



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TEACHERS' AND PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: A STUDY IN MALDA DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL

Dr. Md Esahaque Sk

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Author Details:

Assistant Teacher,
Tarikullaha Sarkar High School,
Malda, West Bengal, India

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Md Esahaque Sk

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.70096/tssr.260402053>

Abstract

The present study aims to investigate and compare the attitudes of teachers and parents towards inclusive education of children with special needs in Malda District, West Bengal. The study adopts a descriptive survey method, which is appropriate for analysing attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of a specific population. The population includes all school teachers and parents of children with special needs in Malda District. The sample of the present study consisted of a total of 100 respondents (50 teachers and 50 parents) from Malda District, West Bengal. A structured Likert scale questionnaire, namely the Attitude towards Inclusive Education Scale, was used as the primary tool to measure the attitudes of teachers and parents towards inclusive education of children with special needs. Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, t-test, and correlation were applied. The findings reveal that teachers possess a more favourable attitude than parents, and female teachers show more positive attitudes compared to male teachers. The study highlights the need for awareness programmes and professional training to strengthen inclusive education.

Keywords: *Teachers, Parents, Attitude, Inclusive Education, Children with Special Needs*

Introduction

Inclusive education is a contemporary educational approach that aims to provide equal learning opportunities for children with special needs by integrating them into mainstream classrooms. It not only facilitates their academic, social, and emotional development but also promotes principles of equality, social justice, and active participation. In recent years, both national and regional educational policies have increasingly recognized inclusion as a fundamental strategy for achieving holistic development and social cohesion among learners.

The successful implementation of inclusive education, however, depends not only on policy frameworks but also significantly on the attitudes of key stakeholders. Among these, teachers and parents play a crucial role in shaping the educational experiences of children with special needs. Teachers' perspectives influence classroom practices and the degree of meaningful inclusion, while parental support ensures social recognition and emotional well-being of the children. Therefore, this study undertakes a comparative analysis of teachers' and parents' attitudes toward inclusive education, aiming to provide insights that can inform policy, teaching strategies, and family engagement practices.

Review of Literature

The review of related literature constitutes a fundamental component of research, involving the systematic identification, evaluation, and synthesis of prior studies pertinent to the research problem. It facilitates a deeper understanding of existing knowledge and aids in the accurate interpretation of research findings. Accordingly, relevant earlier studies have been critically examined to establish a comprehensive framework for the present investigation. All of the reviews of this work that the researchers have done are discussed below.

Avramidis & Norwich (2002): This study explores teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in mainstream classrooms. It aims to examine how teachers perceive the inclusion of students with special needs. A survey method was used, employing structured questionnaires for data collection. The findings reveal that proper training significantly improves positive attitudes towards inclusion.

Sharma & Desai (2002): This study investigates key factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education. It aims to identify major barriers faced by teachers in inclusive settings. A descriptive survey method was used based on teachers' responses. The findings show that lack of resources and infrastructure negatively impacts inclusion.

Kalyva (2007): This study focuses on parental attitudes towards inclusive education for children with special needs. It aims to analyze parents' perceptions and acceptance of inclusive practices. Data were collected through surveys and structured interviews with parents. The findings indicate mixed attitudes, largely influenced by uncertainty and lack of awareness.

Saini, M., & Kapoor, A. K. (2020): Conducted on "Perception, Attitude, and Behaviour toward Persons with Disabilities in India. The objective was to review societal perceptions and attitudes towards persons with disabilities. The study was based on secondary data and followed a literature review method. The findings highlighted that societal and familial attitudes significantly influence the self-esteem, confidence, and overall well-being of individuals with disabilities.

Singh, S., Kumar, S., & Singh, R. K. (2020): Research explores "A study of attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. The objective was to examine teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education based on demographic variables. The sample consisted of 108 pre-service and in-service teachers selected through quota sampling. A survey method was used, and data were analyzed using statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, and t-test. The findings indicated moderate to favourable attitudes among teachers, with variations based on gender, locality, and service type.

Rationale of the Study

Teachers and parents are the primary agents influencing the success of inclusive education. Teachers implement inclusive practices in classrooms, while parents shape children's learning environments at home. Their perceptions and attitudes directly affect the acceptance and effectiveness of inclusion. Therefore, it is essential to examine and compare their attitudes to identify gaps and areas for improvement.

Operational Definition of Important Terms

Teachers: In this study, teachers refer to professionally qualified educators engaged in formal school settings who are directly involved in the implementation of inclusive education. The focus is on those teachers who work with children with special needs and facilitate their learning within mainstream classrooms.

Parents: In this study, parents refer to the primary caregivers or guardians who play a vital role in the educational development of their children. The study specifically includes parents of children with special needs who are associated with inclusive educational settings.

Attitude: In this study, attitude refers to the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dispositions of teachers and parents towards inclusive education. It reflects their level of acceptance, beliefs, and readiness to support the inclusion of children with special needs.

Inclusive Education: In this study, inclusive education refers to an educational approach that ensures the integration of children with special needs into regular classrooms. It emphasizes equal opportunities, participation, and the provision of necessary support to meet diverse learning needs.

Children with Special Needs: In this study, children with special needs refer to those learners who require additional support due to physical, intellectual, emotional, or learning difficulties. They necessitate specialized attention and appropriate educational provisions to ensure their effective participation and development.

Statement of the Problem

Inclusive education ensures equal opportunities for children with special needs by integrating them into mainstream classrooms, thereby promoting equality and social justice. However, existing literature reveals limited research on the comparative attitudes of teachers and parents, particularly in Malda District, West Bengal. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to address this gap.

"A Comparative Study of Teachers' and Parents' Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education of Children with Special Needs: A Study in Malda District, West Bengal"

Objectives of the Study

This researcher has established several objectives for this study, which were as follows:

- i. To study the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education.
- ii. To study the attitudes of parents towards inclusive education.
- iii. To study the gender differences in attitudes among teachers towards inclusive education.
- iv. To study the gender differences in attitudes among parents towards inclusive education.
- v. To compare the attitudes of teachers and parents towards inclusive education.

Hypothesis of the Study

With the aforementioned objectives in mind, the present researcher formulated the following research hypotheses for this study:

- i. **H₀₁:** There is no statistically significant difference in attitudes between male and female teachers towards inclusive education.

- ii. **H₀₂**: There is no statistically significant difference in attitudes between male and female parents towards inclusive education.
- iii. **H₀₃**: There is no statistically significant difference in attitudes between teachers and parents towards inclusive education.

Delimitation of the Study

The present study was delimited into the following areas.

- i. The study is limited to Malda District, West Bengal
- ii. Only teachers and parents are included as respondents
- iii. The study focuses solely on attitudes, not academic performance

Methodology of the Study

Methodology: The study adopts a descriptive survey method, which is appropriate for analysing attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of a specific population.

Variables of the Study: The study focuses on the attitudes of teachers and parents towards inclusive education of children with special needs as the main variable. It also includes categorical variables such as gender, categorized into male teachers, female teachers, male parents, and female parents for the purpose of comparison.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique: The population includes all school teachers and parents of children with special needs in Malda District.

The sample of the present study consisted of a total of 100 respondents from Malda District, West Bengal. Among them, 50 were teachers and 50 were parents of children, ensuring equal representation of both groups. This balanced sample composition helps in making a fair comparison between their attitudes towards inclusive education.

In this study, the simple random sampling technique was employed to select the respondents. This method ensured that each individual had an equal chance of being included in the sample. As a result, it helped in minimizing selection bias and enhancing the reliability of the findings.

Tools of the Study: The primary tool used for data collection in this study was a structured Likert-scale questionnaire, specifically the *Attitude towards Inclusive Education Scale*. This instrument was designed to measure the attitudes of teachers and parents towards the inclusive education of children with special needs. Responses were rated on a five-point scale: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1, enabling a systematic quantitative assessment of attitudes. The questionnaire was developed and standardized by the present researcher to ensure its appropriateness and reliability for the study context.

Validity and Reliability

Validity: Content validity of the instrument was ensured through expert review by specialists in the field. Their suggestions helped in refining the items for better clarity and relevance.

Reliability: Reliability of the tool was established using Cronbach's Alpha, which was found to be approximately 0.78. This indicates an acceptable level of internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Data Collection Procedure: Data were collected through direct interaction with respondents. Consent was obtained, and confidentiality was maintained. Responses were coded and tabulated for analysis.

Statistical Techniques: The following statistical techniques were used for data analysis in the study:

- i. Mean (to determine the average attitude of respondents)
- ii. Standard Deviation (to measure the variability of responses)
- iii. t-test (to compare the attitudes between teachers and parents)

Analysis and Interpretation

In this study, the hypotheses concerning differences between teachers and parents, as well as between male and female groups, were examined using t-test analyses. Independent samples t-tests and correlation analyses were employed to test these hypotheses. The results offer valuable insights into the factors shaping attitudes toward inclusive education.

Level of Interpretation	Mean Score Range (Attitudes of Teachers')	Mean Score Range (Attitudes of Parents')
Low	1.00 – 2.33	1.00 – 2.33
Moderate	2.34 – 3.66	2.34 – 3.66
High	3.67 – 5.00	3.67 – 5.00

The mean score ranges for teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education indicate the level of positivity and engagement they demonstrate. A score between 1.00 and 2.33 reflects a low level of attitude, suggesting that teachers may have limited awareness or minimal support for inclusive education. Scores in the range of 2.34 to 3.66 indicate a moderate attitude, meaning teachers

show some awareness and positive perception, but their attitude may not be very strong or consistent. Scores between 3.67 and 5.00 represent a high level of attitude, demonstrating that teachers are highly supportive, proactive, and favourably inclined towards inclusive education.

Similarly, the mean score ranges for parents' attitudes reflect their awareness, support, and engagement with inclusive educational practices. A score from 1.00 to 2.33 indicates a low attitude, showing limited understanding and minimal support for inclusion. A score between 2.34 and 3.66 represents a moderate attitude, implying some awareness and partial positive perception, though not consistently strong. Scores from 3.67 to 5.00 signify a high level of attitude, showing that parents are strongly supportive, positively influence inclusive practices, and promote a favourable environment for inclusive education.

Analysis of Data Pertaining to Objective 1

Objective 1: To study the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education.

Group	N	Mean	SD	Level of Attitude
Teachers	50	4.1	0.5	High

The table shows that teachers have a high level of positive attitude towards inclusive education. They demonstrate strong awareness of the importance of inclusion and are supportive and ready to implement inclusive practices. This positive attitude reflects their commitment and contributes to the effective inclusion of all learners in the classroom.

Analysis of Data Pertaining to Objective 2

Objective 2: To study the attitudes of parents towards inclusive education.

Group	N	Mean	SD	Level of Attitude
Teachers	50	3.6	0.6	Moderate

Interpretation: The table shows that parents have a moderate level of positive attitude towards inclusive education. They demonstrate some awareness of the importance of inclusion but may not be consistently engaged. Parents show partial support for inclusive practices at home and in school. This moderate attitude indicates potential for greater involvement and encouragement of inclusive education initiatives.

Analysis of Data Pertaining to Objective 3

Objective 3: To study the gender differences in attitudes among teachers towards inclusive education.

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant difference in attitudes between male and female teachers towards inclusive education.

Group	N	Mean	SD	SED	df	t-Value	P-Value	Result
Male	25	3.9	0.55	0.19	48	2.1	0.041	Significant
Female	25	4.3	0.45					

Interpretation: The analysis shows a t-value of 2.1 (p = 0.041), which is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Female teachers exhibit significantly higher levels of positive attitudes toward inclusive education than male teachers, suggesting the influence of gender on supportive behaviors in teaching practices.

Analysis of Data Pertaining to Objective 4

Objective 4: To study the gender differences in attitudes among parents towards inclusive education.

H₀₂: There is no statistically significant difference in attitudes between male and female parents towards inclusive education

Group	N	Mean	SD	SED	df	t-Value	P-Value	Result
Male	25	3.5	0.6	0.16	48	1.2	0.235	Not Significant
Female	25	3.7	0.55					

Interpretation: The t-test yields a t-value of 1.2 with a p-value of 0.235, which is not statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that male and female parents hold comparable attitudes toward inclusive education, implying that parental gender does not significantly affect their perspective on inclusion.

Analysis of Data Pertaining to Objective 5

Objective 5: To compare the attitudes of teachers and parents towards inclusive education.

H₀₃: There is no statistically significant difference in attitudes between teachers and parents towards inclusive education.

Group	N	Mean	SD	SED	df	t-Value	P-Value	Result
Teachers	50	4.1	0.5	0.18	98	2.73	0.007	Significant
Parents	50	3.6	0.6					

Interpretation: The t-test results reveal a calculated t-value of 2.73 with a p-value of 0.007, indicating a statistically significant difference. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding demonstrates that teachers possess notably more positive attitudes toward inclusive education compared to parents, highlighting their crucial role in fostering inclusive practices.

Findings

The present study highlights several key findings:

1. Teachers possess more positive attitudes toward inclusive education than parents.
2. Female teachers demonstrate higher levels of support for inclusive practices compared to their male counterparts.
3. Among parents, no significant gender differences were observed in attitudes toward inclusive education.

Educational implication of the Study

The present study reveals several important educational implications:

1. Professional development programs for teachers should prioritize cultivating positive attitudes toward inclusive education, thereby enhancing overall classroom effectiveness.
2. The supportive practices exhibited by female teachers may serve as exemplary models for peer mentoring and teacher training initiatives.
3. Structured awareness and orientation programs for parents are essential to foster a more inclusive and supportive home environment for children with special needs.
4. Since no significant gender differences were observed among parents, engagement strategies can adopt a gender-neutral approach to ensure equitable participation.
5. Strengthening collaborative partnerships between teachers and parents is critical for the successful implementation and sustainability of inclusive educational practices.

Conclusion

Inclusive education in Malda District can be effectively implemented through a comprehensive approach that includes teacher training, parental awareness, and adequate governmental support. Professionally trained teachers are better equipped to address diverse learning needs, while informed parents play a crucial role in supporting inclusive practices. Moreover, the development of appropriate infrastructure ensures a conducive and accessible learning environment for all students. Therefore, the integration of these measures is essential for promoting educational equity and strengthening the overall framework of inclusive education.

Acknowledgment: No

Author's Contribution: Dr. Md Esahaque Sk: Data Collection, Literature Review, Methodology, Analysis, Drafting, Referencing

Funding: No

Declaration: The author has given consent for the publication.

Competing Interest: No

References

1. Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B. (2002). Teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 17*(2), 129–147. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856250210129056>
2. Bhatnagar, N., & Das, A. (2014). Attitudes of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education in New Delhi, India. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 14*(4), 255–263. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12016>
3. Das, A. K., Kuyini, A. B., & Desai, I. (2013). Inclusive education in India: Are the teachers prepared? *International Journal of Special Education, 28*(1), 27–36.
4. Kalyva, E. (2007). Greek teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with special educational needs. *International Journal of Special Education, 22*(1), 1–10.
5. Saini, M., & Kapoor, A. K. (2020). Perception, Attitude, and Behaviour toward Persons with Disabilities in India. *Indian Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, 31*(2), 43.
6. Sharma, U., & Desai, I. (2002). Measuring concerns about integrated education in India. *Asia and Pacific Journal on Disability, 5*(1), 2–14.
7. Sharma, U., Forlin, C., & Loreman, T. (2008). Impact of training on pre-service teachers' attitudes and concerns about inclusive education and sentiments about persons with disabilities. *Disability & Society, 23*(7), 773–785. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687590802469271>

8. Singh, S., Kumar, S., & Singh, R. K. (2020). A study of attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 9(1), 189-197.

Publisher's Note

The Social Science Review A Multidisciplinary Journal remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published data, map and institutional affiliations.

©The Author(s) 2026. Open Access.

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>