



## VALUES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF WEST BENGAL REGARDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

**Md Meptahul Islam**

*Research Scholar, Department of Teacher Education, Baba Saheb Ambedkar Education University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India*

**Dr. Piku Chawdhury**

*Associate Professor, Satyapriya Roy College of Education, Kolkata, West Bengal, India*

**\*Corresponding Author: Md Meptahul Islam**

### Abstract

Inclusive education ensures equal access and opportunities for all students, regardless of their abilities. Values of inclusive education stresses the need to eliminate exclusions, create a sense of belonging, and transform educational environments to equally respect and appreciate differences. The study aims to investigate the differences in values of secondary school teachers regarding inclusive education based on gender, habitat, year of teaching experience, special education background, government/government aided and private school teachers, and teachers teaching in different schools. The study uses a descriptive survey method and quantitative methods to collect data from 516 teachers in government, government-aided, and private secondary schools, using the Teacher's Values Towards Inclusive Education (TVTIE) questionnaire. The study found that gender doesn't affect teachers' values of inclusive education, and both male and female teachers have similar values. Factors like habitat, teaching experience, school nature, and board types don't affect teachers' values.

**Keyword:** *Inclusive education, Inclusive values and Secondary School Teacher*

### Introduction

Education is a purposeful and organized process that provides learners with knowledge, competencies, capabilities, values, and attitudes that empower them to effectively function in all areas of life. If education fails to respect the student as a person and as a member of a larger society, it may be considered useless. Therefore, it is fundamental that classrooms are carefully constructed to create an inclusive environment that accommodates the unique requirements of a wide range of learners (Onyesom & Igberaharha, 2021). So, inclusive education is the concept that all students, no matter what their abilities or disabilities are, should have the same access to and chances to learn. The idea came from a desire to respect people's values. It takes into account that each student has different needs and tries to create a helpful and welcoming learning space where everyone feels welcome. Promoting an open society that values differences and helps everyone grow as a whole is what it does.

Inclusive values are essential elements for enhancing the acquisition of knowledge and engagement of all individuals, removing all types of exclusions, and transforming educational environments and systems to effectively address differences in a manner that equally respects and appreciates everyone (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008). Inclusive values create a feeling of belonging and cohesion among pupils, irrespective

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of their differences. This promotes a favorable educational environment in which variety is accepted, and children develop the ability to value and respect one another (UNESCO, 1994). The integration of inclusive values also fosters the cultivation of empathy and tolerance among students. By engaging in collaborative learning with peers from various cultures and abilities, students acquire a more profound understanding of various perspectives and life experiences (Slee, 2011). Thus teachers' values play a critical role in the classroom and are essential to achieving inclusive education (Mthembu, 2009).

### **Rationale of the Study**

Teachers should possess inclusive values such as patience, tolerance, fairness, equality, empathy, affection, confidence, trust, passion, and respect (Onyesom & Igberaharha, 2021). A range of studies indicate that pre-service teachers and teachers do have a commitment to enhancing those values that align with inclusive education, such as making a positive difference to the lives of students, helping students to become more aware of their needs, abilities and goals, shaping and supporting students, and caring for students (Balyer & Ozcan, 2014; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2013; O'Sullivan, 2005). Booth (2011, p.34) outlines that a key component of effective inclusion involves "developing mutually sustaining relationships" between teachers, students, school and their communities. There is growing awareness of the central role that values play in quality teaching and learning (Brady, 2011; Juvonen, 2006; Lovat, 2010), and Tirri (2010) identified caring and respect as essential values that teachers must demonstrate. Again, Onyesom & Igberaharha (2021) show that teachers of secondary school are required to understand inclusive values and pedagogies in order to effectively implement inclusive education. According to USAID (2011), it is important to comprehend inclusive education because it might lead to various outcomes based on distinct fundamental concepts and values. However, previous researches reveal that many teachers find inclusive education is challenging, and they have indicated they do not feel adequately trained during their undergraduate degree to successfully support the diverse needs of all students (Hemmings & Weaven, 2005; Winter, 2006). This points out to the need of more research in the area. This study assesses and examines the values of inclusive education among secondary school teachers in West Bengal. The aim is to gain valuable insights into the teachers' perspectives on inclusive education. This information can help identify both strong aspects and areas that need improvement.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To find out if there is any significant difference between secondary school teachers' values regarding inclusive education, on the basis of their gender.
2. To find out if there is any significant difference between secondary school teachers' values regarding inclusive education, on the basis of habitat.
3. To find out if there is any significant difference between teachers' values regarding inclusive education, based on their year of school teaching experience.
4. To find out whether there is any significant difference in values regarding inclusive education between teachers who have and have not any degree/ diploma/certificate in Special education/have or have not studied a paper on inclusive education in B.Ed. program.
5. To find out whether there is any significant difference in values regarding inclusive education between Government/Government aided and Private school teachers.
6. To find out whether there is any significant difference in values regarding inclusive education between teachers teaching in school under the board of CBSE/ICSE and those under WBBSE/WBCHSE.

### **Hypotheses of the Study:**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference between male and female school teachers in their value about inclusive education.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference between rural and urban school teachers in their values about inclusive education.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant difference between teachers with 10 years or less teaching experience and teachers with more than 10 years teaching experience in their values about inclusive education.

H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant difference between teachers who have and those who do not have any degree/diploma/certificate in Special education /have or have not studied a paper on inclusive education in B.Ed. Program in their values about inclusive education.

H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant difference between teachers of Government/Government aided and Private schools in their value about inclusive education.

H<sub>06</sub>: There is no significant difference between teachers under the board of CBSE/ICSE and those under WBBSE/WBCHSE in their values about inclusive education.

### **Operational Definition:**

- **Values:** In this study, values refer to the fundamental concepts, ethics, and moral concerns that guide teachers' positive behaviors and decisions toward children with special needs in inclusive classrooms. Inclusive values include compassion, respect, justice, and understanding of learners' unique educational needs. Equity, participation, and support for all learners in a regular classroom are further examples.
- **Inclusive Education:** In the context of this study, "inclusive education" refers to the practice of including students with disabilities into regular educational settings, alongside their non-disabled peers, through the provision of additional support and an appropriate the environment.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

Due to constraints in terms of time and resources, as well as the capabilities of the researchers, the scope of the current study has been restricted to the following:

- Representative districts from East, West, North, South and Central region of West Bengal have been selected for data collection, namely Jalpaiguri, Maldah, Purulia, Birbhum, Bardhaman, Murshidabad, Kolkata, Howrah, South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas.
- Study has been delimited to secondary school of West Bengal.
- Study has been delimited to secondary school under the CBSE/ICSE/WBBSE/ WBCHSE board.
- Sample has been limited to 516 teachers

### **Design of the Study**

The research has used the descriptive survey method, considering the nature of the research. Data collection and analysis have employed quantitative methods.

### **Population**

The population of the study includes all teachers in government, government-aided, and private secondary schools.

### **Sample**

Using the basic random sampling technique, the researcher selected a sample of 516 teachers as responders based on their availability.

### **Tool**

The researchers developed the Teacher's Values Towards Inclusive Education (TVTIE) questionnaire and in-depth study of related researches to gather data from school teachers.

### **Results and Interpretation:**

**Testing of H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between male and female school teachers in their value about inclusive education.

**Table 1: Independent two sample Mann-Whitney Test of values about inclusive education of secondary school teacher in respect of Gender**

Grouping Variable	Category	N=516	Mean-Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z-value	Significance value (2 tailed)
Gender	Male	307	252.19	30143.000	-1.166	.243
	Female	209	267.78			

(#Not Significant at 0.05 level)

**Interpretation**

From Table 1 it is observed that the mean-rank scores of the male teachers and female teachers are 252.19 and 267.78, respectively. It is also observed that Mann-Whitney U test statistics for the mean rank difference is 30143.000, the Z value is -1.166 and the corresponding p-value is .243, which is greater 0.05 ( $p > .05$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be said that male teachers are not significantly different from the female teachers with respect to values about inclusive education.

**Testing of H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between rural and urban school teachers in their values about inclusive education.

**Table 2: Independent two sample Mann-Whitney Test of values about inclusive education of secondary school teacher in respect of Habitat**

Grouping Variable	Category	N=516	Mean-Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z-value	Significance value (2 tailed)
Habitat	Rural	241	249.35	30933.500	-1.305	.192
	Urban	275	266.51			

(#Not Significant at 0.05 level)

**Interpretation:**

From Table 2 it is observed that the mean-rank scores of the rural teachers and urban teachers are 249.35 and 266.51, respectively. It is also observed that Mann-Whitney U test statistics for the mean rank difference is 30933.500, the Z value is -1.305 and the corresponding p-value is .192, which is greater than 0.05 ( $p > .05$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be said that rural teachers are not significantly different from the urban teachers with respect to values about inclusive education.

**Testing of H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between teachers with 10 years or less teaching experience and teachers with more than 10 years teaching experience in their values about inclusive education.

**Table 3: Independent two sample Mann-Whitney Test of value about inclusive education of secondary school teacher in respect of Teaching Experience**

Grouping Variable	Category	N=516	Mean-Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z-value	Significance value (2 tailed)
Teaching Experience	10 years or less	276	252.78	31541.000	-.935	.350
	Above 10 years	240	265.08			

(#Not Significant at 0.05 level)

**Interpretation:**

From Table 3 it is observed that the mean-rank scores of the teachers with 10 years or less teaching experience and teachers with more than 10 years teaching experience are 252.78 and 265.08, respectively.

It is also observed that Mann-Whitney U test statistics for the mean rank difference is 31541.000, the Z value is -.935 and the corresponding p-value is .350, which is greater than 0.05 ( $p > .05$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be said that teachers with 10 years or less teaching experience are not significantly different from the teachers with more than 10 years teaching experience with respect to values regarding inclusive education.

**Testing of H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference between teachers who have and those who do not have any degree/diploma/certificate in Special education /have or have not studied a paper on inclusive education in B.Ed. Program in their values about inclusive education.

**Table 4: Independent two sample Mann-Whitney Test of values about inclusive education of secondary school teacher in respect of Educational Qualification**

Grouping Variable	Category	N=516	Mean-Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z-value	Significance value (2 tailed)
Educational Qualification	Teacher who have any degree/diploma/certificate in Special education/ have or have not studied a paper on inclusive education in B.Ed.	290	275.68	27788.500	-2.966	.003
	Teacher who have not any degree/diploma/certificate in Special education/ have or have not studied a paper on inclusive education in B.Ed.	226	236.46			

(\* Significant at 0.05 level)

**Interpretation:**

From Table 4 it is observed that the mean-rank scores of the teachers who have and those who do not have any degree/ diploma/ certificate in Special education / have or have not studied a paper on inclusive education in B.Ed. are 275.68 and 236.46, respectively. It is also observed that Mann-Whitney U test statistics for the mean rank difference is 27788.500, the Z value is -2.966 and the corresponding p-value is .003, which is less than 0.05 ( $p < .05$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be said that teachers who have any degree/ diploma /certificate in Special education /have or have not studied a paper on inclusive education in B.Ed. are significantly different from the teachers who do not have any degree/ diploma/ certificate in Special education / have or have not studied a paper on inclusive education in B.Ed. with respect to values about inclusive education.

**Testing of H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant difference between teachers of Government/Government aided and Private schools in their value about inclusive education.

**Table 5: Independent two sample Mann-Whitney Test of values about inclusive education of secondary school teacher in respect of Nature of School**

Grouping Variable	Category	N=516	Mean-Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z-value	Significance value (2 tailed)
Nature of School	Government/Government aided	319	259.16	31210.500	-.128	.898
	Private	197	257.43			

(#Not Significant at 0.05 level)

**Interpretation:**

From Table 5 it is observed that the mean-rank scores of the teachers of Government/Government aided and Private schools are 259.16 and 257.43, respectively. It is also observed that Mann-Whitney U test statistics for the mean rank difference is 31210.500, the Z value is -.128 and the corresponding p-value is .898, which is greater than 0.05 ( $p > .05$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be said that Government/ Government aided school teachers are not significantly different from the Private school teachers with respect to values about inclusive education.

**Testing of  $H_0$ :** There is no significant difference between teachers under the board of CBSE/ICSE and those under WBBSE/WBCHSE in their values about inclusive education.

**Table 6: Independent two sample Mann-Whitney Test of values about inclusive education of secondary school teacher in respect of Types of Board**

Grouping Variable	Category	N=516	Mean-Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z-value	Significance value (2 tailed)
Types of Board	CBSE/ICSE	74	239.63	14957.500	-	.239
	WBBSE/WBCHSE	442	261.66		1.177	

(#Not Significant at 0.05 level)

**Interpretation:**

From Table 6 it is observed that the mean-rank scores of the teachers under the board of CBSE/ICSE and those under WBBSE/WBCHSE are 239.63 and 261.66, respectively. It is also observed that Mann-Whitney U test statistics for the mean rank difference is 14957.500, the Z value is -1.177 and the corresponding p-value is .239, which is greater than 0.05 ( $p > .05$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be said that the teachers under the board of CBSE/ICSE are not significantly different from the teachers under the board of WBBSE/WBCHSE with respect to values about inclusive education.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the gender of teachers does not affect their values of inclusive education and both male and female teachers have the approximately same values of towards inclusive education. It is also concluded that habitat, teaching experience, nature of school and types of board does not affect on teachers values of inclusive education. The findings of the present study led the researcher to conclude that teachers who have any degree/ diploma /certificate in Special education /have studied a paper on inclusive education in B.Ed. are significantly different from the teachers who do not have any such degree with respect to values regarding inclusive education. The teachers who have any degree/ diploma /certificate in Special education /have studied a paper on inclusive education in B.Ed. are significantly higher values of inclusive education than teachers who do not have any such degree. A possible reason for this difference is that teachers with any educational qualifications show higher values of inclusive education.

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