

# COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ATTITUDES OF GENERAL AND SPECIAL TEACHER TRAINEES TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is a transformative approach that aims to provide equitable learning opportunities to all students, including those with special needs, within mainstream classrooms. The successful implementation of inclusive practices largely depends on the attitudes and readiness of teachers. This study investigates and compares the attitudes of general and special teacher trainees towards inclusive education in Jaipur city. A total of 300 teacher trainees (150 general and 150 special) were randomly selected from various teacher training institutions in Jaipur. A descriptive survey method was employed, and data was collected using a self-administered attitude scale developed for this purpose. The data were analyzed using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test. Findings revealed that general teacher trainees exhibited significantly more positive attitudes toward inclusive education compared to special teacher trainees. The difference in mean attitude scores between the two groups was found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The study concludes that while both groups recognize the importance of inclusive education, there is a need to strengthen special education training programs to promote more inclusive mindsets. The study offers suggestions for curriculum enhancement, increased practical exposure, and attitudinal development for both groups of trainees.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Teacher Trainees, General Education, Special Education, Attitudes, Descriptive Survey, Pre-service Teachers, Statistical Comparison, Educational Inclusion and Jaipur District

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a globally recognized paradigm that emphasizes the right of every child, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities, to access quality education within a common learning environment. The aim of inclusive education is to eliminate discrimination and ensure equitable learning opportunities for all learners by integrating children with special needs into regular classrooms. In recent decades, educational policies across the world, including India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, have emphasized the implementation of inclusive practices in mainstream schools.

Teachers play a pivotal role in the successful implementation of inclusive education. Their beliefs, attitudes, and readiness directly affect their behavior in the classroom and their approach towards diverse learners. Therefore, the training of

future teachers—both general and special education trainees—needs to be closely examined to understand their perspectives toward inclusive education.

While general teacher trainees are primarily trained to handle regular classrooms, special education trainees receive specialized training to cater to children with diverse needs. It is essential to explore whether these two groups differ in their attitudes toward inclusive education, as such attitudes influence teaching practices, classroom climate, and ultimately, the success of inclusion.

## 2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Despite numerous policy interventions and teacher training reforms, the successful implementation of inclusive education continues to face significant challenges in India. Among these, teacher attitude remains one of the most critical factors influencing inclusive practices. Previous research has shown that even well-intentioned policies may fail if teachers are not adequately prepared or lack a positive disposition toward inclusion.

In this context, teacher education programs serve as the foundation for shaping the attitudes, knowledge, and skills of future educators. While general teacher trainees may not always receive in-depth training related to special needs education, special education trainees may hold views shaped by their specialized curriculum and exposure to disability studies.

However, limited research exists that directly compares the attitudes of these two groups within the same geographical or institutional context. Understanding the comparative attitudes of general and special teacher trainees is vital for designing effective teacher training curricula, promoting inclusive values, and identifying specific areas where attitudinal gaps may exist.

This study, therefore, attempts to fill this gap by conducting a comparative analysis of the attitudes of general and special teacher trainees in Jaipur city. By analyzing their responses to a standardized attitude scale and interpreting the findings using statistical methods, this research aims to provide empirical evidence that can inform teacher training policies and inclusive education strategies.

## 3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several national and international studies have explored teacher attitudes toward inclusive education, recognizing it as a crucial factor in the implementation of inclusive practices.

- [Sharma et al. \(2008\)](#) emphasized that teacher attitudes toward inclusion significantly depend on the type of training received, exposure to children with disabilities, and support structures available in schools. They suggested that practical training combined with theoretical knowledge leads to more positive attitudes.
- [Kumar and Midha \(2017\)](#) conducted a comparative study of the attitudes of schoolteachers working in general and special education settings in Delhi-NCR. Their findings indicated that while both groups supported the concept of inclusion, general educators exhibited greater hesitation in implementation due to lack of preparedness.
- [Mistry and Skutil \(2022\)](#) studied pre-service teachers in India and found that special education trainees had a more nuanced understanding of inclusion, while general trainees often held

stereotypical beliefs about disabilities. They advocated for integrating inclusive pedagogy into general teacher training programs.

- **Avramidis and Norwich (2002)** reviewed a range of international studies and found that teachers with more experience in inclusive settings and higher self-efficacy tend to display more positive attitudes toward inclusion. They also noted that factors such as age, gender, and teaching subject could influence attitudes.
- **Singh and Yadav (2015)** investigated the attitudes of B.Ed. trainees in Rajasthan and found mixed results—some trainees expressed support for inclusive education, while others felt ill-equipped to teach students with disabilities. The study called for curriculum revisions in teacher training institutions.

These studies collectively emphasize the variability in teacher attitudes based on educational background, training experiences, and exposure to inclusive settings. However, very few studies have examined this difference at the pre-service level between general and special education trainees, particularly in the Indian context and more specifically in Jaipur.

This study, therefore, seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by comparing the attitudes of general and special teacher trainees in Jaipur city using a standardized self-administered attitude scale and statistical analysis.

#### **4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To assess the attitudes of general teacher trainees towards inclusive education.
- 2) To assess the attitudes of special teacher trainees towards inclusive education.
- 3) To compare the attitudes of general and special teacher trainees towards inclusive education.
- 4) To determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the attitude scores of general and special teacher trainees.

#### **5. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

The study tests the following hypotheses:

**1) Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ):**

- There is no significant difference in the attitudes of general teacher trainees and special teacher trainees towards inclusive education.

**2) Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):**

- There is a significant difference in the attitudes of general teacher trainees and special teacher trainees towards inclusive education.

#### **6. METHODOLOGY**

##### **6.1. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study follows a descriptive survey method, which is appropriate for gathering quantitative data on the attitudes and perceptions of a large population. This design helps in comparing responses between two defined groups.

## 6.2. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

### 1) Population:

- The population comprises all teacher trainees enrolled in general and special education teacher training programs in Jaipur district.

### 2) Sample:

- A total of 300 teacher trainees were selected randomly from various teacher training institutions in Jaipur City, Rajasthan.

**General teacher trainees: 150**

**Special teacher trainees: 150**

Random sampling ensured that the sample is representative of the population, minimizing selection bias.

## 6.3. TOOL USED

A self-administered attitude scale was developed and used to measure the participants' attitudes towards inclusive education. The scale included statements related to:

- Beliefs about inclusive education,
- Perceived effectiveness of inclusive teaching practices,
- Readiness to teach children with special needs,
- Perceptions of institutional support for inclusion.

Responses were recorded on a Likert-type scale (e.g., Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree), with scoring done in a way that higher total scores indicate more positive attitudes toward inclusive education.

The scale was pre-tested for reliability and validity before administration.

## 6.4. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

- The researcher approached various B.Ed. and Special B.Ed. colleges across Jaipur city.
- Permission was taken from heads of institutions.
- The attitude scale was distributed to trainees, who were instructed on how to fill it independently.
- The data collection was completed within a fixed time frame and all responses were checked for completeness and accuracy.

## 6.5. STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The data were analyzed using the following statistical methods:

- **Mean and Standard Deviation:** - To assess and compare the central tendency and variability of attitude scores within each group.
- **t-test (Independent Samples):** - To determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the mean attitude scores of general and special teacher trainees.

A significance level of 0.05 (5%) was used to test the hypothesis.

## 7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

To analyze the data collected from 300 teacher trainees (150 general and 150 special), descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) and inferential statistics (independent sample t-test) were used. The objective was to compare the attitudes of the two groups toward inclusive education.

**Table 1**

**Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Attitude Scores**

Group	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
General Teacher Trainees	150	76.42	8.15
Special Teacher Trainees	150	72.35	7.90

From the above table, it is observed that the mean attitude score of general teacher trainees (76.42) is higher than that of special teacher trainees (72.35). This suggests that general teacher trainees exhibit slightly more positive attitudes toward inclusive education than their special counterparts.

**Table 2**

**Table 2 Results of Independent Sample t-test**

Groups Compared	t-value	df	p-value	Significance
General vs. Special Teacher Trainees	3.86	298	0.0001	Significant

### Interpretation:

The calculated p-value (0.0001) is less than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that the difference in attitude scores between the two groups is statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted.

## 8. FINDINGS

- 1) General teacher trainees showed more positive attitudes toward inclusive education compared to special teacher trainees.
- 2) The difference in mean scores between the two groups was found to be statistically significant using the independent sample t-test.
- 3) Despite their specialized training, some special education trainees may still harbor concerns or reservations about inclusive practices in mainstream settings.

## 9. CONCLUSION

This study revealed a significant difference in the attitudes of general and special teacher trainees toward inclusive education in Jaipur city. Contrary to common assumptions, general teacher trainees demonstrated more favorable attitudes than special education trainees.

This finding suggests that attitude development may not depend solely on specialized training but also on the broader educational environment, personal beliefs, or exposure to inclusive practices. It highlights the need to re-examine the curriculum and approach used in special education training programs and to

provide both general and special teacher trainees with more practical experiences in inclusive classrooms.

## 10. SUGGESTIONS

- 1) **Curriculum Reform:** - Integrate inclusive education content more meaningfully into both general and special teacher training programs.
- 2) **Practical Exposure:** - Arrange joint practicum opportunities in inclusive settings for both general and special teacher trainees to foster collaborative learning.
- 3) **Workshops and Seminars:** - Organize regular training on inclusive practices, disability awareness, and classroom accommodations for diverse learners.
- 4) **Attitudinal Development:** - Use reflective activities and discussion-based methods in teacher training institutions to challenge stereotypes and biases toward children with disabilities.
- 5) **Further Research:** - Conduct similar studies at a larger scale across different states and use mixed methods (qualitative + quantitative) to capture deeper insights.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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