



A Study on Attitude of Parents Towards Inclusive Education in Kamrup Rural and Nagaon Districts of Assam

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ABSTRACT

The success of inclusive education largely depends on the attitudes of various stakeholders, particularly parents, who play a crucial role in shaping the educational experiences of their children. In the context of Assam, particularly in the districts of Kamrup Rural and Nagaon, understanding parental attitudes towards inclusive education is essential for effective policy implementation and educational reform. For this study 24 secondary schools and 50 parents of secondary schools were selected from the districts mentioned above. The study shows that the parents have positive attitude in general towards inclusive education. The findings show that there has been no significant difference in the attitude of the parents based on gender, age group and locality. However, the mean scores of fathers indicate that they have slightly more favourable attitude than the mothers, the parents above 40 years have also a little more favourable than the younger parents towards inclusive education and locality as a variable, the parents from the rural areas of these districts found to be more positive than the parents from urban areas.

Key Words: Inclusive education, Secondary Schools, Attitude, Stakeholders, Disability.

INTRODUCTION:

Inclusive education is a pedagogical approach that seeks to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN). It emphasizes the importance of integrating students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms, thereby fostering an environment of acceptance and diversity. The success of inclusive education largely depends on the attitudes of various stakeholders, particularly parents, who play a crucial role in shaping the educational experiences of their children. In the context of Assam, particularly in the districts of Kamrup Rural and Nagaon, understanding parental attitudes towards inclusive education is essential for effective policy implementation and educational reform.

Research has shown that parental attitudes can significantly impact the outcomes of inclusive education systems. Positive attitudes among parents are associated with greater support for inclusive practices, while negative attitudes can lead to resistance and hinder the implementation of inclusive policies “Parental Perception of Inclusive Education” (2020). In Assam, where cultural, social, and economic factors vary widely, it is crucial to explore how these elements influence parental perceptions of inclusive education.

Moreover, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the importance of inclusive education as a means to promote holistic growth and development among all students (Rahman, 2021). However, the successful implementation of these policies requires the active involvement and support of parents. Understanding parental attitudes is therefore critical for identifying barriers to inclusion and developing targeted interventions that promote positive perceptions.

This study aims to investigate the attitudes of parents towards inclusive education in the specified districts of Assam. By examining the factors that influence these attitudes, the research seeks to provide insights that can inform educational stakeholders, policymakers, and practitioners about the necessary steps to foster a supportive environment for inclusive education. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive education in India, highlighting the importance of parental involvement in achieving educational equity for all students.

REVIEWS OF RELATED LITERATURE:

The attitudes of parents towards inclusive education are critical for the successful implementation and sustainability of inclusive practices in schools. This literature review synthesizes existing research on parental attitudes towards inclusive education, highlighting key findings and themes relevant to the study of parents' attitudes in Kamrup Rural and Nagaon districts of Assam.

Research consistently indicates that parental attitudes significantly influence the success of inclusive education. Mathur and Koradia, 2018 found that the attitudes of parents of typically developing children are heavily dependent on the severity of the disabilities of their peers. This suggests that parents may have varying levels of acceptance based on their understanding and experiences with disabilities, which can affect their support for inclusive practices.

Aboelmaaty (2023) identified that the educational level of parents is a statistically significant predictor of their attitudes towards inclusion. Parents with higher educational backgrounds tend to have more favorable attitudes towards inclusive education, likely due to better awareness and understanding of the benefits of inclusion. This finding aligns with other studies that suggest educational attainment plays a crucial role in shaping parental perceptions (Aboelmaaty, 2023; Page et al., 2020).

The availability of information and direct experiences with children with special needs are critical factors influencing parental attitudes. Arman and Kurniawati (2019) noted that parents who have had meaningful interactions with children with disabilities tend to exhibit more positive attitudes towards inclusion. This highlights the importance of community engagement and awareness programs that facilitate interactions between parents and children with special needs.

Research has shown that gender plays a role in shaping parental attitudes towards inclusive education. Alshemari et al. (2023) found that female parents are generally more supportive of inclusive practices than male parents. This difference may stem from varying levels of engagement and emotional investment in the educational experiences of their children, suggesting that targeted outreach efforts may be necessary to engage male parents more effectively.

The cultural context significantly influences parental attitudes towards inclusive education. Studies conducted in various countries, including Ghana and Kuwait, reveal that cultural beliefs and societal norms can shape how parents perceive inclusion. Understanding the local cultural dynamics in Assam is essential for interpreting parental attitudes and developing effective strategies for promoting inclusive education (Amponteng et al., 2018; Gasteiger-Klicpera et al., 2013).

The literature emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in advocating for inclusive education. Sabila & Kurniawati (2019) highlighted that parents with open views towards inclusion are more likely to support and participate in the implementation of inclusive practices in schools. This underscores the need for schools to foster strong partnerships with parents to enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education.

Despite the overall positive trends in parental attitudes, barriers still exist. Research indicates that misconceptions about the effectiveness of inclusive education and concerns about the quality of education for typically developing children can lead to resistance among parents. Addressing these concerns through targeted communication and education is crucial for fostering a more supportive environment for inclusion ("Parental Perception of Inclusive Education", 2020).

The above literature reveals that parental attitudes towards inclusive education are influenced by a variety of factors, including educational level, gender, personal experiences, and cultural context. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing effective strategies to promote inclusive education in the districts of Assam. This study aims to build on existing research by providing empirical evidence on parental attitudes in the specified regions, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on inclusive education.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY:

The rationale for conducting this study on the attitudes of parents towards inclusive education in the districts of Kamrup Rural and Nagaon in Assam is multifaceted, reflecting the critical role that parental perceptions play in the successful implementation of inclusive educational practices. Inclusive education aims to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Understanding parents' attitudes is essential for several reasons like Influence on Educational Outcomes, Demographic Variability, Cultural Context, Addressing Concerns and Misconceptions, Policy Implications and Promoting Collaboration.

The rationale for this study is grounded in the understanding that parental attitudes are a critical factor in the success of inclusive education. By examining these attitudes in the specific context of Assam, this research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on inclusive education, providing insights that can enhance educational practices and policies in the region.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The implementation of inclusive education has emerged as a critical focus in educational reform, particularly in diverse contexts such as Assam, India. Despite the recognized benefits of inclusive education for children with special needs, the attitudes of parents play a pivotal role in determining the success of such initiatives. In the districts of Kamrup Rural and Nagaon, there exists a pressing need to understand parental attitudes towards inclusive education, as these attitudes can significantly influence the acceptance and effectiveness of inclusive practices in schools. Hence, the problem is stated as “A Study on Attitude of Parents Towards Inclusive Education in Kamrup Rural and Nagaon Districts of Assam.”

OBJECTIVES:

1. To find the level of attitude of parents towards inclusive education at secondary school stage in Kamrup Rural and Nagaon districts of Assam.
2. To find out the difference between the Attitude mean scores of Secondary School parents towards Inclusive Education in respect of their gender, age group and locality.

HYPOTHESIS:

1. There is no significant difference between the overall attitude mean score of parents of Secondary School students in Kamrup Rural and Nagaon Districts of Assam towards Inclusive Education in respect to variables like their Gender, age group (≤ 40 years and > 40 years) and the locality.

METHOD ADOPTED:

The researcher adopted a descriptive cum normative survey method. The descriptive cum normative survey method is a research approach that integrates both descriptive and normative elements to enhance the understanding of social behaviors and attitudes in current scenario. This method is particularly effective in contexts where researchers aim to capture not only the existing state of affairs but also the expectations or standards that govern behaviors of the individuals. The descriptive normative appeals effectively increased response rates across different samples, indicating the generalizability of these findings (Misra et al., 2013).

RESEARCH DESIGN:

As per the nature of method adopted, the researcher used the cross-sectional research design. One of the primary reasons for utilizing a cross-sectional study is its efficiency in data collection. Cross-sectional studies allow researchers to gather data from a large sample in a relatively short time frame, which is particularly beneficial when resources are limited. For instance, employed a descriptive survey as its main research design to assess household perceptions of garbage collection practices, highlighting the method's effectiveness in capturing data quickly and efficiently (Jauculan, 2023). Similarly, noted that descriptive surveys are designed to gather opinions and attitudes from large groups, thereby facilitating the collection of comprehensive data on various phenomena (Aybek & Aslan, 2017).

POPULATION OF THE STUDY:

The population of the study was taken from two districts (Kamrup Rural and Nagaon). Twenty-four schools were selected from two districts. One hundred twenty parents were selected from the 24 schools. The sample of the study was drawn from this population.

The details of the total population of the study have been shown in Table – 1

Table - 1: Total population.

Particulars	Districts		Total
	Kamrup Rural	Nagaon	
Total No. of Schools	10	14	24
Total number of Parents	50	70	120

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY:

The details of the selected schools and parents, on the basis of sub-division, gender, age group and the locality (urban and rural) are shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table - 2: Selected Sample of schools and their Parents.

Particulars	Districts		Total
	Kamrup Rural	Nagaon	

No. of Schools Selected	6	10	16
Total number of Parents	12	38	50

Table - 3: Background information of parents

Particulars		Number	Percentage (%)
Total Sample		50	100.00
Gender	Fathers	21	42.00
	Mothers	29	58.00
Age	≤ 40 years	18	36.00
	> 40 years	32	64.00
Locality	Rural	30	60.00
	Urban	20	40.00

TOOL USED:

Tools play a magnificent role in collecting the relevant and reliability data. As per the nature of the objectives of the study, the investigator used the *Attitude Scale for measuring the attitude of the parents towards inclusive education* developed by him.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

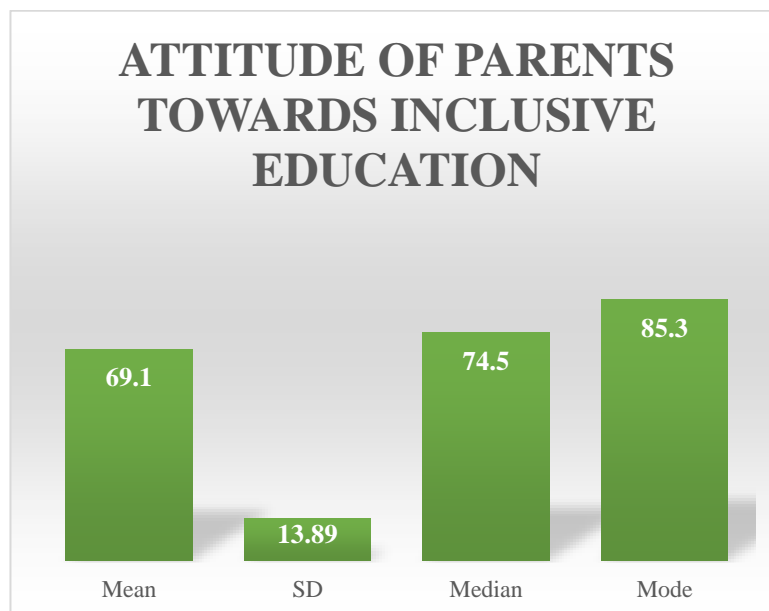
Objective – 1: To study the attitude of the Parents towards Inclusive Education in Kamrup Rural and Nagaon Districts of Assam.

For achieving this objective – 1, the researcher collected the data from two districts of Assam as indicated in the objective – 1 and the attitude scores of Parents of these selected districts of Assam have been shown in Frequency Table – 4.

Table – 4: Frequency Table showing the Attitude Scores of the Parents towards Inclusive Education in Kamrup Rural and Nagaon Districts of Assam.

CI	80 – 89	70 – 79	60 – 69	50 – 59	40 – 49	30 – 39
F	17	8	11	10	3	1

N = 50 Mean = 69.1 SD (σ) = 13.89 Median = 74.5 Mode = 85.3

**Figure 1: Figure showing the Attitude Mean, Median, Mode and SD (σ) Scores of the Parents in Kamrup Rural and Nagaon Districts of Assam Towards Inclusive Education.**

For achieving the objective – 1 and testing hypotheses, the researcher computed means, SDs, SE_D, and t-values of the attitude scores of secondary school students as shown in table 4.

The data provided regarding the attitudes of parents of secondary school students towards inclusive education in two districts of Assam reveals important insights into their perceptions. With a sample size (N) of 50, a mean score of 69.1, a standard deviation (SD) of 13.89, a median of 74.5, and a mode of 85.3, we can interpret these statistics to understand the general attitude of parents towards inclusive education.

The mean score of 69.1 suggests a generally positive attitude among parents towards inclusive education, as scores above 50 typically indicate favorable perceptions. The standard deviation of 13.89 indicates a moderate level of variability in responses, suggesting that while many parents hold positive views, there are also significant differences in attitudes among individuals. The median score of 74.5, being close to the mean, reinforces the idea that the distribution of attitudes is relatively symmetrical. The mode of 85.3, being the most frequently occurring score, indicates that a notable subset of parents holds particularly strong positive views towards inclusive education.

Objective- 2: To find out the difference between the Attitude mean scores of Secondary School parents towards Inclusive Education in respect of their gender, age group and locality.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the overall attitude mean score of parents of Secondary School students in Kamrup Rural and Nagaon Districts of Assam towards Inclusive Education in respect to variables like their Gender, age group (≤ 40 years and > 40 years) and the locality.

For achieving this objective – 2, the researcher collected the data from two districts of Assam as indicated in the objective – 2 and the attitude scores of Parents of these selected districts of Assam have been shown in Frequency Table – 5.

Table – 5: Showing the computed the Means, SDs, SE_D, and t-value on attitude with respect to variables of Secondary School parents of Assam towards Inclusive Education.

Particulars		Number	Mean	SD	SE _D	t-Value
Total Sample		50	69.33	14.02	1.27	
Gender	Fathers	29	70.02	14.28	3.92	0.56
	Mothers	21	67.83	13.21		
Age	≤ 40 years	18	67.28	13.66	4.05	0.70
	> 40 years	32	70.13	13.91		
Locality	Rural	30	70.5	13.56	4.01	0.87
	Urban	20	67.0	14.10		

The data in Table – 5, regarding the attitudes of parents of secondary school students towards inclusive education in two districts of Assam provides a comprehensive overview of how various demographic factors – namely gender, age, and locality – affect these attitudes. The sample consists of 50 parents, with a mean score of 69.1, a standard deviation (SD) of 13.89, and varying scores across different demographic groups.

- i. The mean score for fathers (70.02) is higher than that for mothers (67.83) indicating a potential gender difference in the measured variable. However, the t-value of 0.56 suggests that this difference is not statistically significant, as it is below the commonly accepted threshold of 1.96 for significance at the 0.05 level in a two-tailed test. This indicates that while there is a difference in means, it may not be meaningful in practical terms. This suggests that while fathers may exhibit slightly more positive attitudes towards inclusive education, the difference is not statistically significant, indicating a general consensus among both genders regarding their support for inclusive education.
- ii. The data indicates that participants over 40 years have a higher mean score compared to those aged 40 years or younger. The t-value of 0.70 suggests that this difference is also not statistically significant. This finding may imply that age does not play a critical role in influencing the measured variable, or that other factors may be more influential.
- iii. The mean score for participants from rural areas is significantly higher than that for urban participants. However, the t-value of 0.87 indicates that this difference is not statistically significant. This suggests that while there may be a trend indicating that rural participants perform better, the difference does not reach statistical significance, which may warrant further investigation with a larger sample size.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The overall mean score of 69.33 indicates a generally positive attitude towards inclusive education among parents, which is encouraging for the implementation of inclusive practices in schools. This finding is consistent with studies that highlight the importance of parental attitudes in the success of inclusive education (Dukmak, 2023). The overall positive mean score indicates that parents are largely supportive of inclusive education, aligning with findings from the present study, which emphasize that positive attitudes among parents are crucial for the successful implementation of inclusive practices (Page et al., 2020).

The standard deviation suggests that while many parents are supportive, there are those who may harbor reservations or negative views. This variability could be influenced by factors such as personal experiences with disabilities, educational background, or exposure to inclusive practices, as noted by (Xu et al., 2022).

The mode indicates that a significant number of parents have very high support for inclusive education, which may reflect a growing awareness and acceptance of inclusive practices in the educational landscape of Assam.

This finding resonates with the present study's assertion that parental involvement is critical for the success of inclusive education (Aboelmaaty, 2023).

The findings from this study highlight the importance of fostering positive attitudes among parents towards inclusive education. As indicated by the present study, parental attitudes can significantly influence the effectiveness of inclusive practices in schools (Boer & Munde, 2014). The positive mean score suggests that there is a foundation upon which educational stakeholders can build to enhance inclusive education initiatives. However, the variability indicated by the standard deviation points to the necessity for targeted interventions to address the concerns of less supportive parents. Training programs for parents, similar to those discussed by Sokal and Katz, could enhance understanding and acceptance of inclusive education (Aboelmaaty, 2023). Additionally, as highlighted by the present study, parents' perceptions of teaching practices and available resources play a crucial role in shaping their attitudes towards inclusion (Paseka & Schwab, 2019).

The lack of significant gender differences in attitudes suggests that both fathers and mothers are equally supportive of inclusive education. However, the more positive attitudes among rural parents indicate a potential area for further exploration, as urban parents may face different challenges or have different perceptions regarding inclusion (Pozas, 2023).

The data indicates that participants over 40 years have a higher mean score compared to those aged 40 years or younger. The t-value of 0.70 suggests that this difference is also not statistically significant. However, the reference provided does not support this claim adequately, as it focuses on aggression levels in children rather than attitudes in adults (Koprinkova-Ilieva, 2019). Thus, further research may be needed to clarify the relationship between age and attitudes in this context.

The mean score for participants from rural areas is higher than that for urban participants. However, the t-value of 0.87 indicates that this difference is not statistically significant. The more positive attitudes among rural parents suggest that community engagement strategies could be beneficial in urban areas to enhance understanding and acceptance of inclusive education. Programs that involve parents in discussions about the benefits of inclusion and provide resources could bridge the gap in attitudes observed between rural and urban parents (Bandyopadhyay & Dhara, 2021).

RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

The analysis of the data reveals that while there are observable differences in mean scores across gender, age, and locality, none of these differences are statistically significant based on the provided t-values. This indicates that further research may be necessary:

- i. To explore these trends more deeply, potentially with larger sample sizes or additional variables that could influence the outcomes.
- ii. To explore the underlying reasons for the differences in attitudes based on age and locality.

CONCLUSION:

The attitudes of parents towards inclusive education in Assam are predominantly positive, which is encouraging for the future of inclusive practices in the region. However, addressing the concerns of those with less favorable views will be essential in ensuring that inclusive education is effectively implemented and sustained. While the overall attitudes of parents towards inclusive education in Assam are positive, understanding the nuances related to gender, age, and locality can help stakeholders develop targeted interventions to promote inclusive practices effectively.

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