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# Perceptions of Inclusive Education among Primary Teachers and Parents in Lucknow: A Reanalysis of a Community-Based Study

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## Abstract

Inclusive education requires more than the physical placement of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The perceptions, preparedness and perceived support of teachers, together with parents' expectations and concerns, are important contextual factors in determining how inclusion is experienced at school level. This study examined perceptions of inclusive education among parents and primary teachers in Lucknow, India. The original study employed a descriptive survey design and purposive sampling. The participants comprised 100 parents—50 parents of children with special needs and 50 parents of children without special needs—and 80 teachers, including 30 special education teachers and 50 regular primary teachers. Two Likert-type questionnaires were used: a nine-item parent questionnaire addressing perceived benefits and willingness to use inclusive schooling, and a 31-item teacher questionnaire addressing six dimensions of inclusion, including perceived benefits, competence, willingness, available support and teaching skills. Descriptive statistics and independent-group t-tests were originally reported.

The findings indicate generally favourable perceptions of inclusion among both parent groups and both teacher groups, but also reveal differences in perceived preparedness and instructional challenges. Special education teachers reported higher perceived benefits of inclusion and higher perceived competence than regular teachers. Regular teachers reported greater difficulty in teaching children with special educational needs. Parents of children without disabilities reported somewhat greater willingness to send their children to inclusive settings than parents of children with disabilities. However, a reanalysis of the reported means and standard deviations indicates that several statistical significance claims in the original dissertation are not supported by the summary statistics, highlighting the importance of transparent statistical reporting in educational research. The findings suggest that positive attitudes alone are insufficient for sustainable inclusion; teacher preparation, specialist collaboration, accessible resources and meaningful parent engagement are essential. The study also demonstrates the value of revisiting historical local evidence in light of contemporary inclusive-education policy and research.

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**Keywords:** inclusive education; primary education; parents; regular teachers; special educators; teacher competence; disability; India; Lucknow

## 1. Introduction

Inclusive education has increasingly shifted from a placement-oriented concept towards a broader framework concerned with access, participation, belonging, learning and educational success for diverse learners. The Salamanca Statement and subsequent international developments strengthened the principle that ordinary schools should be capable of educating children with diverse learning needs. Contemporary scholarship similarly conceptualizes inclusion as more than physical integration, emphasizing meaningful participation and appropriate support.

In India, the movement towards inclusive education has developed through successive policy and legislative initiatives. Earlier programmes and legislation emphasized integration of children with disabilities into ordinary educational settings, while subsequent policy developments have increasingly emphasized accessibility, reasonable accommodation, teacher preparation, individualized support and participation. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 specifically emphasizes the inclusion and equal participation of children with disabilities in the schooling system and calls for appropriate resources, special educators and resource centres.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 provides the contemporary statutory framework for disability rights in India. Current Government of India guidance emphasizes equal educational opportunities, accessibility, reasonable accommodation, individualized support, appropriate pedagogical measures, accessible learning materials, assistive devices and teacher training.

Within this framework, the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and parents remain important. Teachers are central to classroom implementation because they determine, in everyday practice, how curriculum, instruction, classroom participation and peer interaction are organized. Research has consistently identified teacher self-efficacy, training, experience and access to support as important factors associated with inclusive practice. A systematic review of 71 studies, for example, found that teaching experience, context, knowledge of inclusive education policy, teacher education, professional learning and experiential contact with persons with disabilities can influence teacher self-efficacy for inclusion.

At the same time, parents occupy a critical position in educational decision-making. Their perceptions may reflect concerns about academic achievement, social development,

acceptance, safety, teacher preparedness and the availability of appropriate support. Consequently, understanding both parent and teacher perspectives can provide a more comprehensive picture of the conditions under which inclusion is likely to be accepted and implemented.

The present paper revisits a study conducted in Lucknow during 2011–2012. The original dissertation sought to investigate the perceptions of primary teachers and parents concerning inclusion and specifically examined perceived benefits, willingness, teacher competence, available support and perceived teaching skills. The original study was conducted when Indian inclusive-education policy was evolving considerably; revisiting its findings provides an opportunity to identify enduring issues while interpreting them in the context of contemporary policy.

## 2. Purpose of the Study

The original investigation aimed to examine perceptions of inclusive education among primary teachers and parents in Lucknow. The study specifically considered:

a) Parents' perceptions of the benefits of inclusive education.
b) Parents' willingness to send their children to inclusive schools.
c) Teachers' perceptions of the benefits of inclusion.
d) Teachers' perceived competence for serving children with and without disabilities.
e) Teachers' willingness to teach in inclusive settings.
f) Teachers' perceptions of available support for inclusion.
g) Teachers' perceptions of their skills in teaching children without disabilities.
h) Teachers' perceptions of their skills in teaching children with special educational needs.

These objectives are explicitly set out in the original dissertation.

## 3. Research Questions

The study addressed two broad groups of questions.

**Parent-related questions**

- Do parents of children with and without disabilities differ in their perceptions of the benefits of inclusive education?
- Do the two groups differ in their willingness to send their children to inclusive schools?

**Teacher-related questions**

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- Do regular and special education teachers differ in their perceptions of the benefits of inclusion?
- Do they differ in their perceived competence?
- Do they differ in their willingness to teach in inclusive settings?
- Do they differ in their perceptions of available support?
- Do they differ in their perceived skills for teaching children without disabilities?
- Do they differ in their perceived skills for teaching children with special educational needs?

The original study was specifically concerned with primary-level inclusion in the Lucknow context.

## 4. Method

### 4.1 Research Design

The study used a **descriptive survey design**. No experimental manipulation was undertaken. Data were collected through questionnaires administered to parents and teachers. The original methodology describes purposive sampling and the use of descriptive statistics together with independent-group t-tests.

### 4.2 Participants

The original sample comprised **180 participants**:

| **Participant group** | **n** |
|---|---|
| Parents of children with special needs | 50 |
| Parents of children without special needs | 50 |
| Regular primary teachers | 50 |
| Special education teachers | 30 |
| **Total** | **180** |

The original dissertation states that purposive sampling was used and that participants were drawn from Lucknow, with the study delimited particularly to rural and semi-rural settings.

### 4.3 Instruments

Two questionnaires were developed by the researcher.

The **parent questionnaire** contained nine Likert-scale items rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It examined two dimensions:

1. Perceived benefits of inclusion.
2. Willingness to send the child to an inclusive setting.

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The **teacher questionnaire** contained 31 items using a five-point Likert scale and examined six dimensions:

1. Perceived benefits of inclusive education.
2. Perceived competence.
3. Willingness to teach in an inclusive setting.
4. Perceived availability of support.
5. Perceived skills for teaching children without disabilities.
6. Perceived skills for teaching children with special educational needs.

The dissertation states that the questionnaire content was informed by the literature and by examination of questionnaires used in earlier research.

### 4.4 Data Collection

The researcher met parents and teachers in different areas of Lucknow, explained the purpose of the study and provided instructions for responding to the five-point Likert scale.

### 4.5 Data Analysis

The original analysis included frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. Independent-group t-tests were used to compare groups.

For the present paper, the reported group means and standard deviations have additionally been examined using approximate Welch independent-samples t-tests. Because the original raw dataset is not available, these calculations should be regarded as **secondary calculations from reported summary statistics**, rather than a replication of the original analysis.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Parents' Perceptions of the Benefits of Inclusion

Parents of children with special needs had a reported mean score of **3.91 (SD = 0.78)**, while parents of children without special needs had a mean of **4.04 (SD = 0.74)**.

The original dissertation reported that 72% of parents of children with special needs and 80% of parents of children without special needs selected the positive end of the scale for perceived benefits.

However, the difference between the reported means is relatively small. A Welch t-test calculated from the reported means, standard deviations and sample sizes gives approximately $t = -0.86$, $p = .395$. Thus, based on the summary statistics available in the

dissertation, the difference should **not be described as statistically significant at the conventional .05 level**.

### 5.2 Parents' Willingness to Use Inclusive Education

The mean willingness score was **3.78 (SD = 0.87)** among parents of children with special needs and **3.85 (SD = 0.85)** among parents of children without special needs.

The original dissertation reported 63% willingness among parents of children with special needs and 73% among parents of children without special needs.

The difference in the reported means is small. Recalculation from the reported summary statistics produces approximately $t = -0.41$, $p = .685$. Consequently, the available summary statistics do not support the original claim that this difference was statistically significant.

### 5.3 Teachers' Perceptions of the Benefits of Inclusion

Special education teachers reported a mean of **4.30 (SD = 0.73)**, compared with **3.94 (SD = 0.85)** among regular teachers.

This represents a difference of 0.36 scale points. A Welch t-test based on the reported summary statistics gives approximately $t = 2.01$, $p \approx .049$.

Thus, the available summary statistics provide some evidence of a difference between the two groups, although the result is close to the conventional .05 threshold and should be interpreted cautiously given the absence of raw data.

### 5.4 Perceived Teacher Competence

Special education teachers reported a mean competence score of **4.18 (SD = 0.85)** compared with **3.94 (SD = 0.87)** among regular teachers.

The recalculated Welch test gives approximately $t = 1.21$, $p = .230$. Therefore, although the special education teachers reported a higher mean, the available summary statistics do not establish a statistically significant difference.

This is an important distinction from the original dissertation's interpretation, which described the difference as significant.

### 5.5 Willingness to Teach in Inclusive Settings

Both groups reported an identical mean of **3.59**. The standard deviations were 0.97 for special education teachers and 0.87 for regular teachers.

The resulting difference is effectively zero ($t \approx 0.00$, $p = 1.00$). Thus, the available evidence indicates broadly comparable willingness to teach in inclusive settings.

### 5.6 Perceived Availability of Support

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Special education teachers reported a mean of **3.54 (SD = 1.05)**, compared with **3.46 (SD = 0.93)** among regular teachers.

The difference was small and the recalculated Welch test gives approximately t = 0.34, p = .733. The evidence therefore does not support a statistically significant difference based on the reported summary statistics.

The original dissertation nevertheless reported that special education teachers perceived greater support.

**5.7 Perceived Skills for Teaching Children with Disabilities**

A notable difference appears in the reported means for this dimension. Special education teachers reported a mean of **3.29 (SD = 1.36)**, whereas regular teachers reported **4.30 (SD = 0.92)**.

The direction of this result is particularly important because it differs from the narrative interpretation in parts of the original dissertation. A recalculated Welch test gives approximately t = −3.60, p < .001.

This suggests that the reported data themselves indicate a substantial difference between the groups. However, because the original questionnaire wording and coding procedure are not fully available in the dissertation in a form that permits independent verification, the direction should be interpreted cautiously.

**5.8 Perceived Skills for Teaching Children without Disabilities**

Special education teachers reported a mean of **2.94 (SD = 1.12)** and regular teachers a mean of **3.02 (SD = 0.93)**.

The recalculated Welch test gives approximately t = −0.33, p = .743, indicating no statistically meaningful difference based on the available summary statistics.

**6. Summary of the Quantitative Findings**

| **Dimension** | **Special teachers** | **Regular teachers** | **Approx. Welch p** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Benefits of inclusion | 4.30 (0.73) | 3.94 (0.85) | .049 |
| Perceived competence | 4.18 (0.85) | 3.94 (0.87) | .230 |
| Willingness to teach | 3.59 (0.97) | 3.59 (0.87) | 1.000 |
| Available support | 3.54 (1.05) | 3.46 (0.93) | .733 |
| Skills: children with disabilities | 3.29 (1.36) | 4.30 (0.92) | <.001 |
| Skills: children without disabilities | 2.94 (1.12) | 3.02 (0.93) | .743 |

Note. Values are taken from the original dissertation. The p-values are approximate secondary calculations from the reported means, SDs and group sizes using Welch's independent-samples t-test. They are not calculations from the original raw dataset.

## 7. Discussion

The study provides several insights into how different stakeholders perceived inclusive education in Lucknow.

First, both groups of parents expressed generally favourable perceptions of the benefits of inclusion. The mean scores of 3.91 and 4.04 were above the midpoint of the five-point scale. This indicates that inclusive education was not generally rejected by parents. At the same time, parents of children with disabilities showed somewhat lower scores on both perceived benefits and willingness than parents of children without disabilities. This difference should not automatically be interpreted as opposition to inclusion. Parents of children with disabilities may have been responding to more immediate concerns regarding individualized instruction, teacher competence, accessibility and the availability of support.

This interpretation is consistent with wider research showing that parental views can be shaped by the perceived quality of educational services and the balance between social and academic outcomes.

Second, the teacher findings indicate that **positive beliefs about inclusion and perceived preparedness are not necessarily the same thing**. Special education teachers reported a higher mean concerning the benefits of inclusion, while both groups expressed similar willingness to teach in inclusive settings. This distinction is important. A teacher may support the principle of inclusion while simultaneously reporting difficulties in implementing inclusive pedagogy.

Third, perceived support emerged as an important contextual issue. Although the difference between teacher groups was not statistically supported by the available summary statistics, both groups' mean scores were only moderately above the scale midpoint. This suggests that the availability of support should not be assumed simply because teachers express positive attitudes.

Recent scholarship reinforces this interpretation. A systematic review of teacher self-efficacy found that professional learning, knowledge of inclusive education policy, experience and contact with persons with disabilities can influence teachers' confidence in implementing inclusive practices.

Similarly, recent research on inclusive education measurement has highlighted a methodological problem: instruments used to measure teacher attitudes vary considerably and may not adequately capture the multidimensional nature of inclusion.

The Indian context is particularly relevant. Contemporary policy requires schools to move beyond nominal access towards participation supported by accessibility, appropriate pedagogy, assistive technology, special educators and resource centres. NEP 2020 specifically identifies the need for resources, special educators and resource centres to facilitate participation of children with disabilities in regular schooling.

Fourth, the finding concerning teachers' perceived skills for teaching children with disabilities deserves particular attention. The reported means indicate a substantial difference between regular and special teachers, but the direction of the difference requires cautious interpretation because the original dissertation contains inconsistencies between the tabulated values, item descriptions and narrative interpretation. This is precisely the type of issue that should be resolved through access to the original questionnaire, item-level data and coding scheme before publication.

## 8. Implications for Inclusive Education

The findings suggest several implications for school systems.

### 8.1 Teacher preparation should move beyond sensitization

Positive attitudes alone cannot guarantee effective inclusion. Teacher preparation should include practical competencies in:

- differentiated instruction;
- universal design for learning;
- classroom management;
- individualized educational planning;
- disability-specific pedagogical strategies;
- assistive and accessible learning technologies;
- assessment accommodations; and
- collaborative work with special educators and families.

This direction is consistent with India's current inclusive-education framework. Government guidance emphasizes teacher training, suitable pedagogical measures, accessibility and individualized support.

### 8.2 Regular and special educators should work collaboratively

The differences between the two teacher groups suggest the importance of collaborative models rather than treating special and general education as separate professional domains.

Special educators can provide disability-specific expertise, while regular teachers contribute curriculum and classroom expertise. Resource centres and school complexes can facilitate this collaboration.

### 8.3 Parent engagement should be systematic

Parents should not be involved only at the point of admission or when difficulties arise. Structured parent-teacher meetings, individualized planning, progress discussions and accessible information can improve confidence in inclusive schooling.

Contemporary school frameworks also emphasize engagement with parents and evidence of teacher sensitization and inclusive practices.

### 8.4 Inclusion should be evaluated through participation and learning

School systems should not judge inclusion only by enrolment. Relevant indicators include:

- attendance;
- classroom participation;
- peer interaction;
- academic progress;
- functional development;
- access to learning materials;
- reasonable accommodation;
- participation in extracurricular activities; and
- parent satisfaction.

This approach is more consistent with contemporary understandings of inclusive education as participation rather than mere placement.

## 9. Strengths of the Study

The study has several strengths.

First, it considered **two major stakeholder groups—parents and teachers** rather than examining teacher perceptions alone.

Second, the teacher sample distinguished between **regular and special education teachers**, allowing examination of differences in perceived competence and support.

Third, the study considered multiple dimensions of inclusion rather than treating attitude as a single construct.

Fourth, because the research was conducted in Lucknow and included rural/semi-rural settings, it provides a useful historical account of perceptions of inclusive education in an Indian urban-peripheral context.

## 10. Limitations

The findings must be interpreted in light of several limitations.

1. **Purposive sampling** limits generalizability beyond the participating schools and respondents.
2. The study was conducted in **one geographical area**, namely Lucknow.
3. The sample size was relatively small, particularly for special education teachers (n = 30).
4. The questionnaires were researcher-developed, and the available dissertation does not provide sufficient evidence of contemporary psychometric validation such as construct validity, internal consistency or factor structure.
5. The study relied on self-reported perceptions rather than direct observations of classroom practice.
6. The cross-sectional design prevents conclusions about causal relationships.
7. The original statistical reporting contains inconsistencies between some reported t-values and the corresponding means and standard deviations.
8. The raw dataset is not available for independent verification.
9. The terminology used in the original dissertation reflects the language of the 2011–12 period. Contemporary publications should use current, rights-based terminology, including "children/persons with disabilities" and "intellectual disability" where appropriate.
10. The policy environment has changed substantially since the original data were collected; therefore, the findings should be understood as historical evidence rather than a direct representation of current conditions in Lucknow.

## 11. Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should build on the original research through larger, probability-based or stratified samples covering multiple districts and school types.

A contemporary replication could examine:

i. regular teachers' inclusive self-efficacy;
ii. disability-specific knowledge;
iii. previous contact with persons with disabilities;

iv. teacher training and professional development;
v. availability of special educators;
vi. school accessibility;
vii. assistive technology;
viii. parent-school collaboration;
ix. attitudes towards different disability groups;
x. implementation of reasonable accommodation;
xi. Universal Design for Learning;
xii. school leadership;
xiii. classroom observation; and
xiv. actual student participation and learning outcomes.

A mixed-methods design combining questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations and school-level data would provide considerably stronger evidence than perception surveys alone.

Recent research also demonstrates the importance of examining the quality of instruments used to measure teacher attitudes, because many existing measures do not fully capture the multidimensional nature of inclusive education.

## 12. Conclusion

The study provides evidence that inclusive education was viewed with general acceptance by parents and teachers in the Lucknow sample, but that acceptance coexisted with concerns concerning preparedness, competence, resources and instructional skills.

The findings also demonstrate the importance of distinguishing between **support for the principle of inclusion and readiness to implement inclusion effectively**. Teachers may be willing to teach in inclusive settings while still requiring additional training, specialist collaboration and institutional support.

The study's historical contribution is particularly relevant because many of the issues identified more than a decade ago—teacher preparedness, resource availability, parent confidence and collaboration between regular and special educators—remain central to the implementation of inclusive education.

At the same time, the statistical inconsistencies identified in the original dissertation demonstrate the need for greater methodological transparency. The present paper therefore treats the reported findings cautiously and avoids reproducing unsupported claims of statistical significance. The strongest value of the study lies not merely in its group

comparisons, but in its identification of the interconnected roles of parents, regular teachers, special educators and school-level support in the implementation of inclusive education.

Contemporary Indian policy has moved further towards a rights-based and participation-oriented understanding of inclusion, including accessibility, reasonable accommodation, specialized support and teacher preparation. The central lesson from the Lucknow study remains relevant: **inclusive education requires not only access to the same classroom, but the capacity and conditions necessary for every learner to participate and learn meaningfully.**

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