



# A Study on The Attitudes Of Secondary School Teachers Towards Inclusive Education At Montfort School, Guwahati

Maria Soosai S<sup>1\*</sup>, Prof. Khem Chand Kapoor<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>Research Scholar, Assam Don Bosco University, Tapesia Gardens, Kamarkuchi, Sonapur – 782 402, Assam. (orcid id: 0009-0006-3313-3725)

<sup>2\*</sup>Professor, Assam Don Bosco University, Tapesia Gardens, Kamarkuchi, Sonapur – 782 402, Assam

## ABSTRACT:

Inclusive education aims to integrate students with diverse needs into mainstream classrooms, fostering equitable learning opportunities. This study examines the attitudes of secondary school teachers at Montfort School, Guwahati, toward inclusive education, recognizing their critical role in its successful implementation. Using a descriptive-cum-normative survey method, data were collected from a sample of 50 teachers through an Attitude Scale developed by the researcher.

Findings indicate generally positive attitudes among teachers, with significant differences based on gender and experience. Female teachers, older teachers, and those with more experience exhibited more favorable views toward inclusion. However, no statistically significant differences were found between special educators and general educators or between teachers with varying years of teaching experience. These findings highlight the need for targeted training programs, particularly for male, younger, and less experienced teachers, to enhance their confidence and preparedness for inclusive teaching.

The study underscores the importance of mentorship programs, professional development, and collaboration between general and special educators to strengthen inclusive education practices. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on inclusive education, providing insights for improving teacher training and policy implementation. Future research should focus on gender-specific interventions, teacher preparedness, and co-teaching models to further support inclusive practices.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Attitude, Special Educational Needs (SEN), Professional Development, Mentorship, Co-Teaching, Curriculum Adaptation

## INTRODUCTION:

Inclusive education has gained significant momentum in recent decades, advocating for the integration of students with diverse needs into mainstream classrooms. This approach aims to provide equitable educational opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities, while fostering a culture of acceptance among peers. Montfort School in Guwahati, India, serves as a pertinent case study for examining teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, as these attitudes are critical for successful implementation. Understanding these attitudes is essential for identifying potential barriers and facilitators to effective inclusive practices.

Inclusive education seeks to meet the diverse needs of all students, particularly those with disabilities and special educational needs (SEN), by providing quality education in an inclusive and supportive environment. The global movement toward inclusive education is supported by frameworks like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Goal 4, which calls for inclusive and equitable education for all (Boer et al., 2011; O'Toole & Burke, 2013). In India, this push for inclusion is reflected in policies such as the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009) and the National Policy on Education (2020), both advocating for the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools (You et al., 2019; Zagana et al., 2017). However, the success of inclusive education largely depends on teachers' attitudes, as they are key implementers of educational policies. Teachers' perceptions of inclusion affect their classroom dynamics and teaching practices (Mngo & Mngo, 2018; Moti et al., 2018).

Montfort School in Guwahati offers a valuable context for exploring secondary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in India. As an institution committed to promoting an inclusive environment, it provides insight into how teachers engage with inclusive practices. Investigating these attitudes helps identify barriers to inclusion and understand the factors that facilitate effective inclusive practices.

Teachers' attitudes significantly shape educational outcomes. Positive attitudes are linked to a willingness to adapt teaching methods, collaborate with special educators, and engage in professional development (You et al., 2019; Zagana et al., 2017). Conversely, negative attitudes can hinder inclusive practices, resulting in the marginalization of students with disabilities (Mngo & Mngo, 2018). This literature review examines the factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their implications for practice.

At Montfort School, secondary school teachers' attitudes are shaped by factors such as training, school climate, self-efficacy, and demographic variables. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing strategies that can enhance teachers' attitudes and contribute to the success of inclusive education initiatives.



## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

The concept of attitude in the context of education is multifaceted, encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. According to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior, attitudes are shaped by beliefs about the outcomes of a behavior, normative beliefs about what others think one should do, and perceived behavioral control (Moti et al., 2018). This framework can be applied to understand teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, as their beliefs about the efficacy of inclusive practices, societal expectations, and their perceived ability to implement such practices all contribute to their overall attitude.

Research indicates that teachers who receive specialized training in inclusive education tend to have more positive attitudes towards inclusion (Krischler & Cate, 2019; Raudeliūnaitė & Steponėnienė, 2020). For instance, a study by Moti et al. found that teachers with formal training in inclusive practices were more likely to express confidence in their ability to teach students with diverse needs (Xue et al., 2023). Furthermore, ongoing professional development opportunities that focus on inclusive pedagogy can enhance teachers' understanding and acceptance of inclusive practices, thereby fostering a more positive attitude (Majoko, 2019). Teachers' experiences in the classroom also play a crucial role in shaping their attitudes towards inclusion. Studies have shown that teachers with more years of experience are generally more supportive of inclusive education compared to their less experienced counterparts (Kartono, 2024; Olufunke & Oluremi, 2014). This may be attributed to the accumulation of practical knowledge and skills in managing diverse classrooms over time. Additionally, demographic factors such as age, gender, and educational background can influence attitudes, with younger teachers often displaying less favorable attitudes towards inclusion due to a lack of exposure and experience (Hsieh et al., 2012).

The school climate significantly impacts teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. A supportive and collaborative school environment that encourages teamwork among teachers, parents, and support staff is essential for fostering positive attitudes. Research by Xue et al. emphasizes that a positive school climate, characterized by strong leadership and a commitment to inclusivity, can enhance teachers' self-efficacy and willingness to embrace inclusive practices. Conversely, a lack of resources, inadequate administrative support, and negative peer attitudes can lead to resistance and reluctance to implement inclusive education.

Understanding the factors that influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education is crucial for developing effective strategies to promote inclusivity in schools. Professional development programs should be tailored to address the specific needs and concerns of teachers, providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement inclusive practices effectively. Additionally, fostering a positive school climate that values diversity and collaboration can enhance teachers' confidence and commitment to inclusive education.

This literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, setting the stage for further investigation into the specific context of Montfort School in Guwahati. By synthesizing existing research, this review highlights the importance of understanding teachers' perspectives as a means to enhance inclusive practices in educational settings.

## RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY:

The rationale for investigating secondary school teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education at Montfort School, Guwahati, stems from their crucial role in its successful implementation. Teachers' beliefs and perceptions influence their teaching strategies and the overall learning environment for students with diverse needs. While well-trained teachers recognize the benefits of inclusion, inadequate training can lead to resistance, hindering students' educational experiences.

Factors like administrative support, staff collaboration, and resource availability shape teachers' attitudes. Understanding Montfort School's specific context helps identify challenges and opportunities for fostering inclusive practices. This study aims to inform policy and practice by highlighting barriers and facilitators, ultimately enhancing teachers' attitudes and improving educational outcomes for students with special needs.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

This study explores the attitudes of teachers at Montfort School, Guwahati, towards inclusive education, recognizing that teachers' beliefs and perceptions which play a key role in its successful implementation. Despite a growing emphasis on inclusive education in India, challenges remain, particularly due to insufficient training, resources, and administrative support. These factors can lead to negative attitudes that hinder the inclusion of students with special educational needs (SEN). By investigating these attitudes at Montfort School, the study aims to identify key barriers and facilitators to inclusive education, providing insights to improve practices and inform future policies. Hence, the problem statement for this study is stated as **"A Study on the attitudes of Secondary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati."** Addressing this problem is essential for developing effective strategies to enhance inclusive education practices at Montfort School and beyond.



### OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the attitude of the Secondary School teachers towards Inclusive Education of Children with Special Needs (CWSN) at Montfort School, Guwahati.
2. To find out the difference between the attitude of male and female secondary school teachers towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.
3. To find out the difference in attitude of secondary school teachers based on age, specifically those aged  $\leq 30$  years and  $\geq 31$  years towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.
4. To find out the difference in attitude based on teaching experience comparing teachers with  $\leq 10$  years and  $\geq 11$  years of experience towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.
5. To find out the difference in attitude between Special Educators and General Educators towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.

### HYPOTHESES:

1. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female secondary school teachers towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.
2. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of secondary school teachers aged  $\leq 30$  years and those aged  $\geq 31$  years towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.
3. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of secondary school teachers with  $\leq 10$  years of teaching experience and those with  $\geq 11$  years of experience towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.
4. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of Special Educators and General Educators towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.

### METHOD ADOPTED:

The researcher adopted a descriptive cum normative survey method to investigate teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education at Montfort School, Guwahati. This methodological approach is particularly suitable for this research study as it allows for the collection of quantitative and qualitative data regarding teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and practices related to inclusive education in present day scenario. This method facilitates the systematic collection of data that describes the current attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education. By capturing a snapshot of teachers' perceptions, the study can identify prevalent trends, patterns, and variations in attitudes across different demographic groups within the teaching staff (Boer et al., 2011; O'Toole & Burke, 2013). The normative component allows for the comparison of the collected data against established standards or benchmarks related to inclusive education practices. This enables the identification of areas where teachers' attitudes align or diverge from best practices and theoretical frameworks in inclusive education (You et al., 2019; Zagana et al., 2017). The combination of descriptive and normative elements provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teachers' attitudes, including their training, experience, and the school environment.

### RESEARCH DESIGN:

The researcher adopted cross-sectional research design for this study. This approach is particularly suitable for examining teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education at Montfort School, Guwahati, as it allows for the collection of data at a single point in time from a diverse sample of participants. The cross-sectional approach enables comparisons between different groups of teachers based on demographic variables such as age, gender, teaching experience, and educational background. This can help identify patterns and trends that may influence attitudes towards inclusion (Arabambi et al., 2022).

### POPULATION OF THE STUDY:

The population for this study comprises the teaching staff at Montfort School, Guwahati, which includes both general education teachers and special education teachers. This diverse group of educators provides a rich context for examining attitudes towards inclusive education, as they represent a range of experiences, training backgrounds, and perspectives on the integration of Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) into mainstream classrooms.

The details of the total population of the study have been shown in Table – 1.

**Table – 1: Showing total No. of teachers in Montfort School, Guwahati**

Particulars	Male	Female	Total
Primary and Upper Primary	11	35	46
Secondary	5	9	14
Senior Secondary	4	12	16



Total No. of Teachers	20	56	76
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### SAMPLE OF THE STUDY:

The researcher selected a sample of 50 teachers by adopting the stratified proportionate random sampling technique. Further the selected sample of 50 teachers divided into different categories as shown in Table – 2.

**Table – 2: Sample of Teachers for the Study**

Particulars		Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	20	40.00
	Female	30	60.00
Age	≤ 30 years	15	30.00
	≥ 31 Years	35	70.00
Teaching Experience	≤ 10 years	25	50.00
	≥ 11 Years	25	50.00
Qualification	Special Educators	13	26.00
	General Educators	37	74.00

### TOOLS USED:

Tools play a magnificent role in collecting relevant and reliable data. As per the nature of the objectives of the study, the investigator used the **Attitude Scale for measuring the attitude of the secondary school teachers towards inclusive Education** developed by him. The reliability of the attitude scale was tested using the test-retest method, yielding a coefficient of 0.84, indicating a good level of consistency. The content validity was ensured by seeking the opinions of content experts to validate the scale's relevance and accuracy.

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

**Objective – 1: To study the attitude of the secondary school teachers towards Inclusive Education of Children with Special Needs (CWSN) at Montfort School, Guwahati.**

For achieving this objective – 1, the researcher collected the data from the selected teachers and the attitude scores of the teachers of Montfort School, Guwahati have been shown in Frequency Table – 3.

**Table – 3: Frequency table showing the attitude scores of the secondary school Teachers towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.**

CI	100 – 109	90 – 99	80 – 89	70 – 79	60 – 69	50 – 59	40 – 49
F	9	12	14	7	3	4	1
N = 50, Mean = 84.7, SD = 15.43, SE <sub>D</sub> = 2.18, Median = 86.6, Mode = 87.27							

**Interpretation:** As per the findings presented in Table 3, secondary school teachers at Montfort School, Guwahati, generally exhibit a positive attitude toward inclusive education. The computed attitude mean score of Secondary School teachers of Montfort School, Guwahati came out to be 84.7 (67.76%) and it suggests that the teachers possess quite favourable attitude towards the inclusion of Visually Impaired students in Montfort School of Guwahati. The median and mode score came out to be 86.6 and 87.27 respectively. Median and Mode attitude scores are clearly indicative of better attitude of the teachers towards the implementation of inclusive education in Montfort School, Guwahati.

**Objective – 2: To find out the difference between the attitude of male and female secondary school teachers towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.**

**Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female secondary school teachers towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.**

For achieving this objective – 2, the researcher collected the data from the selected teachers and the attitude scores of the teachers of Montfort School, Guwahati have been shown in Table – 4

**Table – 4: Showing the computed Mean, SD, SE<sub>D</sub>, and t- value on attitude with respect to Secondary School Male and Female Teachers towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School.**

Particulars	Number	Mean	SD	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-value
Secondary School Male Teachers	20	79.02	16.87	3.75	2.13
Secondary School Female Teachers	30	88.50	13.06	2.38	

**Interpretation:** The table – 4 indicates that the computed t-value was found to be 2.13 which is greater than the criterion t-value (2.01) at .05 level of significance for 48 df, hence, the computed t-value (2.13) has been



considered significant and the formulated hypothesis: **“There is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female secondary school teachers toward Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati”** is rejected. From this, it is interpreted that the male and female teachers differ significantly in their attitude towards the inclusion in Montfort School, Guwahati. Further, it has been noticed that female teachers possess better and higher attitude towards inclusion than the male teachers at Montfort School located in Guwahati. This difference seems to be due to better level of empathy, exposure and sense of service to special category of students.

**Objective – 3: To find out the difference in attitude of secondary school teachers based on age, specifically those aged  $\leq 30$  years and  $\geq 31$  years towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.**

**Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the attitudes of secondary school teachers aged  $\leq 30$  years and those aged  $\geq 31$  years towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.**

For achieving this objective – 3, the researcher collected the data from the selected teachers and the attitude scores of the teachers of Montfort School, Guwahati have been shown in Table – 5

**Table – 5: Showing the computed Mean, SD, SE<sub>D</sub>, and t- value on attitude with respect to Secondary School  $\leq 30$  years and  $\geq 31$  Years old Teachers towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School.**

Particulars		Number	Mean	SD	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-value
Age	$\leq 30$ years	15	78.5	16.25	4.2	1.81
	$\geq 31$ Years	35	87.3	14.25	2.4	

**Interpretation:** The table – 5 indicates that the computed t-value was found to be 1.81 which is lesser than the criterion t-value (2.01) at .05 level of significance for 48 df, hence, the computed t-value (1.81) has not been considered significant and the formulated hypothesis: **“There is no significant difference between the attitudes of secondary school teachers aged  $\leq 30$  years and those aged  $\geq 31$  years toward Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati”** is retained. From this, it is interpreted that teachers aged  $\leq 30$  years and those aged  $\geq 31$  years teachers do not differ significantly in their attitude towards the inclusion in Montfort School, Guwahati. Further, it has been noticed that the teachers aged 30 years or younger have a mean score of 78.5, while those aged 31 years or older have a higher mean score of 87.3. The standard deviation for the older group (14.25) is slightly lower than that of the younger group (16.25), suggesting that older teachers have a more consistent positive attitude toward inclusion. This trend may be attributed to greater exposure, experience, and understanding of inclusive education among older teachers.

**Objective – 4: To find out the difference in attitude based on teaching experience comparing teachers with  $\leq 10$  years and  $\geq 11$  years of experience towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.**

**Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the attitudes of secondary school teachers with  $\leq 10$  years of teaching experience and those with  $\geq 11$  years of experience towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.**

For achieving this objective – 4, the researcher collected the data from the selected teachers and the attitude scores of the teachers of Montfort School, Guwahati have been shown in Table – 6

**Table – 6: Showing the computed Mean, SD, SE<sub>D</sub>, and t- value on attitude with respect to Secondary School Teachers having teaching experience of  $\leq 10$  years and  $\geq 11$  Years towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School.**

Particulars		Number	Mean	SD	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-value
Teaching Experience	$\leq 10$ years	25	80.5	16.7	3.34	2.0
	$\geq 11$ Years	25	88.9	12.67	2.53	

**Interpretation:** Table 6 indicates that the computed t-value was found to be 2.0, which is lesser than the critical t-value of 2.01 at the 0.05 significance level for 48 degrees of freedom. Since the computed t-value does not reach the threshold for significance, the formulated hypothesis: **“There is no significant difference between the attitudes of secondary school teachers with  $\leq 10$  years of teaching experience and those with  $\geq 11$  years of experience towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati”** is retained. This suggests that teaching experience does not play a decisive role in shaping teachers’ attitudes toward inclusive education at Montfort School, Guwahati. Both groups of teachers those with fewer years of experience and those with more share similar perspectives on the inclusion of visually impaired students.

Although no statistically significant difference was found, slight variations in mean scores still exist, indicating that factors other than experience such as training in inclusive education, exposure to students with disabilities,





institutional support, and personal beliefs could influence teachers' attitudes more strongly than their years of service.

**Objective – 5: To find out the difference in attitude between Special Educators and General Educators towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.**

**Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the attitudes of Special Educators and General Educators towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati.**

For achieving this objective – 5, the researcher collected the data from the selected teachers and the attitude scores of the teachers of Montfort School, Guwahati have been shown in Table – 7.

**Table – 7: Showing the computed Mean, SD, SE<sub>D</sub>, and t- value on attitude with respect to Secondary School Special Educators and General Educators towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School.**

Particulars	Number	Mean	SD	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-value
Special Educators	13	86.8	15.76	4.37	0.56
General Educators	37	83.95	15.23	2.5	

**Interpretation:** The table – 7 indicates that the computed t-value was found to be 0.56 which is lesser than the criterion t-value (2.01) at .05 level of significance for 48 df, hence, the computed t-value (0.56) has not been considered significant and the formulated hypothesis: **“There is no significant difference between the attitudes of Special Educators and General Educators towards Inclusive Education at Montfort School, Guwahati”** got retained. The mean score for special educators (86.8) is slightly higher than that of general educators (83.95), but the difference is not substantial. The t-value of 0.56 confirms that this difference is not statistically significant. This finding suggests that while special educators have slightly more favorable views on inclusion, general educators at Montfort School also hold largely positive attitudes, which is encouraging for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

#### MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The findings suggest that female, older, and more experienced teachers tend to have more positive attitudes toward inclusive education. While special educators show slightly higher mean scores, the difference between them and general teachers is not statistically significant, indicating broad support for inclusion. These variations highlight the need for targeted training, especially for male, younger, and less experienced teachers, to build their confidence and understanding of inclusive education.

Gender differences in attitudes toward inclusion may stem from societal norms, perceptions, and exposure to inclusive settings. Research suggests that female teachers often display greater empathy and engagement with students with disabilities (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008). Training and sensitization programs have been shown to enhance male teachers' confidence by challenging biases and providing hands-on experiences (Forlin et al., 2010). Exposure to role models, structured workshops, and peer discussions can help address misconceptions and reinforce the benefits of inclusion.

Teaching experience significantly influences attitudes toward inclusion, with experienced teachers generally being more accepting due to their exposure to diverse learners and adaptive strategies (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000). Novice teachers often face anxiety and uncertainty in inclusive classrooms (Jordan, Glenn, & McGhie-Richmond, 2010). Mentorship programs, where less experienced teachers collaborate with veteran educators, have been recommended to build confidence and professional growth (Loreman et al., 2013). Continuous professional development and classroom observations further help younger teachers adopt inclusive practices (UNESCO, 2017).

Collaboration between general and special educators is crucial for effective inclusion. General teachers often feel unprepared to teach students with disabilities, while special educators possess specialized knowledge but may not be well integrated into mainstream classrooms (Florian & Linklater, 2010). Co-teaching models, where both educators plan, instruct, and assess students together, have been shown to improve inclusive education (Friend & Cook, 2013). Schools that promote peer support, shared lesson planning, and professional learning communities tend to have higher success rates in implementing inclusion (Salend, 2011; Sharma et al., 2015).

#### EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:

1. The findings highlight the need for targeted professional development to address gaps in teacher attitudes toward inclusive education. Training programs should focus on building awareness and confidence, especially among male, younger, and less experienced teachers. Workshops and hands-on learning experiences can help foster more inclusive mindsets.
2. Gender-based differences in attitudes suggest the importance of sensitization programs. Schools should implement structured training that provides male teachers with role models, peer discussions, and



experiential learning to enhance their confidence in inclusive classrooms. Integrating inclusive education into pre-service teacher training can also ensure all educators are well-prepared.

3. Since experienced teachers tend to have more positive attitudes, mentorship programs should be prioritized. Pairing novice teachers with veteran educators can support professional growth, confidence building, and skill development. Collaborative learning environments, peer coaching, and classroom observations can further strengthen inclusive teaching practices.
4. Stronger collaboration between general and special educators is essential. Schools should promote co-teaching models, joint professional development, and teamwork to ensure all teachers feel equipped to support students with disabilities. Encouraging professional learning communities can enhance the overall effectiveness of inclusive education.

Inclusive education requires a systemic approach, including policy support, ongoing training, and institutional commitment. Schools must invest in continuous professional development, mentorship, and collaboration to create an equitable learning environment for all students.

## CONCLUSION:

The study highlights that the teachers at Montfort School generally hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education, with variations based on gender, age, experience, and qualification. Female teachers, older teachers, and those with more experience showed more favorable attitudes. The findings suggest the need for sensitization programs for male teachers, mentorship for younger teachers, and increased collaboration between general and special educators. To enhance inclusive education, future research should focus on gender-specific interventions, teacher preparedness, and collaborative teaching models.

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