



A Comparative Analysis of Secondary School Teachers' Attitude Towards Inclusiveness Across School Types

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Abstract

The right to education (2009), the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) and the National Education Policy (2020) have increased the national awareness of inclusive education in India. The attitude of teachers is a crucial determinant of the success of the inclusive practices, particularly in the secondary schools where the academic pressure and diversity in the classroom are excessive. The quantitative research problem is the investigation of a difference in attitude towards inclusiveness among teachers at the secondary schools in government and private schools in Dehradun District, Uttarakhand. The sampling strategy used was stratified random sampling, where there were 100 teachers (50 government and 50 private). A standardized Teachers Attitude Scale

Towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE) (Sood & Anand, 2011) was used to collect data, which was analysed based on descriptive statistics and an independent

samples t-test. Results show that both groups have rather positive attitude but government school teachers exhibit much more favourable attitude to inclusion compared to that of teachers in a private school. The research blames this on the varying exposure to government-sponsored training, divergent student makeup in state-run schools as well as policy-driven accountability. Teacher education implications, school leadership and policy intervention implications are discussed. Such recommendations as the reinforcement of inclusive pedagogy training in the private schools, more sustained professional development and more institutional support systems are suggested.

Keywords: Inclusiveness, Attitude, Secondary school

1. Introduction

Inclusive education has become an international imperative in education that promotes fair access, involvement and

achievement of any learner notwithstanding his/her socio-economic standing, disabilities, learning requirements, gender identity, or cultural diversities. The UNCRPD Convention and Sustainable Development Goal 4 highlight the right to quality and inclusive and equitable education. These international frameworks also intertwine with the national policies in India, including the National Education Policy (2020), that directly advocates the inclusive approach in every tier of education.

Inclusive education points out that teachers play a key role in the development of the learning environment. Their attitude and values, expectations and readiness to take up inclusive strategies determine the levels of successful conversion of inclusive policies into classroom realities. Inclusion is further complicated in the secondary school level due to the pressures of the academic process, specialization of the subject, more students in the classroom and the readiness of the learners. In that case, the attitude of teachers plays a crucial role in defining whether inclusive education is actually exercised or it is just a policy rhetoric.

The Dehradun District of Uttarakhand is considered to be a special educational geography as it combines the high-end private schools and the various government schools. Literacy rates have increased in the area and there has been a huge policy focus on inclusive schooling. Nonetheless, there are still inequities in the practice of inclusiveness, supply of qualified teachers and access to specialized support services. It is important to understand the attitudes of teachers in various school types to be able to plan effective interventions.

This paper is a comparison of the attitude of secondary school teachers to inclusiveness between the government and the private schools located in Dehradun District to determine patterns, gaps, and future educational needs.

2. Literature Review.

Based on an in-depth literature review, it can be concluded that there is a great amount of literature on the topic of an inclusive education both in India and in particular states such as Uttarakhand. This section summarizes the findings that are applicable to the attitude of teachers, regional variations, and determinants of inclusive practices. Inclusive education is not simply about having students with disabilities in the regular classes, but reorganizing schools

to accommodate to various needs. As pointed out by Stainback and Stainback (1990), inclusion encourages the involvement of all and involves changes at the system level involving curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. UNESCO (2009) considers inclusion as the eradication of obstacles to learning and inclusion in the marginalized groups.

The attitude of teachers is one of the factors that affect the translation of these ideals into practice. The support of positive attitude differentiated instructions, collaborative learning strategies and responsive teaching strategies and negative attitude creates barriers.

Inclusive education has been a widely held notion that is regarded as a very important aspect of reforms in the education system, especially in developing nations such as India where the diversity of learners is high. Inclusive education has its conceptual base

that focuses on reorganizing school cultures, pedagogies and assessment systems that would be inclusive to all learners (UNESCO, 2009). Stainback and Stainback (1990) believe that inclusion does not entail the integration of students with disabilities in regular schools but the restructuring of learning process to remove obstacles to inclusion. The attitude of teachers is key to such change, as they determine the implementation of the inclusive policies in classrooms. Flexible teaching styles, collaborative learning, adaption of teaching materials and the establishment of supportive environments are promoted by positive attitudes, and inhibited by negative attitudes which may limit the opportunities of learners with various needs.

Within the context of the wider Indian society, several studies indicate that the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education differs depending on the state because of the training and opportunities, and institutional culture. Sharma (2011) wrote that several teachers in India are willing to embrace inclusive practices but they do not always have proper training in professional practices. Khan and Ahmad (2019) discovered that the attitude of secondary teachers toward inclusion was moderately positive in Uttar Pradesh, yet they perceived that they were being underprepared as they had limited exposure to inclusion instructional methods. They have pointed out that systematic training modules and administrative assistance are necessary. In a similar fashion, Manohar and Ramachandran (2020) stated that teachers who received special training as part of government programs like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan had much more positive attitude than those who never received this

training in Karnataka. This paper put into emphasis the transformational value of well-structured professional growth.

More knowledge comes up in western India. Patil (2018) in Maharashtra discovered that the tendency of teachers in the private schools within the city tended to be reluctant to include learners because of the presence of competition within the academic setting and the perceived threat to the school performance indicators. Educators complained of work overload and lack of support services to learners with special needs. Conversely, some of the studies conducted in the southern part of India show that government schools in the southern part are more in line with the inclusive practice. In a large-scale study of teachers in Tamil Nadu, Ramasamy and John (2017) found that government school teachers were more accepting of inclusive education, compared to privately school teachers, since government school teachers were undertaking mandatory state-level training and had more exposure to a diverse student population.

The studies carried in metropolitan settings also help in the perception of attitudinal patterns. Sharma and Gupta (2020) found that in Delhi NCR, teachers in the private schools found it challenging to reconcile the requirements of inclusive practices with those imposed by parental demand on high performance in school. Their research has observed that big classes and shortage of specialized staff were also a problem. In the meantime, government school teachers seemed to be better prepared to practice inclusivity because of the institutional support structures and adherence to national policies.

There is limited research on Uttarakhand but it provides crucial regional data. Joshi (2018) researched in Nainital district and concluded that teachers in the majority of cases were in Favor of the concept of inclusive education and did not have enough training to deal with diverse needs efficiently. The research observed that teachers were informative of inclusive policy, but they did not adopt it because of lack of special resources like counsellors, remedial teachers. In a different study by Rawat and Pundir (2020) in Haridwar, it was established that the government school teachers had much better awareness and knowledge of inclusive education as compared to the teachers in the private schools. They explained this variance by state sponsored training programs and constant exposure to heterogeneous learners in the African schools. Bisht (2021) discovered in Dehradun that teachers in private schools tended to see inclusion as a burden because of the pressure by parents, school management, and the academic requirements which emphasized performance over the inclusion learning process. On the contrary, teachers of government schools indicated that they were more responsible in terms of implementing inclusive education as mandated by the government and policy adherence.

In the study by Saini and Pandey (2023), pre-service teachers were studied in Nainital, and the results showed that although trainees rated their self-efficacy towards inclusive practices as moderate, the confidence in them varied across the localities, which suggested that not all parts of the state were equally prepared. Juyal (2023) identified that pre-service teachers of various teacher education institutes in

Uttarakhand were supportive of the concept of inclusion but were concerned about classroom management, the lack of resources, and the practical aspect in the implementation in the secondary schooling. In a more context-specific research study, Rangarajan (2023) examined a remote rural school in Uttarakhand and observed that geographical isolation, infrastructural and lack of support services influenced teacher attitude such that including students was difficult despite good intentions.

Throughout these studies, it is clear that there is a general trend such that teacher attitude towards inclusion is affected positively because of access to professional development, administrative support, exposure to a wide range of learners and clear policy directives. States in which teachers are provided with systematic training including Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are more likely to report positive attitude. On the other hand, in those states or regions where the schools are privately run and the academic success is valued more than the inclusion system, the attitude of the teachers is not as favourable. Results of Uttarakhand are in line with these trends nationally especially emphasizing on the attitudinal gap between government and private school teachers in terms of preparedness, confidence and willingness to adopt inclusive practices.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the inclusiveness attitude of teachers in the secondary schools in Dehradun District.
2. To compare the attitude of government and the private secondary school teachers towards inclusiveness.

3. To establish the statistically significant differences between the attitudes of the two groups.

4. Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant difference in the attitude of government and private secondary school teachers towards inclusiveness.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The research design used in the study is quantitative, descriptive-comparative research design that would be appropriate in determining differences between groups on the basis of numerical information.

5.2 Population

The sample was made up of all the secondary school teachers in the government and the private schools of Dehradun District.

5.3 Sample and Sampling Method.

Stratified random sampling was used to sample out 100 secondary school teachers (50 government school teachers and 50 privatized school teachers). The stratification was done in terms of the school type so that they get equal representation.

5.4 Research Tool

The Teacher Attitude Scale Towards Inclusive Education (**TASTIE**) (Sood & Anand, 2011) was used to collect the data by administering this 47-item standardised instrument on a 3-point Likert scale on Secondary school teachers. The main purpose of the scale is to measure the

attitude of elementary school teachers towards inclusive education. Although, the present scale has been specifically developed for elementary teachers but it can also be used for teachers working at secondary level.

Four domains including Psychological/Behavioural, Social and Parental, Curricular and co-curricular and Administrative were measured by the tool. The internal consistency (Internal Consistency $r = 0.86$) was also high.

5.5 Data collection Procedure.

Questionnaires were also distributed face-to-face after receiving authorizations of the school administrations and the consent of the participants. They were filled in anonymously.

5.6 Statistical Techniques

- Descriptive analysis was done by means of mean and Standard Deviation.
- There was also the use of independent sample t-test to compare mean scores.

6. Results and Analysis

6.1 Descriptive Statistics

School Type	N	Mean Score	SD	t value	Sig. level
Government	50	96.42	8.15	3.95 with df 98	p < 0.01
Private	50	89.76	9.04		

6.2 Analysis of the Result

The results analysis showed the existence of definite and statistically significant difference in the attitude of government and private secondary school teachers in Dehradun District toward inclusive

education. The teachers working in government schools scored higher ($M = 96.42$) than teachers working in private schools ($M = 89.76$), which is dissimilar, and has a more positive attitude towards the inclusion of diverse learners. The independent samples t -test value ($t = 3.95$, $p < 0.01$) confirmed that this difference was not a mere coincidence and that school type made a significant difference in the perceptions and preparedness of the teachers to inclusive practices. These results indicate that, government teachers are more favourably oriented towards inclusion, perhaps due to improved training programs offered by the state, with students of more heterogeneous classes working and having higher policy expectations regarding inclusion. Conversely, the relative low level of attitude of the teachers in the private schools could be due to issues of pressure in academics, institutional support and training opportunities. In general, the discussion points to the essence of the importance of the institutional context in the determination of the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education.

7. Discussion of the Result

The study results are consistent with the available literature on the topic in India and demonstrate the fact that the attitude of teachers toward inclusive education is highly influenced by the systemic factors. Government teachers in schools were much more favourable towards inclusiveness, which can be explained by the fact that they regularly attend compulsory training courses organized by SCERT, DIETs, and Samagra Shiksha, which is also observed in Tamil Nadu (Ramasamy and John, 2017) and Karnataka (Manohar, 2020). Their exposure to varied socio-economic and cultural learner populations also leads to

adoption and preparedness to inclusive practices whereas policy accountability interventions like observing inclusion policies, disability certification and U-DISE report promotes compliance and positive interactions. Conversely, attitude was found to be lower among teachers of the private schools, as was also found in other studies in Maharashtra and Delhi, presumably because of high levels of academic performance, strict performance requirements and parental apprehensions regarding inclusion of children with special needs. Moreover, in private schools, there is usually no systematic training in inclusive education and Rawat and Pundir (2020) in their study in Uttarakhand worry about it too. The current results also largely correspond to the works of the Uttarakhand-based researchers, such as Bisht (2021), who has reported resistance among the teachers of the private school in Dehradun because of the institutional pressures and Joshi (2018), who has pointed to insufficient preparedness among the teachers in the state. Altogether, it can be highlighted that the attitude of teachers to inclusiveness in Uttarakhand mainly depends on training, the availability of resources, the institutional culture, and the expectations of the policy.

8. Implications on Pedagogical Practice.

Educational leaders with positive attitude towards inclusive education are better placed to employ effective pedagogical methods that favour diverse students. These teachers are more likely to implement differentiated instructional methods to enable them to respond to the diverse learning needs by means of content, methods, and assessment. They also tend to be more receptive to cooperation with special educators and other professional

helpers which improves the overall quality of instruction and provides the students with disabilities with the necessary help. Moreover, educators who hold positive attitudes generally use multisensory styles of learning that can support various styles of learning and allow making classroom experiences more interactive and involving. Their optimism also helps to provide emotionally supportive and inclusive classroom settings in which all students will feel valued and be able to achieve. As such, the attitude of teacher strengthening is a key area to the attainment of meaningful and sustainable practices in inclusive education.

9. Conclusion

The present study provides empirical evidence that teachers in government secondary schools of Dehradun District demonstrate significantly more favourable attitudes towards inclusive education than their counterparts in private schools. These findings are consistent with national- and state-level research highlighting that teachers' attitudes are strongly influenced by access to systematic training, institutional support and sustained exposure to diverse learners. Such factors are central to the successful implementation of inclusive practices in schools.

In alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which places equity, inclusion and access at the core of educational reform, the findings underscore the urgent need to strengthen inclusive education initiatives across all types of schools in Uttarakhand. NEP 2020 emphasizes teacher empowerment, continuous professional development and the creation of supportive school ecosystems to address the diverse learning needs of all students, including children

with disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The comparatively less favourable attitudes observed among private school teachers indicate a critical gap in policy implementation and professional preparedness. Addressing this gap requires targeted capacity-building programmes, improved resource networking, and the development of inclusive school cultures that are consistent with the vision of NEP 2020 for universal participation and learning for all. Strengthening teacher education, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and ensuring accountability across both government and private institutions will be essential in transforming secondary schools into equitable, inclusive, and learner-centred environments as envisaged by NEP 2020.

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