



TEACHERS PERSPECTIVES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF COOCHBEHAR, WEST BENGAL

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Abstract: Inclusive education aims to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. It is crucial to improve teachers knowledge and skills to better support students with special needs. Inclusive education continues to face various challenges and confusion regarding its implementation. This study examined the teachers perspectives in inclusive education implementation in selected schools in Coochbehar, West Bengal as a basis for a proposed intervention plan. This qualitative study explores the Perspectives of school teachers working in rural primary schools of Coochbehar, West Bengal regarding the practices, challenges, and possibilities of Inclusive education. A total of 18 rural primary school teachers participated in the study of government Institution. The data were gathered through two method only one is primary data(Interviews,& Questionnaires) and another is Secondary data (Research Article, Research Paper, Google form, e-book, website, Online survey, research project etc.) analysis. The result of this study showed that while teachers largely support the philosophy of inclusive education, they often straggle with insufficient training, lack of resources, and minimal community awareness. Teacher were not fully aware of inclusive education policy and practice. Inclusive education needs to be funded separately by all levels of government. It advocated for intervention plan and resources to support the effective implementation of inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Teachers Perspectives, Rural Primary Schools, Pedagogical Tools, Coochbehar District.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education refers to the educational practice base on the philosophical belief that all learners, those with disabilities and those without, have a right to be educated together in age appropriate class groups, and that all will benefit from education in regular classrooms of community school (Ram,& patel, 2023). The word "Inclusion" is also used to refer to an educational system designed to provide access for all groups that have been marginalized in society. Inclusive education is special education is a recent concept, and also an accepted approach in general education in the Indian context. The concept of inclusion has emerged from the idea of providing equalization of educational opportunities to "all". Providing equal opportunity does not mean giving same things to all children. It means providing equality of educational opportunities by paying attention to the diverse nature of their individual needs. In a society, where the children are given a right to belong, they are also given a right their diversity and individuality. Inclusive education aims to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions (UNESCO, 2020; Both & Ainscow, 2016). The Right to Education (RTE) Act and national policy frameworks such as the National Education Policy (NEP-2020) have emphasized the importance of inclusive education (Govt.of India, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2020). Inclusive education outlines several confusions about Inclusion that have been implemented to date and are still facing various problems. Teachers knowledge must be improved, skills are also very necessary. Suppose this infrastructure is not improved and developed. In that case, this will place a burden on education in the future because it is unable to overcome the challenges that students with disabilities have long felt. This study has therefore emerged due to the researchers genuine concerns for students with special educational needs who are placed in general education classrooms, as well as assisting the various stakeholders in education such as teachers, parents, and administrations in understanding the glitches that negatively affect the process of inclusive education (Yvonne, Karl Patric,& Jinky, 2025). A teacher in the regular school focusses on the average learner but is also experienced in handling academically talented as well as slow learners. The general classroom teacher teaches those who differ in their level of intelligence. The study would assist the teachers with knowledge that could make inclusion a more favourable and practical exercise. Thus, the researcher has the needed competency with years of experience in the teaching profession and can observe what is happening with the present education wherein there is a need not sacrifice quality with that quantity (Bipul, Sanchita,& Liton, 2025).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chakraborty, B., Mitra, S. & Mallick, L. (2025) Was studied on the research paper, "*Exploring teachers perspectives on inclusive education practices in rural schools of Chakdaha block, West Bengal*". The study was used qualitative method to collect data. The sample design of the study is purposive in nature. A total of 20 in-service teachers have been selected from five rural government and government-aided schools across Deeli, Silinda-I, Hingnara, Tatla, and Rautari Gram Panchayats of Chakdaha Block. The study findings reveal that while most teachers acknowledge the value of inclusion education and show a positive disposition toward its implementation, their understanding of the concept remains narrowly focused on disability inclusion. In the absence of formal training and adequate resources, many rely on personal improvisation and experience to address classroom diversity.

English, Y.C., Galgo, K.P., & Galindo, J.D. (2025) Was studied on the research paper, "*Exploring teachers perspectives on their Inclusive education preparedness*". This study examined the teachers preparedness in inclusive education implementation in three selected schools in Cebu City, Namely, Labangon Elementary school, Lahug National High School, and Palamban National High School as a basis for a proposed intervention plan. A descriptive-co-relation design was employed to examine and probe the quantitative data. A total of 104 school teachers participated in the study, completing a demographic profile sheet and inclusive education survey questionnaire. The findings revealed that, while well-prepared and prepared teachers had a similar understanding of the concept and significance of inclusive education, there was a notable difference on how this understanding was applied in classroom practices.

Mwambe, Z. (2020) Was studied a research paper, "*Teachers Perspectives on the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Tanzania: A case of Njombe town council*". Qualitative approach was used in gathering depth information regarding teachers perception in the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools through conducting in-depth interview, Non-participant observation, Documentary review and focus group discussion. The sample consisted of 19 respondents namely; special Needs Education Officer, Heads of schools and subject teachers who were selected through purpose and snowball sampling. The findings of this study there is no doubt that, teachers have positive perception towards implementation of inclusive education as they are working hard and they are good advocacies of Inclusive education. Also teachers are showing a lot of effort in helping the children with disability in the inclusive classes to reach their goals and also doing census to identify children with disabilities and enroll them.

Chowdhury, P. (2018) Was conducted a study on, "*A study on the Competencies of teacher educators of West Bengal regarding inclusive education*". The study was used both quantitative and qualitative method to collect data. The purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample. The sample consists of 400 teacher educators from different public and private teacher education institutes of the state of West Bengal. The main data collection tools and technique used in this study are: Questionnaires, Interview Schedule, Observation Sheets based on Competency Rating Scales. The findings of this study should inform and guide teacher education policy forming, further research orientation and curriculum revision related measures.

Mambo, J.A. (2011) Was studied on the research paper, "*Exploring teachers perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education in a regular primary school: A Papua New Guinea study*". The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education in one regular primary school in the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. This study was a qualitative study using a case study approach. The data was gathered through Individual and focus group Interviews and Document Analysis. The sample size of the study was 20 teachers in one primary school in the SHP of PNG. The result of this study showed that i) Teachers were not fully aware of inclusive education policy and practice, ii) Poor implementation of inclusive education policy as due to lack of appropriate training and professional development, iii) Inclusive education needs to be funded separately by all levels of government.

RESEARCH GAP

From the above review of literature, a few studies have been conducted in India regarding the variables used in the present research. Either these have been researched upon separately or in combination with other variables. This study indicates that there is a missing link in terms of knowledge and methodology. Hence, the present study intends to fill the available gap by exploring teachers perception on inclusive education, challenges they face in implementation inclusive education and efforts made by teachers in implementation of inclusive education which was not currently in Coochbehar District because mostly people with disability are excluded.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study explored teachers perspectives on their readiness to implement inclusive education in selected rural primary schools of Coochbehar, aiming to inform the development of an intervention plan. Specifically, it sought to examine the factors influencing teachers preparedness, including their socio-demographic profile such as age, marital status, highest educational attainment, field of specialization, and length of service. It also investigated teachers perceived preparedness in areas like Self-efficacy, learning materials, lesson planning, and teaching strategies. Teachers are the primary facilitators of inclusive classrooms, and their reflections reveal the ground realities, practical strategies, and unmet need in the system. The findings of this research can inform policymakers, educational planners, and school administrators about the actual conditions in rural primary schools, leading to better training programs, support systems and policy interventions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The researcher will be studied under the title - "*Teachers Perspectives on the Implementation of Inclusive Education in rural primary schools of Coochbehar, West Bengal*".

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To Identify teachers perception towards the implementation of inclusive education in rural primary schools.
2. To Explore the strategies used by teachers to manage diversity and inclusion in rural primary schools classroom.
3. To Identify the challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in rural primary schools.
4. To gather suggestions from teachers on improving inclusive education in rural areas.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the teachers perceptions towards implementation of inclusive education in rural primary schools?
- What strategies do teachers use to address the learning needs of diverse students in inclusive classrooms?
- What are the major challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in rural primary schools?
- What recommendations do teachers offer to strengthen inclusive education in rural contexts?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

The qualitative approach was used in the present study. This study adopts a qualitative research design to deeply explore the lived experiences, opinions, and reflection of rural primary schools teachers on inclusive education practices in the rural context of Coochbehar, West Bengal.

Sample and Sampling:

Sample is the representative unit of the population systematically selected by following a scientific method. As per the nature of the study researcher has used purposive sampling technique for present study, wherein qualitative data will be collected. A total of 18 in-service teachers have been selected from Six rural primary government schools across Coochbehar District.

Tools:

In the study, the appropriate tools selected contribute to the success of the data collection. In the present study, the researcher has used interview, through questionnaire collect data.

Data Collection:

Data Collection is the process of gathering and measuring information from various sources to obtain a comprehensive and accurate understanding of particular subject or phenomenon. This process involves identifying relevant data, in compliance with the general objective of the study. The qualitative research techniques of interview through questionnaire were used in this study for collecting the necessary data. The qualitative data were collected mainly two ways One is primary data (Interviews, & Questionnaire) and another is Secondary data (Research Article, Research Paper, Google form, e-book, website, and research project) etc.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis the major process that is required to be effectively implemented. After the collection of data, the data was organized, analyzed, and given proper interpretation on the basis of the objectives of the study. The data was analyzed and given proper interpretation on the basis of the objectives of the study, which are given below:

What are the teachers perceptions towards implementation of inclusive education in rural primary schools?

This is first research question of the study whereby, it aimed to express on the extent to which teachers perception towards inclusive in rural primary schools. When the researcher asked rural primary schools teachers about their perceptions of inclusive education, all of them replied that: Most teachers associate inclusive education primarily with the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream classrooms, while some also extend it to include students from marginalized and disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g., economically weaker sections, first-generation learners). There is a general positive attitude toward inclusion, with many teachers viewing it as a necessary step toward social equality and education for all. However, the understanding of the broader goals of Inclusive education (equity, participation, respect for diversity) remains limited due to lack of proper orientation and training. Some teachers express concern about their preparedness to teach students with special needs due to inadequate training and support. Moreover the findings indicates that teachers are eager to promote inclusive education and to be good advocacies of it. And always insist that the government to consider these schools by giving them special concern so as the teaching and learning to be smooth and none will be blamed. And these schools to do not feel like they are isolated. Since inclusive education is not in Coochbehar District it is important to enhance all the important related teaching and learning environment. The way teachers are engaged in inclusive education effectively is how teachers encode for future generation.

What Strategies do teachers use to address the learning needs of diverse students in inclusive classrooms?

Teaching-learning strategies, play a significant role in the success of inclusion that the mere placement of learners in the Inclusive settings. Teachers used a variety of teaching-learning strategies in inclusive setting in general primary school such as whole class instructions, small group instruction, individual attention, peer-tutoring, cooperative teaching, team teaching and co-curricular activities such as debates, cultural events, celebration of important day etc. In addition, teachers used various accommodations and modifications to facilitate the teaching-learning process:

- Teachers commonly adopt peer tutoring, group work, and activity-based learning to address the varied learning needs of students.
- Simplified teaching materials, use of visual aids, multilingual explanations are also used to assist learners with differing levels of understanding.
- Some teachers develop informal Individualized Education plan (IEPs), although they lack technical expertise in special pedagogy.
- Despite their best efforts, many strategies are improvised rather than systematically planned, largely due to limited access to training and inclusive teaching resources.

What are the major Challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in rural primary schools?

The respondents were interviewed to establish the challenges faced in the implementation of inclusive education. The investigation looked at the views from all the respondents and came up with the following as the challenges which were common by most of the respondents. In inclusive schools there are inadequate instructional materials to use:

- Lack of infrastructure, such as ramps, accessible toilets, and classroom space, was reported as a major hindrance.
- Large class sizes and high teacher-student ratios make individualized attention difficult.
- Teachers reported minimal pre-service or in training on inclusive pedagogy or disability awareness.
- There is a notable absence of special educators or resource persons to support mainstream teachers.
- Social stigma and lack of awareness among parents often lead to resistance or neglect of Inclusive efforts.
- Administrative indifference and irregular supervision further demotivate teachers.
- They further suggested that if we take care of these shortcomings and try to do away with them and instead by making needed provisions available, we can overcome these challenges, we can make inclusive education a great success in our general schools. The teachers from government schools suggested that unless and until, these challenges are removed and proper resources and support as well as training is provided to general teachers, meaningful inclusion and success of Inclusive education is hard to achieve.

What recommendations do teachers offer to strengthen inclusive education in rural context?

Teaching learning strategies refers to all those activities including ways and means, methods and techniques which a teacher uses in the classroom to achieve the pre-set instructional and learning objectives. Generally, different teachers use different strategies as per the need of context, availability of resources and their perspectives and convenience. Teachers used a variety of teaching-learning strategies in inclusive setting in general schools such as:

- Teachers advocate for regular and specialized training programs focusing on inclusive teaching techniques, classroom management, and disability sensitization.
- Suggestions include appointing special educators developing inclusive curriculum context and reducing class sizes.
- There is a demand for better infrastructure, including assistive technology and learning aids.
- Teachers recommend stronger monitoring and support from school management and educational officers.
- Parent awareness programs and community outreach were emphasized to build inclusive mindsets.
- Teachers also stressed to importance of counselling services and peer mentoring systems in schools.
- Develop Resource support systems: Government and local authorities should ensure the provision of teaching-learning materials, assistive device, and infrastructural accommodations (like ramps and accessible toilets) in rural primary schools to support children with diverse needs.
- Strengthen School Leadership and Administrative support: School head and administrative officials must be trained and sensitized to foster an inclusive school environment. Leadership support is essential for implementing inclusive policies and motivating teachers.
- Promote Peer Collaboration and Teacher Networks: Rural teachers should be encouraged to form peer support groups or networks to share recourses, teaching strategies, and problem-solving practices related to inclusion.

CONCLUSION

In this study it was seen that most of the schools Inclusive education programme is going on. All the schools have Inclusive setting in their curricular process. The study provides a comprehensive insight into perceptions, practices, challenges, and recommendations of rural teachers concerning inclusive education in Coochbehar, West Bengal. Findings reveal that while most teachers acknowledge the value of inclusive education and show a positive disposition toward its implementation, their understanding of the concept remains narrowly focused on disability inclusion. In the absence of formal training and adequate resources, many rely on personal improvisation and experience to address classroom diversity. Teachers face a multitude of challenges, including infrastructural limitations, large class sizes, lack of administrative and community support, and insufficient professional development opportunities. While various governmental schemes and policies exist to support inclusive education, their effectiveness is hindered by gaps in implementation and awareness at the grassroots level. It is recommended that schools implement comprehensive professional development programs tailored to teachers' need and local contexts. The programs should include a mix of in-person workshops, online courses, and hands-on training to address specific areas of inclusive education such as behaviour management, lesson planning, and differentiation of instruction. Furthermore, a flexible curriculum is essential to meet the diverse needs of all students and provide every child with an equal opportunity to succeed. The study emphasizes the urgent need for systemic reforms that bridge the policy-practice gap, empower teachers through capacity building, and foster collaborative efforts among schools, families, and communities.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study will be delimited to the govt. Rural primary schools only.
- The study will be delimited to govt. Rural primary schools teachers perspectives only.
- The study will be delimited to Coochbehar District, West Bengal only .

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