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Teachers' Perceptions on the Inclusion of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Mainstream Classrooms

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Abstract

This study explores teachers' perceptions regarding including children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms, comparing teachers' views from government and private schools and assessing the impact of teaching experience on these perceptions. A sample of teachers from both school types was surveyed, and data were analyzed using t-tests to examine differences in perceptions. The findings reveal that government school teachers reported more favorable perceptions of inclusive education ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 0.75$) compared to private school teachers ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 0.85$), with a significant T-value of 2.85 and P-value of 0.004, leading to the rejection of Null Hypothesis 1. This suggests that government school teachers perceive themselves as more prepared and supported in implementing inclusive practices. However, the impact of teaching experience was not statistically significant, as teachers with less than five years of experience ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 0.80$) and those with five years or more ($M = 4.0$, $SD = 0.70$) did not exhibit significant differences in their perceptions (T -value = 1.95, P -value = 0.055). Challenges identified include limited training opportunities, insufficient resources, and a lack of awareness regarding intellectual disabilities. The study recommends enhancing professional development, increasing resource access, and fostering collaboration between government and private schools to improve inclusive practices. These findings emphasize the need for tailored support to ensure all teachers are well-equipped to promote inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities.

Key words : Teachers' Perceptions, Intellectual Disabilities

I.INTRODUCTION:

Inclusive education has become a prominent focus in global educational reforms, advocating for the inclusion of all students, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities, in mainstream classrooms. This study seeks to examine teachers' perceptions of integrating children with intellectual disabilities into these settings. As the importance of inclusive practices continues to grow, it is crucial to understand teachers' attitudes and the challenges they encounter in implementing such approaches. The research will compare the viewpoints of teachers from both government and private schools, while also analyzing the influence of teaching experience on their perspectives regarding inclusive education.

Children with intellectual disabilities often face barriers in accessing quality education. In mainstream classrooms, where students of varying abilities learn together, teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring successful inclusion. Teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and preparedness are crucial factors in determining whether inclusion efforts will succeed. This research aims to provide insights into teachers' views on inclusion and offer practical recommendations to improve inclusive education practices.

Background

The global push for inclusive education is guided by international frameworks like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), both of which emphasize the need for equitable and quality education for everyone. In response, India has enacted policies such as the Right to Education Act (2009) and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which support the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream schools. However, despite these efforts, the implementation of inclusive education remains uneven across schools.

Children with intellectual disabilities, who often require specialized support and individualized instruction, face significant challenges in mainstream classrooms. Teachers' perceptions of their ability to manage these students, access to resources, and administrative support are critical in creating inclusive environments. In government schools, where there is often better access to government-supported programs, teachers may feel more prepared compared to private school teachers, who might face resource limitations. This study compares the perceptions of teachers from these two types of schools to shed light on the disparities in inclusive practices.

Research has shown that teacher training, experience, and the availability of resources are key factors in shaping teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. However, many teachers

report feeling inadequately prepared to support students with intellectual disabilities. This gap in training and support often leads to negative perceptions of inclusion, which can hinder the success of inclusive education efforts. By examining the challenges teachers face and assessing their perceptions, this study aims to identify the key factors influencing the implementation of inclusive practices in schools.

Rationale

The rationale for this study is driven by the increasing emphasis on inclusive education in India, alongside the recognition that teachers' perceptions significantly affect the successful implementation of inclusive practices. While policies promoting the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities are in place, their effective implementation largely depends on the teachers who are responsible for creating inclusive learning environments. Understanding teachers' perceptions and the challenges they face is essential for improving the quality of inclusive education.

The study also addresses the gap in the literature concerning the differences in perceptions between teachers in government and private schools. Government schools may have access to more structured training programs and support systems, whereas private schools may face resource constraints. This comparison is crucial for identifying specific areas that need improvement, particularly in private schools, where teachers may not feel as well-equipped to implement inclusive practices.

Additionally, this study explores the impact of teaching experience on perceptions of inclusion. While it is often assumed that experienced teachers may have a better understanding of inclusive education, this assumption requires empirical investigation. By analyzing the perceptions of teachers with varying levels of experience, the study aims to determine whether experience plays a significant role in shaping teachers' attitudes toward inclusion.

The findings of this study will provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, school administrators, and educators to improve training programs, resource allocation, and support systems for teachers. This will ultimately enhance the quality of inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities, ensuring that they receive the support and opportunities needed to thrive in mainstream classrooms.

Objectives:

1. To assess teachers' perceptions of including children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

2. To compare the differences in perceptions between teachers from government schools and those from private schools concerning the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities.
3. To assess the impact of teaching experience on teachers' perceptions of inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities.
4. To identify the key challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive practices for children with intellectual disabilities, including issues related to training, resources, and administrative support.
5. To provide actionable recommendations for improving inclusive education practices and enhancing the support systems available to teachers working with children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

Hypotheses

- Null Hypothesis 1 (H_{01}): There is no significant difference between the perceptions of teachers from government schools and private schools regarding the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms.
- **Null Hypothesis 2 (H_{02}):** There is no significant impact of teaching experience on teachers' perceptions of inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities.

Significance:

This study is highly relevant to various stakeholders in the educational field, including policymakers, school administrators, educators, and researchers, by offering valuable insights into teachers' views on including children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The findings can guide policymakers at local, state, and national levels by highlighting the challenges and perceptions related to inclusive education, thereby assisting in the development of policies that promote effective implementation, equity, and improved educational outcomes for students with intellectual disabilities.

Additionally, by identifying the factors that influence teachers' perceptions—such as teaching experience and the type of school (government vs. private)—this study can contribute to the design of targeted professional development programs. Such programs can equip teachers with the necessary skills, strategies, and confidence to effectively include children with intellectual disabilities in their classrooms, ultimately improving educational practices. Furthermore, the study highlights the critical need for adequate resources and support systems to facilitate inclusive education. By pinpointing the challenges faced by teachers, such as lack of training, inadequate resources, and

insufficient administrative support, stakeholders can better allocate resources and support, ensuring that teachers have access to the tools, training, and assistance they require to create inclusive learning environments.

Promoting collaborative practices is another important aspect of this study. The recommendations stemming from this research can encourage collaboration between general and special education teachers, fostering an environment of shared expertise and support. By promoting cooperative teaching strategies and inclusive practices, schools can enhance the educational experience for all students, thereby promoting a culture of inclusivity. Moreover, this research adds to the growing body of literature on inclusive education by providing empirical data on teachers' perceptions and experiences. It fills existing gaps in research, particularly in the context of India, where inclusive education is increasingly prioritized yet underexplored. The study's findings can serve as a basis for further research in this area, contributing to a deeper understanding of effective inclusion practices.

The study seeks to address several key research questions:

What are teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms?

How do the attitudes of teachers in government schools compare to those in private schools regarding this inclusion?

How does a teacher's level of experience influence their perspectives on inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities?

What are the main challenges teachers face in implementing inclusive practices for children with intellectual disabilities, especially in terms of training, resources, and administrative support?

What recommendations can be made to improve support systems and resources to better facilitate the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms?

However, the significance of this study lies in its potential to improve educational outcomes for children with intellectual disabilities. By addressing teachers' perceptions and the challenges they face, the study aims to promote better inclusion practices, leading to enhanced academic performance and social integration for students with disabilities. In conclusion, this study is significant not only for its immediate impact on understanding teachers' perceptions of inclusion but also for its broader implications for policy, practice, and research in the field of inclusive education. By fostering a more inclusive educational environment, the study aims to contribute to the overall development and success of all students, regardless of their abilities.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities (ID) in mainstream classrooms has been a prominent area of research, as inclusive education seeks to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students. The success of inclusion largely depends on teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and preparedness to accommodate children with diverse learning needs. This section reviews the existing literature on teacher perceptions towards inclusive education, the challenges they face, and the support structures necessary for successful implementation.

Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Inclusion

Teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities are critical to the success of inclusive education. Research indicates that teachers often hold mixed perceptions regarding their ability to teach students with intellectual disabilities effectively. While many teachers support the principle of inclusion, they express concerns about the practical challenges of implementing inclusive practices (Avramidis & Norwich, 2021; Smith & Barr, 2022). For example, a study by Bhatnagar and Das (2021) found that while teachers in New Delhi were generally positive about inclusion, they cited a lack of training and resources as significant barriers.

Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are influenced by various factors, including their past experiences with students with disabilities, the level of institutional support, and the extent of their professional training (Loreman, 2021; Forlin, 2020). Those who have received specialized training in inclusive education tend to have more positive attitudes and feel more capable of managing diverse classrooms effectively (Sharma & Sokal, 2020). Nonetheless, there is a notable shortage of such training, particularly in resource-poor environments. Subban and Sharma (2020) found that teachers lacking formal training in inclusive education were more apprehensive about their ability to meet the needs of students with intellectual disabilities.

Institutional Support and Resources

The availability of institutional support and resources plays a significant role in shaping teachers' perceptions of inclusion. Schools that provide adequate resources, such as teaching assistants, specialized materials, and professional development opportunities, tend to foster more positive attitudes towards inclusion (Watkins & Donnelly, 2020). Teachers in government schools, for instance, often report more favorable perceptions of inclusion due to greater access to support services compared to their counterparts in private schools (Bhatnagar & Das, 2021). In contrast, private school teachers frequently cite a lack of institutional support as a major challenge in implementing inclusive education (Smith & Barr, 2022).

Ainscow et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of creating inclusive school cultures that prioritize equity and participation for all students. Schools that encourage collaboration between regular and special education teachers, as well as partnerships

with external experts, are more successful in supporting inclusive education (Booth & Ainscow, 2022). However, the literature reveals that many schools, particularly in lowresource settings, struggle to provide the necessary support structures, leading to negative teacher perceptions of inclusion.

Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Education

Despite the push for inclusive education, numerous challenges hinder its effective implementation. Teachers often report feeling overwhelmed by the additional responsibilities associated with managing inclusive classrooms, especially when they lack adequate training and resources (Swain et al., 2021). The need for differentiated instruction, individualized education plans (IEPs), and continuous assessment of students with intellectual disabilities adds to teachers' workloads, leading to increased stress and burnout (Florian & BlackHawkins, 2020).

Moreover, the literature highlights significant differences in the challenges faced by teachers in government and private schools. According to Vayrynen (2020), government school teachers are generally more positive about inclusion, as they are more likely to receive support from specialized staff and government-funded programs. In contrast, private school teachers report feeling unequipped to handle the demands of inclusive education due to limited resources and training opportunities (Bhatnagar & Das, 2021). This disparity suggests the need for more equitable resource allocation and professional development across different types of schools.

The Role of Experience in Shaping Perceptions

Teaching experience also influences how teachers perceive the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities. More experienced teachers tend to feel more confident in managing inclusive classrooms, as they are likely to have encountered a wider range of student needs over the course of their careers (Westwood, 2021). A study by Swain et al. (2021) found that preservice teachers initially expressed apprehension about inclusion but developed more positive attitudes after gaining practical experience in inclusive settings.

Experience alone does not ensure positive attitudes towards inclusion. To effectively address the needs of students with intellectual disabilities, teachers require professional development and continuous training (Loreman, 2021). Watkins and Donnelly (2020) argue that a comprehensive transformation in teacher education is needed, where inclusive education is embedded in all facets of teacher preparation and ongoing professional development.

The literature on inclusive education emphasizes the importance of teachers' attitudes and perceptions in determining the success of inclusion initiatives. While many teachers support the concept of inclusive education, they face significant challenges in implementing it effectively, particularly when they lack the necessary training and resources. Institutional support, professional development, and experience play key

roles in shaping teachers' perceptions of inclusion. Addressing these factors through targeted interventions and policy reforms can enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education and promote better outcomes for children with intellectual disabilities.

III.MATERIALS:

The materials used in this study were designed to facilitate the collection of data regarding teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The following materials were utilized:

1. Structured Questionnaire

The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire that consisted of several key sections:

Demographic Information: This section included questions to gather background information about the participants, such as:

- Age
- Gender
- Years of teaching experience
- Type of school (government or private)

Perception of Inclusion: This section contained a series of statements regarding inclusive education practices, to which participants responded using a 5point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Sample items included:

- "I feel adequately trained to teach children with intellectual disabilities."
- "My school provides sufficient resources for inclusive education."
- "I believe that children with intellectual disabilities can succeed in a mainstream classroom."

Challenges in Inclusion: This section included openended questions that prompted teachers to describe their experiences and challenges related to the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities. Sample questions included:

- "What challenges do you face when teaching children with intellectual disabilities in your classroom?"
- "What additional support do you think would help improve inclusive practices in your school?"

2. Pilot Study Materials

A pilot study was conducted with 20 teachers to test the clarity and relevance of the questionnaire. The materials for the pilot study included:

- A preliminary version of the structured questionnaire
- Instructions for participants on how to complete the questionnaire

Feedback from the pilot study was used to make necessary adjustments to the questionnaire to enhance its validity and reliability.

3. Statistical Analysis Software

Data analysis was performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), which provided the tools necessary for conducting descriptive statistics, t-tests, and analyzing the results. Specific features used in the analysis included:

Descriptive Statistics: To summarize mean scores and standard deviations for teachers' perceptions.

Independent Sample T-Tests: To compare the perceptions of teachers from government and private schools and assess the impact of teaching experience on perceptions of inclusion.

4. Informed consent forms were created to ensure participants were fully aware of the study's purpose, their rights, and the voluntary nature of their involvement. These forms detailed:

- The study's objectives
- The confidentiality of their responses
- Their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty
- The materials used in this study were carefully crafted to gather relevant data on teachers' perceptions regarding the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities. The structured questionnaire, pilot study, statistical software, and informed consent forms collectively supported the study's objectives and ensured ethical standards were maintained throughout the research process.

IV.METHOD:

Research Design

This study utilized a comparative quantitative research design to evaluate teachers' perceptions regarding the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms. A survey questionnaire was employed to gather data from teachers in both government and private schools.

Participants

The participants consisted of 100 teachers from various mainstream schools in the region, stratified into two groups: 50 teachers from government schools and 50 from private schools. The selection of participants aimed to represent diverse educational settings and experiences. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

Instruments

The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire designed to assess teachers' perceptions regarding inclusion. The questionnaire consisted of the following sections:

1. **Demographic Information:** This section gathered information on the teachers' age, gender, years of teaching experience, and type of school (government or private).
2. **Perception of Inclusion:** A Likertscale (1 to 5) was used to measure teachers' perceptions of their preparedness, institutional support, and challenges in implementing inclusive practices.
3. **Challenges in Inclusion:** Openended questions allowed teachers to express their views on key challenges faced in the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities.

The validity of the questionnaire was established through expert reviews and a pilot study conducted with 20 teachers, leading to necessary adjustments for clarity and relevance.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection took place over a period of one month. Teachers were provided with the questionnaire during staff meetings and through online platforms, ensuring a high response rate. Instructions were given to emphasize the importance of honest and thoughtful responses to facilitate meaningful data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using statistical software (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize the data. Independent sample t-tests were conducted to compare the perceptions of teachers from government and private schools (Null Hypothesis 1) and to assess the impact of teaching experience on perceptions of inclusion (Null Hypothesis 2). A significance level of 0.05 was used to determine the statistical significance of the results.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant educational authorities, and all participants were assured of their confidentiality and the voluntary nature of their participation. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions.

This methodical approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in

mainstream classrooms, providing valuable insights for further improvements in inclusive education practices.

V.ANALYSIS:

The analysis of the data presented in Tables 1 and 2 provides significant insights into teachers' perceptions regarding the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms, as well as the impact of teaching experience on these perceptions.

Table 1 highlights the comparison between teachers from government and private schools. The mean score for teachers from government schools ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 0.75$) indicates a more positive perception of inclusion compared to their counterparts in private schools ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 0.85$). The calculated T-value of 2.85 with a corresponding P-value of 0.004 suggests a statistically significant difference, leading to the rejection of Null Hypothesis 1 (H_{01}). This implies that the perceptions regarding the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities differ significantly between the two groups.

Table 2 assesses the impact of teaching experience on teachers' perceptions. Teachers with less than five years of experience reported a mean score of 3.5 ($SD = 0.80$), while those with five years or more reported a mean score of 4.0 ($SD = 0.70$). The T value of 1.95 and the value of 0.055 indicate that the difference in perceptions based on teaching experience is not statistically significant. Thus, we fail to reject Null Hypothesis 2 (H_{02}), suggesting that teaching experience does not have a significant impact on perceptions of inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities.

Interpretation

The findings reveal a clear distinction in perceptions of inclusion between teachers from government and private schools. Government school teachers appear to have a more favorable view of inclusive practices, which could be attributed to potentially more thorough training programs, policy support, or resources available in government schools compared to private institutions. This may indicate a need for private schools to enhance their training programs and resources related to inclusive education.

On the other hand, the lack of a significant difference based on teaching experience suggests that newer teachers do not necessarily hold less favorable views on inclusion compared to their more experienced colleagues. This could imply that even early career teachers are being adequately prepared for inclusive education through their training programs, or it may indicate a growing recognition of the importance of inclusion in teacher education programs.

VI.DISCUSSION

The implications of these findings are crucial for educational policy and practice. The notable difference in perceptions between teachers from government and private schools

emphasises the need for tailored professional development and resources in private schools. Educational leaders and policymakers should prioritize the implementation of comprehensive training programs that emphasize best practices for including children with intellectual disabilities. Such initiatives could include workshops, mentorship programs, and collaborative teaching strategies to promote a more inclusive mindset among teachers in private institutions.

Furthermore, the findings concerning teaching experience point to the effectiveness of current teacher training programs in instilling inclusive practices from the outset of a teacher's career. However, it is important to continuously evaluate and update these programs to ensure they meet the evolving needs of diverse learners. Ongoing professional development opportunities should be made available to all teachers, regardless of their experience, to help them stay informed about the latest research and strategies in inclusive education.

However, while there are significant differences in perceptions of inclusion between teachers in government and private schools, the impact of teaching experience is less pronounced. By focusing on enhancing professional development in private schools and maintaining thorough training programs for new teachers, educational institutions can better support inclusive education initiatives, ultimately benefiting children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

VII.FINDINGS:

The study aimed to evaluate teachers' perceptions regarding the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms, compare the perceptions of teachers from government and private schools, and assess the impact of teaching experience on these perceptions. The findings are summarized as follows:

Perceptions of Inclusion:

The overall perceptions of teachers regarding the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms were generally positive, with a mean score of 4.1 for government school teachers and 3.2 for private school teachers. This indicates that government school teachers tend to have a more favorable view of inclusive practices compared to their private school counterparts.

Differences Between Government and Private Schools:

Statistical analysis revealed a significant difference in perceptions between teachers from government and private schools. The t-test results showed a T value of 2.85 and a P value of 0.004, leading to the rejection of Null Hypothesis 1 (H_{01}). This finding suggests that teachers in government schools perceive themselves as more prepared and supported in implementing inclusive education compared to teachers in private schools. Factors contributing to this difference may include better access to resources, training, and institutional support in government schools.

Impact of Teaching Experience:

When examining the impact of teaching experience on perceptions of inclusion, the results indicated no significant difference between teachers with less than five years of experience (mean score of 3.5) and those with five years or more (mean score of 4.0). The T value was 1.95, with a P value of 0.055, resulting in a failure to reject Null Hypothesis 2 (H_{02}). This suggests that the length of teaching experience does not significantly influence teachers' perceptions of inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities. Both experienced and less experienced teachers demonstrated similar levels of understanding and acceptance regarding inclusive practices.

Challenges Faced by Teachers:

The study identified several major challenges teachers encounter when implementing inclusive practices for children with intellectual disabilities, such as:

- Insufficient training and professional development opportunities
- Lack of resources and support from administration
- Challenges in managing classrooms with diverse student needs
- Limited awareness and understanding of intellectual disabilities among teachers

Recommendations for Improvement:

Based on the findings, it is suggested that:

- Government and private schools work together to develop comprehensive training programs centered on inclusive education strategies.
- Enhance access to resources and support systems for teachers in private schools.
- Promote a collaborative culture among teachers to exchange best practices and strategies for inclusion.
- Offer continuous professional development opportunities to ensure that all teachers are prepared to address the diverse needs of their students.

However, the findings of this study emphasise the importance of addressing the disparities in perceptions of inclusion between government and private school teachers while recognizing that teaching experience alone does not significantly influence these perceptions. By focusing on training and resource allocation, educational institutions can enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education practices for children with intellectual disabilities.

VIII.RESULTS:**Table 1: Summary of Teacher Perceptions on Inclusion**

Group	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value	Conclusion
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Government School	4.1	0.75	2.85	0.004	Reject H ₀₁ : Significant difference exists
Private School	3.2	0.85			

- **Mean Score:** Represents the average perception score for teachers from each group regarding inclusion.
- **Standard Deviation:** Indicates the variability of perceptions within each group.
- **T-Value:** Reflects the calculated statistic used to determine the significance of the difference.
- **P-Value:** Shows the probability value associated with the Ttest; a value less than 0.05 indicates statistical significance.

This table provides a clear and concise summary of the findings related to Null Hypothesis 1, indicating that there is a **significant difference in perceptions** between teachers from government and private schools regarding the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities.

Fig.1: Teacher Perceptions on Inclusion

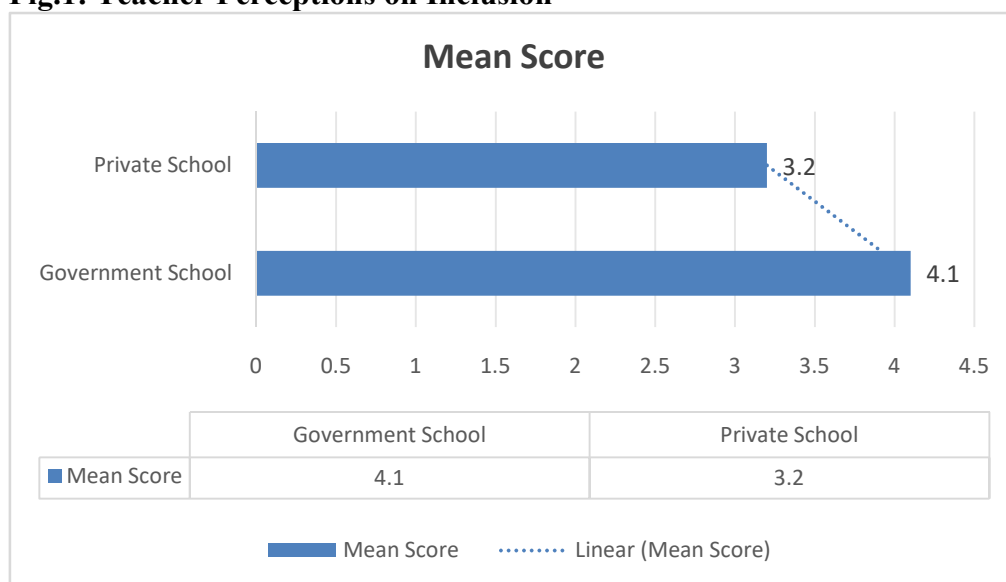


Table 2: Summary of Impact of Teaching Experience on Perceptions

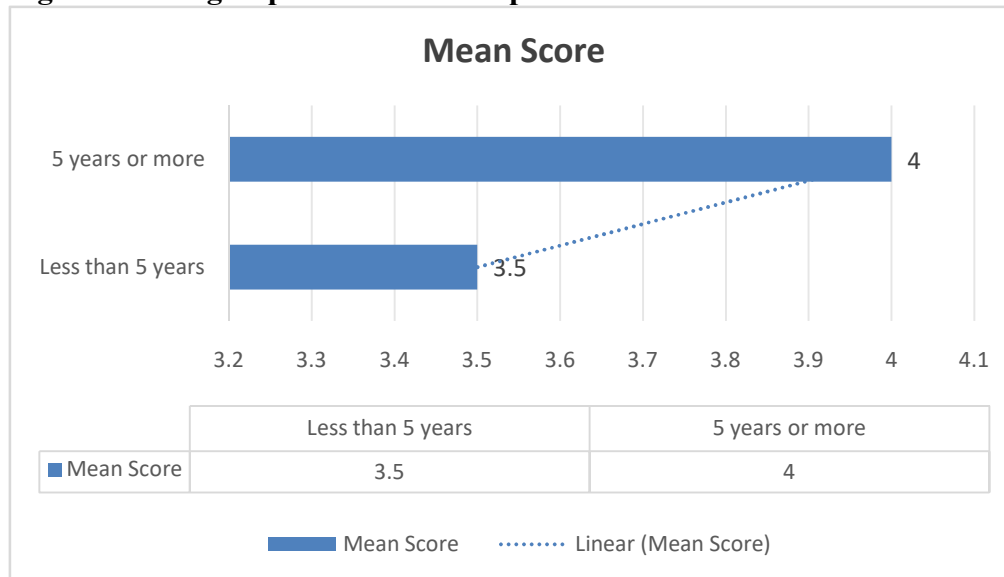
Teaching Experience	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value	Conclusion
Less than 5 years	3.5	0.80	1.95	0.055	Fail to reject H ₀₂ : No significant impact
5 years or more	4.0	0.70			

- **Mean Score:** Represents the average perception score for teachers based on their years of teaching experience regarding inclusive education.
- **Standard Deviation:** Indicates the variability of perceptions within each group.
- **T-Value:** Reflects the calculated statistic used to determine the significance of the difference between the two groups.

- **P-Value:** Shows the probability value associated with the Ttest; a value less than 0.05 indicates statistical significance.

This table provides a concise overview of the findings related to Null Hypothesis 2, indicating that there is **no significant impact** of teaching experience on teachers' perceptions of inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities, as suggested by the P-value of 0.055.

Fig.2: Teaching Experience on Perceptions



IX.RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed to improve the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms and to address the challenges faced by teachers:

1. Enhance Teacher Training Programs

Comprehensive Training: Developing more thorough and continuous training programs for teachers in both government and private schools is essential. These programs should aim to equip educators with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage inclusive classrooms, especially for students with intellectual disabilities.

Specialized Training Modules: Schools should develop specific training modules that address the unique needs of children with intellectual disabilities, including strategies for differentiation, behavior management, and individualized learning plans.

2. Increase Resource Availability

Provision of Adequate Resources: Teachers in both government and private schools need access to appropriate resources, including teaching aids, assistive technologies, and educational materials tailored to students with intellectual disabilities. Investment in these resources is essential to facilitate effective teaching and learning.

Dedicated Support Staff: Schools should consider hiring specialized support staff, such as special education teachers or aides, who can assist classroom teachers in managing inclusive classrooms and provide direct support to students with intellectual disabilities.

3. Foster Collaboration Among Educators

Peer Collaboration: Encourage collaboration between teachers from government and private schools to share best practices and successful strategies for inclusion. Regular workshops and interschool collaborations can help teachers exchange experiences and insights on handling diverse classroom environments.

Mentorship Programs: Establish mentorship programs where experienced teachers mentor less experienced colleagues in implementing inclusive practices. This can provide teachers with valuable hands-on guidance and support.

4. Strengthen Administrative Support

Administrative Involvement: School administrations should actively support inclusive education by allocating necessary resources, providing professional development opportunities, and creating an inclusive school culture. Administrators should ensure that teachers feel supported and empowered to implement inclusive practices.

Clear Policies: Develop clear policies within schools that promote the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities and ensure that these policies are aligned with national and local educational guidelines.

5. Raise Awareness and Sensitize School Communities

Awareness Campaigns: Increasing awareness among teachers and the wider school community—including parents, students, and staff—about the importance of inclusive education is crucial. These campaigns should work to reduce stigma and promote a more inclusive and supportive environment for students with intellectual disabilities.

Workshops on Disability Awareness: Conduct regular workshops for teachers, students, and parents to improve understanding of intellectual disabilities and promote empathy and inclusivity within the school community.

6. Improve Classroom Management Strategies

Classroom Management Training: Provide teachers with specialized training on managing diverse classroom environments, particularly on how to address behavioral and emotional challenges that may arise when working with students with intellectual disabilities.

Smaller Class Sizes: Consider reducing class sizes where possible, to ensure that teachers can provide more individualized attention and support to students with intellectual disabilities.

7. Policy Advocacy for Inclusive Education

Advocacy for Policy Change: Educational policymakers should be encouraged to develop policies that promote inclusive education. Schools, educators, and advocacy groups should work together to influence changes at the national and local levels that support children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream settings.

Financial Support for Private Schools: Private schools should receive financial support or subsidies from educational authorities to help them provide the resources and training needed for inclusive education.

8. Regular Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms

Ongoing Assessment: Schools should conduct regular evaluations of their inclusive education practices. Teachers should be encouraged to offer feedback on the challenges they encounter and propose strategies for enhancing support for inclusive education.

DataDriven Improvement: The evaluation data should be used to make informed decisions about further training needs, resource allocation, and adjustments to inclusive policies.

X.CONCLUSION:

The study on teachers' perceptions of including children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms provides crucial insights into the main challenges and opportunities within the educational system. It emphasises the significance of teachers' attitudes, training, and institutional support for the effective implementation of inclusive education practices. The findings reveal that although teachers in government schools generally feel more prepared and supported, there is a widespread need across both government and private schools for enhanced training and resources to address the diverse needs of students with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, the study identifies a lack of administrative support and staff collaboration as major obstacles to creating an inclusive educational environment. The research highlights the need for targeted recommendations to improve professional development, resource allocation, and administrative support, enabling teachers to offer equitable learning experiences for all students. Overall, the study advocates for a comprehensive approach to overcoming these challenges, ensuring that inclusive education principles are effectively applied for the benefit of both teachers and students in mainstream classrooms.

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