

A STUDY OF ATTITUDE OF IN-SERVICE TEACHERS OF CHHATTISGARH STATE TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Introduction

Inclusive education, a cornerstone of equitable learning, aims to provide all students, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, or emotional differences, the opportunity to learn together in the same environment. The philosophy behind inclusive education promotes diversity in the classroom, ensuring that every child, including those with disabilities, has access to a quality education alongside their peers. In a diverse country like India, where education plays a pivotal role in social transformation, the shift toward inclusive education aligns with the global movement toward more humanistic and democratic schooling practices.

Chhattisgarh state's educational landscape, characterized by a mix of urban and rural schools, provides an opportunity to study how inclusive education is perceived and practiced across different contexts. In this regard, the attitudes of in-service teachers become a critical factor in determining the success of inclusive education. Teachers' attitude towards inclusion not only shape the classroom environment but also influence their teaching practices, ability to differentiate instruction, and willingness to accommodate students with special needs. However, teachers may face various challenges in implementing inclusive education, such as a lack of resources, inadequate training, and the added responsibility of managing diverse learning needs. Understanding their attitudes is essential to address these challenges and to design interventions that support them in this process.

Literature Review

Recent studies emphasize that positive teacher attitudes are essential for successful inclusive education. In their study, Mehta and Jha (2022) noted that teachers who demonstrate more favorable attitudes towards inclusion are more likely to create supportive learning

environments for students with disabilities. However, they also found that many teachers in rural India, including Chhattisgarh, struggle with implementing inclusive education due to ingrained biases and a lack of understanding about disabilities (Mehta & Jha, 2022).

Training has been identified as a key factor in fostering positive attitudes toward inclusive education. Kumar and Roy (2022) found that in-service training significantly improved teachers' confidence and attitudes towards inclusive education, particularly when focused on practical strategies and classroom management for diverse learners. Singh and Gupta (2023) identified several barriers to effective inclusion in Chhattisgarh, such as large class sizes, lack of resources, and limited administrative support. According to Das and Verma (2023), teachers with higher self-efficacy are more likely to adopt inclusive practices. They spotted that many teachers lacked the confidence to work with students with disabilities due to limited exposure to inclusive methodologies during their professional training.

Bhardwaj and Patel (2022) found that societal attitudes towards disability influence teachers' perceptions of inclusion. Teachers often reflect that students with disabilities require specialized, segregated education, which can lead to resistance to inclusion in mainstream classrooms. Gupta and Rao (2024) found that in-service teachers often feel unprepared to manage inclusive classrooms due to a lack of competence in specialized teaching techniques. Incorporating technology into classrooms has been suggested by Jain and Bansal (2023) as a way to support inclusive education. They also identified that while teachers were open to using technology to enhance inclusion, many lacked the infrastructure and training to do so effectively.

Sen and Bhattacharya (2022) found that teachers who received strong support from their school administrators were more likely to adopt inclusive practices. This is particularly relevant in states like Chhattisgarh, where schools in rural areas may have limited access to resources and leadership guidance. Kaur and Singh (2024), stressed that future research should focus on developing localized training programs tailored to the specific needs of teachers such as prioritizing practical strategies, resource management, and cultural competence to help them to overcome the barriers they face in implementing inclusive education.

Rationale

In the context of Chhattisgarh, where educational resources are often limited, especially in rural areas, examining in-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education becomes even more significant. The state has seen considerable efforts to improve its education system, but the journey towards full inclusion remains complex. This study seeks to explore the attitudes of in-service teachers in Chhattisgarh toward inclusive education, with a focus on understanding the

factors that influence their attitude. By identifying the barriers that shape these attitudes, this research aims to provide insights into how inclusive education can be strengthened in the state. The findings from this study will be valuable in informing policymakers, educators, and stakeholders about the necessary steps to support teachers, improve teacher training programs, and foster an educational environment that embraces diversity and inclusion. Ultimately, this research hopes to contribute to the ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable education system in Chhattisgarh.

Research Questions

During the process of review some questions arises which leads this piece of work-

- What attitude do the in-service teachers of Chhattisgarh state have towards inclusive education?
- What are the influencing factors which influence the teachers' attitude towards inclusive education?

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are:

- To explore the attitudes of in-service teachers towards inclusive education in Chhattisgarh state.
- To identify the factors influencing teachers' attitude towards inclusive education
- To provide recommendations for policy and practice based on the findings.

Delimitation

This study is delimited to the in-service teachers of Chhattisgarh state only.

Methodology

Sample and sampling

The sample for the study included 100 in-service teachers from various schools across urban and rural areas of Chhattisgarh. The participants were selected using convenient sampling method.

Research Design

This study employs a Qualitative research design using a survey methodology.

Data Collection Tool

The data collection instrument was a Likert scale-based questionnaire designed to assess teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. The questionnaire contains 5 Positive statements and 5 negative statements and a question for identifying the factors influencing attitude towards inclusive education.

Data Analysis

Analysis 1. For analyzing the data pertaining to objective -to explore the attitudes of in-service teachers towards inclusive education in Chhattisgarh state, the responses for positive items and negative items were analyzed separately through percentage analysis technique.

Table 1: Analysis of positive items

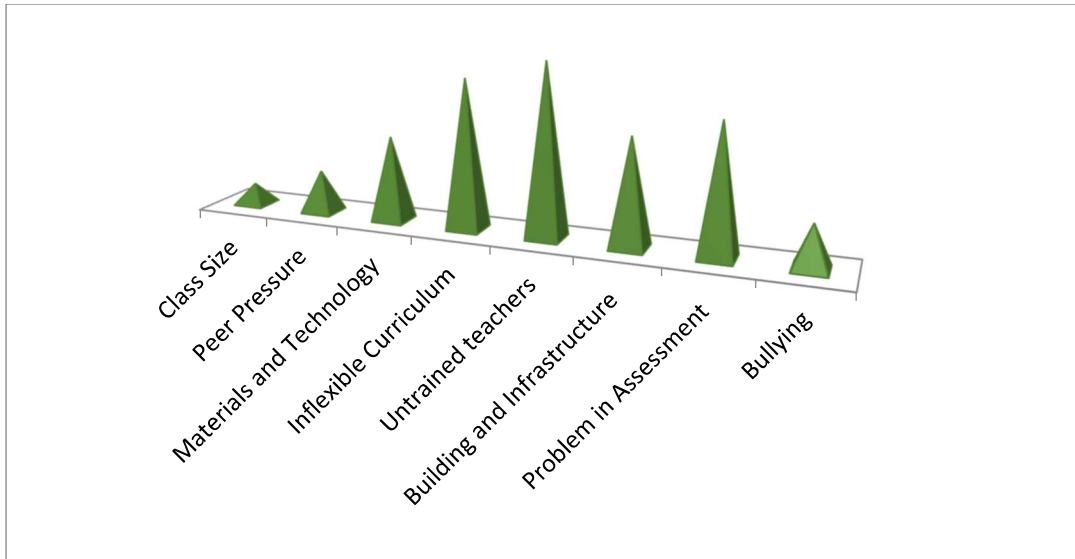
S.No.	Item No.	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Neutral (N)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
1	Item No. 1	64%	30%	4%	2%	-
2	Item No. 3	54%	36%	4%	4%	2%
3	Item No. 6	34%	50%	6%	10%	-
4	Item No. 9	46%	38%	12%	4%	-
5	Item No. 10	42%	48%	6%	4%	-

Table 2: Analysis of negative items

S.No.	Item No.	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Neutral (N)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (DS)
1	Item No. 2	-	6%	6%	24%	64%
2	Item No. 4	-	6%	8%	40%	46%
3	Item No. 5	4%	8%	12%	30%	46%
4	Item No. 7	2%	22%	18%	34%	24%
5	Item No. 8	8%	20%	12%	36%	24%

After analyzing the responses for positive items it is clearly visible that majority of respondents have responded mostly to the Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) options which shows their positive inclination towards inclusive education. Similarly the responses for negative items were analyzed and it is observed that the majority of respondents recorded their response as Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D) which is a clear indication of their supportive attitude towards Inclusive Education.

Analysis 2. For analyzing the data concerning objective no. 2 i.e. to identify the factors influencing teachers' attitude towards inclusive education, different factors (identified in various studies) were given to respondents to arrange them in preference which they thought as the most influential factor to the least influential factor. The data obtained were analyzed through percentage analysis followed by ordering from most to least influential factor.



Graph 1: preference of factors influencing attitude towards Inclusive Education

From the above graph it is observed that the most influential factor for influencing the attitude of in-service teachers is availability of untrained teachers which is really a big problem for developing a conducive environment for Children with Special Needs (CWSN), backward and underprivileged children. Followed by this inflexible curriculum is the next factor which hinders the positive attitude towards inclusive education. The third most influential factor is the problem in assessment of such children as they were assessed in similar way the normal children were assessed.

Building and infrastructure and materials and technology were considered as the next influential factor by the in-service teachers. Bullying, peer pressure and class size were reflected by the in-service teachers as the least influential factors.

Analysis of Objective 3. To provide recommendations for policy and practice based on the findings. From the responses filled by the respondents following recommendations were drawn by the researchers –

1. As per the responses an urgent need of training of in-service teachers is required to accommodate CWSN, backward and underprivileged children in their classes without considering them as a burden for them.
2. The curriculum should be made more flexible to cater the needs of CWSN, backward and underprivileged children to make them engaged in that curriculum.
3. As soon as the curriculum is redefined the next step the policy makers should take is to make the assessment criteria for CWSN, backward and underprivileged children.
4. The infrastructure and other basic facilities should be taken into consideration keeping in mind the problems of these children.

5. To make these children more engaged in the classroom activities more technological interventions are needed.
6. Some activities should be performed in the school to make other children empathize the feelings of CWSN, backward and underprivileged children.

Discussion

The result obtained from this study i.e. the positive attitude of In-service teachers towards inclusive education is supported by work of Das & Verma (2023), Mehta & Jha (2022) and Sen & Bhattacharya (2022). The influential factors for inclusive education as mentioned in this work were also identified by Gupta & Rao (2024), Jain & Bansal (2023), Kaur & Singh (2024), Kumar & Roy (2022) and Singh & Gupta (2023).

Conclusion

The study reveals that while in-service teachers in Chhattisgarh State hold generally positive attitudes towards inclusive education but several barriers obstruct its effective implementation. Important barriers among them are lack of training to teachers, rigid or inflexible curriculum, lack of material resources and technological intervention, building and infrastructure etc. These findings emphasize the importance of providing teachers with continuing professional development, access to adequate resources, and institutional support to foster a more inclusive educational environment.

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