



Attitude of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education in the Upper Primary Schools of Uttar Pradesh

¹Ajay Kumar Yadav and ²Vinod Prakash Tiwari

¹Assistant professor

Faculty of Education, Jangi Mahavidyala, Asabaranpur, Jaunpur, (U.P.) India

²Principal, New Era College, Mhow, Indore, (M.P.) India

Abstract

Inclusive education has emerged as a crucial element of contemporary educational reforms in India, particularly after the implementation of the Right to Education Act (RTE, 2009) and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD, 2016). Teachers, being the central agents of classroom transformation, play a vital role in ensuring the success of inclusive practices. This study aims to examine the attitudes of teachers working in upper primary schools of Uttar Pradesh toward inclusive education, focusing on their perceptions, preparedness, challenges, and willingness to accommodate diverse learners, including children with disabilities, learning difficulties, and socio-cultural disadvantages. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from a representative sample of upper primary school teachers through a standardized Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES). The findings revealed that most teachers hold a moderately positive attitude toward inclusive education, appreciating its philosophy of equity and equal opportunity. However, a significant proportion expressed concerns relating to lack of adequate training, limited infrastructural facilities, heavy workload, and insufficient teaching-learning resources. The analysis also highlighted differences in attitudes based on gender, teaching experience, school type, and level of professional training. The study emphasizes the need for robust in-service training programmes, better resource allocation, inclusive-friendly school environments, and continuous professional support. Strengthening teacher capacity is essential to effectively implement inclusive education in Uttar Pradesh and foster meaningful participation of all learners.

Keywords: Inclusive education, teacher attitude, upper primary, Uttar Pradesh, disability, pedagogy.

Introduction

Education is universally recognized as a powerful instrument for social transformation, economic progress, and the holistic development of individuals. In recent decades, the concept of inclusive education has gained significant momentum worldwide, reflecting a shift from segregation or integration toward a system where all children learn together, irrespective of their abilities, backgrounds, or learning needs. Inclusive education emphasizes removing barriers to participation, enhancing equal opportunities, and transforming schools into environments that nurture the potential of every child. In India, the vision of inclusive education aligns with constitutional mandates such as equality, non-discrimination, and social justice, and is further strengthened by policies such as the Right to Education Act (2009), the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), and the National Education Policy (2020). Together, these frameworks highlight the importance of providing inclusive, accessible, and quality education to children with diverse needs, particularly at the foundational and upper primary levels.

Upper primary education marks a crucial stage in a child's academic journey, serving as a bridge between foundational learning and secondary education. It is during this phase that students experience increasing academic demands, cognitive development, emotional changes, and social interactions. Teachers at this level play a central role in shaping student learning outcomes, attitudes, and self-confidence. Their beliefs and dispositions toward inclusive education significantly influence how effectively they accommodate students with disabilities, learning difficulties, behavioral challenges, linguistic diversity, and socio-economic disadvantages. The success or failure of inclusive education depends largely on teacher attitudes, classroom practices, and professional readiness. The state of Uttar Pradesh, being the most populous state in India, presents a diverse educational landscape marked by variations in infrastructure, teaching quality, resource availability, and student diversity. Upper primary schools in Uttar Pradesh enroll a significant number of children from rural, marginalized, and economically weaker backgrounds, as well as children with disabilities. However, despite policy-level initiatives, the implementation of inclusive education faces several challenges. Teachers often encounter large class sizes, limited training opportunities, inadequate teaching-learning materials, and insufficient administrative support. These factors influence their attitudes toward inclusive practices, which in turn shape the learning experiences of students with special educational needs.

Teacher attitude is a psychological construct that encompasses beliefs, emotions, perceptions, and predispositions to act in certain ways. A teacher with a positive attitude toward inclusion tends to adopt flexible teaching methods, exhibit empathy, modify classroom environments, and collaborate with peers and parents. Positive attitudes encourage teachers to view diversity as a strength, recognize the potential of all learners, and engage in reflective teaching. Conversely, negative or uncertain attitudes may result in resistance, lowered expectations, biases, and exclusionary practices. Several studies have shown that teacher attitudes are shaped by various factors including prior training, teaching experience, school environment, exposure to inclusive practices, and personal beliefs about disability and diversity. Although inclusive education is a national priority in India, differences arise in how teachers perceive and implement it across different states and regions. In Uttar Pradesh, many teachers express support for the philosophy of inclusive education but simultaneously express concerns about practical implementation. This discrepancy between ideological acceptance and classroom implementation underscores the importance of understanding teacher attitudes in depth. Upper primary teachers often face constraints such as lack of assistive devices, inadequate support staff, absence of specialized training, and insufficient academic resources. As a result, they may feel unprepared or hesitant to work with students who require individualized attention.

The shift toward inclusive education requires not only structural changes but also attitudinal transformation among teachers. Teacher education institutions have incorporated elements of inclusive pedagogy, yet many in-service teachers have had limited exposure to formal training on inclusive practices. This gap highlights the need to assess the preparedness and mindset of teachers working in upper primary schools. Understanding their attitudes can provide insights into barriers, opportunities, and areas where targeted interventions are needed. Such an assessment becomes particularly important in Uttar Pradesh, where educational disparities are wide and the inclusion agenda is crucial for achieving equity. The present study aims to explore and analyze the attitudes of teachers working in upper primary schools of Uttar Pradesh towards inclusive education. It seeks to investigate how teachers perceive the inclusion of learners with disabilities, slow learners, children from marginalized communities, and those with varied learning needs. The study examines the extent to which teachers feel confident in implementing inclusive strategies, their willingness to adapt teaching methods, and their perception of institutional support. It also explores demographic variables such as gender, teaching experience, qualification level, and school type to determine whether these factors influence teacher attitudes.

Research on teacher attitudes toward inclusive education is significant because it contributes to understanding how inclusive policies translate into classroom realities. Positive attitudes among teachers are essential for developing inclusive school cultures, promoting child-centered pedagogies, and ensuring meaningful participation of all students. By capturing teacher perspectives, the study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, administrators, and teacher educators. These recommendations may include strengthening in-service training programmes, improving school infrastructure, enhancing support mechanisms, and promoting awareness about inclusive practices.

5. Review of Literature

Inclusive education has emerged as a global priority, with emphasis on providing equitable learning opportunities to all children, including those with disabilities, learning difficulties, and socio-cultural disadvantages. Researchers worldwide have explored the attitudes of teachers, as their beliefs and perceptions strongly influence the implementation of inclusive practices. This review synthesizes significant national and international studies that highlight the conceptual evolution, determinants of teacher attitudes, and barriers to effective inclusion, thereby providing a structured foundation for the present study.

1. Conceptual Foundations of Inclusive Education

The idea of inclusion is rooted in the philosophy that every child has the right to participate in mainstream education without discrimination. UNESCO (1994) played a pioneering role through the Salamanca Statement, asserting that inclusive schools are “the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes” and ensuring equal opportunities. This perspective shifted the global dialogue from segregation to inclusion, emphasizing the transformation of schools into learner-friendly environments. Research by Ainscow (2005) argued that inclusive education is not limited to accommodating children with disabilities; rather, it encompasses addressing diversity in all forms—linguistic, cultural, socio-economic, and intellectual. Booth and Ainscow (2002) introduced the Index for Inclusion, which remains influential in defining inclusive school cultures, policies, and practices. Their framework highlights that teachers must possess positive attitudes to identify and remove barriers to learning.

2. Teacher Attitudes and Their Significance

Teacher attitudes are psychological determinants shaping classroom practices and interactions. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) conducted a landmark literature review that emphasized how teacher beliefs influence the acceptance of inclusive practices. They reported that teachers with positive attitudes are more willing to modify instruction, collaborate with colleagues, and provide emotional support to students with special needs. Studies by Sharma, Forlin, and Loreman (2008) across Australia, Hong Kong, and India revealed that attitudes toward inclusion are influenced by familiarity with special needs, prior experience, and professional training. Their findings demonstrate that teachers who have participated in inclusive education workshops or interacted with children with disabilities tend to hold more favorable attitudes. Similarly, the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) suggests that attitudes directly predict behavioral intentions, indicating that teachers with supportive attitudes are more likely to implement inclusive practices in the classroom. This reinforces the need to assess teacher attitudes as a precursor to improving inclusive education.

3. Global Studies on Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion

International research has widely addressed teacher attitudes across educational contexts. For example, Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) reviewed 28 U.S.-based studies and concluded that while teachers

support the general philosophy of inclusion, many express concerns about classroom management, inadequate training, and heavy workloads. Their concern was that teachers lacked confidence in meeting diverse learning needs without sufficient resources. In Europe, Forlin (2010) found that teachers in Italy and Spain displayed moderately positive attitudes but struggled with implementing differentiated instruction. Similarly, research in South Africa by Engelbrecht (2006) revealed that teachers support inclusion but face structural limitations such as large class sizes and insufficient teaching materials. In the Middle Eastern context, Alghazo and Naggat Gaad (2004) found that teachers in the United Arab Emirates showed low confidence in inclusive practices, mainly due to a lack of specialized training. Studies in Turkey (Kaya & İzci, 2019) also highlighted that teacher readiness and training greatly influence attitudes.

4. Indian Studies on Inclusive Education and Teacher Attitudes

In India, inclusive education became prominent with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Right to Education Act (2009), and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016). Research in India has explored teacher readiness, challenges, and attitudes in implementing these reforms. Mohapatra and Dash (2018) conducted a study on teachers in Odisha and found that while teachers were sympathetic towards children with disabilities, they lacked pedagogical strategies to support them. Their study emphasized the need for structured in-service training programmes. Sharma and Desai (2002) found that Indian teachers hold neutral to slightly positive attitudes but express concerns regarding workload, lack of assistive devices, and insufficient classroom support. Similar findings were reported by Bhatnagar and Das (2014), who studied teachers in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. Their results showed that although teachers appreciate the ideal of inclusion, they do not feel adequately prepared to handle diverse learning needs. Kumar and Raja (2019) examined teachers from Tamil Nadu and reported that attitudes varied significantly based on experience and training. Teachers who had completed special education courses demonstrated significantly more positive attitudes. Meanwhile, pre-service teachers often displayed positive attitudes due to exposure to inclusive pedagogy in B.Ed. curriculum, but in-service teachers struggled with actual implementation.

5. Attitude Differences Based on Demographic Variables

Demographic variables play an important role in shaping teacher attitudes. Several studies have highlighted that female teachers generally exhibit more positive attitudes toward inclusion as compared to male teachers (Avramidis et al., 2000; Bhatnagar & Das, 2014). Gender differences may stem from varying emotional perspectives, empathy levels, or educational experiences. Teaching experience also influences attitudes. Research indicates that teachers with fewer years of experience may be more open to adopting inclusive practices, while older teachers sometimes resist changes due to traditional teaching backgrounds (Forlin, 2010). Teacher qualifications also affect attitudes. Studies by Padmavathi (2018) found that teachers with higher qualifications or specialized training in inclusive education show greater preparedness and acceptance. School type is another determinant. Private school teachers often display more positive attitudes because of smaller class sizes, better infrastructure, and access to teaching aids. In contrast, government school teachers in rural areas frequently report challenges due to overcrowded classrooms and inadequate support staff.

6. Barriers to Positive Attitudes and Effective Inclusion

Although inclusive education is widely supported in principle, several challenges hinder its effective implementation in India and globally. These challenges influence teacher attitudes significantly.

a) Lack of training: The most frequently reported barrier is insufficient training. Teachers often lack the knowledge to identify disabilities, use assistive tools, or design individualized learning plans. Studies

by Forlin (2010) and Sharma et al. (2008) emphasized that training improves teacher attitudes significantly.

b) Inadequate infrastructure: Many schools lack ramps, resource rooms, special educators, and accessible toilets. In Uttar Pradesh, infrastructural limitations are a major concern reported in studies by Bhatnagar and Das (2014).

c) Large class sizes: Overcrowded classrooms make it difficult to provide personalized attention, leading to teacher stress and negative perceptions of inclusion.

d) Curriculum rigidity: Indian school curricula often focus on content-heavy syllabi rather than skill-based learning, making it difficult to individualize instruction for diverse learners.

e) Lack of administrative support: Absence of guidance from school principals or education officers often leaves teachers feeling isolated when dealing with students with special needs.

f) Social stigma and parental attitudes: Community attitudes sometimes negatively influence teachers' perceptions, particularly in rural areas, where disabilities are misunderstood or stigmatized.

7. Positive Trends and Emerging Perspectives

Despite challenges, there is growing evidence of improvement in teacher attitudes toward inclusive education. Increased advocacy, teacher training modules under the NEP 2020, and integration of inclusive practices in B.Ed. and D.El.Ed. curriculums have strengthened awareness among teachers. Pilot initiatives in states like Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Maharashtra have shown that when teachers are provided with continuous professional development, collaboration with special educators, and adequate resources, their attitudes become highly positive. Studies by Singal (2016) and Das & Kattumuri (2021) documented significant improvements in teacher confidence when inclusive education is supplemented with structured support systems. New research also highlights the importance of reflective teaching practices, peer collaboration, inclusive pedagogy training, and school-community partnerships. These approaches help teachers understand diversity as an enriching component of classroom learning.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the attitude of upper primary teachers toward inclusive education.
2. To compare attitude between male and female teachers.
3. To compare rural and urban teachers' attitudes.

7. Hypotheses

H1: There is no significant difference in attitude based on gender.

H2: There is no significant difference between rural and urban teachers.

H3: Teaching experience does not affect teachers' attitude.

8. Research Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive survey research design to investigate the attitudes of teachers toward inclusive education in upper primary schools of Uttar Pradesh. This design was chosen because

it enables the researcher to collect factual information, identify existing conditions, and understand teachers' perspectives without manipulating variables. The study population comprised upper primary school teachers working in both government and private institutions across selected districts of Uttar Pradesh. From this population, a representative sample of teachers was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure proportional representation of gender, school type, and teaching experience. The final sample size was adequate to conduct meaningful statistical analysis and draw reliable conclusions.

Data were collected using a standardized and validated Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES), which measures teachers' perceptions across dimensions such as acceptance of inclusive philosophy, confidence in handling diverse learners, perceived institutional support, instructional readiness, and perceived challenges. The tool included a mix of positive and negative statements rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Before the final administration, a pilot study was conducted to assess the clarity, reliability, and internal consistency of the instrument. The calculated reliability coefficient indicated that the tool was suitable for the present research.

The data collection process involved distributing questionnaires personally as well as online to ensure wider reach and higher response rates. Respondents were assured of confidentiality, and the purpose of the study was clearly explained to encourage honest responses. After collecting the data, both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, percentage, and standard deviation were used to summarize the general attitudes of teachers. Inferential statistics such as t-test and ANOVA were utilized to examine differences in attitudes across demographic variables like gender, teaching experience, and school type. The analysis was performed using statistical software to ensure accuracy. The methodology adopted provides a systematic and objective framework for understanding teacher attitudes toward inclusive education in the state.

9. Data Analysis

The present chapter focuses on the systematic analysis and of data collected to assess the attitude of teachers toward inclusive education in upper primary schools of Uttar Pradesh. The data were collected from a representative sample of teachers across government, aided, and private schools. The standardized Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) was used to measure teachers' perceptions on key dimensions including *philosophical acceptance, readiness and preparedness, instructional adaptability, infrastructural adequacy, perceived challenges, and overall attitude*. The analysis includes descriptive statistics, percentage distribution, mean scores, and comparative tables for demographic variables such as gender, teaching experience, academic qualification, school type, and training status. The primary objective of this analysis is to understand teachers' level of acceptance and willingness toward inclusive practices, as well as the structural and professional constraints that may influence their attitudes. The chapter is divided into sections dealing with demographic characteristics, dimensional analysis, comparative attitude scores, and of overall findings.

9.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Teachers by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	120	48
Female	130	52
Total	250	100

The gender distribution shows a slightly higher representation of female teachers (52%) compared to male teachers (48%). This reflects the increasing participation of women in the teaching profession, especially at the upper primary level in Uttar Pradesh. The relatively balanced representation provides a suitable basis for comparing gender-based attitude differences toward inclusive education.

9.2 Attitude Scores by Gender

Table 2: Mean Attitude Score by Gender

Gender	Mean Score	
Male	72.4	Moderately Positive
Female	78.8	Positive

Female teachers exhibit a stronger positive attitude toward inclusive education than male teachers. This may be due to higher empathy levels, nurturing tendencies, and greater openness toward child-centered pedagogy among female teachers. The difference indicates the need for more gender-sensitive training modules to uplift male teachers' participation in inclusive practices.

9.3 Attitude by Teaching Experience

Table 3: Distribution by Teaching Experience

Experience (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0–5 years	70	28
6–10 years	85	34
11–15 years	55	22
Above 15 years	40	16
Total	250	100

The highest proportion (34%) of respondents has 6–10 years of experience, followed by fresh teachers with 0–5 years of experience (28%). A sizable portion (38%) of teachers has more than 10 years of experience. Such diversity enables meaningful of how experience influences attitudes toward inclusive practices.

Table 4: Mean Attitude Score by Experience

Experience Group	Mean Score	Level of Attitude
0–5 years	82.1	Highly Positive
6–10 years	77.5	Moderately Positive
11–15 years	70.3	Neutral to Moderately Positive
Above 15 years	68.7	Neutral

younger teachers (0–5 years) show the most positive attitude toward inclusive education. Teachers with longer experience show more conservative responses. This may be because younger teachers are recently trained under updated teacher-education frameworks emphasizing inclusive education, while older teachers did not receive similar training during their professional preparation. These findings highlight the significance of regular, updated, in-service training for senior teachers.

9.4 Attitude by Professional Qualification

Table 5: Distribution of Teachers by Highest Professional Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
B.Ed.	165	66
M.Ed.	55	22

Other (D.El.Ed./B.T.C.)	30	12
Total	250	100

A majority (66%) of the respondents hold a B.Ed. degree, which is the minimum professional requirement for upper primary education. Only 22% are M.Ed. holders, indicating limited pursuit of higher professional qualifications in teaching. The presence of teachers with D.El.Ed./BTC reflects the state's flexibility in teacher recruitment.

Table 6: Mean Attitude Score by Qualification

Qualification	Mean Score	Attitude Level
B.Ed.	75.4	Moderately Positive
M.Ed.	82.6	Highly Positive
D.El.Ed./BTC	68.2	Neutral

Teachers with M.Ed. degrees show the most positive attitude, likely due to better theoretical understanding of inclusive frameworks. BTC/D.El.Ed. teachers, who have limited exposure to inclusive pedagogy during their training, exhibit lower attitude scores.

9.5 Attitude by School Type

Table 7: Distribution by School Type

School Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Government	130	52%
Aided	40	16%
Private	80	32%
Total	250	100%

Government schools constitute the majority (52%) of the sample due to their larger presence in Uttar Pradesh. Private schools (32%) and aided schools (16%) also contribute significantly.

Table 8: Mean Attitude Score by School Type

School Type	Mean Score	
Government	74.2	Moderately Positive
Aided	80.5	Strongly Positive
Private	69.1	Neutral to Moderately Positive

Aided school teachers show the highest positive attitude. This may be due to better student-teacher interaction, relatively lower workload, and improved resources compared to government schools. Private school teachers' comparatively neutral attitude may be influenced by greater performance pressure and larger classroom sizes.

9.6 Attitude Dimensions

The ATIES tool measures **five key dimensions** of teachers' attitudes. Each dimension is analyzed separately.

Table 9: Dimension-wise Mean Scores

Dimension	Mean Score	
Philosophical Acceptance	81.3	Highly Positive
Instructional Adaptability	74.5	Moderately Positive

Infrastructure Perception	60.8	Low
Readiness & Preparedness	72.1	Moderately Positive
Perceived Challenges	55.3	High Challenges Indicated

Teachers show a **strong philosophical acceptance** of inclusive education, agreeing with its principles of equality and social justice. However, their perception of infrastructure (mean = 60.8) is low, indicating inadequate physical facilities and resource support. The “perceived challenges” dimension scores lowest (55.3), revealing the burden teachers feel when dealing with diverse learners without sufficient training and support systems.

9.7 Overall Attitude Score

Table 10: Overall Attitude Score (Categorized)

Category	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Positive	80 and above	65	26%
Moderately Positive	65–79	130	52%
Neutral	50–64	45	18%
Negative	Below 50	10	4%
Total	—	250	100%

A total of 78% teachers (26% highly positive + 52% moderately positive) exhibit a generally positive attitude. Only 4% show negative attitudes. The neutral group (18%) primarily consists of teachers with long experience or limited training. This distribution strongly supports the feasibility of implementing inclusive education with proper training and resources.

9.8 Comparative Analysis: Trained vs. Untrained Teachers

Table 11: Attitude Scores Based on Inclusive Education Training

Training Status	Mean Score	Attitude Level
Trained in Inclusive Education	84.6	Highly Positive
Not Trained	68.4	Neutral to Moderately Positive

Training makes a significant difference: trained teachers show highly positive attitudes, while untrained teachers show only moderate acceptance. This establishes training as the most powerful variable influencing inclusive attitudes.

9.9 Interrelationship Between Dimensions

Table 12: Correlation Between Dimensions

Dimension Pair	Correlation (r)	Strength
Philosophical Acceptance & Instructional Adaptability	0.78	Strong
Readiness & Perceived Challenges	–0.64	Strong Negative
Infrastructure & Instructional Adaptability	0.52	Moderate

A strong positive correlation (0.78) exists between acceptance and adaptability, meaning teachers who philosophically support inclusion are more willing to adjust instructional strategies. The strong negative correlation (–0.64) between readiness and perceived challenges suggests that lack of readiness increases challenges. Improving training and resources lowers perceived challenges significantly. The analysis highlights that teachers of upper primary schools exhibit generally positive attitudes toward inclusive education but face constraints related to infrastructure, training, classroom management, and workload. Younger and better-qualified teachers show more enthusiasm, whereas teachers with longer experience express more reservations. Across dimensions, teachers strongly believe in the value of inclusive education but lack adequate support systems to implement it effectively.

Findings

The findings of the study provide an in-depth understanding of the attitude of teachers toward inclusive education in upper primary schools across Uttar Pradesh. Analysis of the data revealed that a significant majority of teachers hold a moderately positive to highly positive attitude toward inclusive education, reflecting their philosophical acceptance of the concept. Teachers believe that inclusive education promotes equality, social justice, and opportunities for all learners, including those with disabilities and diverse learning needs. This suggests that the conceptual acceptance of inclusive principles is firmly rooted among most teachers, which forms a strong foundation for further implementation. The study also brought to light considerable gaps in readiness, preparedness, and practical implementation at the school level. Teachers reported facing challenges due to inadequate infrastructure, such as the absence of ramps, resource rooms, assistive devices, and modified classroom arrangements. Many teachers expressed concern over the lack of trained special educators, insufficient government support, and absence of appropriate teaching-learning materials suitable for diverse learners. These gaps significantly influenced teachers' ability to effectively practice inclusive methods in real classrooms.

Comparative analysis revealed notable differences in attitudes based on demographic variables. Female teachers and younger teachers displayed more positive attitudes compared to their male and more experienced counterparts. Teachers with higher qualifications, particularly M.Ed. holders, expressed a deeper understanding and appreciation of inclusive principles. Similarly, teachers who had undergone training in inclusive education demonstrated significantly higher attitude scores than those without training, indicating the strong role of professional development in shaping positive attitudes. Differences were also observed across school types; aided schools exhibited more positive attitudes, while private schools showed comparatively lower enthusiasm due to performance pressures and larger student strength. The dimension-wise analysis showed that while teachers strongly agree with the philosophy of inclusion, their perceptions of infrastructural adequacy and institutional support remain low. The perceived level of challenges was also high among teachers, especially concerning classroom management, lack of parental involvement, and diversity in students' learning abilities. Despite these challenges, a majority of teachers expressed willingness to adapt their teaching practices, provided that adequate training, support, and resources are made available.

Discussion

The discussion of the findings highlights several critical insights about teachers' attitudes and how these attitudes influence the effective implementation of inclusive education in upper primary schools of Uttar Pradesh. One of the most significant observations from the study is the strong philosophical acceptance of inclusive education among teachers. This aligns with the national educational agenda promoting equality and equal access to quality education as per RTE Act, 2009 and RPwD Act, 2016. Teachers largely agree that inclusive education promotes social harmony, reduces discrimination, and fosters peer learning. This conceptual acceptance forms an essential starting point, as positive attitudes are prerequisites for successful implementation. Despite this conceptual acceptance, the practical readiness of teachers appears to be less robust. Many teachers lack adequate training and feel unprepared to teach students with diverse learning needs. This gap between belief and ability is consistent with previous research which suggests that teachers' attitudes are shaped not only by their values but also by their confidence and competence. Teachers who do not feel adequately skilled may show hesitation or discomfort even if they ideologically support inclusion. In this study, trained teachers exhibited significantly higher positive attitudes, indicating that structured training programs can enhance teachers' confidence and willingness to participate in inclusive practices.

The study's findings also show major infrastructural and systemic challenges in inclusive education. Teachers consistently pointed out issues like overcrowded classrooms, lack of assistive devices,

insufficient special educators, and inadequate school facilities. These challenges directly impact teachers' ability to adapt instruction to diverse learners. Without proper infrastructure and resources, the burden of inclusive teaching falls disproportionately on the teacher, which may affect classroom management and teaching effectiveness. Therefore, it becomes evident that positive attitudes alone are insufficient; institutional support and infrastructure must complement them. Demographic analysis also yielded noteworthy insights. Female teachers showed more favorable attitudes compared to male teachers, likely due to greater patience, empathy, and inclination toward nurturing roles traditionally associated with female educators. Younger teachers showed stronger positive attitudes, which can be attributed to their exposure to updated pedagogical frameworks during their recent training. In contrast, more experienced teachers, who may not have received formal training in inclusive education earlier, expressed concerns about managing diverse learners.

The differences across school types highlight deeper systemic disparities. Aided schools demonstrated the highest mean attitude scores, possibly due to their moderate student strength, better teacher-student ratios, and longer-standing focus on community engagement. Private schools, despite having better facilities, showed more neutral attitudes, likely because teachers face pressure to maintain academic performance metrics, making them hesitant to accommodate diverse learners who may require additional instructional time. The analysis of the five dimensions further reveals nuanced information. Teachers strongly endorse the philosophical ideals of inclusive education but express concerns regarding infrastructural adequacy and perceived challenges. The low mean score for "infrastructure perception" underscores the urgent need for school-level improvements, such as accessibility, technological integration, and classroom modifications. The high "perceived challenges" mean score suggests teachers require immediate professional and administrative support.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that teachers in the upper primary schools of Uttar Pradesh generally possess positive attitudes toward inclusive education, reflecting their acceptance of its philosophy and recognition of its significance in promoting equitable learning opportunities. A considerable proportion of teachers agree that inclusive education fosters social integration and supports learners with diverse needs. This indicates that the foundational mindset for the implementation of inclusion is well-established among the teaching community. The study also reveals a clear disparity between teachers' conceptual acceptance of inclusion and their practical readiness to implement it. While teachers express willingness to embrace inclusive practices, many feel inadequately prepared due to insufficient training, lack of essential resources, and absence of infrastructural support. These gaps significantly affect teachers' confidence in managing diverse learning needs within regular classrooms. The dimension-wise analysis also identifies infrastructure and perceived challenges as the major barriers that hinder effective inclusive teaching in schools. Demographic variations suggest that younger teachers, female teachers, and those holding higher qualifications or professional training in inclusive education show stronger positive attitudes. This highlights the need for targeted professional development programs for teachers with more experience or limited exposure to inclusive pedagogy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the implementation of inclusive education in upper primary schools of Uttar Pradesh. First, there is an urgent need to provide comprehensive pre-service and in-service training to teachers on inclusive pedagogy, classroom management strategies, and the use of assistive technologies. Such training should be regular, practical, and aligned with the specific challenges teachers face. Second, schools must be equipped with adequate infrastructure, including ramps, accessible toilets, resource rooms, learning materials, and technological tools that support diverse learners. The government should ensure the recruitment and

deployment of special educators in all upper primary schools to provide specialized support to teachers and students. Collaborative teaching models—where general and special educators work together—should be promoted to enhance instructional effectiveness. Fourth, school administrators should foster an inclusion-friendly environment by encouraging community awareness programs, parental involvement, and sensitization workshops. This will help build a supportive ecosystem for children with special needs. class sizes should be reduced in overcrowded schools to enable teachers to give individualized attention to students requiring additional support. Regular monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms should be established to ensure the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives.

Limitations

The study, while comprehensive, is subject to certain limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size, although statistically adequate, was limited to selected districts of Uttar Pradesh, and therefore the findings may not represent the attitudes of all upper primary teachers across the state. Second, the study relied on self-reported data through a standardized attitude scale, which may be influenced by social desirability bias, potentially leading to overestimation of positive attitudes. Third, the study focused primarily on teachers' attitudes and did not include observations of classroom practices, which could have provided deeper insights into how attitudes translate into actual teaching behaviors. the study did not examine administrative attitudes, parental perspectives, or student experiences, all of which are influential components of inclusive education.

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