

Influence Of Gender and Type of School on Teacher Attitude Towards Inclusive Education Among Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract- Inclusive education is an evolving approach for education of the Children with Special Needs with a focus on equity and social justice. Schools are required to cater to the needs of all types of children. The success of any approach depends on the positive attitude of its stakeholders. Likewise, teachers positive attitude towards inclusive education is one of the most important factors for its successful implementation.

This study examines how gender and type of school influence secondary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Azamgarh district, Uttar Pradesh. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, data was collected from 301 teachers selected through multistage random sampling. Attitudes were measured with a 42-item scale developed by the researchers. Results showed no significant difference in attitudes between male and female teachers. However, teachers in government schools reported significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusive education than those in private schools. There was no significant interaction effect between gender and type of school. These findings highlight the need for targeted efforts to promote positive attitudes towards inclusion, especially in private schools. The study's results may inform policy and professional development initiatives aimed at strengthening inclusive practices in Indian secondary education.

Keywords: inclusive education, teacher attitude, gender, type of school, India.

INTRODUCTION

The Education of children with special needs has always been a matter of concern for educationists. In recent years, there has been a paradigm shift from special to inclusive education. This advocates that all children, irrespective of their abilities, linguistics, or cultural background,

should be taught in general school systems alongside their peers. Schools must incorporate inclusive educational practices and ensure that each child's educational needs are fulfilled. Various documents, such as the Salamanca declaration and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, have emphasized the inclusion of CWSN in mainstream classrooms. India, being a signatory of all such international legislation, has also incorporated inclusive education as a preferred choice for educating CWSN. Consequently, various legislations and policies have been passed over time, such as the PWD Act, SSA, NCF 2005, and RPWD ACT. NEP 2020 also talks about adapting inclusive practices through a flexible curriculum, learner centered pedagogical practices, multiple entry and exit systems, and bringing equity in classrooms.

Teachers play a central role in implementing inclusive education, as their attitudes, skills, and daily practices directly affect how effectively CWSN educational needs are met. They are responsible for adapting teaching methods and materials to meet diverse learning needs, creating a supportive environment where every student feels valued. Teachers also collaborate with families, specialists, and school leaders to identify and address barriers to participation and learning. By promoting respect for diversity and setting clear expectations for inclusion, teachers help ensure that students with different backgrounds and abilities can access meaningful learning opportunities. Their ongoing commitment and openness to professional development are essential for the success of inclusive education in any school setting.

A teacher's attitude is crucial in shaping the success of inclusive education. Positive attitudes towards inclusion lead teachers to welcome students with diverse abilities and backgrounds, making them more likely to adapt their teaching and classroom environment to meet individual needs. When teachers believe in the value of inclusion, they create a supportive atmosphere where all students feel respected and capable of learning. Conversely, negative or hesitant attitudes can result in resistance to change, limited use of inclusive strategies, and lower student participation. Ultimately, a teacher's attitude influences not just classroom practices but also how inclusive education is implemented across the entire school.

Studies in India generally report moderate to favourable attitudes, but evidence on who holds stronger attitudes is mixed. Gender differences, when present, are small. Sector differences are more probable because policy emphasis, resources, and professional development often vary between government and private schools.

Studies indicate that gender differences in teacher attitudes towards inclusive education are often negligible. For instance, research in the Gaya district of Bihar found no significant difference between male and female teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education (Singh et al., 2020). Similarly, a study in Jammu and Kashmir reported no appreciable differences in attitudes based on gender (Mantry & Pradhan, 2023). However, some studies suggest that female teachers may hold more positive attitudes compared to male teachers, as seen in a study involving university and school teachers (Anil Kuma, 2016). A study conducted in Chelyabinsk found that 63.8% of teachers demonstrated a positive attitude towards inclusive education, although there was a noted reluctance to take on responsibilities and collaborate with parents (Roslyakova et al., 2024).

In North and South Cotabato, teachers displayed a welcoming attitude towards inclusive education, emphasizing the importance of training and collaboration to enhance their skills (Beltran, Lpt et al., 2022). In Romania, school principals

showed a more open attitude towards inclusive education compared to teachers, with their willingness not predicted by seniority but by experience with students with special needs (Jurca & Sava, 2023). A cross-cultural study revealed that German teachers exhibited the least favourable attitudes towards inclusion, while general education teachers were more pro-inclusion than those in special education settings (Kossewska et al., 2024).

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Despite various legislations Inclusive education has not been practically implemented in its full essence in India. Lack of proper training, reluctance of parents, lack of proper infrastructure and unavailability of resource personnels are some factors that hinder the full implementation of inclusive education. Teachers are also very apprehensive about practical implementation of inclusive practices in Indian classrooms that are already overcrowded. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the level of teachers attitude towards inclusive education and role of gender as well as type of schools as a determinant of their attitude. Findings of this study will help educators, policy makers, administrators and all other stakeholders in understanding the levels of teachers attitude and various factors that influence, in shaping their attitude.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the level of Teacher Attitude towards inclusive Education with respect to gender and type of schools.
2. To examine the influence of gender on Teacher Attitude towards inclusive Education of secondary school teachers.
3. To examine the influence of types of school on Teacher Attitude towards inclusive Education of secondary school teachers.
4. To find out the influence of interaction between gender and types of school on Teacher Attitude towards inclusive Education of secondary school teachers.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant influence of gender on Teacher Attitude towards inclusive Education of secondary school teachers.
2. There is no significant influence of types of school on Teacher Attitude towards inclusive Education of secondary school teachers.
3. There is no significant influence of interaction between gender and types of school on Teacher Attitude towards inclusive Education of secondary school teachers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A Quantitative cross-sectional survey with a 2 (Gender) \times 2 (School type) factorial structure was opted for the study. Participants were 301 secondary school teachers selected through a multistage random sampling in Azamgarh district, Uttar Pradesh. Approximately 86% of distributed questionnaires were returned and usable.

Tool used in the study

Attitudes were assessed with the help of a scale developed by researchers. The scale consists of 42 items measured on a 4-point Likert Scale. Higher scores indicate more favourable attitudes. Reliability and construct validity were established in the larger study.

Procedure and Ethics

Permissions were secured from school authorities. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with administration during the 2022–2024 academic sessions.

Data Analysis

Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, the researchers have used proper statistical techniques i.e., Mean, Standard Deviation, percentage and 2 \times 2 factorial design ANOVA to analyze the collected data with the help of SPSS software version 25.0.

Table 1. Normal Distribution of Teacher Attitude towards inclusive Education Scores of Secondary School Teachers

N	Mean	SEM	SD	Skew.	SE Skew.	Kurt	SE Kurt	Z-Value of Skew.	Z-Value of Kurt.
301	119.8	0.823	14.27	0.103	0.141	−0.230	0.282	0.73	−0.82

The skewness was found to be 0.103 (SE = 0.141), while the kurtosis value was −0.230 (SE = 0.282). These values yielded Z-scores of 0.73 for skewness and −0.82 for kurtosis, both of which fall within the accepted threshold of ± 1.96 (Field, 2013). The skewness and kurtosis values do not

indicate significant deviation and show strong alignment with the normal model. This permits the valid use of parametric statistical procedures for further analysis involving Attitude Towards Inclusive Education.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 2. Level of Attitude toward Inclusive Education by Gender and School Type

Level of Attitude	Frequency				Percentage			
	Gender		Type of School		Gender		Type of School	
	Male	Female	Govt.	Private	Male	Female	Govt.	Private
High (≥ 135)	20	21	22	19	11.0%	17.6%	20.6%	9.8%
Moderate (106–134)	134	76	74	136	73.6%	63.9%	69.2%	70.1%
Low (≤ 106)	28	22	11	39	15.4%	18.5%	10.3%	20.1%
Total	182	119	107	194	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 2, signifies that out of 182 male secondary school teachers, 11.6% exhibited high level of Attitude, 73.6% male teachers showed moderate

level of Attitude and 15.4% of male teachers belongs to low level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education, whereas out of 119 female teachers,

17.6% exhibited high level of Attitude, 63.9% female teachers showed moderate level of Attitude and 18.5% female teachers demonstrated low level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education.

Table-2 also indicates the percentage wise distribution of attitude towards Inclusive Education among government and private secondary school teachers. In case of government secondary school teachers, out of 107 teachers, 20.6% of government secondary school teachers exhibited high level, 69.2% of teachers exhibited moderate level and 10.3% teachers exhibited low level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education.

In case of private secondary school teachers out of 194 teachers, 9.8% of private secondary school teachers are in the high level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education, 70.1% having moderate level of Attitude toward Inclusive Education and 20.1% of teachers having low Attitude towards Inclusive Education. It can be inferred that teachers belonging to government secondary school, a greater number of private school teachers belongs to high level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education and majority of government as well as private secondary school teachers belong to a moderate level of Attitude toward Inclusive Education. The trend is also clear from the graphical representation as shown in the Graph 1, & 1(A), 2 & 2(A) below.

Fig 1 & 1A Showing the percentage wise distribution of Attitude toward Inclusive Education of male and female secondary school teachers

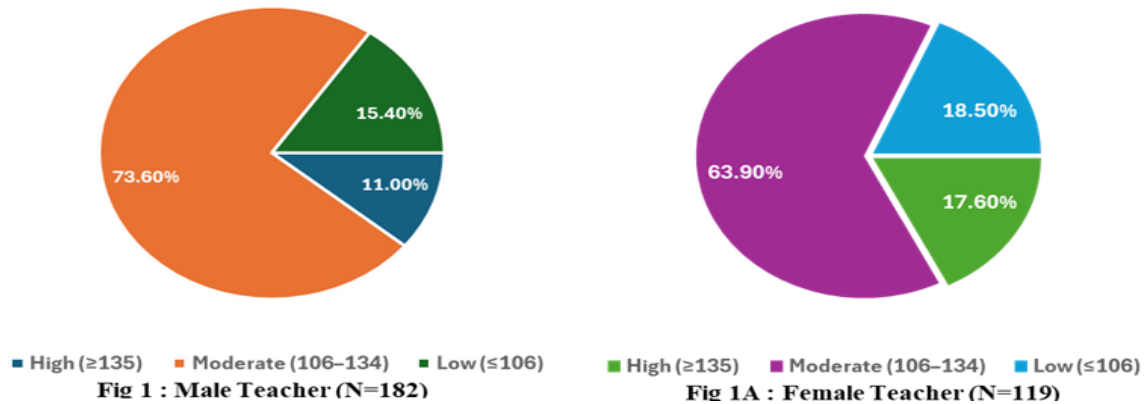


Fig 2 & 2A showing the percentage wise distribution of Attitude towards Inclusive Education of Government and private secondary school teachers.

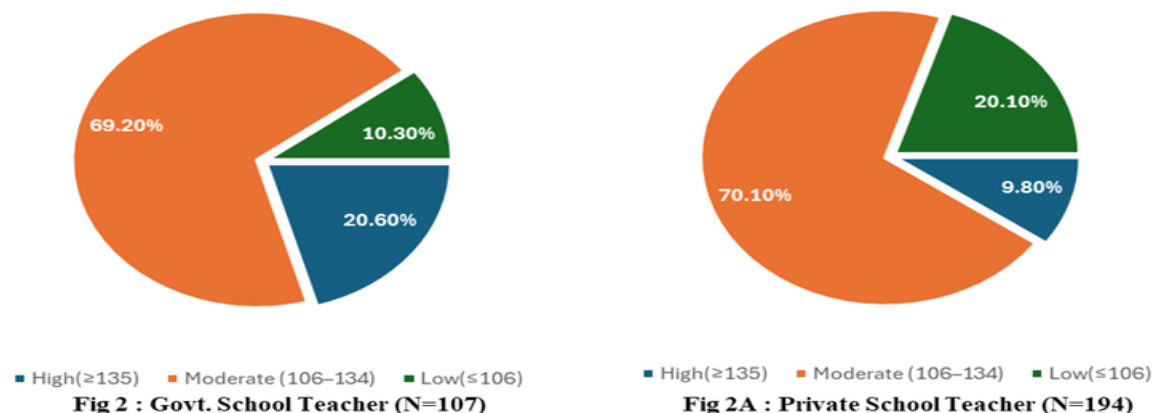


Table 3. Summary of 2×2 factorial design ANOVA for the scores of Teacher Attitude towards Inclusive Education according to their gender and type of School

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.	η^2_p
Gender (A)	499.213	1	499.213	2.547	.112	.009
Type of School (B)	2,441.639	1	2,441.639	12.459	< .001	.040
A × B	213.295	1	213.295	1.088	.298	.004
Error	58,205.113	297	195.977			
Total	4,381,365.000	301				
Corrected Total	61,113.435	300				

Influence of gender on Attitude towards Inclusive Education of secondary school teachers

The main effect of gender was not statistically significant, $F(1, 297) = 2.55$, $p = .112$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$. This suggests that, within the current sample, male and female secondary school teachers hold comparable views regarding inclusive education. Thus the null hypothesis *“There is no significant influence of gender on Teacher Attitude towards inclusive Education of secondary school teachers is accepted.”*

Influence of type of school on Attitude towards Inclusive Education of secondary school teachers

The ANOVA results indicate that the type of school has a significant effect on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, $F(1, 297) = 12.46$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .040$. This finding suggests that teachers working in different types of schools differ in their attitudes towards inclusive education.

The value of effect size (0.040) indicates that 4.0% variation is caused by the type of school and its error. To know which groups mean score of Attitude is significantly higher than other, the data was further analyzed with the help of t-test and results are given in the Table-4 below

Table 4. Comparison of Attitude of teachers belonging to government and private secondary schools

Type of School	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Government	107	123.55	14.41	3.01	0.003
Private	194	117.74	13.80		

**Significant at 0.01 level.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) found a statistically significant effect of type of school on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, $F(1, 297) = 12.46$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .040$. To further clarify this difference, an independent samples t-test was also conducted. The results indicated that government school teachers ($M = 123.55$, $SD = 14.41$, $n = 107$) reported significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusive education than private school teachers ($M = 117.74$, $SD = 13.80$, $n = 194$), $t(299) = 3.01$, $p = .003$.

Teachers working in government schools exhibited significantly more favourable attitudes towards inclusive education than those in private schools. Thus, the null hypothesis that *“There is no significant influence of school type on attitudes towards inclusive education among secondary school teachers”* is rejected.

To study the trend of influence of types of school on attitudes towards inclusive education among male and female teachers, Fig -3 has been plotted.

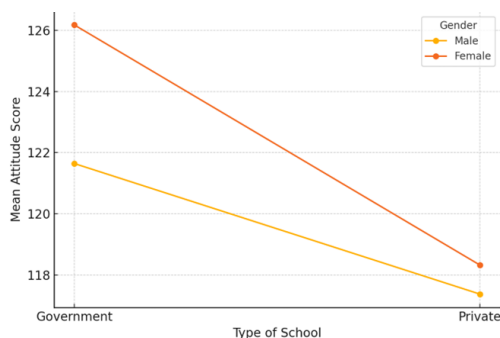


Fig 3 - Interaction Plot: Gender × Type of School on Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Influence of the Interaction Between Gender and Type of School on Attitude Towards Inclusive Education

A two-way analysis of variance was conducted to examine whether the effect of type of school on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education depends on gender. The interaction between gender and type of school was not statistically significant, $F(1, 297) = 1.09$, $p = .298$, partial $\eta^2 = .004$. This result suggests that the relationship between type of school and attitudes towards inclusive education is similar for both male and female teachers. The findings indicate that there is no significant combined influence of gender and school type on attitudes towards inclusive education among secondary school teachers. In other words, the difference in attitudes between government and private school teachers does not vary significantly by gender. Thus, the null hypothesis that "There is no significant influence of interaction between gender and school type on Attitude Towards Inclusive Education of secondary school teachers" is accepted.

DISCUSSION

This study set out to examine the influence of gender and type of school on secondary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. The results show that gender does not significantly affect teachers' attitudes, which corresponds with previous research conducted in India and abroad (Singh et al., 2020; Pradhan & Mantry, 2023). This consistency across studies suggests that both male and female teachers tend

to share similar perspectives on inclusive education, possibly due to common exposure to the same professional environments and educational policies.

the type of school was found to significantly influence attitudes, with government school teachers reporting more positive attitudes towards inclusive education compared to their counterparts in private schools. This difference may be linked to several factors. Government schools in India are more likely to be targeted by inclusive education policies and government initiatives, which often include in-service training and additional resources. Teacher preparation programs play a significant role in shaping positive attitudes towards inclusive education, emphasizing the need for strategies that promote inclusive mindsets among prospective teachers (Sasikala, 2023).

Teachers in government schools may encounter a wider range of student backgrounds and needs, promoting greater acceptance of inclusion as part of their everyday teaching practice. In contrast, private schools, which often have greater autonomy in admissions and classroom management, might experience less pressure to adopt inclusive practices, possibly resulting in less favourable attitudes among their staff.

The study also examined whether the effect of school type differed by gender. The absence of a significant interaction suggests that the differences observed between government and private schools hold for both male and female teachers alike. This result indicates that school type, rather than gender, is the main contextual factor shaping teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in this sample.

Overall, these findings have practical implications. First, they highlight the need for targeted professional development and policy efforts in private schools to raise awareness and build positive attitudes towards inclusive education. School leadership and policymakers might consider designing in service training and incentives for private school teachers, ensuring that all educators, regardless of sector are

prepared and motivated to support inclusive classrooms.

The results also suggest that interventions aimed at encouraging positive attitudes should focus more on institutional factors than on individual characteristics such as gender. Addressing structural barriers and providing adequate support and resources may be more effective than gender-based interventions in promoting inclusive education.

Finally, this study underscores the importance of continued research in diverse educational settings to better understand the complex factors influencing teacher attitudes towards inclusion. Further studies could explore additional variables, such as teaching experience, subject specialization, and the impact of specific training programs, to develop a more comprehensive picture of what supports inclusive attitudes in schools.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Additional factors (over and above teaching experience, content, or previous professional learning on inclusive education) can be explored.
- Qualitative studies (interviews, focus groups) to investigate more deeply, into teachers' attitudes and barriers can be done.
- Longitudinal studies to examine how teacher attitudes change over time or following interventions can be done.
- Research can be conducted to explore other stakeholders' perspectives (students, parents, administration) to understand inclusive education from another viewpoint.

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