

Research Article

A Comparative Study on Teachers Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education in Tripura: An Analysis Across Gender, Locality, and Teaching Experience

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Abstract

This study, grounded in a learner-centered approach, investigates teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education with reference to gender, years of teaching experience, and urban-rural background. To achieve this, null hypotheses were formulated, and statistical methods including mean, median, standard deviation, and t-test were applied for data analysis. Data were collected through a self-constructed questionnaire administered using purposive sampling. The study population consisted of 2500 elementary school teachers from West Tripura and 1,500 elementary school teachers from South Tripura, from which a representative sample of 200 teachers was selected. The findings aim to provide insights into the factors influencing teachers' perceptions of inclusive education, thereby contributing to policy and practice in the field of teacher education and educational reform.

Keywords

Inclusive Education, Attitude, Teacher Attitude

1. Introduction

Teachers are central to the effective implementation of inclusive education, as their attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions significantly shape classroom practices and influence student outcomes. The success of inclusion depends not only on policy frameworks but also on how teachers adapt their teaching strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Globally, the importance of inclusive education has been emphasized in initiatives such as UNESCO's Salamanca Statement (1994), while in India, it has been reinforced through the Right to Education Act (2009) and the National Education Policy (2020). These frameworks highlight the need for equal learning opportunities for all children, regard-

less of their abilities or backgrounds. However, the practical realization of inclusion often hinges on teachers' perspectives, readiness, and capacity to address the challenges of diversity in classrooms.

Research evidence suggests that teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education may vary across demographic and professional factors. Studies indicate that teaching experience can influence confidence levels in managing inclusive classrooms, while novice teachers may demonstrate greater openness to innovative practices. Similarly, differences in attitude may emerge between male and female teachers, as well as between those working in urban and rural schools,

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largely due to disparities in exposure, resources, and training opportunities.

In this context, the present study conducts a comparative analysis of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in the districts of West Tripura and South Tripura. Specifically, it examines variations based on gender, years of teaching experience, and geographical setting (urban versus rural). Using statistical tools such as mean, median, standard deviation, and t-test, the study seeks to generate insights that can inform teacher preparation programs, educational policy, and the broader implementation of inclusive practices in schools.

2. Operational Definition of the Key Term

Inclusive education: Inclusive education is an educational approach that seeks to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students, irrespective of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or cultural differences. It focuses on eliminating barriers to learning, embracing diversity, and creating a supportive environment in which every learner can participate actively and feel valued within the classroom community.

Attitude: An attitude can be described as a mental disposition that shapes how a person judges or responds to something with approval or disapproval. It represents the combination of one's thoughts, feelings, and behavioral tendencies directed toward objects, individuals, concepts, or situations.

Teacher attitude: Teacher attitude encompasses the beliefs, emotions, values, and dispositions that educators develop toward their profession, students, instructional practices, and educational policies. These attitudes shape how teachers understand their responsibilities, engage with learners, and apply teaching strategies, ultimately affecting both the learning environment and student achievement.

3. Need and Significance of the Study

Inclusive education focuses on integrating all learners into the mainstream schooling system, irrespective of their individual differences. The inclusion of every child is not only a fundamental right but also essential for promoting equity and quality in education. Teachers serve as the key agents in this process, as their attitudes, classroom management abilities, and openness to diversity greatly influence the effectiveness of inclusive practices.

Yet, teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education are not always consistent; they may differ according to factors such as gender, teaching experience, and socio-geographical context (urban or rural). For example, while experienced teachers may display greater confidence in handling diverse classrooms, some may resist change due to long-established practices. Likewise, variations in gender perspectives and the availability of resources across different settings can shape how teachers perceive and implement inclusive education.

4. Literature Review

Several studies have been conducted to examine teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in different contexts—

Alassaf, M. A. [1] has been studied 321 special education teachers in Riyadh revealed moderate levels of knowledge and attitudes toward the inclusion of children with autism in mainstream schools. More favorable results were linked to female teachers, higher educational attainment, greater teaching experience, and prior autism-related training. The study emphasizes the importance of tailored professional development and enhanced institutional support to strengthen inclusive education in Saudi Arabia.

Barnová, S., Kožuchová, M., Krásna, S., & Osad'án, R analyzed a study explored Slovak teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education within the framework of the new national strategy [2]. Applying the MATIES scale, it assessed cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions across different age groups. Findings indicated notable age-related differences in affective and behavioral attitudes, underscoring the importance of teacher perspectives in the transition from integration to inclusion. The research offers valuable insights to guide policy and school reform in Slovakia.

Charitaki, G., Kourti, I., Gregory, J. L., Ozturk, M., Ismail, Z., Alevriadou, A., Soulis, S., Sakici, Ş., & Demirel, C. A study on inclusive education in Bhutan, where the concept is still in its developmental stage, and teachers play a crucial role in its implementation [3]. Surveying 145 teachers across eight districts and analyzing the data through Rasch analysis and R software, the study found slightly positive attitudes (average score 3.965). Significant variations were observed based on gender, academic qualifications, and teachers' experience in working with students with special needs.

Dorji, R., Bailey, J., Paterson, D., Graham, L., & Miller, J. reviewed the study of 908 teachers across Greece, the UK, the USA, Malaysia, and Turkey validated a four-factor model of attitudes toward inclusion [4]. Findings revealed cross-country differences—UK strongest in cognitive, Greece in affective and behavioral, and the USA lowest overall. Teacher experience, work level, and qualifications significantly shaped attitudes, underscoring the role of cultural context and professional background.

Gomez-Mari, I., Sanz-Cervera, P., & Tarraga-Minguez, R. investigated the attitudes of pre-service teachers in Kosovo toward inclusive education by analyzing responses from 210 participants through quantitative methods [5]. The results indicated that attitudes were generally positive, with those who had taken only one inclusion course demonstrating more favorable perspectives than participants who had completed multiple courses.

Jia, L., Tan, R., & Santi, M. explored the attitudes of 108 pre-service and in-service teachers in Bihar's Gaya district, taking into account variables such as service type, gender, and location [6]. Using a questionnaire and statistical analysis, the study found that attitudes toward inclusive education ranged

from moderate to favorable. Pre-service teachers and those working in urban areas were more supportive of inclusion compared to in-service and rural teachers, while no significant differences were observed between male and female participants.

Koliki, D., Koliki, K., & Zabeli, N. emphasized that international organizations continue to highlight the importance of inclusive education for children with disabilities [7]. In France, although the number of students with disabilities enrolled in mainstream schools has doubled over the past 15 years, the extent of inclusion still differs depending on the type of disability and educational stage. Their study, which evaluated the attitudes of 440 in-service 99 teachers and 135 pre-service teachers using the Multidimensional Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale, revealed that while both groups held generally similar attitudes, pre-service teachers expressed more positive views, particularly toward students with cognitive, sensory, and motor disabilities. These findings provide valuable insights into strategies for strengthening inclusive practices and improving learning experiences for all students.

Kumar, A. was comparing 45 teachers from Italy and China revealed contrasting perspectives on inclusive education: Italian teachers embraced the social model [8], focusing on access and respect for diversity, whereas Chinese teachers adopted a medical model shaped by cultural views of disability. The findings underline the cultural impact on inclusive education and offer insights for enhancing practices in both countries.

Lemoine, L., Bernier, T., Peter, L., Noël, Y., & Besançon, M. studied of 105 elementary teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina found generally positive attitudes toward including students with ASD, but many felt unprepared to provide support. Teachers with ASD training and higher self-efficacy showed more favorable attitudes [9], while age, gender, and education level had no effect. The study stresses the need for systematic ASD-focused training to strengthen inclusive education.

Memisevic, H., Dizdarevic, A., Mujezinovic, A., & Djordjevic, M. conducted a systematic review of 25 studies published between 2015 and 2020 to examine teachers' knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in inclusive classrooms [10]. The review, covering research across four databases, revealed that overall knowledge about ASD among teachers remained limited. However, higher levels of understanding were found among early childhood educators and university faculty, with knowledge improving further when teachers had received prior training or had direct experience with students diagnosed with ASD.

Niharika, & Vishwakarma, B. explored a study assessed the attitudes of 50 pre-service general education teachers and 50 pre-service special education teachers in Chandigarh toward [11] inclusive education. While no significant overall differences were found, general education teachers demonstrated slightly higher enthusiasm and willingness to include children

with disabilities compared to special education teachers. The results indicate that attitudes are influenced by factors such as training, resources, and preparedness, underscoring the need for enhanced support and preparation for both groups to promote effective inclusion.

Pushpa, & Kumar, P. analyzed a study compared urban and rural teachers in Rajasthan regarding their attitudes toward inclusive education [12]. Results showed that urban teachers held more positive views, largely due to greater access to training and resources. Both groups, however, reported common challenges such as inadequate training, limited resources, and weak support systems. The study recommends targeted professional development, better resource allocation, and stronger institutional support to improve teachers' readiness for inclusive practices and to bridge the gap between policy and classroom implementation.

Saloviita, T. explored a study of secondary teachers' views on inclusive education, examining variations by location and gender [13]. Findings revealed that urban teachers tended to show more favorable attitudes than rural teachers, though the difference was only moderate. Gender differences were more distinct, with female teachers demonstrating consistently stronger support for inclusion compared to male teachers. The study emphasizes the importance of targeted training and institutional support to bridge attitudinal gaps and enhance inclusive practices.

Savolainen, H., Engelbrecht, P., Nel, M., & Malinen, O. reviewed a national survey of 1,764 Finnish teachers revealed clear differences in views on inclusion [14]. Classroom and subject teachers rated below the neutral midpoint, whereas special-education teachers rated above it. About 20% were firmly against inclusion, while only 8% strongly supported it. Other factors, such as work orientation and self-efficacy, showed little influence, with teacher role emerging as the key factor. The findings reflect a divided attitude among teachers but also indicate room for policy development.

Singh, R., Jain, V. K., & Yadav, S. reviewed study of 319 South African and 822 Finnish teachers explored attitudes and self-efficacy in inclusive education [15]. Both groups held positive views on disabilities but shared concerns about classroom inclusion. South African teachers showed higher confidence in behavior management, while Finnish teachers excelled in collaboration, which was closely tied to positive attitudes. The findings stress the importance of tailored teacher education to address different national challenges and enhance inclusive practices.

5. Research Gap

The survey of existing literature shows that previous studies have not simultaneously explored teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education with respect to three major dimensions—gender, teaching experience, and geographical setting (urban vs. rural). This study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing all three factors within a unified framework.

6. Statement of the Problem

In view of the above facts, the investigator has tried to study the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. Therefore, the title of the present investigation is “Comparative study on teachers’ attitude towards inclusive education”.

7. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To examine teachers’ attitudes towards inclusive education on the basis of gender.
- 2) To explore teachers’ attitudes towards inclusive education in urban versus rural setting.
- 3) To investigate attitudes towards inclusive education based on years of teaching experience.

Hypothesis of the Study:

H₁₁: There is a significant difference between male and female teachers in respect of attitude towards inclusive education.

H₁₂: There is a significant difference between urban and rural teachers in respect of attitude towards inclusive education.

H₁₃: There is a significant difference between teachers with varying years of teaching experience in respect of towards inclusive education.

8. Methodology and Procedure

Population: The total population for this study comprised 2,500 elementary school teachers from West Tripura district and 1,500 elementary school teachers from South Tripura

district.

Sample: Out of the total population, a sample of 200 elementary school teachers was selected using the purposive sampling technique.

Tool: A self-constructed questionnaire was employed as the research tool for this study be used.

9. Statistical Method Used

Mean: The mean, or average, is calculated by dividing the total sum of all values in a dataset by the number of observations. It reflects the central tendency of the data.

Median: The median is the central value of a dataset when the numbers are arranged in order, either ascending or descending. In cases where the dataset has an even number of observations, it is obtained by averaging the two middle values.

Standard Deviation (SD): The standard deviation indicates the degree of variation or spread within a dataset. A smaller SD shows that the values are clustered closely around the mean, while a larger SD suggests greater dispersion of the values.

t-test: A t-test is a statistical procedure used to compare the averages of two groups and assess whether their difference is statistically meaningful. It is commonly used in research to test hypotheses.

Data Analysis

H₁₁: There is a significant difference between male and female teachers in respect of attitude towards inclusive education.

Table 1. Gender difference between male and female teachers towards inclusive education.

GENDER	TOTAL	MEAN	MEDIAN	SD	DF	T	RESULT	DECISION
MALE	11451	114.51	114.5	7.152	198	0.003	NS	H ₁ Failed to accepted
FEMALE	11275	117.44	117	6.395				

The first table shows that the mean of attitude level score of male and female teachers is 114.51 and 117.44 respectively, median is 114.4 and 117 respectively and the SD are 7.152 and 6.395 respectively. The calculated “p” value (0.003) which is less than at 0.05 level of significant, according to

t-table. Hence, there is no significant difference between male and female SB and High school teachers towards inclusive education.

H₁₂: There is a significant difference between urban and rural teachers in respect of attitude towards inclusive education.

Table 2. Background difference between urban and rural teachers towards inclusive education.

BACKGROUND	TOTAL	MEAN	MEDIAN	SD	DF	T	RESULT	DECISION
URBAN	11608	116.08	115	7.328	198	0.3118	NS	H ₁₂ Failed to accepted
RURAL	11246	117.14	118	7.418				

The second table shows that the mean of attitude level score of urban and rural areas is 116.08 and 117.14 respectively, median is 115 and 118 respectively and the SD are 7.328 and 7.418 respectively. The calculated “p” value (0.3118) which is less than at 0.05 level of significant, according to t-table.

Hence, there is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers towards inclusive education.

H1₃: There is a significant difference between teachers with varying years of teaching experience in respect of towards inclusive education.

Table 3. Years of teaching experience towards inclusive education.

comparison	Mean, Median & SD			df	t-test	Result	Decision
4 to 16 Vs. 16 to 26	8	5	4.106	141	1.179	NS	H1 ₃ Failed to accepted
16 to 26 Vs. More than 26	21.571	21	3.806	85	1.503	NS	H1 ₃ failed to accepted
4 to 16 Vs. More than 26	31.075	32	3.665	158	1.466	NS	H1 ₃ failed to accepted

“The third table presents a comparison of teachers’ attitudes across three categories of teaching experience: 4-15 years, 16-26 years, and more than 26 years. For teachers with 4-15 years of experience, the mean attitude score was 8, the median was 5, and the standard deviation (SD) was 4.106. In the 16-26 years group, the mean score increased to 21.571, with a median of 21 and an SD of 3.806. Among those with more than 26 years of experience, the mean score further rose to 31.075, with a median of 32 and an SD of 3.665. To examine whether these differences were statistically significant, p-values were calculated for pairwise comparisons between the groups: 4-15 years vs. 16-26 years ($p = 1.179$), 16-26 years vs. more than 26 years ($p = 1.503$), and 4-15 years vs. more than 26 years ($p = 1.466$). Since all calculated p-values were greater than the 0.05 threshold, the results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in teachers’ attitudes across the three levels of teaching experience.”

10. Findings and Discussion

Gender and Attitude: The results indicated that male and female teachers hold comparable attitudes toward inclusive education, with no significant difference observed. This implies that gender is not a major factor influencing teachers’ perspectives.

Years of Experience and Attitude: The findings showed no meaningful variation in attitudes based on years of teaching experience. Both early-career and long-serving teachers expressed similar views on inclusive education.

Rural-Urban Setting and Attitude: Analysis revealed no significant difference between rural and urban teachers in

their attitudes toward inclusive education. This suggests that school location and setting do not markedly shape teachers’ perceptions.

11. Conclusion

The study aimed to investigate teachers’ attitudes toward inclusive education in relation to gender, teaching experience, and rural-urban school context. The results showed no significant differences across these variables, suggesting that teachers hold largely similar views on inclusive education regardless of their demographic or professional background.

This consistency indicates that teachers’ attitudes are likely influenced more by systemic factors such as educational policies, professional training, and the broader movement toward equitable learning opportunities than by individual characteristics. The findings highlight that, while teachers generally share a uniform outlook on inclusive practices, the effectiveness of inclusive education relies more on ensuring adequate institutional support, targeted training, and sufficient resources than on addressing demographic variations.

Abbreviations

SD	Standard Deviation
NS	Not Significant
SB	Senior Basic

Author Contributions

Sutapa Kar: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal

Analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

Kalitoli K. Chishi: Supervision

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. All the authors have contributed to this work without any financial, personal, or professional relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest. The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper.

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Biography



Sutapa Kar is a dedicated educator and researcher currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Education at ICAI University, Tripura. She has qualified the UGC-NET (June 2025) for eligibility for Ph.D. in Education. With dual master's degrees in Education and Political Science, and professional training in B.Ed., Sutapa brings strong academic and pedagogical expertise. Since 2021, she has been serving as a Graduate Teacher under the Government of Tripura. Her interests lie in advancing educational research and practice, reflecting a commitment to fostering effective learning and teaching.



Kalitoli K. Chishi is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education at ICFAI University, Tripura. She holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Education from the same university and has qualified UGC-NET. Her research interests include social intelligence, emotional intelligence, and modernization in education. She has published several papers in UGC-CARE-listed journals and presented at national and international conferences. Dr. Chishi has actively participated in numerous workshops and faculty development programs on research methodology, ethics, and educational innovation. She is also involved in designing academic courses on the university's LMS platform.