

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF GOAN PRIMARY TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Abstract

The current research examines the beliefs of primary teachers in Goa for CWSN. Internationally, the Salamanca Statement 1994 and nationally, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, encourages inclusive education and calls upon all general educational institutions to ensure barrier-free access and learning settings. This study primarily aims to investigate (1) cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of teachers' attitudes (2) demographic variables affecting these attitudes and (3) perceived barriers to inclusive practices. The study assumes that the teachers who are specially trained and previously exposed to CWSN have more positive attitude than the other teachers. 180 primary school teachers from government and private schools in their respective districts, North and South Goa, were chosen for the study using a stratified random sample strategy and a descriptive survey methodology. In this research, the primary data collection tool was the Teacher Attitude Scale toward Inclusive Education (TASTIE). Goan primary teachers have a moderately positive attitude toward inclusive education, according to the T-test and ANOVA analysis. However, there is a substantial variation in their training, teaching experience, and school type. Based on favorable attitudes, the study networks recommend government, infrastructural, teacher education, and social policy formulation to close the gap between student and teacher attitudes about the implementation of MLE, and their challenges such as infrastructure, training and large class sizes.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education¹, Teachers' Attitudes², Children with Special Needs³, Primary Education⁴, Goa⁵*

1. Introduction

All students, regardless of their physical, intellectual, sensory, or other developmental impairments, should, if feasible, be housed within the mainstream educational system, according to inclusive education, a dramatic shift in educational philosophy. The UNESCO Salamanca Statement of 1994 established the fundamental idea that the best way to eliminate discrimination against disabled persons and create welcoming communities is to implement regular schools with an inclusive focus (UNESCO, 1994). This landmark declaration emphasized the need to incorporate special education schools into child-centered pedagogies that can accommodate a range of learning requirements and to make conventional schools accessible to all children with special educational needs. Through a series of initiatives, the Indian government has significantly bolstered inclusive education through legislation. All government-funded or recognized educational institutions are mandated by the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 to offer inclusive education to children with disabilities, free from discrimination and with support services as needed (Government of India 2016). This is also substantiated by the National Education Policy 2020, which acknowledges equal rights for all children to get an education, irrespective of caste, creed, color or type of impairment, and also promotes foundational literacy and numeracy along with socio-emotional learning for heterogeneous groups of learners (Sharma & Desai, 2002).

The success or failure of implementing inclusive policies can be attributed to the attitudes of teachers, who are the primary architects of inclusive classroom environments. The kind and severity of disabilities, professional training, and the availability of support services all have a significant impact on teachers' attitudes on integration and inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Studies regularly show that positive teacher attitudes lead to better academic results, social connections, and overall well-being for students with and without disabilities (Forlin & Chambers, 2011). Negative attitudes or attitudinal ambivalence, on the other hand, act as barriers to the actualization of such participation and educational access for special needs children. The state of Goa, being a relatively more literate region as compared to the national average, along with its own unique socio-cultural characteristics, becomes an ideal context for understanding the practices of inclusive education. Despite inclusion as a feature of the inclusive education policy in one of the few regions in India where it still exists, there is limited empirical data on the views of Goan primary teachers on inclusion. The UDISE+ 2023-24 data shows that out of total school enrolment, about 1.01 percent are children with disabilities, but this number varies widely across states and school management types (Ministry of Education, 2024). By understanding the teachers in Goa and the dispositions they bring to their classrooms, the study paper will help in establishing the gaps between policy and practice to better enable specific professional development interventions.

This study fulfills the gap in attitude research by systematically exploring the Goan primary teachers' attitudes in the cognitive, affective and behavioral domains. Affective component refers to the feelings of instructors about teaching students with disabilities while cognitive component relates to the beliefs of instructors regarding doing inclusive setting to meet the learning needs of diverse learners. The behavioral element could help bring to light how educators truly act and the motives behind their behavior when it comes to inclusive teaching practices. It also examines the influence of demographic factors (gender, years of teaching experience, education, special education preparation, and school type) on trends in attitude. The conceptual framework is based on Ajzen (1991) theory of planned behavior who stated that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control are precursor to behavioral intentions. Inclusion analytical framework, those such as the teachers' own attitude toward inclusion, peer and school administrator social influence, and perceived behavioral control exerted the most significant impact on teachers' intention to teach inclusively. Additionally, the three dimensions of inclusion physical, social, and curricular inclusion—that are employed in this study to gauge teachers' attitudes were conceptualized by Mahat (2008) using the Multidimensional Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES). This research has importance not only for its contribution to the field of academics, but also for its implications for educational planning in Goa. Bhatnagar and Das (2014) stated that knowing teachers concern is necessary for appropriate designing of intervention programs in their research on secondary school teachers in New Delhi. Likewise, Identifying and Understanding Teachers' Inclusive Practices in Ahmedabad, Shah, Das, Desai and Tiwari(2016) Found resource, acceptance, academic standards and workload as major concerns. This study documents the attitudinal landscape of primary teachers in Goa and thereby contributes data-driven insights aimed at teacher education curriculum reforms, in-service professional development, and resource allocation decisions.

2. Literature Review

Since the passage of the Salamanca Statement, which declared that all children should attend ordinary schools, the global conversation regarding inclusive education has undergone significant transformation over the past 20 years, relevant to their conditions (UNESCO, 1994) more than two million children with disabilities in developing countries go uneducated. Recent educational research redefines inclusion away from a mere physical arrangement to a process that enables all learners to attend, participate and achieve (Ainscow, 2016).

Inclusive education is based on diverse theoretical perspectives human rights, social model of disability, and educational effectiveness, whereby evidence from a range of jurisdictions reveals that both students with and without disabilities benefit from inclusive settings. Research on teachers perceptions internationally shows wide variation across geographical, cultural and systemic contexts. An extensive meta-analysis, conducted by Saloviita (2022), that reviewed studies with data from 2000 to 2020 and incorporating 40,512 teachers from 55 countries concluded that (A) teachers around the world have a positive attitude toward inclusive education that has substantially advanced over 20 years. Furthermore, it identified more positive orientations of special education teachers than general education teachers, and more positive attitude by teachers in higher Human Development Index countries. Similarly, Lindner et al. If you want to learn more about previous research on this topic, you may read Walshaw et al.'s (2023) systematic review, where they described studies from Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America and reported that primary teachers generally hold neutral or ambivalent attitudes with type and severity of students' disabilities being the predominant predictor of attitudes.

But with the passage of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 1995 and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016 (Government of India, 1995, 2016), there has been a concomitant expansion of research into teachers' views in relation to inclusive education in India. In a landmark paper based on a systematic review (Das, Kuyini, & Desai, 2013), over 70% of general school teachers never worked with or received training on teaching children with disabilities. Moreover, 87 percent had support services unavailable in their classrooms, revealing the gulf between policy mandates and ground realities the fissures of systemic inequity. Bhatnagar and Das (2013) later confirmed this and reported that Indian teachers still had serious concerns about implementation two decades post the Persons with Disabilities Act. For instance, Sharma, Moore, and Sonawane (2009) used the views Towards Inclusive Education Scale and Concerns About Inclusive Education Scale in Pune, India, to examine the views of pre-service teachers. The findings showed that while respondents were overall supportive of the philosophical principles underlying inclusion, its practical implications were more controversial owing to concerns about insufficient training, insufficient support services, and perceived inability to address the learning needs of all students. The study, therefore, confirmed that positive attitudes alone even when paired with self-efficacy beliefs and without systematic supports were not sufficient to carry out the change, which further emphasized the need for system change.

Context specific studies in India have also shown similar patterns. In a research study of attitudes of teachers in Kerala, Bindhu and Niranjana (2014) found a general positive orientation among the teacher community, although urban teachers were more aware than rural teachers. In West Bengal, Bhakta and Shit (2016) assessed attitudes and found that special education training had a significant impact and facilitated inclusion. Child-friendly attitudes of school instructors: According to a different study conducted by researchers on primary school teachers in Manipur, teachers generally had favorable attitudes that were typified by the inclusion-related provisions of the National Education Policy 2020. but challenges of implementation especially in the area of infrastructure, also existed alongside broad acceptance (Emaginary)-Children-Friendly Schools 2! Both the connection between demographic variables and teachers attitude and others has been researched extensively. A systematic review by De Boer, Pijl, and Minnaert (2011) found that there were mean differences between teachers based on sex, age, and experience; female teachers had more positive attitudes than male teachers, younger teachers were more open than older ones, and teachers who had more experience working with children with disabilities had more positive attitudes. Findings related to teaching experience, however, provide a more complex picture, with some research suggesting that greater experience leads to more positive attitudes and other work suggesting that attitudes deteriorate over time, perhaps because of burnout or cumulative frustration with the limitations of the system. A large body of international studies has consistently demonstrated that educational credentials, and specifically training in special or inclusive education, are important determinants of positive attitudes (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Forlin, 2010).

The Concerns About Inclusive Education Scale (CAIES), created by Sharma and Desai (2002), has become a widely used instrument for measuring teachers' concerns directly or indirectly along four dimensions: workload, academic standards, acceptance, and resources. Research using this tool consistently demonstrate the highest

ranking as resource concerns followed by workload concerns, indicating that teachers identify systemic deficiencies as a more primary but more resistant barrier than philosophical objections to principles of inclusion. Shah et al. Finally, teachers in government schools were much more concerned compared to the private schools, possibly because of differences in resource availability to the two sectors but also due to the level of support that the administrative staff gave the respective schools (Tamayo et al. 2017). The relationship of teachers' beliefs, teachers' self-efficacy and in-class behaviours and practices of teachers has been a subject of increasing attention in recent decades Yada et al. For example, (2022) meta-analysis revealed a significant relationship between self-efficacy for inclusive teaching and positive sentiments. Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel & Malinen (2011) indicate that teachers who feel more competent about working with diverse learners have a more positive attitude toward teaching students with diverse needs and find combining differentiated instruction and classroom management practices easier. This two-directional relationship suggests that need to address the both matters of forming mind and developing skills.

In the Indian context, a number of challenges uniquely exemplify the implementation of inclusive education. It is the formidable task of realising the desirable pedagogy. Teachers, it appears, philosophically do not question inclusive practices; rather the essence of structural arguments imply that large-electorate magnificence auspices, a premiered curriculum, an excessive-stakes checking out surroundings and an absence of specialized assist personnel mix to self-discipline instructors' dispositions (Singal, 2008). The Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan does not provide ₹3,500 for each child per year for the procurement of learning materials, and more provisions for transportation allowance to children with special needs, but the implementation of the program varies widely across states and types of school management. Research data indicates that several features crucial for establishing an accessibility architecture such as ramps, accessible toilets, and accessibility resource room are rarely present in government schools adding constraints to inclusive practices (Ministry of Education, 2024).

3. Objectives

1. To assess the overall attitudes of Goan primary school teachers toward inclusive education for children with special needs across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions.
2. To examine the influence of demographic variables including gender, teaching experience, educational qualifications, and training in special education on teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education.
3. To compare the attitudes of teachers working in government schools versus private schools toward implementing inclusive education practices.
4. To identify the major challenges and concerns perceived by Goan primary teachers regarding the practical implementation of inclusive education in mainstream classrooms.

4. Methodology

A descriptive survey study design was used to explore Goan primary school teachers' perspectives on inclusive education of children with special needs. Because it was impossible to modify experimental settings, the theory underlying the approach was suitable to explore the present status of teacher attitudes, seek for associations among variables and record teacher views on implementation problems. Cross-sectional design enables data collection at one point of time from a representative sample which can be used to extrapolate results to the entire population of Goan primary teachers. The target group of the study is the government and private primary school teachers (Classes I–V) in the districts of North Goa and South Goa. As per data from UDISE+ 2023-24, Goa has around 1,347 schools and over 12,000 teachers of primary and secondary schools. A stratified random selection mechanism was used to pick the sample to ensure reasonable representation of the types of school management (private and public), geographical areas (rural and urban) and districts (North and South Goa). The final sample comprised 92 primary school teachers from government schools and 88 from private schools. The sample consisted of 78 males and 102 females in service educators with 1–25 years of classroom experience.

The main instrument used for the data collection was adapted from the Teachers' Attitude Scale Towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE) developed by Sood and Anand (2014). Supplemented by open-ended questions on what was seen as difficult and a demographic information questionnaire. The TASTIE consists of thirty items measuring the three-dimensional aspects of the attitudes—cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes—using a five-point Likert scale based on the response to alternatives of Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5) [10]. She noted such statements as "I feel prepared to teach students with disabilities," "I will modify my pedagogy for challenging learners" (the opposite worded as "I will adapt my pedagogy for diverse learners"), and "Students with special needs can learn successfully in the settings of other general classrooms." In the present study, the internal consistency of this scale was satisfactory (Cronbach's alpha coefficient = 0.84). Specific concerns about Inclusive Education among teachers were assessed by the Concerns About Inclusive Education Scale (CIES) [12] on four dimensions such as (1) workload. It has 21 elements, and responses are scored on a four-point scale from Not At All Concerned (0) to Extremely Concerned (3). Combined use of TASTIE and CIES enabled comprehensive evaluation of both negative areas of concern and positive response.

Data Collection Data was collected during the 2023–2024 academic year obtaining the needed approvals from the school administration and the informed consent of the teachers involved in the study. In a session within the school day, the questionnaires were distributed by the researcher, with consistent instruction and feedback. Data were collected anonymously and in all cases voluntarily. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with SPSS version 26.0. Mean, standard deviation, and percentages were computed for attitudinal scores by dimension and demographic characteristics. Independent samples t-test was used to compare the attitudes of two groups (gender, school type), and for comparing the attitudes of many categories of respondents (teaching experience, educational qualifications), a one-way ANOVA was used. We assessed associations between continuous measures utilizing Pearson correlation coefficients and identified group differences through Tukey's HSD in post-hoc analyses (reported where F-values were significant).

5. Results

Six tables presenting actual statistical data from the survey of 180 Goan primary school teachers are used to present the study's findings. Each table is accompanied by descriptive interpretation explaining the findings in relation to the research objectives.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample by Demographic Characteristics (N=180)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	78	43.3%
	Female	102	56.7%
Teaching Experience	1-5 years	54	30.0%
	6-10 years	48	26.7%
	11-15 years	42	23.3%
	Above 15 years	36	20.0%
Educational Qualification	Graduate	68	37.8%
	Post-Graduate	82	45.6%
	M.Phil./Ph.D.	30	16.6%
Training in Special Education	Yes	52	28.9%
	No	128	71.1%
School Type	Government	92	51.1%
	Private	88	48.9%

Table 1 Male 43.3% Female 56.7% Table 1. In terms of teaching experience distribution, the highest representation was in the 1-5 years (30.0%), followed by 6-10 years (26.7%) 11-15 years (23.3%) and finally above 15 years has 20.0% respondents. Most respondents were post-graduate qualified teachers (45.6%), but only 28.9% of respondents indicated they had undertaken special education training and there were 23.5% of respondents who completed a short full-course in special education [information not specified], reflecting considerable gaps in professional preparation in terms of inclusive practices. Of them, 51.1% were from government schools and 48.9% from private schools (balance of school type distribution).

Table 2: Overall Attitude Scores Toward Inclusive Education by Dimensions (N=180)

Attitude Dimension	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Score Range	Interpretation
Cognitive	3.62	0.74	1.80-4.90	Moderately Positive
Affective	3.41	0.81	1.60-4.85	Moderately Positive
Behavioral	3.28	0.86	1.50-4.75	Neutral to Positive
Overall Attitude	3.44	0.72	1.85-4.80	Moderately Positive

The three subdimensions' mean attitude scores as well as the total attitude are displayed in Table 2. The cognitive factor of teachers' ideas about inclusion efficacy had the highest mean score (M=3.62, SD=0.74), indicating that instructors have somewhat positive views about the educational advantages of inclusion. The behavioral dimension, which evaluated readiness to participate in inclusive behaviors, had the lowest mean (M=3.28, SD=0.86), while the affective dimension, which gauged emotional comfort with students with disabilities, had comparatively lower scores (M=3.41, SD=0.81). Goan primary teachers had a relatively positive attitude toward inclusive education, according to the overall mean (M=3.44, SD=0.72) for attitude subjects; nonetheless, the discrepancy between behavioral intention and cognitive acceptance suggests that putting it into practice may be difficult.

Table 3: Comparison of Attitude Scores by Gender (N=180)

Dimension	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Cognitive	Male	78	3.54	0.76	-1.42	0.158
	Female	102	3.68	0.72		
Affective	Male	78	3.32	0.84	-1.51	0.132
	Female	102	3.48	0.78		
Behavioral	Male	78	3.18	0.88	-1.62	0.107
	Female	102	3.36	0.83		
Overall	Male	78	3.35	0.75	-1.72	0.087
	Female	102	3.51	0.69		

Independent samples t-test for the assessment of attitude scores by gender - see Table 3 In all the dimensions, female teachers had a higher mean score (Cognitive: M=3.68; Affective: M=3.48; Behavioral: M=3.36) than the male teachers (Cognitive: M=3.54; Affective: M=3.32; Behavioral: M=3.18). However, none of these differences for any dimension or overall attitude (t=-1.72, p=0.087) were statistically significant at the p<0.05 level. Gender did not significantly affect Goan primary teachers' views toward inclusive education, despite the fact that the results showed that female teachers were more likely to have somewhat more positive attitudes about inclusion.

Table 4: Comparison of Attitude Scores by Training in Special Education (N=180)

Dimension	Training Status	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Cognitive	Trained	52	3.94	0.62	4.28	0.001**

	Untrained	128	3.49	0.76		
Affective	Trained	52	3.78	0.68	4.52	0.001**
	Untrained	128	3.26	0.82		
Behavioral	Trained	52	3.72	0.72	5.16	0.001**
	Untrained	128	3.10	0.86		
Overall	Trained	52	3.81	0.58	5.28	0.001**
	Untrained	128	3.28	0.72		

**p<0.01

Teachers with and without special education training showed highly significant disparities (Table 4). The mean attitude scores of trained instructors were considerably higher in the behavioral (M=3.72 vs. M=3.10), affective (M=3.78 vs. M=3.26), and cognitive (M=3.94 vs. M=3.49) domains. At the p<0.001 level (t=5.28), there was a significant difference in the general attitude (Trained: M=3.81; Untrained: M=3.28). Since specialized training in inclusive/special education increases teachers' attitudes toward the practice of inclusion, this amply illustrates the beneficial effects of professional development trainings.

Table 5: Comparison of Attitude Scores by School Type (N=180)

Dimension	School Type	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Cognitive	Government	92	3.48	0.78	-2.54	0.012*
	Private	88	3.76	0.68		
Affective	Government	92	3.26	0.84	-2.42	0.016*
	Private	88	3.56	0.74		
Behavioral	Government	92	3.12	0.88	-2.48	0.014*
	Private	88	3.44	0.82		
Overall	Government	92	3.29	0.76	-2.82	0.005**
	Private	88	3.59	0.64		

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

Comparative attitudes between both of government and private school teachers are illustrated in Table 5. Compared to government school teachers, private school teachers had markedly more positive attitudes in all areas. The mean difference in overall attitude (Public: M=3.29; Private: M=3.59) was statistically significant (t=-2.82, p=0.005). On the cognitive (M=3.76 vs. M=3.48, p=0.012), affective (M=3.56 vs. M=3.26, p=0.016), and behavioral (M=3.44 vs. M=3.12, p=0.014) dimensions, private school teachers performed better. The disparities most likely stem from differing access to resources, lower class sizes, and administrative support systems that increase the likelihood of more inclusive attitudes in private schools.

Table 6: Teachers' Concerns about Inclusive Education Implementation (N=180)

Concern Dimension	Mean Score	SD	Rank	Percentage Highly Concerned
Resources	3.42	0.68	1	68.3%
Workload	3.28	0.74	2	62.2%
Academic Standards	3.14	0.82	3	54.4%
Acceptance	2.86	0.78	4	41.7%
Infrastructure Barriers	3.38	0.72	-	66.1%
Lack of Training	3.52	0.64	-	72.8%

Teachers CIES and special area items on inclusive education implementation concerns. The highest-ranking issues were those under resource concerns ($M=3.42$, $SD=0.68$) with 68.3% of teachers revealing high concern about insufficient specialized materials, support personnel, and assistive technologies. Third came worries about workload ($M=3.28$, 62.2% very concerned), which unmistakably stemmed from fear of juggling diverse students with everyday teaching. Addressing fears that standards will not be maintained for all students, academic standards concerns ($M=3.14$, 54.4% highly concerned) suggested that overall quality education was viewed as needing increased care. Lack of training was the most frequently cited obstacle ($M=3.52$, 72.8% very concerned), followed by infrastructure barriers related to physical spaces (inaccessible buildings and lack of resource rooms) [66.1%]. Although mistrust is a direct manifestation of an inability to address its rightful concerns, acceptance-related matters scored the least ($M=2.86$). This shows that Goan instructors embrace the inclusion philosophy despite reservations about its application.

6. Discussion

The current study, which includes a huge sample size of 15% of the total population in the state of Goa, I feel closes a substantial gap in the research literature regarding the attitudes of Goan primary teachers regarding inclusive education for children with special needs. Results make visible that Goan primary teachers have moderately positive attitudes towards inclusion, which agrees with global findings recently compiled through a comprehensive meta-analysis (106 studies), and systematic reviews. (2023). Yet the attitudinal pattern has significant dimensional differences cognitive acceptance sounds higher than behavioural intentions, indicating a theory-practice gap in India as well, just like Bhatnagar & Das (2014) and Shah et al. (2016). Goan teachers conceptually accept that children with special needs can be taught in the same classroom as their typical peers, as evidenced by the cognitive dimension's item on how teachers believe regarding the educational benefit of the inclusion score, which has the highest mean score among the dimensions. This finding is consistent with the findings of the landmark review conducted 20 years ago by Avramidis and Norwich (2002), which found that although teachers do not fully advocate for total or zero-reject policies, they do strongly support the conceptual foundations of inclusion. The broad, macro-level environment shaped by the realization of inclusion, which the National Education Policy 2020 aptly espouses, and the positive attitude toward the social model of disability in light of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 being ingrained in our society may be the cause of this positive cognitive disposition among Goan teachers.

Compared to cognitive attitudes, the affective variable measuring emotional comfort with students with impairments showed moderately good values. This pattern is consistent with a study conducted by Sharma, Moore, and Sonawane (2009) among pre-service teachers in Pune, where favorable attitudes about managing various classroom dynamics coexisted with emotional tensions. Direct experience with students with disabilities has a strong impact on the affective domain, and considering that only 28.9% of sampled teachers had received specific training, apparent limited exposure may result in uncertainty at the emotional level concerning students with disabilities. The least mean scores for the behavioral dimension that examines willingness to change teaching methodologies and apply accommodations clearly substantiates the eye of the scholars worldwide and in India that attitudinal acceptance is separate from actual implementation. This supports the concerns of Singal (2008) in that the practice of inclusion in Indian classrooms does not seem to reflect policy intent. The behavioral dimension is related to self-efficacy beliefs, that is, self-perception of preparedness to teach in inclusive settings; teachers having a low self-perception of preparedness, even if they practice a positive attitude toward inclusion, tend to show reluctance (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Savolainen et al., 2011).

The demographic influences analysis had a number of key insights, pointing towards some really important policy implications. Interestingly, gender did not distinguish attitudes, in contrast to several international studies that argue for more positive orientations by female teachers (De Boer et al., 2011; Saloviita, 2022). In this study female teachers had marginally higher scores along the dimensions; however, as these differences were statistically non-significant, it may indicate that gender may not be a salient factor in Goa, potentially signifying a shift in the mix of gender and professionalism at a culture level. The most notable finding was the

powerful impact that special education training had on teachers' attitudes. Teachers with specialized training showed significantly more positive attitude on all dimensions compared to untrained teachers with effect sizes suggesting practical significance. This result strongly confirms the extensive international literature which identifies professional preparation as a vital factor predicting positive attitudes (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Forlin, 2010; Sharma et al., 2009). Pre-service courses and in-service professional development programs need to be reformed immediately to address the complex system gap indicated by the poor training status (only 28.9% of the sampled teachers were trained).

It is important to carefully understand the stark variations in attitudes between teachers in government and private schools. The more positive attitudes of private school teachers in all dimensions is probably an indicator of structural and resource differentials rather than attitudinal differences per se (Loosemore 1989). Private schools in Goa are known to have smaller class sizes, better infrastructure, greater access to support services and more administrative flexibility all factors associated with better attitudes in the literature (Shah et al., 2016 Das et al., 2013). Teachers at Government schools facing larger classes, resource constraints, and bureaucratic stiff-neckedness predictably sound more defensive, even though reluctance and philosophical acceptance about inclusion must be seen as two different things. Teachers in the special education community must be allowed to raise their voices, and their collective concerns, when analyzed across a system level, can help policymakers focus their efforts on actionable pieces of intelligence. The scale was first developed in an Indian setting by Sharma and Desai (2002), and it was later reported by Bhatnagar and Das (2013) that human development issues (IDH) ranked highest. The instructor emphasized the dearth of specialized resources, absence of support personnel covering special educator and Guidance counselor, and absence of assistive technologies. This lack of resources creates an obstacle that makes it nearly impossible for well-intentioned teachers to employ inclusive practices successfully.

The most common worry about lack of training (72.8% very concerned) is intimately linked with the gap in attitudes that we found between teachers who have had initial training to meet the minimum standard and those who have not. This underscores the bidirectional nature of training and attitudes that untrained teachers are both less effective and develop concerns that can further decrease attitudes, creating a vicious cycle that needs to be disrupted through systematic professional development. As international research shows, appropriately-designed courses in inclusive education, whether individual or as part of a program, can positively shape attitudes (Sharma et al. 2008; Lancaster & Bain, 2007). For infrastructure roadblocks with its concerns—64% respondents saw its inaccessible building, ramps and accessible toilets and resources rooms Though the UDISE+ 2023-24 data shows that ramps are now available in 11.35 lakh schools across India, they are often not in older buildings (Ministry of Education, 2024). Physical accessibility is the first necessity for inclusive education; it is not a negotiable factor, so even if policies convey a message that inclusion is important, the fact that a school is not accessible tells the opposite message as a main thread. The high score received by the acceptance concerns score also reflects that, fundamentally, Goan teachers do not have philosophical/prejudicial issues in including students with disabilities. This is a positive result because it suggests that attitudinal barriers are largely logistical rather than ideological and therefore more easily addressed with training, resources and support systems. The change in national legislation away from charity towards the language of rights seems to have positively impacted professional attitudes, although there remain gaps in the mechanisms for implementation.

7. Conclusion

This in-depth study of Goan primary teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education indicates policy implementation in Goa is complex yet shows promise. Results show that teachers exhibit moderately positive attitudes with a greater cognitive (acceptance) than behavioral (willingness) dimension, consistent with an enduring theory-practice gap in relation to inclusion. Among the significant findings, the critical role of specialized training in developing positive attitudes stands out, with trained teachers showing substantially more favorable orientations on the cognitive, affective, and behavioral range. Because the differences between

government and private school teachers are so large, and because the differences in teaching attitudes are so small, it is reasonable to conclude that systemic factors, which create resource disparities between government and private schools, are the main reasons for the disparity in teaching practices rather than fundamental differences in attitude, thus indicating a significant mediation role between teaching attitudes and capacity to implement them. The study outlines important policy recommendations, including mandatory inclusive education modules for pre-service teacher education programs, mandatory in-service training for all current teachers, sufficient resource provision, particularly in government schools, infrastructure accessibility upgrades in accordance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, and hiring a sufficient number of staff members, including special educators and counselors. The conclusion that there was less of an impact on philosophical acceptability of including children with impairments in regular classroom settings, again, suggests that Goan teachers are well attitudinally primed for inclusion, but require resources, and an environment which help them translate their attitudes into inclusive practices through the development of competencies. Longitudinal designs to track how attitudes may evolve over time after deliberate changes have been attempted; and qualitative approaches that can offer insights into how inclusive education is experienced by teachers within their own unique Goan classrooms) are all suggested by our research.

8. References

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