



# Teachers' Perception Towards Inclusive Education: A Quantitative Study

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## Abstract:

This quantitative study investigates teachers' perception towards inclusive education and examines how variable such as training, teaching experience and school type affect these perceptions. Data were collected from 120 primary and secondary school teachers using a structured questionnaire. The findings revealed that while most teachers exhibit moderately positive perceptions, significant differences exist based on training in inclusive education and years of experience. The study recommends strengthening teacher training and providing institutional support to foster inclusive practices.

**Keywords:** inclusive education, teacher perception, special needs, training and quantitative research

## I. Introduction

Inclusive education has become a global educational priority aimed at ensuring equal access, participation and success for all learners, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. Rooted in the principles of social justice and human rights, inclusive education seeks to remove barriers that prevent students with special educational needs from learning alongside their typically developing peers in mainstream classrooms (UNESCO,2020). In recent years, many countries, including India, have adopted inclusive education policies to promote the full participation of children with disabilities in general education systems.

Despite strong policy frameworks, the implementation of inclusive education often encounters practical challenges at the school level. Teachers, as the central agents of classroom instruction, play a crucial role in either facilitating or hindering inclusion. Their perceptions, attitudes and readiness significantly influence the success or failure of inclusive practices (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). A teacher who believes in the philosophy of inclusion and feels confident in their ability to accommodate diverse learners is more likely to implement inclusive strategies effectively (Sharma,

Loerman & Forlin,2012). Conversely, negative perceptions and lack of preparation may result in resistance classroom practices.

In the context of this study, the following key terms are classified to ensure a consistent understanding:

- **Inclusive Education** refers to an educational approach where students of all abilities learn together in the same classroom with the necessary support system in place.
- **Teachers' Perception** encompasses the attitudes, beliefs and interpretations held by teachers about the value, feasibility and implementation of inclusive education.
- **Special Educational Needs (SEN)** describes students who require additional educational support due to physical, intellectual, emotional.
- **Attitude** refers to teachers' favorable or unfavorable evaluations of inclusive education and their willingness to adapt teaching methods to meet diverse needs.
- **Teacher Training** involves pre-service and in-service educational experiences designed to prepare teachers for inclusive teaching practices.
- **Support Services** include resources and personnel- such as special educators, therapists or learning materials- that facilitate the inclusion of students with SEN in general education classrooms.

### 1.1. Review of Related Literature

Teacher attitudes towards inclusive education have been widely studied. Numerous studies indicated that teachers' attitudes toward inclusion are mixed and often influenced by their understanding of disabilities, past experiences and perceived self-efficacy. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) found that teachers' perceptions are influenced by factors such as training, experience and availability of resources. Teachers who are confident and trained in handling diverse needs are more likely to support inclusive education. However, where teachers lack confidence or feel equipped, resistance to inclusion is more common (Sharma et al., 2008).

- **Attitudes and Beliefs Towards Inclusion**



Inclusive education, grounded in principles of equity and diversity, has gained global prominence since the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), which emphasized education for all, regardless of ability. Since then, research has extensively explored the role of teacher perceptions in implementing inclusive practices. Teachers are the primary facilitators of inclusive classrooms, and their attitudes, training and beliefs directly influence the success of inclusive education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Research in developing countries, including India, echoes these concerns. Studies in Indian context show varied results. While some teachers embrace inclusion, others express concern about large class sizes, lack of training and insufficient support (Das et al, 2013). Teachers also report increased workload and difficulty in addressing diverse learning needs within mainstream classrooms. Moreover, school type (government vs. private) may also influence teacher attitudes due to differing institutional resources.

#### ● Impact of Training and Professional Development

Professional development and pre-service training are critical in shaping teachers' readiness for inclusive education. Sharma et al. (2006) found that even short-term training significantly improved teachers' attitudes and reduced anxiety about working with children with special needs. Likewise, Ferlin (2010) argued that training should not only focus on knowledge but also target attitudes, empathy and skills for differentiated instruction.

In India, the **Right to Education Act (2009)** and **RPWD Act (2016)** mandate inclusive education. However, teacher education programs often fail to provide hands-on experience or sustained exposure to inclusive environments. Kumar & Kumar (2021) emphasized that most general education teachers do not feel adequately prepared to teach students with disabilities, often relying on special educators to handle these students. This dependency undermines the vision of a fully inclusive classroom.

#### ● School Context and Support Systems

The school environment also plays a critical role in shaping teachers' perceptions. Ainscow and Miles (2008) noted that schools with strong leadership, collaborative culture and adequate resources foster more positive attitudes among teachers. In contrast, under-resourced schools often struggle to create inclusive settings, regardless of individual teacher efforts.

Studies comparing public and private schools in India show mixed results. Some suggests that private schools are more flexible and willing to implement inclusive practices, while others argue that public

schools offer more access to government-supported inclusive resources (Das et al., 2013). However, both sectors face challenges in maintain trained support staff and individualized instruction.

while numerous national and international studies have explored inclusive education, there is still a need to understand how regular classroom teachers perceive these efforts, especially in developing countries like India, where challenges such as limited resources, large class sizes and inconsistent teacher training programs persist (Das, Kayani & Desai, 2013). The perception of teachers may vary depending on several variables, such as years of teaching experience, training received (Subban & Sharma, 2006). These variables can offer valuable insights into how inclusive education can be effectively implemented in different contexts.

Furthermore, research often treats teacher attitudes as a generalized construct without examining how various contextual and demographic factors influence perception. This creates a gap in understanding the specific needs, preparedness and challenges faced by mainstream teachers when implementing inclusive education.

Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by using a quantitative approach to examine teachers' perceptions of inclusive education and identify key factors that shape those perceptions within the Indian school context.

#### 1.2. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

1. Examine the general perception of teachers towards inclusive education.
2. Determine whether training in inclusive education influences teachers' attitudes.
3. Analyze the role of teaching experience in shaping perception toward inclusion.
4. Explore any significant difference in perception based on school type (government vs. private).

#### 1.3. Hypothesis

● **H1:** There is a significant difference in teachers' perception of inclusive education based on whether they have received inclusive education training.

● **H2:** There is a significant relationship between years of teaching experience and perception toward inclusive education.

● **H3:** There is a significant difference in perception between teachers from government and private schools.



● **H4:** Teachers who have undergone inclusive education training exhibit more positive attitudes than those without training.

## II. Methodology

### 2.1. Research design:

This study adopted a quantitative, descriptive survey design to explore and analyze the perceptions of school teachers towards inclusive education. A structured questionnaire was used to collect numerical data, allowing for the application of statistical tools to determine patterns, relationships and differences in perception based on various teacher characteristics such as experience, training and school type. This design was chosen because it facilitates the collection of data from a large population within a limited time frame and enables objective analysis.

### 2.2. Participants:

The participants of the study consisted of 120 in-service school teachers selected from both government and private schools located in the state of Odisha, India. A **stratified random sampling** technique was employed to ensure proportionate representation based on gender, years of teaching experience, type of school (government/private) and exposure to inclusive education training.

The demographic breakdown of the sample is as follows:

● **Gender:** 60 male teachers and 60 female teachers

● **Experience:** 40 teachers with less than 5 years, 45 teachers with 5-10 years and 35 with more than 10 years of experience.

● **Training:** 50 teachers had received formal training in inclusive education, while 70 had not. All participants were currently teaching at the primary or secondary level and had at least one year of classroom experience. Teachers who were exclusively working in special education settings were excluded to ensure the study focused on perceptions in general education environment.

### 2.3. Instruments

The primary data collection tool was a structured, self-administered questionnaire developed with reference to previously validated tools such as the Inclusive Education Attitude Scale (Sharma et al., 2008). The questionnaire consisted of 25 closed-ended items designed to assess four major dimensions:

1. **General attitude towards inclusive education**

2. **Self-efficacy in handling students with special needs**

3. **Perceived institutional support**

4. **Challenges faced in inclusive classrooms**

Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was reviewed by 3 experts in inclusive education for content validity and was piloted with 20 teachers from a neighboring district. The pilot study indicated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86, which confirmed the instrument's reliability.

### 2.4. Procedure

Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the heads of the participating schools. Ethical approval was granted by the institutional review board of Ramadevi Women's University, ensuring that the study adhered to ethical research guidelines. Participants were provided with a brief explanation of the study's objectives, assured of confidentiality and informed that their participation was voluntary. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. The questionnaires were distributed in both paper-based and digital formats depending on the accessibility of participants. Teachers were given one week to respond and reminders were sent to ensure a high response rate. Completed questionnaires were collected and checked for completeness and clarity before analysis.

### 2.5. Data Analysis

Data were entered and analyzed using **SPSS version 25**. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and frequency were calculated to summarize teachers' responses. To examine the influence of independent variables (training, experience and school type) on perception scores, **independent samples t-tests** and **one way ANOVA** were employed. The level of significance was set at  $p < 0.05$  throughout the analysis to determine statistical significance.

## III. Results

This section presents the findings of the data collected from 120 school teachers through a structured questionnaire. The analysis was conducted using SPSS (version 25), applying descriptive statistics and inferential statistical tests including t-tests and ANOVA to address the research objectives.



### 3.1. Descriptive Statistics

The overall perception of teachers toward inclusive education was found to be moderately positive. The total mean score was 3.84 (SD=0.52) on a 5-point Likert scale. Among the four subdimensions assessed, teachers showed the most favorable

attitudes towards the **general concept of inclusion** (M=4.02, SD=0.44), followed by **self-efficacy** (M=3.91, SD=0.47). lower mean scores were observed for **perceived institutional support** (M=3.56, SD=0.61) and **challenges in implementation** (M=3.42, SD=0.59).

**Table 1** summarizes the mean and standard deviation for each proportion dimension. Descriptive Statistics for Perception Dimensions (N=120)

Dimension	Mean	SD
General attitude	4.02	0.44
Self-Efficacy	3.91	0.47
Institutional Support	3.56	0.61
Implementation Challenges	3.42	0.59
<b>Overall Perception Score</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>0.52</b>

### 3.2. Inferential Statistics

#### Comparison by Training in Inclusive Education

An independent samples **t-test** was conducted to examine whether teachers' perceptions differed based on whether they had received formal training in inclusive education. The analysis revealed a

significant difference between trained and untrained teachers,  $t(118) = 3.72, p, 01$ . Trained teachers had a higher mean score (M=4.02, SD=0.44) compared to untrained teachers (M=3.63, SD=0.54), indicating that training positively influenced perception.

**Table 2.** Perception Scores by Training Status

Group	N	Mean	SD	T	p
Trained Teachers	50	4.02	0.44	4.35	.01
Untrained Teachers	70	3.63	0.54		

the results show that trained teachers (N = 50) had a higher mean perception score (M =4.02, SD = 0.44) compared to untrained teachers (N =70), who had a mean score of 3.63 (SD = 0.54). the difference in means was tested for statistical significance, yielding a t- value of 4.35 with 118 degrees of freedom and a p-value of .01.  $p < .01$  hence it is statically significant.

#### Comparison by Years of Teaching Experience

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if years of teaching experience had a significant effect on teachers' perceptions of inclusive education. The participants were grouped into three categories: less than 5 years, 5-10 years and more than 10 years of experience.

The result indicated a statistically significant difference in perception scores,  $F(2,117) = 4.23, p < .05$ . Post hoc comparisons using Turkey's HSD test showed that teachers with more than 10 years of experience (M=4.03) had significantly more positive perceptions than those with less than 5 years (M=3.58,  $p < .05$ ). there was no significance difference between the 5-10year group and the other groups.

#### Comparison by School Type

To explore whether perceptions differed based on school type, an independent samples t-test was conducted comparing government and private school teachers. The results showed no significant difference in overall perception scores,  $t(118) = 1.36, p = .177$ . This suggests that the type of school doesn't play a statistically significant role in shaping teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in this sample.

## IV. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine school teachers' perceptions toward inclusive education and to explore how factors such as training, teaching experience and school type influence those perceptions. The findings suggest that overall teachers hold moderately positive views about inclusive education, though challenges and concerns persist.

#### Positive General Attitudes

The descriptive analysis showed that teachers generally support the idea of inclusive education with the highest mean score observed in the domain of general attitude (M= 4.02). this supports earlier findings by Avramidis and Norwich



(2002) and Sharma et al. (2008), who argued that teachers often endorse the concept of inclusion in theory, even if practical implementation may cause concern. The current study reinforces the notion that inclusion is widely accepted as a moral and educational responsibility, especially in the post-Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and TRE Act era in India.

### Role of Training

The results demonstrated a statistically significant difference in perception based on training in inclusive education. Trained teachers exhibited more positive attitudes than their untrained counterparts ( $p < .01$ ). This confirms findings from Ferlin (2010) and Sharma et al. (2006), who emphasized the importance of targeted teacher training in improving confidence and reducing anxiety when working with students with special needs. This finding has direct implications for teacher education programs, suggesting that inclusive pedagogy must be given central attention during both pre-service and in-service training.

### Institutional Support and Challenges

Interestingly, the lowest mean scores were recorded in the areas of institutional support and implementation challenges, reflecting persistent concerns among teachers. Lack of resource personnel, high student-teacher ratios, inadequate infrastructure and limited access to assistive devices may contribute to these concerns. These findings echo those of Das et al. (2013), who reported that in the Indian context, infrastructural and systematic support is often insufficient to meet the needs of inclusive classrooms. The findings suggest that while attitudes may be positive, practical limitations can dampen actual implementation.

### No Significance Difference by School Type

The absence of a significant difference in perceptions between government and private school teachers ( $p > .05$ ) indicates that systematic challenges and opportunities are common across sectors. This challenges the assumption that private schools are inherently better equipped for inclusion. It may also reflect the uniform lack of inclusive education specialists and training across both public and private institutions.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce that while the ideological acceptance of inclusive education is growing, there are practical barriers that must be addressed. Training, experience and supportive school infrastructure play critical roles in shaping teacher attitudes and their willingness to embrace inclusive practices. System-level changes,

including policy implementation, resource allocation and ongoing professional development, are crucial for translating positive perceptions into effective inclusive teaching.

## V. Conclusion and recommendations

### Conclusion:

This study explored the perceptions of school teachers toward inclusive education and examined the influence of training, teaching experience and school type on their attitudes. The findings revealed that, while teachers generally support the philosophy of inclusive education, several barriers limit their ability to implement inclusive practices effectively in the classroom.

Notably, teachers who received training in inclusive education demonstrated significantly more positive attitudes than those without such training. Similarly, those with more than ten years of teaching experience reported more favorable perceptions compared to less experienced teachers. These findings suggest that professional preparation and practical classroom experience play a vital role in shaping teacher confidence and readiness for inclusive education.

The study also found that while teachers accept the idea of inclusion, they struggle with its practical application- particularly in areas related to institutional support and implementation. Issues such as lack of specialized resources, inadequate infrastructure, limited availability of trained support staff and insufficient ongoing training continue to hinder effective inclusion of schools. Interestingly, no significant difference was found in teacher perception based on the type of school (government or private), indicating that inclusive education challenges widespread across the educational landscape.

Overall, the research highlights that teacher perception is not only influenced by ideology but also by access to training, experience and systematic support. These insights are essential for policymakers, administrators and education stakeholders to ensure that inclusive education becomes a successful reality, not merely a theoretical commitment.

## VI. Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve teacher preparedness, attitudes and implementation of inclusive education:

### ● Strengthen Pre-Service and In-Service Training



Inclusive education modules should be integrated into all teacher training programs. Pre-Service teacher education must emphasize inclusive pedagogy, classroom strategies and case-based learning. In-service teachers should undergo regular workshops, certificate programs and practical exposure to inclusive classrooms.

● **Provide Institutional and Government Support**

Education departments should ensure that schools are equipped with special educators, inclusive teaching materials and assistive technology and classroom accommodations. Schools must have clear policies and budgets for implementing inclusive practices and supporting students with diverse learning needs.

● **Continuous Professional development**

Schools and education departments should promote ongoing capacity building. This includes refresher training sessions, exposure visits and peer-learning opportunities focused on inclusive practices.

● **Develop Mentorship Models for New Teachers**

Newly recruited teachers, particularly those with less than five years of experience, would benefit from mentorship programs involving experienced teachers who have demonstrated success in inclusive classrooms. Peer collaboration can significantly enhance early-career teachers' confidence and efficacy.

● **Monitor and Evaluate Inclusive Education Practices**

Educational authorities should establish mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of inclusive practices in schools. This could involve collecting regular feedback from teachers, students and parents to inform future planning and reforms.

● **Promote Awareness and Sensitization**

Schools should conduct regular awareness programs, inclusive weeks and community engagement activities to help all stakeholders-including students, parents and staff-understand the importance of inclusive education and contribute positively to an inclusive culture.

● **Encourage Research and Innovation**

further research is recommended to explore areas such as:

- Subject-specific teacher perceptions of inclusion (e.g., science vs. language).
- The long-term impact of inclusive teacher training.
- Student outcomes and experiences in inclusive classrooms.
- Use of technology and digital tools to support inclusive practices.

Inclusive education is both a right and necessity in today's diverse learning environments. While teacher attitudes are moving in a positive direction, this alone is not enough. Without sustained investment in training, resources and systematic reform, inclusive education may remain an ideal rather than a practical reality. Empowering teachers-through preparation, support and continuous development- is the most effective pathway to creating truly inclusive classrooms where every learner can thrive.

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