to their rural counterparts, the differences are moderate and not consistently significant at stricter statistical thresholds. This suggests that factors such as access to resources, exposure to inclusive training, and institutional support may play a role in shaping these perceptions, especially in rural settings. More notably, the study finds that gender is a significant determinant of attitude, with female teachers demonstrating a more positive outlook toward inclusive education than their male peers. This consistent difference highlights the need to explore underlying reasons for gender-based perception gaps and address them through sensitization and training. In

conclusion, fostering inclusive education requires a multifaceted approach that prioritizes the professional development of all teachers while addressing contextual challenges and promoting equity in teacher training. Policies and programs aimed at strengthening inclusive practices must consider the diverse backgrounds of teachers and ensure that every educator is equipped with the skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary to support all learners. Through these targeted efforts, the vision of inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all can become a more attainable reality.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

- Professional development programs should be designed to sensitize and train teachers, particularly in rural areas and among male teachers, to enhance positive attitudes and equip them with inclusive teaching strategies.
- Since gender-based attitudinal differences are significant, training modules must also address unconscious gender biases and promote equity-focused teaching practices.
- Future studies should include variables like teaching experience, subject specialization, and school management type to gain a more holistic understanding of factors influencing teacher attitudes toward inclusion.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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