



ATTITUDE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN RELATION TO SOME DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

P. Soma Raju & Dr. G. Yashoda

*Research Scholar Department of Education, Acharya Nagarjuna University,
Nagarjuna Nagar- 522 510, Guntur, AP.*

*Research Supervisor, Dept. of Education, Acharya Nagarjuna University,
Nagarjuna Nagar, Guntur, A.P. India.*

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education concerning some demographic variables. Out of this population, a sample of 314 secondary school teachers were selected through a stratified random sampling technique from 40 schools (belonging to the government, local body and private management system). Sood and Anand (2011) established the Teacher Attitude Towards Inclusive Education Scale (TASTIE). There are forty-seven assertions total, of which thirty-nine are positive and eight are negative. The test is a three-point Likert scale. Each of the assertions contains three options, such as "Agree," "Undecided," and "Disagree," next to it. Positive (positive attitude) items score 3, 2, and 1, whereas negative (unfavourable attitude) items score oppositely. The reliability index, or product-moment correlation "r," between the two tests was 0.84, suggesting that the scale is quite dependable for gauging teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. The results found that attitudes towards inclusive education vary among secondary school teachers. There is no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusive education. Secondary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are not considerably affected by their designation. Secondary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are unaffected by the subjects they teach.

Keywords: *Attitude, Inclusive Education and Secondary School Teachers*

Introduction

The phrase "integrated education" has been superseded over time by the word "inclusive education." These two names are often used interchangeably by many in the

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education sector in our nation. They see it as nothing more than a simple shift in language. It is important to understand that inclusive education encompasses much more than just this. It alludes to an educational system that meets the needs of every kid, regardless of their language, social, emotional, intellectual, physical, or other limitations. To effectively educate all students, the school system must develop a child-centered pedagogy that can address the variety of issues it faces when integrating students from varied backgrounds and skill levels (NCERT, Meeting Special Needs in School- A Manual, 2007).

The phrase "inclusion" describes all children living under one roof, irrespective of their gender, caste, class, creed, or handicap. Increasing engagement in learning, cultures, and communities while decreasing exclusion from and within education are all parts of the process of inclusion, which UNESCO (2009) defines as "addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners." With a unified vision that encompasses all children of the proper age range and a conviction that the regular system must educate all children, it entails adjustments and adaptations in content, methods, structures, and techniques (UNESCO, 2005).

All children engage and learn together in the same classroom when inclusive education is practised. Finding novel and creative methods to teach is what inclusion is all about, enabling every kid to engage and contribute in the classroom. It celebrates the individuality and diversity that kids bring to the classroom. Because there is no "one size fits all" approach, inclusion holds that a variety of teaching methods and educational resources should be encouraged in the classroom. The varied requirements of the pupils serve as the foundation for inclusion. An inclusive education system entails enrolling all students with special needs in schools and offering them supportive services. The mindset and practices that guarantee all students access to mainstream education in an environment where everyone is respected and accepted are known as inclusive education.

Making learning settings free of obstacles and geared towards the needs of children, even in the early years, is defined as inclusion. It entails offering the proper assistance to guarantee that all kids obtain an education in neighbourhood settings and facilities—whether official or informal—that is free from discrimination. Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides the framework (UNICEF, 2007). During the post-independence era, the Kothari Commission (1964–1966) emphasized the need to teach children with impairments. It was said that the general education system should include instruction for

children with disabilities, implying that facilities for the blind, deaf, orthopedically challenged, and mentally challenged should also be included (Pandey, 2006).

Inclusive Education and Teachers' Attitude

Conceptually, attitudes are thought of as generally stable entities with behavioural, emotional, and cognitive components. One of the numerous responsibilities teachers have in the teaching and learning process is motivating pupils. Teachers are regarded as the engine of the educational system. Students pick up behaviours by seeing or imitating how to do specific tasks or activities. Instructors are in charge of their students' social and personal as well as academic success. Teachers' actions and methods have an impact on pupils, and their attitudes—whether good or negative—directly influence students. The disposition of the teacher can determine whether or not a youngster enjoys going to school. Teachers' attitudes have a direct impact on students' motivation, performance, and overall well-being. Children might develop a dread of their teachers if they are cruel or humiliating, especially if they are special needs children who need to be treated with love and care. Every encounter you have with students might have a lasting effect; even a small act of kindness can have a big influence. Thus, a teacher's positive outlook is essential to the achievement of inclusion. In a classroom full of kids with varying needs, a teacher's response will undoubtedly have an impact on the kids—positive or bad, depending on the teacher's attitude. Thus, educators must adopt a positive attitude while working with pupils who have diverse needs. Teachers now have a greater responsibility as a result of the inclusive education model. In an inclusive classroom, teachers are expected to work with students who have individual education plans (IEPs) to ensure that every student feels engaged. Teachers' attitudes are also thought to play a part in the success of inclusive education. Individual differences should be taken into account when creating IEPs, and all children—including CSWN—should participate in all activities.

No classroom is an island, particularly an inclusive one where special education instructors, teaching assistants, and service providers provide invaluable chances for children to participate in cooperative learning. To provide engaging lessons that encourage participation and group learning, general education instructors and special education teachers should work together to organize their sessions.

The classroom atmosphere, instructional strategies, and the intellectual and social growth of children are all impacted by the attitude of the teacher. Teachers who adopt an inclusive model and recognize their duty to assist children with special needs will ensure that

every student at the age-appropriate grade level receives equal exposure based on their ability. To reach various students, teachers can employ a variety of strategies. They can also enlist the assistance of specialized professionals in creating lesson plans, as well as the administration and staff of the school.

Need and Significance of the Study

Giving children with special needs access to inclusive education and the chance to grow into well-adjusted, contributing members of society is the ultimate aim of inclusive education. The inclusion of special needs students in neighbourhood mainstream schools has increased their level of acceptance. There is a greater favourable attitude among educators, parents, and government representatives towards children with special needs. A growing number of communes and parents saw how important it was to send these kids to school. We came across some kids who weren't even put in school until their parents were motivated by the inclusive education movement. The investigator, a teacher, felt that it is urgently necessary to look into the attitudes of Heads of Schools and regular teachers at Secondary schools in the teaching-learning situations in inclusive education programmes. Overall, there was a great deal of enthusiasm for the programme and a great desire to see its benefits continue and be built upon.

In the past, special teachers thought that teaching special needs kids in smaller groups and individually might help them catch up. As a result, special classrooms were established for these pupils. In actuality, though, pupils in special education courses that are separated have been falling behind more and more. It's now thought that providing inclusive education is a superior approach to support the success of every student. Teachers' views on including students with learning impairments in normal education classes may be useful in creating solutions and supporting practices that enhance the effectiveness of inclusion programmes. Recognizing that teachers may not have good attitudes towards inclusion if they lack the necessary training or assistance to operate in an inclusive environment. Secondary school teachers can cultivate this positive attitude towards working in an inclusive atmosphere through teacher education.

Generally speaking, it has been discovered that the kind and severity of the incapacitating condition, the teacher's training, experience, gender, and the availability of assistance all affect teachers' attitudes. For this reason, secondary school instructors need to cultivate a favourable attitude towards inclusive education. This study sheds light on the attitudes, difficulties, and worries secondary school instructors now have about including

students with disabilities in the mainstream curriculum. It promised to remove all forms of prejudice and to make it easier for children with special needs to attend conventional schools by removing obstacles on both a physical and psychological level. It urged decision-makers, educators, parents, and other careers to take into account the idea that special education ought to be viewed as an essential component of general education.

Review of the Related Literature

The attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education were investigated by **Shrivastava and Sharma (2021)**. The findings show that special teachers' and normal teachers' views towards inclusive education are not significantly different from one another. Gender is not a significant factor in an individual teacher's inclusive education. A study conducted by **Sharma et al. (2022)** investigated teachers' perceptions of educational inclusion. A total of 309 instructors at universities answered the poll. Regarding degree level, gender, and years of experience, the researchers discovered no statistically significant correlations between instructors' opinions of inclusion. Nonetheless, a statistically significant correlation between instructors' views of inclusion and their interactions with students with impairments was found by the study. When inclusive techniques are applied, the academic and social results of students with disabilities are greatly improved.

Statement of the Problem:

The title of the present investigation is “Attitude of Secondary School Teachers Towards Inclusive Education in Relation to Their Some Demographic Variables”.

Operational Definitions

Inclusive Education:

In literal terms, the word inclusive means "to include" or "to make one of the divided or diversified entities." Therefore, inclusive education refers to teaching all students in the mainstream system, regardless of their circumstances, under a shared framework, and as the duty of all teachers. As stated by Thomas (2003), inclusive education is essentially the process of giving students with special needs access to the same classes and schools as their peers without disabilities. It is the procedure that enables all kids to attend the same school, irrespective of their requirements and ability.

Attitude:

Our views of and behaviours towards every facet of our social environment are fundamentally shaped by our attitudes. A composite arrangement of thoughts, emotions, and propensity for particular behaviours make up an attitude.

An attitude is a person's feeling of favorability or unfavourability towards ideas, things, etc. It expresses a person's stance for or against something.

Michael Hogg defines an attitude as "a negative or positive evaluation of an object that influences human behaviour towards that object"(as cited in Joshi, 2021).

Secondary School Teachers:

The professionals employed by the Andhra Pradesh Board of Secondary Schools to instruct pupils in grades 6 through 10 are referred to in this research as "Secondary School Teachers."

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were formulated for the present investigation.

1. To study the levels of teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.
2. To study the impact of the following variables on the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education.
 - a) Gender
 - b) Designation
 - c) Subject taught at School

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated to test the stated objectives.

1. Teachers do not differ in their levels of attitude towards inclusive education.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education in relation to the following variables.

a) Gender	c) Subject taught at School
b) Designation	

Delimitations of the study:

1. The only geographically covered section of the research was West Godavari, one of Andhra Pradesh's thirteen districts.
2. The current study's focus is restricted to teachers employed by the WG district's Bhimavaram Educational Division in secondary schools.
3. The current survey only included 40 secondary schools.

4. The current study's focus is restricted to Bhimavaram as a single educational division, which has 4 mandalas.
5. Only government, municipal, and private unaided secondary schools in the Bhimavaram educational division are included in the research.
6. The investigation's science disciplines included biological and physical science subjects.

Methodology of the Study

- A. **Method of study:** Because it is the most appropriate approach for the current study, the normative survey method was used in this inquiry.
- B. **Population:** About 9064 secondary school teachers who work in the Bhimavaram educational division, which covers four mandalas in the West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, make up the population under inquiry.
- C. **Sample:** A simple random selection approach was used to choose 313 secondary school teachers from 40 government, local body, and private schools located in the Bhimavaram educational division of the WG District.
- D. **Tool used:** The **TASTIE** was developed by Sood and Anand (2011). Out of the forty-seven statements, thirty-nine are positive and the other eight are negative. Statements have covered four aspects of inclusive education. These are the administrative, social parent, curricular and extracurricular, psychological/behavioural, and curricular elements, in that order.

Scoring: The test is a three-point Likert scale. Each of the assertions contains three options, such as "Agree," "Undecided," and "Disagree," next to it. Positive (positive attitude) items score 3, 2, and 1, whereas negative (unfavourable attitude) items score oppositely. The scale's possible scores go between forty-seven and one forty-one. A more positive attitude towards IE will be reflected in a higher overall score on the scale, and vice versa.

Reliability: Using the Test-Retest approach, the reliability of the scale was determined by choosing 140 instructors. Three months passed between the testing and retesting phases. The reliability index, or product-moment correlation "r," between the two tests was 0.84, suggesting that the scale is quite dependable for gauging teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.

- E. **Statistical Techniques Used:** Mean, SD, Critical Ratio, and ANOVA were used in the study to analyses the data.

Analysis of Data and Interpretation of Results

H₁: Teachers do not differ in their levels of attitude towards inclusive education.

The procedure that follows is utilized to confirm this hypothesis. The mean and standard deviation for the total sample were computed for the inclusive education scale. The mean and SD that were computed are 111 and 8, respectively. Furthermore, the whole sample was split into three inclusive education levels: "moderate" (between M - 1SD and M + 1SD), "unfavourable" (below M - 1SD), and "favourable" (above M + 1SD). The data for the three previously stated categories are included in Table 1, along with a brief explanation of each.

Table 1: Classification of The Total Sample on Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Range	N	%	Classifications
103 and below scores	051	16	Unfavourable
Between 104 and 118	209	67	Moderate
119 and above scores	054	17	Favourable
Total	314	100	

It is evident from the table --- that around sixteen per cent of the sample secondary school teachers have an unfavourable attitude towards inclusive education. Sixty-seven per cent of the sample had a moderate attitude towards inclusive education, while the remaining 17 per cent had a positive attitude. The results of this study demonstrate that attitudes towards inclusive education vary among secondary school teachers.

H₂: There is no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusive education.

Table 2: Means, SD and CR values for Secondary School Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education in Relation to Gender

Gender	N	M	SD	D	σ_D	CR
Female	180	111.68	7.87	1.68	0.91	1.84*
Male	134	110.00	8.14			

*NS at 0.05 level

The computed CR value of 1.84 is less than the table value of 1.96, as Table 2 demonstrates. Therefore, at the 0.05 level, it is not significant. The null hypothesis is so accepted. Regarding inclusive education, there is no discernible difference in the perspectives of male and female teachers.

H₃: Designation makes no difference in the attitudes of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.

Table 3: Means, SD values and Result of One-way ANOVA for Secondary School Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education in Relation to Designation

Designation	N	M	SD	F -Value
Head Master	042	108.70	8.12	2.08*
School Assistant	156	111.10	7.80	
Secondary Grade Teacher	116	111.60	8.20	
ANOVA Analysis				
Source of variation	SS	df	MS	
Between groups	265.086	002	132.543	
Within groups	19866.110	311	63.878	
Total	20131.196	313		

*NS at 0.05 level

It can be shown from table 3 that the F-value (2.08) for df 2 and 311 is less than the 3.03 CV. Therefore, at the 0.05 level, it is not significant. The null hypothesis is so accepted. It demonstrates that secondary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are not considerably affected by their designation. Since the F-value is not significant at the 0.05 level, no additional investigation is conducted to find variations in the attitudes of secondary school teachers regarding inclusive education among various designation groups.

H₄: Subjects taught by secondary school teachers make no difference in their attitude towards inclusive education.

Table 4: Means, SD values and Result of One-way ANOVA for Secondary School Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education in Relation to Subjects taught at school

Subject taught at school	N	M	SD	F -Value
Languages	074	111.88	7.78	1.74*
Mathematics	083	111.40	7.31	
Science	080	111.40	8.17	
Social studies	077	109.20	8.66	
ANOVA Analysis				
Source of variation	SS	df	MS	

Between groups	332.647	003	110.882
Within groups	19773.162	310	63.784
Total	20105.809	313	

*NS at 0.05 level

Table 4 indicates that the F-value (1.74), for df 3 and 311, is less than the 2.64 CV. Therefore, at the 0.05 level, it is not significant. The null hypothesis is so accepted. It demonstrates that secondary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are unaffected by the subjects they teach. Since the F-value is not significant at the 0.05 level, no additional investigation is conducted to find variations in the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education across the subjects taught at school groups.

Major findings of the study:

1. Around sixteen per cent of the sample secondary school teachers have an unfavourable attitude towards inclusive education. Sixty-seven per cent of the sample had a moderate attitude towards inclusive education, while the remaining 17 per cent had a positive attitude. The results of this study demonstrate that attitudes towards inclusive education vary among secondary school teachers.
2. There is no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusive education.
3. Secondary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are not considerably affected by their designation.
4. Secondary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are unaffected by the subjects they teach.

Educational Implications:

According to the current study, secondary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are becoming more moderate. It is important to carry out awareness campaigns about inclusive education. Because male teachers are less optimistic about inclusive education than their female colleagues, there is no discernible difference in the attitudes of male and female teachers towards inclusive education. It is important to raise knowledge regarding inclusive education among male teachers, as their attitude towards it appears to be less positive than that of female teachers.

There is no discernible variation in secondary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education based on their designation and the subjects they teach. There should be

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media campaigns, posters, seminars, and training to increase awareness. In-service teachers ought to attend seminars on the issues facing kids with special needs as well as the tactics and approaches needed to teach special kids in inclusive classrooms. For inclusive education to be implemented successfully, pre-service teacher education courses should cover it as well. Ideally, all teachers should be required to take inclusive education, and the curriculum for teacher preparation should include it heavily. Prospective teachers should be extensively trained in the fundamental knowledge and abilities of inclusive education, such as pedagogical skills and an awareness of the needs and talents of children with special needs.

Suggestions for Further Research:

The results of this study indicate that the suggestions that follow for more research are consistent with the findings of the current study:

1. Future research can examine special school teacher's attitudes towards inclusive education as well as parents' attitudes.
2. Students' attitudes toward inclusive education may also be used as a basis for further research.
3. Similar research can be conducted with additional different variables.
4. Similar research may be done wherever in India, including other AP state districts.
5. Only students with hearing impairments were included in this study. Students with many types of disabilities, such as those with vision impairment, learning problems, autism, cerebral palsy, locomotor disabilities, etc., might participate in research comparable to this one.

Conclusion:

The study's findings support the conclusion that teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education range from moderate to favourable. The results of this study show that secondary teachers have a more moderate attitude towards inclusive education, that gender does not influence a teacher's attitude towards inclusive education, and that attitudes towards inclusive education are roughly equal for male and female teachers. Additionally, based on another study finding, the researcher concluded that secondary school teachers' attitude towards inclusive education are unaffected by their designation and the subjects they teach.

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