



Effectiveness of Inclusive Education in Shimla: An Evaluation

Dr. Monika Sood

Assistant Professor, Department of Education (ICDEOL), HPU,

monikasood.do@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20459554>

Abstract

Inclusive education is a fundamental educational approach that promotes equal learning opportunities for all children, including Children with Special Needs (CWSN), within mainstream schools. The present study evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive education in Shimla district, Himachal Pradesh. The study focuses on teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education, enrolment and retention of disabled children, and the classroom environment created for inclusive learning. Inclusive education has emerged as an important educational reform supported by international frameworks such as the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and national initiatives including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Right to Education Act (2009). Despite various policy interventions, challenges such as inadequate teacher training, lack of resources, rigid curriculum, and limited parental involvement continue to affect its successful implementation. The study adopts a descriptive survey method and includes government school teachers and students from Shimla district. The findings are expected to provide insights into the effectiveness of inclusive practices and contribute to policy improvements aimed at strengthening inclusive education. The study highlights the need for collaborative efforts among teachers, administrators, parents, and policymakers to ensure equitable and quality education for all learners.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Children with Special Needs, Teachers' Attitude, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, School Inclusion, Disability, Shimla.

1. Introduction

Education is recognized as a fundamental human right and serves as a powerful instrument for social inclusion, equality, and empowerment. The concept of inclusive education emerged from the recognition that every child, regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions, has the right to access quality education within mainstream educational settings. Inclusive education aims to eliminate barriers to learning and participation while ensuring that all students learn together in a supportive and equitable environment.

Historically, children with disabilities were educated separately through special schools and segregated educational systems. Such arrangements often limited their opportunities for social



interaction and equal participation in society. Over time, educational philosophies evolved from segregation to integration, mainstreaming, and ultimately inclusion. Unlike integration, which requires children with disabilities to adapt to existing educational systems, inclusive education emphasizes transforming schools to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners.

Internationally, inclusive education gained momentum through initiatives such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1994), which advocated education for all and promoted the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools. In India, legislative measures such as the Persons with Disabilities Act (1995), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the Right to Education Act (2009), and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) have significantly strengthened the framework for inclusive education.

In Himachal Pradesh, efforts have been made to integrate CWSN into mainstream schools through SSA initiatives, provision of assistive devices, teacher training, barrier-free infrastructure, and resource support. Despite these efforts, challenges persist regarding classroom practices, teacher preparedness, parental involvement, and resource availability. Therefore, evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive education is essential to understand its implementation and identify areas for improvement.

The present study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive education in Shimla district by examining teacher attitudes, enrolment trends of disabled children, and the inclusiveness of classroom environments.

2. Review of Literature

Inclusive education has emerged as a significant educational reform aimed at ensuring equal learning opportunities for all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, or linguistic differences. Researchers across the world have examined various dimensions of inclusive education, including teacher attitudes, parental involvement, classroom practices, institutional support, and educational outcomes for children with special needs.

Barton (1992) emphasized that teachers play a crucial role in the successful implementation of inclusive education. His study revealed that many teachers were hesitant to accept children with disabilities into regular classrooms because they perceived inclusion as an additional burden and were concerned about classroom management, curriculum adaptation, and academic achievement. Barton argued that negative teacher attitudes often stem from inadequate training and lack of institutional support. The study highlighted the importance of developing positive perceptions among teachers to facilitate successful inclusion.

Beh-Pajooch (1992) and Shimman (1990) investigated the relationship between teacher training and attitudes toward inclusive education. Their findings demonstrated that teachers who had received specialized training in special education displayed significantly more favorable attitudes



toward students with disabilities than those without such training. Trained teachers were more confident in adapting instructional strategies, managing diverse classrooms, and addressing the unique learning needs of children with disabilities. These studies underscored the necessity of professional development programs for teachers involved in inclusive education.

Clough and Lindsay (1991) examined teachers' perceptions regarding the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. Their study found that although teachers generally supported the concept of inclusion, they expressed concerns about their ability to effectively teach children with learning disabilities and behavioral disorders. The researchers reported that teachers frequently cited insufficient training, lack of resources, and time constraints as barriers to successful inclusion. The study concluded that additional support services and specialized training were essential for effective implementation.

Barkley (1987) focused on the role of parents in supporting children with special needs. The study developed a structured parent-training program aimed at managing behavioral difficulties among hyperactive children. The findings indicated that parents who received training were more capable of reinforcing positive behavior, improving communication, and supporting their children's educational development. The study demonstrated that parental involvement significantly contributes to the academic and social success of children with disabilities and should be considered an integral component of inclusive education.

Maryam and White (1988) and Thurston and Dasta (1990) explored the impact of parental participation on the educational outcomes of children with special needs. Their studies revealed that active parental involvement improved reading comprehension, academic performance, and social adjustment among children with disabilities. Parents who regularly collaborated with teachers and participated in educational activities were able to provide additional learning support at home, thereby enhancing their children's educational achievement. These findings highlight the importance of strong home-school partnerships in inclusive educational settings.

Davis and Watson (2001) critically examined the concept of inclusion from the perspective of children with disabilities. They argued that educational institutions often fail to consider the voices and experiences of children when designing inclusive policies and practices. Their study suggested that inclusive education cannot be fully achieved unless schools address structural, cultural, and social barriers that restrict participation. The researchers advocated for a child-centered approach that recognizes children as active participants in their own educational experiences.

Priestley (1998) investigated the dominant perspectives in disability research and found that much of the existing literature focused on categorizing and measuring disabilities rather than understanding the lived experiences of disabled children. The study recommended shifting the focus toward social and environmental factors that influence educational participation. This



perspective supports the philosophy of inclusive education, which seeks to remove barriers rather than emphasize individual deficits.

Clark et al. (1997) examined the extent of inclusion in mainstream schools and concluded that many schools were only partially inclusive. While children with disabilities were physically present in regular classrooms, they often remained socially isolated and received limited participation opportunities. The study emphasized that genuine inclusion requires more than physical placement; it involves meaningful participation, acceptance, and equal educational opportunities for all students.

Davis and Watson (2001), drawing upon the findings of Leicester (1992), further reported that lack of resources, negative attitudes, and inadequate support systems were major obstacles to achieving full inclusion. Their findings suggested that educational policies must address these barriers through improved infrastructure, teacher training, and community awareness.

Bogdan and Taylor (1989) highlighted the importance of social relationships in inclusive settings. Their research demonstrated that friendships between children with disabilities and their peers contribute significantly to social development, self-esteem, and emotional well-being. Positive peer interactions were found to enhance participation and reduce feelings of isolation among children with special needs.

Meijer, Pijl, and Hegarty (1994) argued that inclusive education should be based on the understanding that all children are different and that these differences should be viewed as natural aspects of human diversity. The researchers emphasized that educational planning and curriculum design must accommodate individual differences rather than expecting students to conform to rigid educational structures.

Rane (1983) conducted an evaluation of the Integrated Education Scheme for Disabled Children in Maharashtra. The findings revealed that most disabled children experienced positive social relationships and satisfactory adjustment in regular schools. Parents expressed favorable views regarding integrated education and believed that mainstream schooling benefited their children both academically and socially. The study provided strong evidence supporting the integration of children with disabilities into regular educational settings.

Cowasji (1985) evaluated orientation programs designed for teachers working in integrated education settings. The study found that teachers who participated in orientation programs demonstrated improved teaching competencies and were more effective in addressing the needs of children with disabilities. The orientation programs also encouraged the introduction of special activities and teaching methods tailored to diverse learners.

Pathak (1984) studied disabled children attending regular schools and found that although many students came from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, they demonstrated satisfactory emotional and social adjustment. However, challenges such as classroom learning difficulties, peer



ridicule, and limited participation in co-curricular activities were reported. The study emphasized the need for supportive educational environments that address both academic and social needs.

Singh and Prabha (1987) evaluated integrated educational facilities for physically handicapped students in Bihar. Their findings indicated that although students were generally well adjusted within their families, communication between disabled and non-disabled students remained limited. The study also identified deficiencies in resource rooms, teacher support, and monitoring mechanisms, highlighting the need for stronger institutional support systems.

Mukhopadhyay and Sharma (1990) investigated teaching competencies required for integrated education and found that teachers generally supported equal educational opportunities for disabled children. The study reported that both male and female teachers recognized the importance of specialized teaching skills for promoting successful integration. The findings emphasized the need for teacher preparation programs focused on inclusive pedagogical practices.

Muruganandam (1990) examined the effectiveness of specially designed instructional materials for visually impaired students. The study found that adapted teaching-learning materials significantly improved students' understanding of scientific concepts. The findings demonstrated that appropriate educational resources can enhance learning outcomes and facilitate successful inclusion of children with visual impairments.

Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that inclusive education is influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including teacher attitudes, professional training, parental involvement, institutional support, curriculum flexibility, availability of teaching-learning materials, and social acceptance. The studies consistently highlight that successful inclusion requires collaborative efforts among teachers, parents, administrators, policymakers, and the wider community. While substantial progress has been made in promoting inclusive education, challenges related to resource availability, teacher preparedness, and social attitudes continue to affect its effective implementation.

2.1 Research Gap

1. The effectiveness of inclusive classroom practices in government schools of Shimla.
2. The impact of inclusive education on enrolment and retention of disabled students.
3. The preparedness of teachers to address diverse learning needs in inclusive settings.
4. The adequacy of infrastructural and pedagogical support available for CWSN.

2.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the attitude of general teachers towards inclusive education.
2. To assess the increase in enrolment and reduction in dropout rates among disabled children.



3. To evaluate the inclusiveness of classroom environments, including seating arrangements and accommodations for children with special needs.
4. To identify challenges affecting the implementation of inclusive education in government schools of Shimla.
5. To suggest measures for improving inclusive educational practices.

2.3 Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant positive attitude among general teachers toward inclusive education.

H02: Inclusive education has no significant effect on increasing enrolment and reducing dropout rates of disabled children.

H03: Inclusive classrooms do not significantly provide appropriate accommodations and supportive learning environments for children with special needs.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The present study entitled “**Effectiveness of Inclusive Education in Shimla: An Evaluation**” employed a **Descriptive Survey Research Design**. The descriptive survey method was considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect information regarding the existing status, opinions, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of respondents concerning inclusive education. The design facilitated the systematic collection and analysis of data related to teachers' attitudes, enrolment and retention of children with special needs, and the effectiveness of inclusive classroom practices in government schools of Shimla district.

3.2 Sample Area and Sample Size

The study was conducted in **Shimla District, Himachal Pradesh**. Government schools implementing inclusive education programmes were selected as the area of investigation.

A total sample of **285 respondents** was selected from different government schools of Shimla district. The respondents included teachers and students associated with inclusive education practices. The sample was considered adequate for obtaining reliable information regarding the effectiveness of inclusive education in the study area.

3.3 Research Tool

For the collection of primary data, a **self-structured questionnaire** was developed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended statements related to:

1. Attitude towards Inclusive Education.
2. Enrolment and Retention of Children with Special Needs (CWSN).



3. Inclusive Classroom Environment.
4. Challenges in the Implementation of Inclusive Education.

The questionnaire was designed using a **five-point Likert Scale**, where respondents indicated their level of agreement with each statement.

Likert Scale Pattern

Response Category	Score
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

The questionnaire contained 36 close-ended items covering various dimensions of inclusive education.

3.4 Statistical Techniques Used

The collected data were classified, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. The following statistical measures were employed:

1. **Frequency Distribution** – to determine the number of responses in each category.
2. **Percentage Analysis** – to analyze the proportion of responses.
3. **Mean Score** – to determine the average perception of respondents regarding inclusive education.
4. **Standard Deviation** – to measure the variability of responses.

The analyzed data were presented in the form of tables and interpreted according to the objectives of the study.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 285 respondents from government schools of Shimla district. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to assess the effectiveness of inclusive education. The responses were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations.

4.1.1. Objective 1- To assess the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education

Table 4.1 Teachers' Attitude Towards Inclusive Education

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	78	27.37
Agree	112	39.30
Neutral	43	15.09
Disagree	34	11.93
Strongly Disagree	18	6.31
Total	285	100

Mean Score Analysis

N	Mean	SD
285	3.69	0.92

The data indicate that 66.67% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that inclusive education is beneficial and should be promoted in schools. The mean score of 3.69 reflects a generally positive attitude among respondents towards inclusive education. This suggests that teachers recognize the educational and social benefits of educating children with special needs alongside their peers.

4.1.2. Objective 2- To assess increase in enrolment and decline in dropout of disabled children

Table 4.2 Perceptions Regarding Enrolment and Retention

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	85	29.82
Agree	109	38.25
Neutral	39	13.68
Disagree	33	11.58
Strongly Disagree	19	6.67
Total	285	100

Mean Score Analysis

N	Mean	SD

285	3.73	0.95
-----	------	------

A majority of respondents (68.07%) believed that inclusive education has positively influenced enrolment and retention of children with special needs. The findings indicate that government initiatives and awareness programmes have encouraged parents to enroll disabled children in mainstream schools.

4.1.3. Objective 3- To assess the inclusiveness of classroom environment

Table 4.3 Inclusive Classroom Environment

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	72	25.26
Agree	118	41.40
Neutral	45	15.79
Disagree	32	11.23
Strongly Disagree	18	6.32
Total	285	100

Mean Score Analysis

N	Mean	SD
285	3.68	0.89

The results reveal that 66.66% of respondents agreed that schools are making efforts to provide inclusive classroom environments. Appropriate seating arrangements, supportive peer interactions, and adaptation of teaching methods contribute significantly to inclusive practices.

4.1.4. Objective 4- To identify challenges in the implementation of inclusive education

Table 4.4 Major Challenges Identified

Challenge	Agree (%)
Lack of teacher training	81.40
Inadequate teaching aids	77.20
Large class size	74.40
Limited parental involvement	71.60
Insufficient funding	69.50
Rigid curriculum	67.40

Lack of administrative support	62.80
--------------------------------	-------

The findings indicate that inadequate teacher training emerged as the most significant challenge. Respondents also highlighted the need for more teaching-learning materials, assistive devices, and financial support for successful implementation of inclusive education.

4.1.5. Objective 5- Overall Effectiveness of Inclusive Education

Table 4.5 Overall Perception of Inclusive Education

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Effective	82	28.77
Effective	121	42.46
Moderately Effective	46	16.14
Less Effective	24	8.42
Ineffective	12	4.21
Total	285	100

The findings indicate that approximately 71.23% of respondents considered inclusive education either effective or highly effective. This demonstrates a generally favorable perception regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Shimla district.

4.2. Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H01: There is no significant positive attitude among teachers towards inclusive education.

Result- Since the mean score (3.69) is higher than the neutral value (3.00), the null hypothesis is rejected.

Finding- Teachers possess a significantly positive attitude towards inclusive education.

Hypothesis 2

H02: Inclusive education has no significant effect on enrolment and retention of disabled children.

Result- The majority of respondents (68.07%) agreed that enrolment and retention have improved.

Finding- The null hypothesis is rejected.

Inclusive education positively influences enrolment and retention of children with special needs.



Hypothesis 3

H03: Inclusive classrooms do not significantly provide supportive learning environments.

Result- The mean score of 3.68 indicates positive perceptions regarding classroom inclusiveness.

Finding- The null hypothesis is rejected.

Inclusive classrooms provide supportive learning environments for children with special needs.

4.3. Findings of the Study

1. Teachers exhibited a positive attitude towards inclusive education.
2. Inclusive education has increased enrolment of children with special needs.
3. Dropout rates among disabled students have decreased.
4. Inclusive classrooms promote social interaction and participation.
5. Teacher training remains the most important requirement for successful implementation.
6. Lack of teaching aids and infrastructure continue to hinder effective inclusion.
7. Parental participation needs further strengthening.
8. Most respondents perceived inclusive education as effective in Shimla district.

The analysis of data collected from 285 respondents reveals that inclusive education has contributed significantly towards educational access, social inclusion, and participation of children with special needs in Shimla district. Although challenges such as inadequate training, insufficient resources, and infrastructural barriers remain, the overall perception of respondents indicates that inclusive education is moving in a positive direction and has the potential to create a more equitable educational system.

5. CONCLUSION

Inclusive education is an essential educational approach that seeks to ensure equal opportunities and quality education for all children irrespective of their abilities or disabilities. The present study entitled “**Effectiveness of Inclusive Education in Shimla: An Evaluation**” examined the implementation and effectiveness of inclusive education in government schools of Shimla district. The findings of the study indicate that inclusive education has brought positive changes in the educational experiences of children with special needs. Teachers generally hold favorable attitudes toward inclusion and recognize its importance in promoting equality, social integration, and educational development. The study further revealed that inclusive education has contributed to increased enrolment and retention of children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

The classroom environment in many schools was found to be supportive and conducive to inclusive learning. Efforts such as modified seating arrangements, peer support, and barrier-free access have enhanced participation among children with special needs. However, the study also



identified several challenges that continue to affect the effectiveness of inclusive education. These challenges include inadequate teacher training, shortage of teaching-learning materials, insufficient assistive devices, overcrowded classrooms, and limited parental involvement.

The success of inclusive education depends largely on the collaborative efforts of teachers, parents, school administrators, policymakers, and the community. Continuous professional development programmes, adequate resource allocation, curriculum flexibility, and strengthened support services are essential for improving the quality of inclusive education.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that inclusive education in Shimla district has been effective in promoting educational access and social inclusion for children with special needs. While considerable progress has been achieved, further improvements in teacher preparedness, infrastructure, and resource support are necessary to realize the full potential of inclusive education. The findings of the study reinforce the view that inclusive education is not merely an educational strategy but a means of achieving social justice, equality, and human dignity for all learners.

5.1 Educational Implications

1. Regular training programmes should be organized for teachers on inclusive teaching practices.
2. Schools should be equipped with adequate teaching-learning materials and assistive devices.
3. Stronger collaboration between parents and schools should be encouraged.
4. Government agencies should increase financial and infrastructural support for inclusive education.
5. Curriculum and assessment procedures should be made more flexible to accommodate diverse learning needs.
6. Awareness programmes should be conducted to promote positive attitudes toward children with special needs.

5.2 Suggestions for Further Research

1. Similar studies may be conducted in other districts of Himachal Pradesh.
2. Comparative studies between government and private schools may be undertaken.
3. Future research may focus on the academic achievement of children with special needs in inclusive settings.
4. Studies may be conducted on parental attitudes towards inclusive education.
5. Research may explore the effectiveness of teacher training programmes related to inclusive education.



References

1. Ainscow, M. (1991). *Effective schools for all*. David Fulton Publishers.
2. Ainscow, M. (2005). Developing inclusive education systems: What are the levers for change? *Journal of Educational Change*, 6(2), 109–124.
3. Allen, K. E., & Schwartz, I. S. (2000). *The exceptional child: Inclusion in early childhood education* (4th ed.). Delmar Publishers.
4. Barklay, R. A. (1987). *Defiant children: A clinician's manual for parent training*. Guilford Press.
5. Barton, L. (1992). Disability and the necessity for a sociopolitical perspective. *Disability, Handicap & Society*, 7(3), 235–248.
6. Beh-Pajoo, A. (1992). The effect of social contact on college teachers' attitudes toward students with severe mental handicaps and their educational integration. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 7(2), 87–103.
7. Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S. J. (1989). Relationships with severely disabled people: The social construction of humanness. *Social Problems*, 36(2), 135–148.
8. Clark, C., Dyson, A., Millward, A., & Skidmore, D. (1997). *New directions in special needs: Innovations in mainstream schools*. Cassell.
9. Clough, P., & Lindsay, G. (1991). *Integration and the support service*. NFER.
10. Davis, J. M., & Watson, N. (2001). Where are the children's experiences? Analysing social and cultural exclusion in 'special' and 'mainstream' schools. *Disability & Society*, 16(5), 671–687.
11. Eredics, N. (2012). *Inclusion in education*. Inclusion Press.
12. Meijer, C. J. W., Pijl, S. J., & Hegarty, S. (1994). *New perspectives in special education: A six-country study of integration*. Routledge.
13. Mukhopadhyay, S., & Sharma, U. (1990). Teaching competencies for integrated education of disabled children. NCERT.
14. Muruganandam, S. (1990). Effectiveness of science teaching materials for visually impaired children. NCERT.
15. Pathak, R. P. (1984). *Disabled children in normal schools*. NCERT.
16. Priestley, M. (1998). Childhood disability and disabled childhoods. *Disability & Society*, 13(2), 207–223.
17. Rane, S. (1983). *Integrated education of disabled children: An evaluation study in Maharashtra*. NCERT.
18. Singh, R., & Prabha, S. (1987). *Evaluation of integrated educational facilities for physically handicapped students in Bihar*. UNICEF.



19. Thurston, L. P., & Dasta, K. (1990). An analysis of in-home parent tutoring procedures. *Remedial and Special Education, 11*(3), 39–46.
20. UNESCO. (1994). *The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education*. UNESCO.
21. World Bank. (2004). *Project appraisal document on a proposed credit to India for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*. World Bank.
22. World Health Organization. (2001). *International classification of functioning, disability and health (ICF)*. WHO.