

Teachers' Self-Efficacy and Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education: Evidence From Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract

Education is the right of every child because a society's diversity is essential to humanity's progress. Inclusive education is an approach to the education system that promotes a sense of belonging and a feeling of being valued among students with diverse backgrounds. The study was undertaken to assess teachers' efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive practices among government secondary school teachers in Manipur. This study also seeks to fill the gap by exploring teachers' roles in ensuring successful inclusive practices. The findings revealed that teachers' efficacy and attitudes largely shape the vision of inclusion for all. The study also highlights the importance of collaboration among the teachers, students, parents, community, and stakeholders. This vision of inclusivity in education cannot be achieved by effort alone. It is a collective effort. Teachers' approach to accepting differences among students, regardless of ability or disability, is crucial. The goal of NEP 2020 is to ensure that no child is left behind by providing equitable, high-quality education to all, regardless of ability or disability. For this mission, the need of the hour is sensitisation; everyone must be sensitised to the needs of children with special needs.

Keywords

Self-Efficacy, Teachers' Attitudes, Inclusive Education, Secondary School Teachers.

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Introduction

Education is one of the most powerful tools that empowers people in society and promotes the well-being of everyone. It gives a society recognition and dignity. In a nation like India, the vision of education has extended far beyond the conventional classroom to the smart classroom, reaching every child, irrespective of language, caste, gender, ability, disability or socio-economic background. With this idea, the philosophy of ‘Inclusive Education’ has emerged in the modern education system. This concept of inclusive education became globally recognised during the late 20th century. The Salamanca Statement (1994), adopted by UNESCO, was a major turning point in inclusive education. It proclaimed that school education should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional or other diversities (UNESCO, 1994).

NEP 2020 also included a major goal of “No Child Left Behind”. Providing equal, equitable and quality education to Children with Special Needs (CWSN) or Divyang as other students is one of the important recommendations of NEP 2020. In Manipur, under the SSA, 2009, the state government initiated various programs for Children with Special Needs. As teachers directly affect classroom climate and learner participation, they are the primary agents of change towards inclusion. The effectiveness of inclusive education relies not only on policies and infrastructure amendments, but also on teachers’ readiness and willingness to accept and work with diverse learners in a regular classroom.

Studies found that teachers’ perceived efficacy affects both the learning environment and their confidence to improve learning outcomes (Sharma et al., 2012). In educational terms, it is the teachers’ belief in their ability to plan and apply teaching strategies and techniques effectively to manage classroom situations and promote learning for all students. As teachers in inclusive classrooms are responsible for meeting a variety of learning needs, self-efficacy can help predict how well they will respond to the challenges of inclusive practices. Researchers have also established a link between teachers’ attitudes about inclusive education and its success or failure. Studies revealed that positive teacher attitudes promote acceptance, cooperative teaching and supportive classroom interactions, whereas negative attitudes hinder children with special needs from participating and learning in school. Teachers demonstrate their acceptance of inclusive education by accommodating diverse learners, modifying teaching methods, collaborating with parents and specialists, and committing to providing equal opportunities for participation to all learners in the classroom. Positive attitudes enable teachers to play a more supportive role in students’ learning, whereas negative attitudes impede the success of inclusive education.

Review of Related Literature

Mamgain (2018) conducted a study titled “Attitudes and Self-Efficacy of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in District Gwalior, India” among 412 government primary school teachers using a descriptive survey method. Its objectives were to identify the level of teachers’ attitude towards inclusion, analyse their self-efficacy in implementing inclusive practices, and to determine the correlation between self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusion. The findings showed that teachers generally showed above-average, favourable attitudes and a high self-confidence toward inclusive education. Despite this, the study also found that only a small percentage of teachers had received formal training in inclusive education. Teachers with higher educational qualifications and those working in urban schools showed more favourable attitudes toward inclusion. The findings indicated that teachers’ attitudes and self-efficacy are positively correlated.

Kumar (2019) investigated the relationship between K-12 STEM teachers’ attitudes and their self-efficacy regarding inclusive education. Surveying 198 randomly selected STEM teachers in Louisiana, researchers used ANOVA, t-tests, and Pearson’s correlation to analyse the data and examine how demographics influenced these factors. The findings showed that educators overall maintained a favourable view and high confidence in their abilities, while very few expressed an unfavourable attitude about managing inclusive environments. There is a clear, moderate link showing that as a teacher’s attitude becomes more positive, their belief in their teaching capability increases.

Research Gap of The Study

From the literature review, some gaps in the study include its limited focus on a specific geographical area and its failure to explore classroom practices or the long-term execution of inclusive education. Moreover, the study stressed government primary school teachers and relied primarily on quantitative survey methods. So, the studies highlighted the need for broader research across diverse educational settings, including private schools, classroom observation, and qualitative approaches to understand how teachers’ attitudes and self-efficacy influence inclusive teaching practices and student outcomes in real classroom contexts. Hence, the present study focuses on areas that are yet to be examined.

Rationale of The Study

Rabindranath Tagore’s statement, “The problem is not to wipe out the differences but how to unite with the differences intact”, reflects the true philosophy of inclusive education and the importance of accepting individual differences in society. Those teachers who have high efficacy have more positive attitudes towards inclusive education as they are confident in handling such classroom situations. On

the contrary, teachers with low efficacy often show anxiety, resistance and uncertainty while dealing with diverse learners. Many studies have also found that teachers' self-efficacy influences instructional methods and classroom management styles. So, it is very important to understand the teacher's ability and attitudes to strengthen inclusive practices.

Therefore, the investigator seeks to find out the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their attitudes towards inclusive education. The study is remarkable for understanding teachers' mental readiness and ability, their approach to accepting diverse students for inclusive practices, and for identifying the key determinants of successful implementation of inclusion in schools. Since all the teachers are the backbone of any educational reform, it is essential to strengthen their effectiveness and positive attitudes towards inclusive education to ensure equitable, quality education for all students without any barriers.

Objectives of The Study

1. To examine the level of self-efficacy towards inclusive practices among government secondary school teachers.
2. To determine the level of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive practices among government secondary school teachers.
3. To find out the correlation between teachers' efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive practices among government secondary school teachers.

Hypotheses

1. There exists a high level of self-efficacy among the teachers towards inclusive practices.
2. There exists a high level of attitudes among the teachers towards inclusive practices.
3. There exists a positive correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and their attitudes towards inclusive practices.

Methodology

The investigator used a descriptive survey method. The study population consists of all government secondary school teachers in Thoubal district. Random sampling was used for sampling purposes. The selected sample work at government schools. I initially decided to take a sample of 50 teachers from Wangjing High School and Lamding Higher Secondary School. The study focused only on secondary school-level teachers.

Tools used

The investigator used the following standardised tools -

1. Teacher Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE-SA) by Vishal Shood and Arti Anand (2019) to measure the attitudes of secondary teachers.

- Teachers' Efficacy towards Inclusive Practices (TEIP) by Umesh Sharma, Tim Loreman, and Christ Forlin (2012) to measure the self-efficacy of secondary teachers.

Statistical Techniques Used

In this study, statistical techniques, including descriptive and inferential statistics, such as percentage and Karl Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, will be systematically used to analyse the collected data.

Table No. 1: Test of Normality

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistics	df	Sig.
Teachers' Attitude	.975	50	.370
Teachers' Self-efficacy	.957	50	.065

The Shapiro-Wilk test indicates that the Teacher Attitude Scale is normally distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk test for teachers' Attitude was 0.975 (p-value = 0.370), indicating normality, and the Self-efficacy scale was also found to be normally distributed (p-value = 0.065). Since the significance value of both variables is greater than 0.05, i.e., $p > 0.05$. Hence, both scales were acceptable for the parametric test.

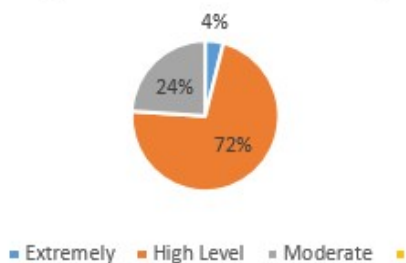
Analysis and Interpretation of Objective No. 1: *Examine the level of self-efficacy towards inclusive practices among government secondary school teachers.*

Table No.2: The level of self-efficacy among the secondary school teachers towards inclusive practices.

Level	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Extremely high level of Self-Efficacy	2	4	4	4.0
High level of Self-Efficacy	36	72	72	76.0
Moderate level of Self-Efficacy	12	24	24	100.0
Total	50	100	100	

Figure No. 1: Pie Chart representing the level of Self-Efficacy Towards inclusive practices among the secondary school teachers of Thoubal district, Manipur.

Fig.1 : Level of self-efficacy



Interpretation of the result:

The table reveals the level of self-efficacy among teachers. Among the valid responses, 72% (36 teachers) had a high level of self-efficacy, implying that majority of secondary teachers have high confidence towards their teaching capabilities and their capacity to manage inclusive classroom practices effectively. In addition, 24% (12 teachers) have a moderate level of self-efficacy, suggesting an average level of confidence that may be improved through further training and support. Only 4% (2 teachers) showed an extremely high level of self-efficacy, reflecting a very strong belief in their professional capabilities. The findings indicate that most teachers have high self-efficacy in implementing inclusive education successfully.

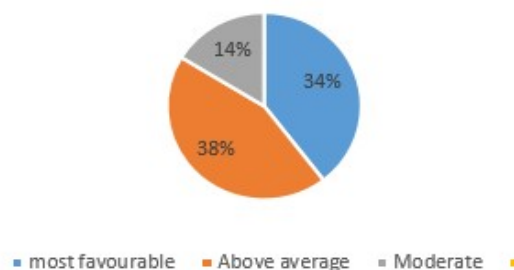
Analysis and Interpretation of Objective No.2: To determine the level of attitude towards inclusive practices among the secondary school teachers in Thoubal district, Manipur.

Table No.3: Level of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive practices among secondary school teachers in Thoubal district, Manipur

Levels	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Extremely Favourable Attitude	7	14.0	14.0	14.0
Most Favourable Attitude	17	34.0	34.0	48.0
Above average favourable Attitude	19	38.0	38.0	86.0
Moderate Attitude	7	14.0	14.00	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Figure No.2: Pie Chart representing the Level of Attitudes towards inclusive practices among the secondary school teachers in Thoubal district, Manipur.

Fig. 2 : Levels of Teachers Attitude



Interpretation of the result of objective no.2:

The table no.3 indicates the level of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive practices among secondary school teachers. The findings show that 38% (19 teachers)

had an above-average, favourable attitude towards inclusive practices. In addition, 34% (17 teachers) showed the most favourable attitudes, while 14% (7 teachers) demonstrated extremely favourable attitudes towards inclusive education. Another 14% (7 teachers) had a moderate attitude. Interestingly, none of the teachers was found in the below average, unfavourable, most unfavourable, or extremely unfavourable categories. Overall, the findings indicate that most secondary school teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusive practices.

Analysis and Interpretation of Objective No.3: *To examine the correlation between self-efficacy and teachers' attitudes towards inclusive practices among the secondary schools in the Thoubal district, Manipur.*

Table No.4: *Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Teachers' Attitudes towards inclusive practices among the secondary school teachers.*

Self- efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.138	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.339	
	N	50	50
Teachers' Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.138
	Sig.(2-tailed)	50	.339
	N		50

Interpretation of the result of objective no.3:

Table no. 4 shows that the correlation between Teachers' self-efficacy and teachers' attitude towards inclusive practices among government secondary school teachers in Thoubal district, Manipur is positively correlated (0.138). From the above results, it can be interpreted that self-efficacy and teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education among government secondary school teachers in Thoubal district, Manipur is positively correlated.

Hypothesis Testing of Objective no.3:

According to this finding, there exists a positive correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and teachers' attitudes among secondary school teachers. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Main Findings of The Study

i) The study shows the level of self-efficacy among the government secondary school teachers was high at 72% and moderate at 24%. Thus, the majority of secondary school teachers had high and moderate self-efficacy.

ii) The study also revealed that the level of attitudes among the teachers was average at 38% and most favourable at 34%. Thus, the majority of the government secondary teachers had an average attitude towards inclusive practices.

iii) The results also revealed a positive and significant correlation i.e. $r = 0.338$ and $p < 0.05$, between self-efficacy and secondary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive practices. Thus, it gives the government secondary school teachers with higher self-efficacy, implement inclusive practices, also have a more favourable attitude towards inclusive education.

Conclusion

The successful implementation of inclusive practices largely depends on teachers. Teachers are the most powerful asset for directly impacting society by implementing new educational challenges at the grassroots level. This study found that the majority of secondary school teachers have above-average self-efficacy and a moderate attitude towards inclusive practices.

The results highlight a positive self-efficacy and teachers' attitudes towards inclusive practices. Thus, it can be concluded that government secondary school teachers with higher self-efficacy, i.e., confidence in their ability to implement inclusive practices effectively, also have a more favourable attitude towards inclusive education. NEP 2020 promotes inclusive education by reducing educational disparities and supporting children with special needs. In Manipur, inclusive education is also expanding through government schemes and educational reforms. Despite this progress, Manipur faces several problems and challenges in implementing inclusive education (Wahengbam,2021). A shortage of trained special teachers, limited awareness among society, limited learning resources, and inadequate infrastructure are the main challenges inclusive practices. The future of inclusive education depends on collaborative efforts among the government, educators, families, and communities to ensure equal, equitable, and high-quality education for all.

Limitations and Future Scope

This study focused only on 50 secondary school teachers. So, in the future study, researchers can focus on larger population and sample size, and could also focus on special needs students for a better understanding of their unheard challenges and emotional experiences. In addition, similar research can be conducted with higher education teachers to understand their perspectives on inclusive education. Moreover, a descriptive study may be conducted to identify the challenges and barriers faced by the teachers when executing inclusive practices. Such research would provide policymakers and stakeholders with effective guidance to promote inclusive education.

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