

Teachers' Views Towards Including Children Who are Differently Abled in India: A Case Study of Segregated and Mainstream Schools in Mangalore

Carol Rodrigues¹; Vincent Macmbinji²

Publication Date: 2025/10/13

Abstract: This study investigates the opinions of educators regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in Indian schools. It looks into Mangalore's mainstream and segregated schools. The study points out discrepancies between inclusive education policies and how they are actually put into practice. Teachers frequently lack special education needs (SEN) knowledge and training. Teachers in the mainstream indicated a lack of knowledge and readiness. The attitudes of special school instructors toward inclusion were more positive. The severity of the handicap affected the views of the teachers. Systemic problems with awareness and training were identified using narrative analysis. The results point to the necessity of more robust teacher preparation programs and legislative changes. According to the report, cooperative policymaking is necessary to guarantee genuine inclusion.

How to Cite: Carol Rodrigues; Vincent Macmbinji (2025). Teachers' Views Towards Including Children Who are Differently Abled in India: A Case Study of Segregated and Mainstream Schools in Mangalore. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 10(10), 558-563. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25oct366>

I. INTRODUCTION

The issues surrounding inclusive educational practices for children with disabilities have been the subject of much discussion during the last thirty years. Adopted on November 20, 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child served as its foundation. Children with disabilities were entitled to free and unhindered access to education, freedom of speech, and freedom of opinion, belief, and religion, according to one of the fifty-four paragraphs (UN, 1989). One of the earliest global campaigns for the rights of disabled children was this one. Despite some criticism, inclusive education is still commonly incorporated into national plans, and there is a plethora of literature on the topic worldwide (Sosu et al., 2010). Nonetheless, different countries have varied perspectives on and methods for putting inclusion into practice. It began in 1974 when the Indian government implemented the Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) program in select areas of the country. This was the beginning of several further Indian policies that promoted the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in mainstream classroom environments. This proved that the government prioritized inclusive school practices and included them in educational policies (Yadav et al., 2015).

➤ Problem Statement

Regarding individuals with SEN, awareness in India is extremely low. They are generally seen to be incapable of doing many things. I decided to disregard what was mentioned at this time and continued working on my master's.

I began to study more about inclusive education and how the UK system supported children with special education needs (SEN), gave them what they needed in school, and prepared teachers to meet their requirements so they could get the support they required. The teachers were passionate educators who made a substantial and constructive contribution to the child's growth. I started learning more about India's inclusive education system after observing how it operates. I discovered that there were a lot of papers published in the field of inclusive education in India, which showed that the country was a strong advocate for inclusive education. However, there were also many articles discussing how inclusion is a challenging concept to understand when teachers are not prepared for it or educated about it. The low quality of the infrastructure, the high teacher-to-student ratio, and the scarcity of government amenities were some of the common elements that were emphasized in the papers.

After reading this, I started to wonder why many documents contained such contradicting information. While some studies claimed that the majority of SEN students were enrolled in school, others claimed that 8 million Indian children were not enrolled in school (Singh, 2016; MHRD, 2009). This prompted me to examine India's educational policy, whose most recent edition was released in 2016. It revealed that the policies in place were not being carried out as intended, and I was dismayed to see that the section devoted to working with SEN was only two pages long. The researcher's position on this study is made clear in the narrative above. The research question's overarching goal is

to effect change in Mangalore and, ideally, to give the necessary recommendations and take into account the study's consequences when formulating policies.

➤ *Research Aim*

Examine the challenges Indian schools confront in adopting inclusive education, even if government rules claim that schools receive resources.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The first global attempt to prioritize education was the Education for All (EFA) conference in 1990. This was followed by the 1994 Salamanca Declaration, which acknowledged inclusive education policies and called for 92 countries, including India, to support the inclusion of marginalized and differently abled children in the classroom. (Singal and Miles, 2010) One of the most important statements that cleared the path for later inclusive policies was this declaration. There is conceptual uncertainty in defining inclusive education because the term has been defined differently around the world since the Salamanca declaration. Different interpretations may arise due to contextual issues, but the ultimate objective is to combat any kind of exclusion in educational environments (Dyson, 2004). In the years that followed, nations attempted to change their educational programs to be more inclusive (Hegarty & Alur, 2002).

According to Hodkinson & Devarakonda (2009), instructors' worries and opinions of inclusion relate to shy children who struggle in daily tasks. The teacher's job was to raise the students' academic performance to that of the other students in the class. The home-school relationship is based on inclusion, and if a child is not doing well in an inclusive setting, it is because of a breakdown in communication between the two groups. The ambiguity of the term "inclusion" in government-issued laws and documents is the cause of this misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the concept (Singal & Rouse, 2003; Singal, 2005; Panda, 2005). Teachers are supportive of children with auditory and visual impairments, but feel that it takes too much time to include children with SEN and disabilities, particularly those with sensory impairments. They would rather see these students educated in special schools (Sharma & Desai, 2002; Hodkinson & Devarakonda, 2009). Due to the amount of time required to spend with each child, teachers believe that incorporating students with special education needs leads to the syllabus not being completed. The severity of the disability determines the other factor influencing a teacher's positive attitude toward inclusion (Bhatnagar & Das, 2014; Das et al, 2013; Tiwari et al., 2015; Heiman, 2001; Croll & Moses, 2000).

Taking into account the opinions of educators, Indian authorities have not included measures to improve teacher preparation or increase knowledge of their obligations to embrace all children (Das et al., 2013). According to the RTE Act, a primary school teacher must hold a diploma in education, and an upper primary school teacher must hold a bachelor's degree in education. A survey carried out in the

state of Karnataka, Bangalore, revealed that even though the professors had recently earned their degrees, ... Although the teachers had received training in teaching, they were not aware of their duties and obligations to children with disabilities. According to the survey, there was little knowledge of RTE and its provisions. According to the study's findings, just 40% of the 200+ teachers had heard of RTE, and 21% were unaware of it. They were aware that one RTE clause allowed children from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds to attend private schools. The RTE's status as a fundamental right was unknown to the teachers.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research paradigm consists of three components: methodological, ontological, and epistemological assumptions (Scotland, 2012). Ontology is the study of existence, whereas epistemology is the study of how knowledge is created and communicated. The primary criteria for the type of volunteers required for this study were knowledge, experience, and educational background, all of which were related to the research issue (Tongco, 2007). Purposive sampling is the sampling strategy used because there is a preconceived idea of who might be able to respond to the study topic. Guarte and Barrios (2006). Teachers from regular schools with the same name as the government-aided special school also took part in the study. Their selection was predicated on their training, experience, and knowledge of Indian educational regulations. Consequently, two teachers from the regular school and three from the special school made up the sample's five participants. Six participants were initially intended to be divided equally between the mainstream and special schools; however, two participants came from the mainstream school because the teachers there were unwilling to participate in the study. An information sheet and other information, if needed, were given to the participants when they were visited and briefed about the study. Additionally, the time and date for the interviews were decided upon after they gave their consent. Knowledge, experience, and educational background were the main requirements for the sort of volunteers needed for this study, and they were all connected to the research topic (Tongco, 2007). Because there is a preconceived notion of who would be able to respond to the study topic, the sampling approach is purposive sampling. Barrios and Guarte (2006). Teachers from government-aided special schools and mainstream schools operating under the same institution name participated in the study.

➤ *Data Analysis*

The participants' point of view was interpreted using narrative analysis based on their encounters with the research issue. Interactional analysis is a subset of narrative analysis that helps identify the relationship between the research and its participants by highlighting the narrative and thematic components of the data (Labov, 1977). Unlike thematic analysis, which focuses on the data's content, narrative emphasizes what is stated rather than how it is said (Riessman, 2008). New knowledge and insights can be molded into a narrative when experiences or viewpoints are

viewed through the lens of a narrative approach (Polkinghorne, 1995).

According to Riesman (2008), it enables the researcher to examine aspects of members of society who might not otherwise have the opportunity to express their ideas. This study will employ semi-structured interviews. According to Bryman (2015) and Bowen (2009), they let the researcher to guide the conversation and offer flexibility, allowing the participant to expound and provide information that would be impossible to obtain through a strict method of inquiry. Therefore, the questions that were developed were based on research studies that looked at teachers' concerns about inclusive policies in India. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with questions that mostly focused on metropolitan mainstream schools.

The questions were created using a similar style and included passages from the 2016 educational policy to determine instructors' opinions of the policies. Taylor and Gibbs (2010) define data analysis as the process of understanding, interpreting, and defining the information that has been collected. Based on how well it will meet the research question, the methodology was selected for this study (BERA, 2011). Narrative analysis was selected to examine a participant's viewpoint based on their experiences in connection with the research question. Interactional analysis is a type of narrative analysis that helps identify the relationship between the research and its participants by highlighting the narrative and thematic elements of the data (Labov, 1977). Unlike thematic analysis, which focuses on the content of the data, narrative analysis highlights the statements' content rather than how they are delivered (Riessman, 2008).

➤ Ethical Consideration

Any research involving human subjects must obtain ethical approval, as per BERA regulations, because it gives participants confidence that "the person, knowledge, democratic values, quality of educational research, and academic freedom" have been valued and respected (2011, p.4). The purpose of these suggestions is to enable the researcher to evaluate all aspects of the study within the specified parameters. To evaluate the caliber of the research, participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the objectives and purpose of the study, along with any prospective benefits (Silverman, 2011). A part of the study was deceptive; notably, the research question inquired whether government-stated educational policies were being implemented, while the title claimed that teachers' opinions on educational policies were being examined. By informing participants that they could express their thoughts at any moment and that their words would be taken into consideration, the participants' opinions were valued (Best, 2014; BERA, 2011). Additionally, they were free to leave at any time without explaining if they felt uncomfortable (BERA, 2011).

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After the data analysis was complete, a superordinate theme emerged, which is further broken down into themes and sub-themes that emerged throughout the coding process.

➤ Teacher Preparedness

• Teachers Knowledge

According to the literature, the participants' understanding of SEN and disability was comparable (Padhy et al., 2015; Kamala & Ramganes, 2013; Karande et al., 2011). The mainstream school participants used the terms "mentally retarded," "abnormal," and "it" to describe a child:

"If there is more children" (Mainstream1). umm.... abnormal.... Children, it's difficult for us to. Handle the "It was problematic child...mentally little.... Child was coming till 4th standardif the child is a little mentally retarded then we can do Researcher: What about learning difficulties if the child has dyslexia or any of those learning difficulties? Participant: Dyslexia means what? running about?" (Mainstream 2).

Similarly, Teachers from Special Schools Expressed the Issues Faced in Mainstream Settings Due to a Lack of Knowledge and Skills Required to Identify Disorders and Disabilities:

"About the tantrums, they must have told the teachers... ahh yes, knowledge is there what type of a tantrum the child shows, how to tackle where the tantrum comes, how what ... what how you have resist the child nothing ... they don't know that....no....they don't know. (Special,1) "They don't know to identify the ummm mild, borderline severe or LD see now many are last time I went to the school LD and MR they compare togetherthey don't know the difference" (Special 3).

This is Evident in the Response from the Teacher in Mainstream:

"Whatever we teach the child is not able to remember not going at all...but all other levels the child is alright, sports games, speech, all that when we say write to some words not there..." (mainstream 2).

The Aforementioned Problems Arise Because Teachers are not Prepared to Work with SEN and Because Inclusive Education is not Covered in the Curriculum for Teacher Preparation Programs, Including the Bachelor of Education, Diploma in Preparation, and TCH Training. Additionally, the Study's Teachers Reported that their Syllabus did not Address SEN-Related Topics:

"About the special needs.....not there". (Mainstream 1). "They have not given ... if they give some subjects we can study ...that level only if they teach: how to teach them, that level then we can do they did not teach us" (Mainstream 2).

There is a dearth of educational programs in India that address special education needs (Singal, 2005; Sharma et al., 2013), and teachers who have graduated are not required to pursue SEN-related courses; instead, they are elective, with low enrollment rates. This may be the cause of a mainstream school teacher's lack of emphasis on teaching SEN students (Sharma & Das, 2015).

- *Teacher's Training*

One theme that emerged from the interviews was the problems with teacher training. Several codes mentioned training as a problem, and all of the teachers who responded said that SEN-related training and seminars ought to be offered because the current training is essentially nonexistent. In response to a question concerning the training, mainstream teachers said:

"They did not teach us. No training is given once they gave.... how to show concern and all. So many years back, once I got". (mainstream 2).

The absence of specialized training was the main issue raised. According to Yoon, Duncan, Wen-Yu Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley (2007), short one or two days of professional development, like the seminars mentioned by participants, are ineffective and have little impact on students' success. Teachers also mentioned that one-day or five-day training is ineffective for learning about SEN.

On the Other Hand, Special Education Instructors Discussed How Mainstream Teachers are not Given Enough Training to Implement Inclusion in their Classrooms. Although the Government Does not Provide Training, Teachers Nevertheless Fulfill the Minimal Requirements and Instruct Others Improperly in the Absence of Adequate Training:

"...we specialized people, how much can we teach in one month or week. One week, the teacher cannot learn all the things... whatever basics, all that only..... they will think they know everything afterwards, they only teach other teachers, they will train other teachers". (Special 3).

Therefore, special education instructors believed that all teachers should be required to complete some sort of SEN and inclusion training. The opinions that the educators voiced coincided with 70% of study participants did not undergo SEN training, according to Das et al. (2013). According to a 2009 study by Hodkinson and Devarakonda, teachers have either no formal training in inclusive practices or very little. In order to address this problem, earlier studies have called for instructors to undergo extensive SEN training in order to create inclusive environments that work (Shah et al., 2016).

- *Attitudes of Teachers*

Teachers were questioned about their opinions on the inclusion of students with special education needs in regular classrooms. The participants' reaction, which indicated that it was preferable to be in special schools because of the child's poor capacity, made it clear that it depended on how severe the demands were and that they needed specialized attention.

Three of the teachers had low expectations for the kids and showed minor signs of supporting the medical model of impairment. whose excerpts are included below:

"An ordinary child will grasp all the competencies that we teach but, that child is slow... it gets the first standard after a long time ...takes time no ...it cannot grasp all the competencies" "We can show love, concern, all thatbut to get knowledge academically may not be able to..." (Mainstream2).

"We have some children like that, mentally IQ is low...actually they belong to a special school, still we are keeping them and teaching them." (mainstream2).

The participants' opinions are corroborated by the literature cited in section 2.5, which states that teachers' attitudes toward inclusive policies are influenced by the severity of the needs (Bhatnagar & Das, 2014; Das et al, 2013; Sharma et al., 2008; Heiman, 2001; Scroll & Moses, 2000; Forlin et al., 1996; Barnatt & Kabzems, 1992). The instructors' opinions supported the medical model, which holds that special education needs should receive separate instruction.

On the Other Hand, Special Education Teachers Expressed a Favorable Opinion of Inclusion, saying that SEN Students May be Integrated into Regular Classrooms Provided the Government Changed its Methodology and Raised Awareness:

"Yeah, when their parents, their siblings, institutions and plus the society surrounding and the government ... they work together only ... then we can find the progress in the different children" (special 1).

"Even our effort is also required; otherwise, we cannot make the children bring them up.... we can bring them to a certain level.... all are giving a negative concept; these children can and what's the useI first showed them that children also can... with the normal children" (special 3).

Although they have been trained to work with children with special education needs, working with SEN children gives them a positive bias towards an inclusive setting (Avisar, 2003; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Hodge & Jansma, 2000). Favorable interactions with SEN students are likely to foster a favorable attitude toward inclusion in the instructor (Thomas et al., 2006; Briggs et al., 2002). at order to foster a favorable attitude toward SEN youngsters, teachers at special schools should also receive training.

V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to time constraints for the research, interviews with teachers at all educational levels were not possible, so only primary mainstream school teachers were interviewed. Interviews were conducted with teachers without grades from the primary, secondary, and higher secondary divisions of the special school. The findings of this study cannot, therefore,

be linked to a particular field of education. Another limitation of this study is that it was conducted at a government-aided school; as a result, the findings cannot be used to represent the views of teachers at private schools or the application of policies. Some of the normal school teachers were reluctant to take part in the study because of the possible effects on their jobs. Despite being assured that their identities would remain confidential, teachers declined to take part in the interviews. This might be the reason why teachers in regular schools speak less than those in special education. The fact that mainstream teachers did not want to spend time completing the interviews after school and that they were hurried and angry near the end of the interviews, was another disadvantage, which might have led to biased responses.

➤ *Implications for Practice*

The government needs to raise social consciousness in order for everyone to cooperate and provide the youngsters with a top-notch education. The participants' perspectives and earlier studies both highlight how uninformed decision-makers are. Consequently, Mangalore ought to adopt a cooperative strategy for formulating policies. Improvements must be made to the teacher education curriculum in Mangalore and across India (Sharma et al., 2008; Mitchell and Desai, 2005; Singal, 2015). This calls on legislators and academic programs to include an inclusive education module in their curricula (Sharma and Das, 2015). According to survey participants, most Indian educational policies focus on the child's shortcomings (Singal, 2006; Das & Shah, 2015). To make positive changes, policymakers must first educate themselves on the traits, traits, and distinguishing indicators of illnesses and disabilities.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that integrating children with impairments into regular classrooms and giving them a top-notch education are difficult tasks. Therefore, there is an urgent need to change the way policies are made and raise awareness of inclusive practices in the educational setting. To ascertain whether policies are being implemented as intended, an assessment method must be developed. Furthermore, both Ministries must collaborate during the policy-making process to secure the best results for the child. Therefore, one essential element of change is the release of a single inclusion policy that applies to the Indian context. While educational institutions acknowledge the potential advantages of inclusive policies, their implementation requires collaboration between the government and educational institutions. Since the government establishes laws, prepares and instructs educators, and is in charge of raising awareness of social issues, it should bear the majority of the blame.

REFERENCES

[1]. Avissar, G., 2003. 'Teaching an inclusive classroom can be rather tedious': an international perspective, Israel, 1998–2000. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 3(3), pp.154-161.

[2]. Avramidis, E. and Norwich, B., 2002. Teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion: a review of the literature. *European journal of special needs education*, 17(2), pp.129-147.

[3]. Barnardt, S.N. and Kabzems, V., 1992. Zimbabwean teachers' attitudes towards the integration of pupils with disabilities into regular classrooms. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 39(2), pp.135-146.

[4]. BERA, 2011. *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*.

[5]. Bhatnagar, N. and Das, A., 2014. Attitudes of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education in New Delhi, India. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 14(4), pp.255-263.

[6]. Briggs, J.D., Johnson, W.E., Shepherd, D.L. and Sedbrook, S.R., 2002. Teacher attitudes and attributes concerning disabilities. *Academic Exchange Quarterly*, 6(2), pp.85-90.

[7]. Croll, P. and Moses, D., 2000. Ideologies and utopias: Education professionals' views of inclusion. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 15(1), pp.1-12.

[9]. Das, A.K., Kuyini, A.B. and Desai, I.P., 2013. Inclusive Education in India: Are the Teachers Prepared? *International Journal of Special Education*, 28(1), pp.27-36.

[10]. Das, A. and Shah, R., 2014. Special education today in India. In *Special Education International Perspectives: Practices Across the Globe* (pp. 561-581). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

[11]. Forlin, C., Douglas, G. and Hattie, J., 1996. Inclusive practices: How accepting are teachers? *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 43(2), pp.119-133.

[12]. Hegarty, S. and Alur, M. eds., 2002. *Education & Children with Special Needs: From Segregation to Inclusion*. Sage.

[13]. Heiman, T., 2001. Inclusive schooling-middle school teachers' perceptions. *School Psychology International*, 22(4), pp.451-462.

[14]. Hodkinson, A. and Devarakonda, C., 2009. Conceptions of inclusion and inclusive education: A critical examination of the perspectives and practices of teachers in India. *Research in Education*, 82(1), pp.85-99.

[15]. Guarte, J.M. and Barrios, E.B., 2006. Estimation under purposive sampling. *Communications in Statistics—Simulation and Computation*, 35(2), pp.277-284.

[16]. Hodge, S.R. and Jansma, P., 2000. Physical education majors' attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 23(3), pp.211-224.

[17]. Labov, W. and Waletzky, J., 1997. Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience.

[18]. Mitchell, D. and Desai, I., 2005. Diverse socio-cultural contexts for inclusive education in Asia. *Contextualising Inclusive Education: evaluating old and new international perspectives*, pp.166-201.

[19]. Miles, S. and Singal, N., 2010. The Education for All and inclusive education debate: conflict, contradiction

- or opportunity? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 14(1), pp.1-15.
- [20]. Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (2009). Right of children to free and compulsory education (RTE) act, 2009. Retrieved from <http://mhrd.gov.in/rte>.
- [21]. Polkinghorne, D.E., 1995. Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 8(1), pp.5-23.
- [22]. Riessman, C.K., 2008. *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Sage.
- [23]. Shah, R., Das, A., Desai, I. and Tiwari, A., 2016. Teachers' concerns about inclusive education in Ahmedabad, India. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 16(1), pp.34-45.
- [24]. Sharma, U. and Desai, I., 2002. Measuring concerns about integrated education in India. *Asia and Pacific Journal on Disability*, 5(1), pp.2-14.
- [25]. Singal, N. and Rouse, M., 2003. 'We do inclusion': practitioner perspectives in some 'inclusive schools' in India: research paper. *Perspectives in Education*, 21(3), pp.85-97.
- [26]. Sosu, E.M., Mtika, P. and Colucci-Gray, L., 2010. Does initial teacher education make a difference? The impact of teacher preparation on student teachers' attitudes towards educational inclusion. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 36(4), pp.389-405.
- [27]. Thomas, G., Walker, D. and Webb, J., 2006. *The making of the inclusive school*. Routledge.
- [28]. Yadav, M., Das, A., Sharma, S. and Tiwari, A., 2015. Understanding teachers' concerns about inclusive education. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 16(4), pp.653-662.