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Research Article

An Enormous Necessity as Readiness of Schools for Inclusion: Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education

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Abstract

Inclusive education has emerged as a crucial approach in the modern world for ensuring equitable and quality learning opportunities for all learners, including differently abled learners. Among the various factors influencing the successful implementation of inclusive education, teachers' attitudes play a crucial role in determining the readiness of schools for inclusion. The present study aimed to examine the attitudes of upper-primary teachers towards inclusive education and to analyse differences based on gender, teaching experience, and teaching stream. The study used a quantitative methodology and a descriptive survey method. Using simple random sampling technique, 232 upper-primary teachers from government-sponsored/aided schools in the Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal, India were selected as sample of the study. Data were collected using the standardized scale "Teacher Attitude Scale Towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE)" developed by Sood and Anand. Statistical techniques such as frequency distribution, percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, t-test, one-way ANOVA, and Games-Howell post hoc test were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that a majority of teachers exhibited unfavourable attitudes towards inclusive education, indicating limited readiness for the implementation of inclusive education. Significant differences were found based on gender, with male teachers demonstrating more favourable attitudes than female teachers. Similarly, teachers with less than 10 years of teaching experience showed more positive attitudes compared to their more experienced counterparts. In terms of teaching stream, Social Science teachers exhibited the most favourable attitudes, followed by science teachers, while Language teachers showed the least favourable attitudes. The predominance of unfavourable attitudes suggests the need for systematic teacher training, continuous professional development, and supportive school environments to enhance school readiness for inclusive education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive, good-quality education is a foundation for dynamic and equitable societies.

--Desmond Mpilo Tutu

The last 70-80 years are the era of the journey towards making inclusive education which was formally started. Philosophers, Educationists, Sociologists think that education not an excluded part of society. Dewey says that, "school is a miniature of society". So, why the differently able children will separately be taking education? For that, not only India but the world proposed an education system in which all the children taking education together without any kinds of discrimination. Now in India it becomes an Act, is Right to Education Act-2009. Here, rejecting any children to admitting and educating in any regular school is a crime.

Inclusive education is a kind of 'zero rejection policy' in the education system (SSA, 2001), but it is not enough to define inclusion. Inclusive education has great meaning and purpose; it implies heterogeneous grouping, appropriate support service provided for the needy child, teachers concerned on decentralized instructional models, all the teachers having a strongly positive attitude towards inclusion, no student feels isolated or segregated from the mainstream environment, every people have opportunity to potential development etc. (Jana & Halder, 2018). In the words of Julka (2005), "Inclusive education means all learners, young people with or without disabilities being able to learn together in regular pre-school provisions, schools and community educational settings with appropriate network of support services. An inclusive class may have amongst others, children who are disabled or gifted, street or working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children belonging to religious, linguistic minorities or children from scheduled tribes, scheduled castes or other backward classes." Inclusive education means including not only children with disabilities in the classroom but all children with diverse backgrounds and abilities (Sharma & Pradhan, 2010). Inclusion includes physical integration, social integration, and access to normalized educational, recreational, and social activities that occur in school (Ryndack & Alper, 2002; Loreman et al., 2005).

India has an important appeal of inclusive education from independence. In the articles no. 15, 21A, 45, 46, 51A(k) of the constitution of independent India has clearly defined about no discrimination in taking education. From the guidance and direction of the constitution, there have various commissions, policies, schemes, projects for implementing education for all. For inclusive education to successfully attain, it is essentially important that principals, teachers and other stakeholders of education maintain a highly positive attitude towards inclusion. Even if inclusive education is mandated by law, strategies and other documents, it will never succeed without the enthusiastic support of its practitioners (Asabella, 2016).

The teacher is an important component of education system who acts in grass-roots level of education. Actually, teachers are the original practitioners of the governmental educational

policies, schemes and programmes, e.g. inclusive education as stressed by World Conference on EFA-1990, is not achieved, may be due to lack of competent teacher (Sharma, 2011). Here, competent teacher means a teacher with sufficient knowledge, skills, concerns and attitude about inclusive education. Conversely, successful inclusion is considered to be a multidimensional concept, influenced by three factors: attitudes, resources and curricula (Favazza et al., 2000). So, the attitude of the teacher toward inclusion is a very important factor because their performance in inclusion is very much affected by that factor. Attitude is a feeling about anything that determines the acceptance or dejection of that thing. An attitude is a kind of value about a thing. In the words of Anastasi (2016), "An attitude is often defined as a tendency to react favourable or unfavourable towards a designated class of stimuli, such as a national or a racial group, a custom or an institution." According to Avramidis et al. (2000), "Professionals' attitudes may act to facilitate or constrain the implementation of policies.....the success of innovative and challenging programs must surely depend upon the cooperation and commitment of those most directly involved". Smith et al. (2013) pointed out several barriers to successfully implementing inclusion in which attitude is one of the influential concerns. According to them, "Attitudinal barriers focus on the beliefs of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel about students with disabilities and inclusion".

It is necessary that teachers who teach and manage the classroom are sensitized and made aware of the philosophy of inclusive education and oriented to the different kinds of adjustments that schools have to make in terms of infrastructure, curriculum, teaching methods and other school practices to relate teaching to the needs of all learners (NCTE, 2009).

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education have been cited as a major factor of school readiness for inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Forlin et al., 2009; de Boer et al., 2011; Sharma et al., 2012; Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Pit-ten Cate et al., 2018). As teachers are the most important implementers of the inclusive practices, the effect of their perceptions, beliefs, and willingness is colossal in the success of inclusive education. Previous studies highlighted the fact that despite adequate policy support on the inclusion concept, a good number of teachers did not express positive or ambivalent views on inclusion due to issues regarding classroom management, insufficient training and poor resources. As an example, de Boer et al. (2011) determined that the teacher attitudes were largely neutral or negative and reflected the lack of readiness to a inclusive classroom. On the same note, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) concluded that the attitudes of teachers were affected by their perceived competence and their perceived support, which implied the absence of readiness for the successful implementation of inclusive education. Empirical research has been conducted in other settings with finer insights into the teacher attitudes. In the investigation conducted in

Salem district, Balasundaram (2011) discovered that the attitude of teachers towards the education of children with special needs (CWSN) and the use of inclusive teaching approaches was very favorable; nevertheless, their attitude towards the work of inclusive schools was moderate to low. This observation implies that teachers might be receptive to the idea of inclusion, but they might be apprehensive about the process of introducing it to the existing school systems. On the same note, according to Galovic et al. (2014), experience in teaching is not a critical factor that influences the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education thereby disproving the common notion that experienced teachers tend to be more accommodative of inclusion. More research helped prove that attitudes of teachers were slowly enhancing. In one of the studies provided to teachers in the secondary schools of Haryana, Nagpal (2015) discovered that a considerable percentage of the teachers were positive about inclusive education. This suggests an increasing presence of the inclusive practices in the teachers, maybe due to the increasing awareness and emphasis in the policies. Nevertheless, Jana and Halder (2018) reported contrasting results when they examined secondary school teachers in Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal, India, and discovered that a very small percentage of teachers supported inclusive education. This indicates that attitudes toward inclusion vary significantly across regions and contexts, highlighting disparities in school readiness. It is also emphasized in the literature that there are a lot of inter-related factors that shape the attitudes of teachers, one of them being the role of training and professional development. According to Forlin and Chambers (2011), training teachers in inclusive education demonstrated that they were more positive regarding their confidence and attitudes. Likewise, inclusive practices of teacher training were influential in terms of alleviating the concern and enhancing positive attitudes regarding inclusion discovered by Sharma and Sokal (2022).

Such studies indicate that teachers must be empowered with appropriate skills and knowledge to enhance their disposition as well as prepare in school (Florian & Rouse, 2009; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Sharma & Sokal, 2015). The other perspective that is also prominent to be borrowed in the literature is the multidimensionality of the teacher attitudes (Triandis, 1971; Ajzen, 2005; Ewing et al., 2017). Ewing et al. (2017) had a conceptualization of teacher attitudes, which comprised the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. Their research shows that teachers may be intellectually agreeable towards inclusion (cognitive) but anxious or uncertain (affective), and this could limit their readiness to implement inclusive practices (behavioural). Such a gap between belief and practice necessitates interventions, which are not limited to knowledge but are also based on emotional and practical components of learning in inclusive environments. The study has also discussed how self-efficacy can affect the attitude of teachers. Malinen et al. (2013) and Diseth (2025) have established that the more positive the attitudes of the teachers to inclusive education, the higher the levels of self-efficacy of the teacher. Likewise, Yada and Savolainen (2017) emphasised that teachers who believe that they have the ability to work in

various types of classrooms have higher chances of exercising inclusiveness. Through these findings, one important aspect of school readiness toward inclusion is the achievement of confidence in the teachers. Another influencing factor in the attitudes of the teachers has been established to be the type and degree of disability. According to Wray et al. (2022), teachers tended to have a more positive attitude towards the students with mild or physical disability as opposed to students with severe intellectual or behavioural issues. This discriminatory acceptance reveals that teachers might have found that certain types of disabilities are more easily accommodated in the general classroom, and this has the potential of influencing their general attitude toward inclusion. The attitude of the teachers is also determined by the institutional and contextual factors. Engelbrecht et al. (2015) noted that a shortage of infrastructural facilities, high classes, and no administrative support adversely influence the opinions of the teachers on inclusive education. Likewise, teachers also have a favourable attitude towards a supportive school environment and access to resources, which is also positively correlated with the same by Wilson et al. (2020). These results demonstrate that school readiness does not solely rely on the personal teachers but also on the systemic and organizational protection. The significance of such practices, such as collaborations and continuous professional growth, has also been noted recently. Pit-ten Cate et al. (2018) have noted that teacher collaboration helps them to be more impressive to implement inclusive strategies and become more enlightened in terms of their attitudes. It was also described in Opoku et al. (2021) that even though the overall attitude of teachers towards inclusive education is positive, in some cases, there are no practical problems that are necessary to conduct an inclusive education efficiently, and that, consequently, influences the overall preparedness of teachers. Charitaki et al. (2022) have also carried out a cross-national study, which revealed that teachers tend to exhibit fairly positive attitudes towards inclusive education, but nonetheless there are numerous contextual influences that significantly impact the way the attitudes towards inclusive education are demonstrated, including policy support, training in inclusive education, and resource availability. Barnová et al. (2022) also stated that as much as teachers feel that inclusion is both morally and educationally required, their mindset is conditional due to the burdens linked to it, including heavy workload, poor infrastructure, and institutional support. Moreover, Fernandez et al. (2023) examined pre-service teachers and came to the conclusion that their attitudes towards the field of inclusion are mostly positive, whereas their level of confidence depends on the exposure to the training process and practice to a great extent. This explains the significance of teacher education programs on how future teachers can be prepared on this. Moreover, Mudhara et al. (2023) discovered that there is a good correlation between the self-efficacy of the teachers and the attitudes of the teachers towards inclusive education, which indicates that high self-efficacy leads to increased positive attitudes towards inclusive education. Similarly, Selisko et al. (2024) present various unique portraits of student teachers with more or less inclusive orientations, and highlighted that views

about teaching and learning meaningfully shape attitudes toward inclusion.

Generally, the literature indicates that the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education has changed gradually over time, though there remain significant differences and issues. Some of the studies indicate positive attitudes, whereas others indicate hesitation or resistance, which implies training, experience, and support differences in the working environment. Such factors as professional development, self-efficacy, type of disability, and institutional resources influence the attitudes of the teachers. Hence, teacher preparedness in terms of systemic training, enabling school settings, and effective practices is vital in enhancing the school preparedness and effective implementation of inclusive education.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Obj. 1.** To study the attitudinal level of upper-primary teachers towards inclusive education.
- Obj. 2.** To compare the attitude of upper-primary teachers towards inclusive education in terms of gender differences.
- Obj. 3.** To compare the attitude of upper-primary teachers towards inclusive education in terms of differences in teaching experience.
- Obj. 4.** To compare the attitude of upper-primary teachers towards inclusive education in terms of teaching stream differences.

4. HYPOTHESES

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the female upper-primary teachers and male upper-primary teachers on their attitude towards inclusive education.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the upper-primary teachers with <10 years of teaching experience and the upper-primary teachers with ≥10 years of teaching experience on their attitude towards inclusive education.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference among the upper-primary teachers of the Language Stream, Science Stream, and Social Science Stream on their attitude towards inclusive education.

5. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- a. **Attitude towards Inclusive Education:** In the present study, the variable 'teacher's attitude towards Inclusive Education' refers to the feeling, thinking, or opinion of teacher towards the four aspects of inclusive education: (i) Psychological / Behavioural aspects, (ii) Social and Parents Related aspects, (iii) Curricular and Co-curricular aspects and (iv) Administrative aspects.
- b. **Upper-primary Teachers:** In the present study, upper-primary teachers refer to those teachers who teach the class VI to VIII in the government-aided/sponsored upper-primary school of Paschim Medinipur District, West Bengal.
- c. **Gender:** In the present study, 'gender' refers to females and males only.
- d. **Teaching Experience:** In the present study, teaching experience refers to that, how many years the upper-primary teachers have been involved with the teaching

profession at governmental aided upper-primary school. It is stratified into two categories: lower than 10 years of teaching experience and greater than or equal to 10 years of teaching experience.

- e. **Teaching Stream:** In the present study, 'teaching stream' means three streams- teachers in the language stream, teachers in the science stream, and teachers in the social science stream.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- a. **Method:** The present study was carried out with the descriptive survey method followed by the quantitative data analysis technique.
- b. **Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique:** The population of the study included all the teachers of government-aided/sponsored upper-primary schools in Paschim Medinipur district. From that population, 232 upper-primary teachers were finally selected as the sample. In the sample selection process, the researcher first selected two blocks (Sabang and Keshpur) from the 21 blocks of the Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal, India, using a simple random sampling technique. Then, 32 upper primary schools (16 schools from each of the selected blocks) were selected using a simple random sampling technique. Finally, 232 upper-primary school teachers were selected from the 32 selected schools as the sample of the study.
- c. **Tool Used:** To collect data, a standardized attitude scale was used as a tool in the present study entitled "*Teacher Attitude Scale Towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE)* (Sood & Anand)" developed by Vishal Sood & Arti Anand. It contains 47 items, each rated along a 3-point scale with responses Agree (3), Undecided (2), and Disagree (1). The main purpose of the scale is to measure the attitude of elementary school teachers (teaching classes from 1st to 8th) towards inclusive education. Although the present scale has been specially developed for elementary teachers, it can also be used for teachers working at the secondary school level. Eighteen items worded negatively are inversely scored, which means Agree (1), Undecided (2), and Disagree (3). After the negatively worded items were reverse-coded/scored, the sum score of all forty-seven items was totaled, indicating an attitudinal index ranging from 47 to 141. Higher scores indicated a highly positive attitude, and lower scores indicated a more negative attitude. The reliability of the scale was established by (i) the test-retest method and (ii) the internal consistency method. The scale is based on the four broad areas or aspects of inclusive education: (i) Psychological / Behavioural aspects, (ii) Social and Parents Related aspects, (iii) Curricular and Co-curricular aspects, and (iv) Administrative aspects. The norm of interpretation of level of teacher's attitude towards inclusive education is provided through 7 levels with score ranges. Seven levels are Extremely Favourable, Most Favourable, Above Average Favourable, Moderate Attitude, Below Average

Unfavourable, Most Unfavourable, and Extremely Unfavourable.

7. ANALYSIS OF DATA AND RESULTS

After collecting data from 232 upper-primary school teachers on their attitudes towards inclusive education using the TASTIE scale, the researcher analyzed the data using various statistical methods, Microsoft Office Excel 2021, and SPSS 21. Data were analysed, and results were

found through using frequency distribution, percentage distribution, mean, standard deviation, t-test, one-way ANOVA, and post hoc test.

7.1. Analysis of Data and Results Pertaining to Objective 1:

[To study the attitudinal level of upper-primary teachers towards inclusive education.]

Table 1.1: Attitude Distribution at Seven Levels in terms of Gender and Overall Sample

Levels of Attitude	Score Range	Overall, Teachers		Female Teachers		Male Teachers	
		N (232)	%	N (112)	%	N (120)	%
E. F	127-141	9	3.88	2	1.79	7	5.83
M.F	116-126	14	6.03	4	3.57	10	8.33
A.A. F	105-115	20	8.62	5	4.46	15	12.50
M.A	90-104	36	15.52	12	10.71	24	20.00
B.A. U	80-89	38	16.38	17	15.18	21	17.50
M.U	69-79	62	26.72	34	30.36	28	23.33
E. U	47-68	53	22.84	38	33.93	15	12.50

N = No. of Teachers

E.F = Extremely Favorable, M.F = Most Favorable, A.A.F = Above Average Favorable, M.A = Moderate Attitude, B.A.U = Below Average Unfavorable, M.U = Most Unfavorable, and E.U = Extremely Unfavorable

Table 1.1 shows the attitudes of upper primary teachers towards inclusive education at seven levels, which are categorized into overall teachers, female teachers, and male teachers. Based on the overall data analysis, it is clear that the largest percentage of upper primary teachers exhibited an unfavourable attitude towards inclusive education. In particular, 65.94 percent of teachers belong to three unfavourable categories, that is, Below Average Unfavourable (16.38%), Most Unfavourable (26.72%), and Extremely Unfavourable (22.84%). This shows that most teachers are not sufficiently oriented towards the inclusive educational practice. On the other hand, 15.52 percent of upper primary teachers are demonstrated moderate attitude level, indicating a neutral attitude, which can be affected by circumstances or contextual conditions. The percentage of teachers who show favourable attitudes is very low, 18.53 percent of teachers, which means that not many teachers are willing to positively embrace inclusive education. On a closer analysis of gender differences, notable variations are revealed in the levels or

nature of attitude towards inclusive education. Among the female upper primary teachers, a larger percentage (79.47) falls under the three unfavourable levels of attitude, in which 33.93 percent are under the Extremely Unfavourable, and 30.36 percent under the Most Unfavourable level of attitude. This indicates that the female teachers in this sample are more likely to demonstrate unfavourable attitudes towards inclusive education. Favourable attitudes are exhibited by only 9.82 percent of female teachers, and a moderate attitude level is exhibited by 10.71 percent of female teachers. Male upper primary teachers, on the contrary, exhibit a more balanced distribution. Though an impressive percentage (53.33) remains in the three unfavourable categories, it is much smaller as compared to female teachers. A comparatively increased number of male teachers (26.66) show favourable attitudes, and with 20 percent portraying a moderate attitude. It means that male teachers are, to a certain extent, more affirmative and open to inclusive education than their female colleagues. In general, the results indicate that the attitude of upper primary teachers towards inclusive education is largely unfavourable or negative, with significant gender differences. The increased unfavourable attitude, especially among the female teachers, indicates the absence of readiness, confidence, or encouragement in the application of the inclusive practices.

Table 1.2: Attitude Distribution at Seven Levels in terms of Teaching Experience

Levels of Attitude	Teachers with <10 years of experience		Teachers with ≥10 years of experience	
	N (101)	%	N (131)	%
E.F	7	6.93	2	1.53
M.F	10	9.90	4	3.05
A.A.F	12	11.88	8	6.11
M.A	18	17.82	18	13.74
B.A.U	17	16.83	21	16.03
M.U	21	20.79	41	31.30
E.U	16	15.84	37	28.24

Table 1.2 reveals the attitudes of upper primary teachers towards inclusive education according to their teaching experience on seven levels and divided into teachers who had teaching experience of less than 10 years and those who had teaching experience of 10 years and above. The analysis shows that notable variations are revealed between two teaching experience groups of upper primary teachers in their levels or nature of attitude towards inclusive education. Among the less experienced upper primary teachers (less than 10 years), a larger percentage (53.46) falls under the three unfavourable levels of attitude, in which 15.84 percent are under the Extremely Unfavourable, 20.79 percent under the Most Unfavourable, and 16.83 percent under the Below Average Unfavourable level of attitude. This indicates that almost half of the less experienced teachers in this sample are likely to demonstrate unfavourable attitudes towards inclusive education. A significant percentage (28.71) of less experienced teachers show positive attitudes, and 17.82 percent show moderate attitudes. This suggests that relatively less experienced teachers are more positive and open towards inclusive education. On the other hand, teachers who have had 10 years of experience or more are

mostly predisposed to unfavourable attitudes, with 75.57% of them falling in the three unfavourable attitude levels. It is especially 31.30 percent of teachers exhibit under Most Unfavourable, 28.24 percent under Extremely Unfavourable, and 16.03 percent under the Below Average Unfavourable level of attitude. The percentage of those who show favourable attitudes is very low (10.69), and 13.74 percent have a moderate attitude. This means that teachers who have more years of teaching experience are less favourable attitude and are more resistant to inclusive education.

The results indicate that the experience in teaching has a strong impact on the attitude of upper primary teachers towards inclusive education, and less experienced teachers are found to have more favourable or positive attitudes than their more experienced colleagues. It might be because newer teachers were exposed more to modern comprehensive policies and training. The findings point to the necessity of continuous professional development and re-orientation training, especially in experienced teachers, to foster their attitude and increase school preparedness to inclusive education.

Table 1.3: Attitude Distribution at Seven Levels in terms of Teaching Stream

Levels of Att	Teachers of Language Stream		Teachers of Science Stream		Teachers of Social Science Stream	
	N (63)	%	N (77)	%	N (92)	%
E. F	1	1.59	2	2.60	6	6.52
M.F	2	3.17	5	6.49	7	7.61
A.A. F	2	3.17	5	6.49	13	14.13
M.A	5	7.94	13	16.88	18	19.57
B.A. U	7	11.11	14	18.18	17	18.48
M.U	20	31.75	20	25.97	22	23.91
E. U	26	41.27	18	23.38	9	9.78

Table 1.3 shows the distribution of the attitudes of the upper primary teachers towards inclusive education across seven levels in terms of three teaching streams, that is, the Language stream, Science stream, and Social Science stream. Based on the analysis, it is identified that teachers in all three streams mostly have unfavourable or negative attitudes towards inclusive education, although the magnitude of attitudes differs among streams. The proportion of the Language stream teachers who are in the unfavourable attitude levels or categories is quite high (84.13), with 41.27 percent in the Extremely Unfavourable level, 31.75 percent in the Most Unfavourable level, and 11.11 percent in the Below Average Unfavourable level. The percentage of those who show favourable attitudes is very low (7.93), and 7.94 percent have a moderate attitude. This means that the unfavourable or negative attitude towards inclusive education is highest among the Language teachers as compared to the other two groups. The percentage of teachers in the Science stream who are categorized under the unfavourable level of attitude towards inclusive education, in this case, is 67.53, which is lower than in the case of teachers of the Language stream,

but still represents the majority in an unfavourable attitude. About 15.58 A percentage of the teachers in the Science stream have favourable or positive attitudes, and 16.88 percent are exhibited the moderate attitude. This indicates that teachers of the Science stream have a relatively balanced yet still largely unfavourable or negative attitude. On the contrary, the upper primary teachers of the Social Science stream are rather more favourable or positive towards inclusive education. Even though 52.17 percent of them are demonstrated unfavourable attitude, this is the least of the three streams. The percentage of teachers of the Social Science stream with favourable attitudes is relatively higher (28.26), and the percentage of teachers with moderate attitudes is 19.57. This means that Social Science stream teachers are more accepting and supportive of inclusive education than the Language and Science stream upper primary teachers. On the whole, the results show that unfavourable attitudes prevail in all streams, although the attitude of teachers of the Social Science stream is more favourable or positive, and teachers of the Language stream show the most unfavourable or negative attitudes.

7.2. Analysis of Data and Result Pertaining to Objective 2 & Hypothesis 1:

[H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the attitude of female upper-primary teachers and male upper-primary teachers toward inclusive education.]

Table 2: Result of 't' test on Gender Groups

Gender Groups	Descriptives			Observed 't'-value	df	P value	Null Hypothesis
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Female Teachers	112	76.82	18.41	5.3203	230	0.0001	Rejected at 0.01 Level
Male Teachers	120	90.49	20.57				

N = No. of Teachers; df = Degree of Freedom

Considering the mean attitude scores of the two gender groups' t-test has been applied. Table 2 shows that the calculated 't'- value with respect to the mean attitude scores between the two gender groups was significant at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, it was found that male upper primary teachers exhibit significantly more favourable attitudes towards inclusive education than female upper primary teachers.

7.3. Analysis of Data and Result Pertaining to Objective 3 & Hypothesis 2:

[H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the attitude of upper-primary teachers with <10 years of teaching experience and teachers with ≥10 years of teaching experience toward inclusive education.]

Table 3: Result of 't' test on Teaching Experience Groups

Teaching Experience Groups	Descriptives			Observed 't' value	df	P value	Null Hypothesis
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Teachers with <10 years of Teaching Experience	101	91.07	22.27	4.8638	230	0.0001	Rejected at 0.01 Level
Teachers with ≥10 years of Teaching Experience	131	78.36	17.54				

N = No. of Teachers; df = Degree of Freedom

Considering the mean attitude scores of the two teaching experience groups, a t-test has been applied. Table 3 shows that the calculated 't' value with respect to the level of attitude between the two teaching experience groups was significant at 0.01 level of significance, and the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it was found that upper primary teachers with less than 10 years of teaching experience exhibit significantly more favourable attitudes

towards inclusive education than upper primary teachers with 10 years or more of teaching experience.

7.4. Analysis of Data and Result Pertaining to Objective 4 & Hypothesis 3:

[H₀₃: There is no significant difference among the upper-primary teachers of the Language Stream, Science Stream, and Social Science Stream on their attitude towards inclusive education.]

Table 4.1: Descriptives on Attitude of the Three Groups of Teachers in terms of Teaching Stream

Teaching Experience Groups	Descriptives		
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Teachers of Language Stream	63	73.87	16.97
Teachers of Science Stream	77	82.58	19.37
Teachers of Social Science Stream	92	91.85	21.00

N = No. of Teachers

Table 4.1 showed that the attitude towards inclusive education among teachers of Language Stream, teachers of Science Stream, and teachers of Social Science Stream differ in terms of sample mean and Standard Deviation.

Hence, one-way ANOVA has been appropriate to check whether there is a significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education among the Teachers of the Language Stream, Science Stream, and Social Science Stream or not

Table 4.2: One-Way ANOVA on Mean Attitude of the Three Groups of Teachers in terms of Teaching Stream

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Statistics	P-value	Null Hypothesis
Between Groups	12278.751	2	6139.376	16.251	.000	Rejected at 0.01 Level
Within Groups	86513.555	229	377.788			

df = Degree of Freedom

That means there is at least one significant difference among the three pairs of comparison. Hence, a post-hoc test has been conducted to determine whether there are significant differences among the paired groups. A Test of

Homogeneity of Variances has been conducted to determine which type of post-hoc test would be appropriate.

Table 4.3: Test of Homogeneity of Variances on Attitude of the Three Groups of Teachers in terms of Teaching Stream

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
3.745	2	229	.025

The researcher checked the homogeneity of variances by Levene's statistic at the 0.05 level of significance and found a significant difference among the variances. This result violates the assumption of homogeneity of

variances. Therefore, the researcher conducted **Games-Howell post hoc test** for unequal sample sizes and unequal variances.

Table 4.4: Post Hoc Test on Mean Attitude of the Three Groups of Teachers in terms of Teaching Stream

Games-Howell post hoc test				
(I) Teaching Stream	(J) Teaching Stream	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Teachers of Language Stream	Teachers of Science Stream	-8.711*	3.073	.015*
	Teachers of Social Science Stream	-17.975*	3.061	.000**
Teachers of Science Stream	Teachers of Language Stream	8.711*	3.073	.015*
	Teachers of Social Science Stream	-9.263*	3.109	.009**
Teachers of Social Science Stream	Teachers of Language Stream	17.975*	3.061	.000**
	Teachers of Science Stream	9.263*	3.109	.009**

**means significant at the 0.01 level; *means significant at the 0.05 level.

The results of the Games–Howell post hoc test (as presented in Table 4.4) reveal significant differences in the mean attitude scores of teachers across different teaching streams towards inclusive education. It was found that the teachers of the Science Stream exhibit significantly more favourable attitudes than teachers of the Language Stream towards inclusive education. Similarly, teachers of the Social Science Stream exhibit significantly more favourable attitudes than teachers of the Language Stream towards inclusive education. Also, teachers of the Social Science Stream exhibit significantly more favourable attitudes than teachers of the Science Stream towards inclusive education. These findings indicate that Social Science teachers possess the most favourable attitudes towards inclusive education among the three groups.

8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to investigate the attitude of the upper primary teachers towards inclusive education as a necessary aspect of the school being ready for inclusion. The results of the research indicate that the attitude of the overall teachers is mostly unfavourable, and there is a high level of variation in the attitude depending on gender, teaching stream, and teaching experience. These results correspond to the previous studies that underline the importance of the attitudes of teachers in founding the success of inclusive education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; de Boer et al., 2011; Engelbrecht et al., 2015). The findings show that most of the teachers portray unfavourable or negative attitude towards inclusive education. This is in accordance with the findings of de Boer et al. (2011), who have indicated that teachers tend to

show neutral or negative attitudes because they are unprepared and not supported. On the same note, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) emphasized that the attitude of teachers depends heavily on their perceived competence and resource accessibility. The prevalence of negative attitudes in the present study indicates that the teachers might not be sufficiently ready to deal with different learners in inclusive classrooms, which in turn interferes with the level of school readiness.

The analysis based on gender has shown that the attitude of male teachers is much more favourable than that of female teachers. This observation contradicts part of the previous research and corroborates the idea that attitudes are situational and determined by the socio-cultural and institutional factors (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). The increased rate of unfavourable or negative attitudes among female teachers could be attributed to a high level of perceived workload, absence of support, or limited exposure to inclusive practices. This observation suggests that gender sensitive interventions and support mechanisms are necessary to make teachers confident and more prepared. The study also found significant differences among the upper primary teachers in attitudes based on teaching streams. Social Science teachers had the most favourable attitudes, followed by Science teachers, while Language teachers exhibited the least favourable attitudes. The outcome of ANOVA and post hoc tests also validated these results, as statistically significant differences were found among the three groups. This difference can be attributed to differences in the nature of subjects and teaching methods. Social Science subjects tend to place focus on the human values, diversity, and social inclusion, which can have a positive effect on the

attitude towards inclusive education in teachers. This observation follows the argument that beliefs and instructional orientations of teachers affect their embrace of inclusive practices (Ewing et al., 2017).

In the case of teaching experience, the research indicated that teachers who had less than 10 years of experience had much more favourable attitudes than the teachers who had 10 or more years of experience. This observation confirms the research of Malinen et al. (2013), and Yada and Savolainen (2017), who stressed that novice teachers are more likely to have high favourable attitude and are more receptive to inclusive practices. Conversely, the older teachers can be guided with the traditional teaching method, and they might not adapt easily to the inclusive environment. Nevertheless, the result of the study conflicts with the presumption that the experience is a prerequisite for positive attitudes, as also pointed out by Galović et al. (2014). Thus, continuous professional development is essential for all teachers, irrespective of their level of teaching experience. The results of the study have a high intensity of proving the significance of teacher training and professional growth in the attitude formation toward inclusive education. Past studies have always revealed positive impacts of training on teacher confidence, knowledge, and positive attitude towards inclusion (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Sharma & Sokal, 2015). Florian and Rouse (2009) also highlighted the fact that it is important to empower teachers with relevant skills and knowledge in order to achieve effective inclusion practices. The current research with a preponderance of negative attitudes indicates that there is a gap in teacher training programs, and systematic training programs should be in place.

An alternative key element that comes out as a result of the discussion is the multidimensional character of the teacher attitudes. As Ewing et al. (2017) explain, attitudes include components - cognitive, affective, and behavioural. Teachers can have a great intellectual justification for inclusive education, but they can be nervous or unprepared for realizing it in practice. Such disparities between belief and behaviour are visible in the current results, and moderate attitudes are reported with unfavourable tendencies. The study of Ajzen (2005), and Triandis (1971) also proves that the concept of attitude is complicated and depends upon various factors, such as beliefs, feelings, and social background. The importance of self-efficacy can also be seen in forming the attitude of teachers. Researches by Malinen et al. (2013), and Mudhara et al. (2023) indicated that the more self-efficacy, the more positive attitudes to inclusion. The current results and especially the positive orientation of less experienced teachers could be attributed to the greater exposure to recent training and inclusion policies, which boost their confidence. Similarly, Fernandez et al. (2023) emphasized the value of the teacher education programs in forming positive attitudes among pre-service teachers. The issue of institutional and contextual factors also contributes to teacher attitudes. Engelbrecht et al. (2015) and Wilson et

al. (2020) highlighted that the influence of poor infrastructure, large classes, and insufficient administrative support negatively impacted teachers' perceptions of inclusion. Barnova et al. (2022) also observed that teachers' attitudes are conditional due to factors such as an excessive workload and the absence of institutional support. Such systemic limitations that prevent the effective implementation of inclusive education may be described as the reasons behind the predominance of unfavourable attitudes in the present study. The role of collaboration and the system of support are also found to be important in enhancing the attitude of teachers in the recent research. Based on their study, Pit-ten Cate et al. (2018) discovered that teachers who engage in collaboration can adopt inclusive practices. et al. (2021) also observed that despite the conceptual support that teachers seem to give to inclusive education, they rarely have the practical skills needed to implement it. The findings imply that improvements in the attitude of teachers should not only be at the individual level but also at the system level in terms of school-related changes.

In conclusion, the current paper has made it clear that the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education is a decisive factor of school readiness for inclusion. Despite some indication of progressive change in attitudes, a considerable percentage of teachers still demonstrate the negative or ambivalent attitudes. These attitudes are affected greatly by gender, teaching experience, teaching stream, professional training, self-efficacy, and institutional support. Thus, the school's preparedness for inclusive education should be improved in a holistic way, which involves systematic teacher training, lifelong learning, enabling school cultures, and working together. By taking care of these issues, not only would the teachers become more positive, but also the successful implementation of inclusive education in schools will be guaranteed.

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10. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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