

## The Attitudes Of Prospective Teachers Towards Teaching Students With Special Needs In Inclusive Settings

Dr. Sam Thomas Joy<sup>1</sup>, Nasreen V.<sup>2</sup> & Asha V. Nair<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Titus II Teachers Training College, Thiruvalla, Pathanamthitta Kerala

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar, Titus II Teachers Training College, Thiruvalla, Pathanamthitta Kerala

Received: 05 April 2025, Accepted: 20 April 2025, Published online: 30 April 2025

### Abstract

The present study aims to measure attitudes of prospective teachers towards teaching students with special needs in inclusive settings with select variables like gender, experience in teaching, and district of population comprising prospective teachers in two districts. From the population 147 students were selected as samples using stratified sampling technique.

SACIE-R scale was adopted for the data collection. Mean, standard deviation and 't' test analysis were verified. Hypotheses were tested using SPSS software. The result shows that the attitude of male and female prospective teachers towards inclusive education is positive, and there is no significant difference in experience in teaching and districts they are studying. The findings indicates that prospective teachers have a positive attitude towards teaching students with special needs in inclusive setting.

**Keywords:** Prospective Teacher, Inclusion, Attitude, Special needs, Inclusive education, Teaching students with special needs

### Introduction

The destiny of nation is being shaped in our classrooms" (Kothari commission). This statement was indirectly supporting a parallel postulate in education that the destiny of our classrooms of the country will be shaped by teachers. RTE act is an example of such policies, which have tried to reduce all kinds of barriers in the society so that all the children can get equal opportunity in education and ultimately in the society. The issue of inclusive education provides an opportunity.

This study will help in making an understanding about the attitude of prospective teachers towards inclusive education and also the gaps in implementation of RTE Act. The success of inclusive education depends on teacher's awareness and attitude. Inclusive education is a right- based approach to education, which consider the diversity of all learners and serve for their needs placing particular emphasis on the needs of children vulnerable to exclusion and marginalization.

Educators with apprehensive attitudes may use practices that promote exclusion rather than inclusion in their classrooms (8). On the other hand, educators who hold positive attitudes towards inclusion tend to use teaching strategies that allow them to accommodate individual differences (3). In an inclusive model, general classroom teachers are the primary provider of instruction for students with disabilities. As a result, they must develop strategies to facilitate the successful inclusion of this group of students (Prater, 2003). Neither classroom teachers nor special education teachers want students with disabilities simply "dumped" into general education classes (Banks, 1992), and the successful inclusion of students does not normally happen without assistance.

Therefore, school personnel must work on effective, cooperative methods to provide suitable programs to all students. Meaning and Definition of Inclusive education refers to education for all children

without discrimination of attainment, gender or disability in the mainstream school. It minimises exclusion and fostering participation for all children in the culture within a wider framework of support of all children in ordinary schools where children and adults with special needs have equal opportunity to participate in activities. It follows the principle of equalisation of educational opportunity. "Inclusion means providing all students within the mainstream appropriate educational programmes that are challenging yet geared to their capabilities and needs as well as any support and assistance they and their teachers may need to be successful in the mainstream.

But an inclusive school also goes beyond this." (Stainback & Stainback, 1990) Inclusion is not a set of strategies or a placement but inclusion is about belonging to the community-a group of friends, a school community or a neighbourhood. Ethlers (1993) defines "three ways to view inclusion: through beliefs and values, through experiences and through outcomes".

The concept of inclusion has emerged from the ideas of providing equal opportunities to all children keeping in mind their diverse nature of their individual needs. Meaningful inclusion is a collaboration involving special educator, teachers in mainstream education, parents, Para-professionals, related services personnel, administrators and the peers.

The Basic Concepts of Inclusive education in special education is a new concept, and also an accepted approach in mainstream education in India. Inclusion is a different perspective on the education of child with special needs in mainstream schools; Inclusion means all children are welcome regardless of differences in regular school. In inclusion the emphasis is not on treating the challenges but emphasizes on changing the environment to accommodate the disability perceiving the challenges as a normal difference.

### **Need of the Study**

Inclusive education has evolved as a movement to challenge exclusionary policies and practices of general schools. The principle of inclusive education is all the children learn together wherever possible regardless of any difficulties and differences they may have. It is a fact that regular schools and regular classroom environment often fail to accommodate the educational needs of many students, especially individuals with disabilities. This is the reason that so many pupils with disabilities do not attend regular schools.

Unit regular schools have developed capacity to cater to them; it is difficult to argue for inclusion. One of the major challenges to achieve this goal is the changing task and attitude of regular classroom teacher. Teachers play a pivotal role for education of all type of children. Favorable and positive attitude of teachers towards children with disabilities is a major aspect of teaching-learning process and also for the growth and development of children with disabilities in the inclusive classroom. Hence, the present paper is justified to study the attitudes of prospective teachers towards inclusive education.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The proposed study was entitled as "**the attitudes of prospective teachers towards teaching students with special needs in inclusive settings**".

### **Operational Definition of the Key Terms**

#### **Attitude**

Gall, Borg and Gall (1996): 'an attitude is an individual's viewpoint or disposition towards a particular 'object' (a person, a thing, an idea, etc.)' (273). attitudes are considered to have three components: cognitive, affective and behavioral (Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Triandis 1971).

**Prospective Teachers**

It includes those pupil-teachers who were perusing B Ed course in Malappuram and Kottayam districts.

**Inclusion**

“Inclusion means providing all students within the mainstream appropriate educational programmes that are challenging yet geared to their capabilities and needs as well as any support and assistance they and their teachers may need to be successful in the mainstream. But an inclusive school also goes beyond this” (Stainback & Stainback, 1990).

**Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the present study were:

1. To study the attitude of prospective teachers towards inclusive education.
2. To compare the attitude of male and female prospective teachers towards inclusive education.
3. To compare the attitude of experienced and non-experienced prospective teachers towards inclusive education.
4. To compare the attitude of Malappuram and Kottayam district prospective teachers towards inclusion.

**Hypotheses of the Study**

The hypotheses formulated for the study were:

1. There is no significant difference in male and female prospective teachers towards inclusion
2. There is no significant difference in experienced and non-experienced prospective teachers towards inclusion.
3. There is no significant difference in attitudes of prospective teachers towards inclusion in Malappuram and Kottayam districts.

**Methodology**

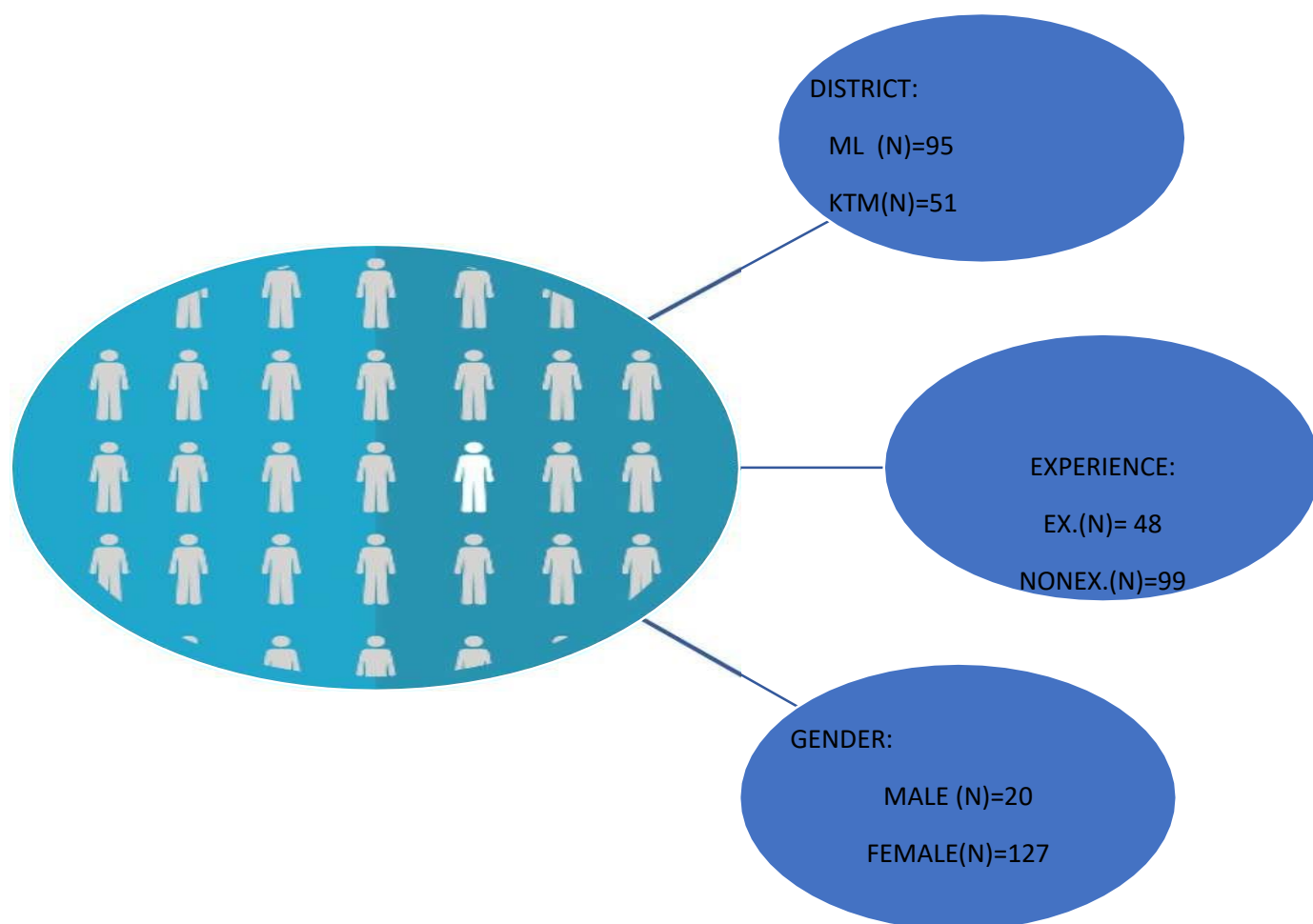
In the present study Normative Survey Method was employed. It was designed to examine the attitudes of prospective teachers towards inclusion.

To achieve the objectives of the present study, a SACIE-R scale was adopted by the investigator. The scale was developed from an initial 60 items and a final 18 item scale was given to 147 students in two districts. The instructions regarding the tool were explained by the investigator.

The investigator collected the filled Google form from the students. The hypotheses were tested using SPSS software and results were interpreted by analyzing mean, standard variation and t test.

**Population and Sample of the study**

For the present study required sampling technique was adopted. Population for the present study comprised of teacher training students of B.Ed. in Kottayam and Malappuram districts. The sample for the present study includes 147 students from two districts.



(ML: Malappuram district, KTM: Kottayam district EX.: Experienced and

NONEX.: Non experienced)

### Analysis and Interpretations of Data

The data generated for the present study were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques using SPSS software. Then the data were interpreted and relevant conclusions were drawn from it. The result thus obtained were tabulated and conclusions were drawn in the following way.

### Hypothesis -1

There is no significant difference in male and female prospective teachers towards inclusion

1: Table indicating the attitude of the male and female prospective teachers towards inclusion

GENDER	N	MEAN	S. D	t	SIGNIFICANCE
MALE	20	59.700	7.20	1.566	NOT
FEMALE	127	62.307	6.87		SIGNIFICANT

\*\*Not significant at 0.05 level of significance.

**Interpretation 1:** From the result of Table-1 it can be seen that, no significant difference was observed between male and female students with respect to their attitude towards inclusion. From the results, it was found that the obtain value of 't' is found to be less than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. So, the obtained value becomes not significant and hence we accept the original hypothesis.

### Hypothesis-2.

There is no significant difference in experienced and non-experienced prospective teachers towards inclusion.

**Table 2: Table indicating the attitude of the experienced and non-experienced prospective teachers towards inclusion**

EXPERIENCE	N	MEAN	S. D	t	SIGNIFICANCE
EXPERIENCED	48	61.47	6.46	0.458	NOT SIGNIFICANT
NON- EXPERIENCED	99	62.03	7.02		

\*\*Not significant at 0.05 level of significance.

**Interpretation 2:** From the result of Table-2, it can be seen that no significant difference was observed between experienced and non-experienced prospective teachers with respect to their attitude towards inclusion. From the results, it was found that the obtain value of 't' is found to be less than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. So, the obtained value becomes not significant and hence we accept the hypothesis.

### Hypothesis-3.

There is no significant difference in attitudes of prospective teachers towards inclusion in Malappuram and Kottayam districts.

**Table 3: Table indicating the attitude of the prospective teachers towards inclusion in Malappuram and Kottayam districts**

DISTRICT	N	MEAN	SD	t	SIGNIFICANCE
MALAPPURAM	95	62.136	6.56	0.602	NOT SIGNIFICANT
KOTTAYAM	51	61.411	7.58		

\*\*Not significant at 0.05 level of significance.

**Interpretation 3:** From the result of Table-3, it can be seen that no significant difference was observed between Malappuram and Kottayam with respect to their attitude towards inclusion. From the results, it was found that the obtain value of 't' is found to be less than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. So, the obtained value becomes not significant and hence we accept the hypothesis

### Conclusion

In the inclusive education programme, students make notable improvement in the areas of social competence through social play in their cognitive and developmental domains. Students in inclusive education have more opportunities to observe, interact with and learn from students who have acquired higher level motor, cognitive, social, and language related skills in the classrooms. In inclusive education, various professionals

like teachers, special educators, physical therapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, social workers etc. work together to formulate Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) and execute the educational programmes. (UNESCO, 1994) Inclusive education provides appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational settings. In this system both teachers and learners feel comfortable with diversity and see it as a challenge to improve the learning environment. In the inclusion model, students with special needs spend most or all of their time with general students but schools most frequently accept selected students with mild to severe special needs. In inclusive education, child has the right to participate in mainstream schools and the school's duty is to accept the child. Inclusion does not support special schools or classrooms to separate students with special needs from other students.

The present study aims to check the attitudes of prospective teachers towards teaching students with special needs in inclusive settings with select variables like gender, experience in teaching, and district of population comprises prospective teachers in two districts Malappuram and Kottayam. From the population, 147 students were selected as sample using stratified sampling technique. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the attitude of male and female prospective teachers towards inclusive education is positive, and there is no significant difference in experience in teaching and districts they are studying. The findings indicates that prospective teachers have a positive attitude towards teaching students with special needs in inclusive setting.

## References

1. Alghazo, E. M., & Gaad, E. E. N. (2004). General education teachers in the United Arab Emirates and their acceptance of the inclusion of students with disabilities. *British Journal of Special Education*, 31(2), 94-99. doi:10.1111/1.0952-3383.2004.00335.
2. Alur, M. (1999). 'Inclusive Children: A study of Policy Exclusion'. Department of Policy Studies, Institute of Education, University of London.
3. Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B. (2002). Teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion: A review of literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 17(2), 129-147.
4. Avramidis, E., Bayliss, P., & Burden, R. (2000). Student teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16(2), 277-293.
5. Bailey, J. (2004). The validation of a scale to measure school principals' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools. *Australian Psychologist*, 39, 76-87.
6. Berryman, J. D., & Neal, W. R. Jr. (1980). The cross validation of the attitudes toward mainstreaming scale (ATMS). *Educational & Psychological Measurement*, 40, 469-474.
7. Kirk, Gallagher, & Anastasiow. (1993). *Educating Exceptional Children* (7th ed.), 42.
8. Mangal, S.K. (2007). *Educating Exceptional Children-An Introduction to Special education*, Prentice-Hall of India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.
9. Walker, T. J. (2012). Attitudes and inclusion: An examination of teachers' attitudes toward including students with disabilities.