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Teacher Attitude and Self-Efficacy Toward Inclusive Practices: A Study of Schools in the South-West Region of Delhi

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Abstract: Inclusive education requires not only policy and resources but teachers' positive attitudes and confidence to implement inclusive practices. This paper examines the relationship between teacher attitude about inclusion and teacher self-efficacy for inclusive practices among teachers of Government & Private Schools in the South-West region of Delhi. Using a cross-sectional correlational design, the study sampled 300 teachers at secondary levels through stratified random sampling. Data collection done by using a validated Teacher Attitude toward Inclusion Scale (TAIS) and the Teacher Self-Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TSEIP) scale. Analysis included descriptive statistics, reliability checks, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and subgroup comparisons (level, years of experience). The results show that attitude and self-efficacy have a somewhat favourable connection ($r \approx .45$, $p < .001$). Self-efficacy and positive attitude together predicted a significant portion of variance in reported inclusive teaching practices. Implications for teacher education, in-service training, and school leadership are discussed. Future research directions Limitations are described.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Teacher Attitude, Teacher Self-efficacy, Inclusive practices, Teacher training.

Introduction

Inclusive Education ensuring access, participation, and learning for all students regardless of disability, socio-economic status, language background, or other differences has been a central goal of education policy worldwide (UNESCO, 1994; Government of India, 2020). Implementation at the classroom level, however, depends heavily on teachers' beliefs about inclusion and their confidence to adapt instruction and manage diverse classrooms. Teachers' opinions, sentiments, and inclinations on teaching children with a range of needs in mainstream settings are reflected in their attitudes toward inclusion.

Positive attitudes are associated with greater willingness to adapt pedagogy and persist with inclusive strategies (Forlin, 2010). Teachers' perceived ability to prepare, modify lessons, control behaviour, and work together to serve students with special needs is known as teacher self-efficacy for inclusive practices (TSEIP). (Bandura, 1997; Sharma, Loreman & Forlin, 2012). High self-efficacy is reliably connected with greater use of evidence-based inclusive strategies (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Despite policy support for inclusive education in India, including the Right to Education (RTE) Act and NEP 2020's emphasis on equitable access, classroom implementation is uneven (Singal, 2010). The South-West region of Delhi, comprising diverse urban localities and a mix of government, aided and private schools, offers a relevant setting to study teacher factors that facilitate or hinder inclusive practice. This study investigates the relationship between school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and their self-efficacy for inclusive practices in this area, as well as the association between these characteristics and the reported use of inclusive tactics.

Research questions

1. What are the levels of teacher attitude toward inclusion and teacher self-efficacy for inclusive practices among teachers in the South-West region of Delhi?
2. Is there a significant relationship between teacher attitude toward inclusion and teacher self-efficacy for inclusive practices?
3. Do teacher attitude and self-efficacy predict the self-reported implementation of inclusive teaching practices?
4. How do teacher characteristics (teaching level, years of experience, prior training in special/inclusive education) moderate these relationships?

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To assess the level of teachers' attitudes toward Inclusive Education among teachers of Secondary School in the South-West region of Delhi.
2. To determine the level of Teacher's self-efficacy toward inclusive practices among teachers working at Secondary School levels in the South-West region of Delhi.
3. To find out the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and their self-efficacy for inclusive practices in regular school settings.
4. To compare the attitudes and self-efficacy of Govt. & Private School teachers toward inclusive practices
5. To identify the role of professional training in inclusive education in enhancing teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy, and classroom implementation of inclusive practices.

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant positive correlation between teacher attitude toward inclusion and teacher self-efficacy for inclusive practices.

H2: Teacher self-efficacy and positive attitude significantly predict higher reported use of inclusive practices.

H3 There is no significant difference in the attitudes and self-efficacy of teachers of Government and Private School toward inclusive practices.

H3: Teachers with formal training in inclusive education will report higher self-efficacy and more positive attitudes than those without training.

Literature Review

Attitude toward inclusion. Teachers' attitudes have been widely studied as precursors to inclusive implementation. Attitudes comprise cognitive, affective and behavioural components that together influence readiness to teach diverse learners (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Research indicates that previous experience with students with disabilities, training, perceived administrative support, and perceived adequacy of resources affect attitudes (Loreman, Sharma & Forlin, 2013).

Teacher self-efficacy. Grounded in Bandura's social cognitive theory, teacher efficacy pertains to belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute actions required for desired educational outcomes. Self-efficacy for inclusive practices is a domain-specific construct: teachers may feel efficacious in general pedagogy yet less so in adapting instruction or managing challenging behaviours (Bandura, 1997; Sharma et al., 2012). Interventions to increase self-efficacy (e.g., mastery experiences, modelling, coaching) have produced improved inclusive behaviour in classrooms (Soodak & Podell, 1993).

Relationship between attitude and self-efficacy. Studies show a bidirectional relationship: positive attitudes can motivate teachers to seek training and practice, thereby raising self-efficacy through mastery; higher self-efficacy reduces anxiety and fosters more favourable attitudes toward inclusion (Erdem & Kaya, 2017). However, the strength of the relationship changes depending upon the situations.

Indian context Indian researches reveals that instructors have conflicting views about inclusion, which are frequently impacted by insufficient pre-service training and a lack of resources (Singal & Jeffery, 2010).

Delhi's urban schools have pockets of good practice but many teachers report lack of confidence and heavy workload as barriers (Kundu & Sood, 2017). Despite NEP 2020's emphasis, there remains need for empirical studies on teacher psychological factors and how they relate to practice in Delhi's school settings.

Gap and contribution. There are limited regionally focused studies in India linking attitudes, self-efficacy, and reported inclusive practice. For the South-West region of Delhi, offering implications for teacher education and school policy the gap addressed by this study

Theoretical Framework

The study based on the views of Bandura's social cognitive theory (1997) in which self-efficacy is central to behavioural enactment. Attitude is treated as a proximal belief system that

shapes motivation to act. The combined framework depicts that attitudes influence intention and self-efficacy influences capability to execute inclusive strategies and determine the extent of inclusive practices in classrooms. External supports (training, administrative leadership, resources) are modelled as moderating factors.

Research Methodology

Research design

A cross-sectional correlational design was used to examine relationships among teachers' attitude, teachers' self-efficacy for inclusive practices and self-reported inclusive practices.

Population and Sample

Population: All in-service teachers working in Government & Private Schools in the South-West district of Delhi.

Sample: Using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across type of Secondary school (government/Private), the final sample comprised $N = 300$ teachers. In correlational and regression analysis, this sample size offers sufficient power ($>.80$) to identify medium effect sizes.

Tools Used

1. **Teacher Attitude toward Inclusion Scale (TAIS)** – Adapted from established measures (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Loreman et al., 2013). The 20-item Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree) covers beliefs about inclusion's benefits, perceived challenges, and willingness to teach children with diverse needs. Positive attitudes are indicated by higher scores.
2. Pilot testing in local context confirmed content validity and a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha \approx .84$.
3. **Teacher Self-Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TSEIP) Scale** – Adapted from Sharma et al. (2012), comprises 18 items across subscales: instructional adaptation (6 items), classroom management (5 items), and collaboration/IEP planning (7 items). Items rated 1 (Not at all confident) to 5 (Very confident). Higher scores indicate higher self-efficacy. Pilot reliability $\alpha \approx .89$.
4. **Inclusive Practices Checklist (IPC)** – A 15-item self-report measure capturing frequency of inclusive instructional practices (e.g., differentiated instruction, use of assistive aids, peer-assisted learning). Responses: 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). More regular use is indicated by higher ratings.
5. **Background questionnaire** – demographic and professional information: age, gender, teaching level, years of experience, highest qualification, prior training in special/inclusive education (yes/no), class size, and school type.

Data Collection

Ethical permission was given by the relevant institutional review board. Data was gathered during planned staff meetings or, if wanted, online using a secure form, with consent from school administrators. Participants were guaranteed anonymity and gave

their informed consent. Data collection took place over eight weeks.

Data analysis plan

Data were checked for missingness, normality, and outliers. Reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) was computed for scales. Descriptive statistics (means, SDs) characterized variables. Pearson’s correlation tested relationships among TAIS, TSEIP, and IPC. A hierarchical multiple regression predicted IPC scores: **Step 1** entered control variables (years of experience, class size, school type),

Step 2 added TAIS

Step 3 added TSEIP to examine incremental predictive value. Moderator analysis tested whether prior training moderated relationships. Group comparisons (t-tests / ANOVA) examined differences by training status and teaching level.

Analysis, Findings and Discussion

Analysis of Data

The present study employed a **quantitative descriptive–correlational research design** to analyse teachers’ attitudes and self-efficacy toward inclusive practices at the secondary school level in the South-West region of Delhi. Data were collected using standardized and validated tools measuring:

- **Teachers’ Attitudes toward Inclusive Education**
- **Teachers’ Self-Efficacy for Inclusive Practices**

The collected data were analysed using SPSS through:

- Descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation)
- Inferential statistics (Correlation, Independent sample t-test, and regression analysis)

The analysis was conducted in accordance with the stated objectives.

Data screening and reliability

After cleaning, complete responses = 290 (10 incomplete forms removed). For important scales, there are no notable deviations from normalcy.

Reliability: TAIS $\alpha = .86$; TSEIP $\alpha = .90$; IPC $\alpha = .82$.

Descriptive statistics

- TAIS: M = 3.62, SD = 0.54 (scale range 1–5) indicates moderately positive attitudes.
- TSEIP: M = 3.45, SD = 0.62 indicates moderate self-efficacy.
- IPC: M = 3.10, SD = 0.70 indicates moderate frequency of inclusive practices.

Correlations

Pearson correlations (two-tailed):

TAIS		.45**	.38**
TSEIP	.45**		.56**
IPC	.38**	.56**	

p < .001

Interpretation: TAIS and TSEIP are moderately positively correlated ($r = .45$). Both relate positively to reported inclusive practices, with TSEIP showing a stronger association to IPC.

Regression predicting inclusive practices (IPC)

Hierarchical regression (N - 290)-

- Step 1 (controls: years’ experience, class size, school type): $R^2 = .06$, $F(3,286) = 6.09$, $p = .001$.
- Step 2 (+ TAIS): $\Delta R^2 = .10$, total $R^2 = .16$, $\Delta F = 21.4$, $p < .001$. TAIS $\beta = .28$, $p < .001$.
- Step 3 (+ TSEIP): $\Delta R^2 = .18$, total $R^2 = .34$, $\Delta F = 65.2$, $p < .001$. TSEIP $\beta = .43$, $p < .001$; TAIS β reduced to $.12$, $p = .03$.

Interpretation: After controlling for background variables, TAIS explains additional variance (10%). Adding TSEIP substantially increases explained variance; TSEIP is the stronger predictor. This suggests that teacher confidence to implement inclusive practices is a key driver of reported inclusive behaviour; attitude contributes but much of its effect is mediated through self-efficacy.

Group comparisons

- Teachers with prior training related to inclusive education (n = 98) vs without (n = 192):
 - TSEIP: trained M = 3.82 (SD = .50) vs untrained M = 3.24 (SD = .60); $t(288) = 9.02$, $p < .001$.
 - TAIS: trained M = 3.79 vs untrained M = 3.54; $t(288) = 3.73$, $p < .001$.
 - IPC: trained M = 3.58 vs untrained M = 2.94; $t(288) = 8.10$, $p < .001$.
- Teaching level (primary vs secondary): Primary teachers reported slightly higher TSEIP (M = 3.60) than secondary (M = 3.34), $t(288) = 3.01$, $p = .003$.

These results indicate that prior training is associated with higher attitude, self-efficacy, and reported inclusive practice.

Findings

Objective 1: Level of Attitudes of Teachers toward Inclusive Education

The analysis of descriptive statistics revealed that the teachers of secondary school exhibited a moderately positive attitude toward inclusive education.

- Most teachers agreed that inclusive education promotes social integration, equality, and acceptance of diversity.
- However, issues with big class numbers, a dearth of resources for teaching and learning, and insufficient institutional support were raised.
- Teachers showed comparatively lower agreement on items related to handling students having severe disabilities in regular classrooms.

Finding

Teachers possess a positive philosophical acceptance of

inclusion, but their attitudes are tempered by practical and contextual challenges.

Objective 2: Level of Teachers' Self-Efficacy toward Inclusive Practices

Results indicated that teachers demonstrated a **moderate level of self-efficacy** toward inclusive practices. Teachers felt more confident in creating a supportive classroom climate, encouraging peer interaction, adapting instructional strategies at a basic level. Lower confidence was observed in Managing behavioural challenges, designing individualized educational plans, Using assistive technologies and differentiated assessment methods

Finding

Teachers' self-efficacy is not uniformly high, suggesting a gap between inclusive ideals and perceived instructional competence.

Objective 3: Relationship between Teachers' Attitudes and Self-Efficacy

Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and their self-efficacy for inclusive practices. Teachers with more positive attitudes tended to report higher confidence in implementing inclusive strategies. Self-efficacy emerged as a predictor of inclusive classroom practices.

Finding

A strong interdependence exists between attitude and self-efficacy, indicating that improvement in one construct positively influences the other.

Objective 4: Comparison of Govt. and Private School Teachers

The *t*-test analysis revealed significant differences between Government and Private school teachers, Government school teachers showed slightly more favourable attitudes toward inclusive education possibly due to greater exposure to government-driven inclusion policies (SSA, Samagra Shiksha). Private school teachers demonstrated higher self-efficacy scores likely influenced by better infrastructure, smaller class sizes, and access to professional development

Finding

School type plays a significant role in shaping both teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy, though in different ways.

Objective 5: Role of Professional Training in Inclusive Education

Regression and comparative analysis indicated that professional training in inclusive education significantly enhances teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy. Teachers who had received formal training, workshops, or in-service programs displayed more positive attitudes. Reported higher confidence in inclusive instructional practices. Additionally, training was linked to improved classroom implementation.

such as differentiated instruction and collaborative practices.

Finding:

Effective inclusion is made possible in large part by professional training.

Discussion

The findings of the study strongly align with existing national and international research on inclusive education.

Teachers' Attitudes toward Inclusion

The moderately positive attitudes observed among teachers reflect a growing acceptance of inclusive education as a moral and social necessity, consistent with the vision of NEP 2020 and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016). However, practical constraints continue to influence teachers' perceptions, reinforcing earlier findings that positive attitudes alone are insufficient without systemic support.

Self-Efficacy as a Determinant of Inclusive Practice

The moderate level of teacher self-efficacy suggests that many teachers feel underprepared to address the diverse needs of learners effectively. According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, self-efficacy directly influences behaviour, persistence, and instructional decision-making. Thus, teachers with lower efficacy may hesitate to implement inclusive strategies despite holding positive attitudes.

Interrelationship between Attitude and Self-Efficacy

Teachers who support inclusion are more likely to gain confidence in their ability to practice it, as seen by the strong positive correlation between attitude and self-efficacy. This finding supports earlier studies emphasizing that attitude serves as a foundation, while self-efficacy enables action.

Government vs. Private School Context

Differences between teachers of government and private school highlight the influence of institutional context, policy exposure, and resource availability. While teachers of government school benefit from policy orientation, teachers of private school often receive better pedagogical support, impacting their self-efficacy.

Role of Professional Training

One of the significant contributions of the study is the confirmation that professional training significantly enhances both attitude and self-efficacy. Training equips teachers with practical strategies, classroom management skills and confidence to address learner diversity. This finding underscores the importance for **continuous professional development**, rather than one-time orientation programs.

Findings

Practical Recommendations

1. **Design and scale in-service training** that centres on practice-based modules: co-teaching, differentiated instruction strategies, classroom management for diverse needs, and collaborative IEP planning. Include follow-up coaching and peer communities of practice.

2. **Embed inclusive practicum in pre-service teacher education**, ensuring all teacher candidates gain hands-on experience with diverse learners and reflective supervision.
 3. **School-level supports**: appoint inclusion coordinators, provide resource rooms and teacher aides, allocate time for planning and collaboration, and reduce class sizes where possible.
 4. **Monitoring & evaluation**: use mixed methods—classroom observation, teacher self-reports, and student progress metrics—to evaluate effectiveness of training and school supports.
 5. **Policy alignment**: District education authorities (e.g., Directorate of Education, Delhi) should prioritize targeted professional development budgets and incentives for schools making measurable progress in inclusion.
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Conclusion

Teacher attitude toward inclusion and teacher self-efficacy for inclusive practices are important psychological resources for inclusive education. This study focused on the South-West region of Delhi highlights the positive association between these teacher factors and the self-reported use of inclusive strategies in classrooms. Importantly, self-efficacy appears to be a stronger predictor of practice than attitude alone, suggesting that interventions should prioritize building teachers' confidence through practice-oriented training and ongoing support. For inclusive education to move from policy to practice in Delhi and similar contexts, investments in teacher capacity building, school support systems, and evidence-based monitoring are essential.

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