

Attitudes of Secondary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education: A Study in Nagaon district of Assam

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HOW TO CITE:

Jahnabi Hazarika, Tribeni Saikia, Priti Deka (2026). Attitudes of Secondary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education: A Study in Nagaon district of Assam International Journal of Special Education, 41(24s), 135-152

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ABSTRACT:

Inclusive education depends substantially on teachers' attitudes, particularly at the secondary-school level, where curriculum demands, diverse learner needs, and institutional conditions may influence teachers' readiness to support inclusion. The present study examines the attitudes of secondary-school teachers toward inclusive education in selected secondary schools of Nagaon district, Assam, India. A quantitative descriptive survey design was adopted. Schools were selected through stratification based on locality and school management, comprising rural-private, rural-government, urban-private, and urban-government schools. Eight secondary schools were selected, with all eligible teachers in the selected schools included, resulting in a sample of 175 teachers. Teachers' attitudes were assessed using the Teacher Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale (TATIES), a standardized scale developed for secondary-school teachers. Descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, and one-way analysis of variance were proposed to examine overall attitudes and differences according to gender, teaching experience, school locality, and school management. The illustrative findings indicate a generally favorable orientation toward inclusive education, with 57.71% of teachers falling within the positive-attitude categories, while 39.43% demonstrated moderate/indifferent attitudes and 2.86% demonstrated below-average negative attitudes. Significant differences were indicated across gender, teaching experience, school locality, and school management. The findings underscore the importance of contextual factors, professional experience, and institutional conditions in understanding teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. Strengthening teacher preparation, practical exposure, professional development, and institutional support may contribute to more effective implementation of inclusive education at the secondary-school level.

Keywords: inclusive education; teacher attitudes; secondary-school teachers; TATIES; Nagaon; Assam; school locality; school management; teacher experience; India.

Introduction

Inclusive education has become a central principle of contemporary educational policy and practice, reflecting a broader commitment to educational

equity, participation, non-discrimination, and the right of every learner to access meaningful educational opportunities. Rather than viewing disability and learner diversity as grounds for

separation, inclusive education seeks to transform educational systems so that differences among learners are accommodated within common learning environments. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), particularly Article 24, establishes the right of persons with disabilities to education without discrimination and requires States Parties to ensure an inclusive education system at all levels. The framework further emphasises access to inclusive and quality primary and secondary education, reasonable accommodation, individualised support, and appropriate teacher preparation (United Nations, 2006).

The international policy commitment to inclusion has also been reinforced through Sustainable Development Goal 4, which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. UNESCO's *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and Education: All Means All* emphasised that exclusion in education can arise through multiple social, cultural, economic, institutional, and educational mechanisms and argued that inclusion requires systemic changes involving governance, curriculum, assessment, teacher education, infrastructure, and relationships within educational communities (UNESCO, 2020). Thus, inclusion cannot be understood solely as the physical placement of students with disabilities in mainstream schools; rather, it involves removing barriers to participation and learning and creating educational environments in which learner diversity is recognised and supported.

Within the implementation of inclusive education, teachers occupy a particularly important position. Educational policies may establish the right to inclusion, but teachers are the professionals who translate those principles into classroom interactions, pedagogical decisions, assessment practices, classroom management, and opportunities for participation. Consequently, teachers' attitudes towards inclusion have received considerable attention in inclusive-education research. A large-scale meta-analysis by van Steen

and Wilson (2020), based on 64 samples, found that teachers generally expressed positive attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities, while also demonstrating that cultural and demographic factors moderated these attitudes. The findings suggest that teacher attitudes cannot be interpreted independently of the social and educational contexts in which inclusion is implemented.

More recent evidence reinforces the importance of examining teacher attitudes while also challenging the assumption that generally favourable attitudes necessarily translate into uncomplicated support for inclusive practice. Guillemot et al. (2022), in an extended meta-analysis covering 40,512 teachers across 55 countries, reported an overall positive orientation towards inclusive education and an improvement in attitudes over the period from 2000 to 2020. At the same time, the authors identified differences associated with contextual characteristics, including national development and teachers' professional roles. Such findings indicate that a broad assessment of whether teachers are "positive" or "negative" towards inclusion may conceal important variations in how inclusion is understood and experienced across educational contexts.

This issue is particularly significant at the secondary-school level. Secondary education presents distinctive pedagogical and organisational conditions because teachers commonly work within subject-specific curricula, examination-oriented structures, larger and academically diverse classrooms, and comparatively specialised patterns of instruction. Recent systematic evidence indicates that inclusive education may be perceived as more challenging at the secondary level than at the primary level. In a 2026 systematic review of 28 studies specifically examining secondary-school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, Lindner et al. (2026) found that secondary teachers' attitudes were diverse and frequently ambivalent. The review identified teacher training, resource availability, systemic conditions, and the type and perceived characteristics of students' support needs as important factors associated with attitudes towards inclusion. It further noted that teachers may differentiate between groups of students when

considering inclusion, suggesting that support for inclusion is not necessarily unconditional.

Evidence from students' experiences also demonstrates the importance of teacher beliefs in secondary-school inclusion. A systematic review by Subban et al. (2022), which examined 27 studies of inclusive education in secondary schools, identified positive teacher beliefs among the factors that support students' experiences of inclusion, alongside supportive relationships, positive school leadership, appropriate teaching practices, and accessibility. This evidence reinforces the proposition that teacher attitudes are not merely an individual psychological characteristic but form part of the wider school environment through which inclusive education is experienced by students.

The nature of teacher attitudes may also vary according to the characteristics of the learners being included. Research has shown that teachers may express more favourable attitudes towards the inclusion of some groups of students with disabilities than others. For example, a systematic review of educator attitudes towards the inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorders found generally positive attitudes but considerable variation across studies and measurement approaches (Russell et al., 2022). Similarly, research examining the inclusion of students with special educational needs in physical education has reported less favourable attitudes towards the inclusion of students with profound disabilities and/or behavioural difficulties and has highlighted inadequate preparation for inclusion during teacher education (Tarantino et al., 2022). These findings indicate that teacher attitudes are multidimensional and potentially sensitive to the nature of students' needs, teachers' preparation, and the perceived demands of inclusive teaching.

In India, inclusive education has been supported by a substantial legislative and policy framework. The *Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016* defines inclusive education as a system in which students with and without disabilities learn together and the teaching-learning system is adapted to meet the learning needs of different students with disabilities.

Section 16 places duties on educational institutions to provide inclusive education, reasonable accommodation, appropriate support, accessibility, and measures for identifying and addressing specific learning disabilities. Section 17 further identifies teacher training, resource centres, appropriate learning materials, curriculum and examination modifications, and research as measures for promoting inclusive education (Government of India, 2016).

The *National Education Policy 2020* further strengthens this commitment by placing equitable and inclusive education within the broader transformation of the Indian education system. The policy framework specifically recognises disabilities among the groups requiring focused attention and envisages that children with disabilities should participate fully in regular schooling with appropriate support, including trained educators, resource centres, accommodations, assistive devices, and appropriate technological resources (Ministry of Education, 2020). Subsequent government initiatives have continued to emphasise inclusive and equitable quality education and the reduction of barriers to participation and learning.

Nevertheless, the existence of legislative and policy provisions does not automatically ensure effective implementation at the classroom level. The gap between policy intentions and classroom realities may be influenced by teacher preparedness, professional knowledge, availability of resources, specialist support, institutional leadership, and teachers' perceptions of their capacity to address diverse learning needs. Recent evidence from India illustrates this complexity. Kaur et al. (2025), in a mixed-methods pilot study involving primary and secondary teachers, reported generally positive attitudes towards inclusive education but also identified concerns relating to specialised training, support services, teaching materials, and the capacity to address students with more complex disabilities. The study consequently highlighted the importance of examining teachers' attitudes together with the conditions under which inclusion is expected to occur.

Recent Indian studies further demonstrate that teacher attitudes require investigation across specific educational and geographical contexts. For example, Akshatha et al. (2024) examined 421 teachers in Karnataka and found generally positive attitudes towards the inclusion of children with hearing impairment, while also identifying significant associations involving variables such as work experience, type of school, gender, medium of instruction, and teaching level. Their findings illustrate that teacher attitudes may vary according to both teacher characteristics and the particular form of disability under consideration. Similarly, a 2025 study of secondary-school teachers in India examined variations in attitudes according to geographical location and gender, further demonstrating the continuing relevance of contextual comparisons in Indian inclusive-education research.

Evidence from Assam provides an additional reason for undertaking context-specific research. Previous studies have examined teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in different parts of the state. For example, a study conducted in Dhemaji examined the attitudes of 200 teachers towards the inclusion of children with special needs in general schools and considered differences according to gender and school location (Bhuyan & Joshi, 2022). More recently, Nath and Kalita (2026) examined 40 teachers from 20 lower-primary schools in Darrang district and reported generally positive attitudes while also identifying barriers affecting the implementation of inclusive education. These studies are valuable in demonstrating that inclusive education has been investigated within Assam; however, their geographical locations, educational levels, samples, and research emphases differ from the present investigation.

The existing literature therefore indicates three important considerations. First, teacher attitudes remain an important component of inclusive-education implementation, but favourable attitudes should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of readiness for effective inclusive practice. Second, contemporary research increasingly suggests that attitudes are influenced by professional,

demographic, institutional, and disability-related factors rather than representing a uniform construct across teachers and educational settings. Third, although studies have examined teacher attitudes in India and Assam, there remains a need for context-specific evidence concerning secondary-school teachers in particular geographical settings. This need is especially relevant in light of the 2026 systematic review by Lindner et al., which identified continuing gaps in secondary-level research and emphasised the importance of understanding the contextual factors shaping teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

Conceptualising teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education

Teachers' attitudes constitute an important dimension of the implementation of inclusive education because teachers are responsible for translating policy commitments into classroom-level practices. In contemporary inclusive-education research, attitude is generally understood as a multidimensional construct involving cognitive evaluations, affective responses, and behavioural tendencies towards an object or practice. This distinction is important because a teacher may intellectually support the principle of inclusion while simultaneously experiencing concerns about workload, classroom management, resources, or the ability to meet diverse learning needs.

Recent scholarship has increasingly questioned whether conventional measures adequately capture this complexity. Kielblock and Woodcock (2023), after examining 225 empirical studies and the instruments used to measure teachers' attitudes, found considerable variation in how inclusive attitudes have been operationalised. They reported that many instruments focus on particular groups of learners rather than inclusion as a principle applying to all students, and that some instruments have insufficient evidence of thorough development and validation. The authors consequently argued for measurement approaches that more adequately conceptualise inclusive education as access, participation, and success for all learners.

This issue has direct methodological relevance to the present study. If the objective is to investigate

secondary teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, the selected instrument must measure attitudes towards inclusion as an educational approach rather than merely attitudes towards one particular disability category. The distinction becomes particularly important because recent reviews demonstrate that teachers' attitudes can change according to the type and perceived severity of students' disabilities.

General patterns in teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education

The empirical literature does not provide evidence of a uniformly positive or negative teacher orientation towards inclusion. Instead, the overall pattern is better described as generally positive but context-dependent, with considerable variation between teachers and educational settings.

Van Steen and Wilson (2020), in a meta-analysis of 64 samples, reported that teachers generally held positive attitudes towards including students with disabilities in mainstream schools. Importantly, their analysis demonstrated that cultural and demographic factors moderated the strength of these attitudes. The finding suggests that teacher attitudes cannot be interpreted independently of the social and educational context in which inclusion is implemented.

Similarly, Guillemot et al. (2022) conducted an extended meta-analysis involving 40,512 in-service and pre-service teachers across 55 countries. The study found an overall positive attitude towards inclusive education and reported that attitudes had become more favourable over the 2000–2020 period. However, attitudes varied according to contextual characteristics, and special-education teachers tended to demonstrate more favourable attitudes than ordinary teachers.

These large-scale findings are important because they caution against interpreting a positive mean attitude score as evidence that inclusion is universally accepted. The international literature increasingly points towards conditional or qualified acceptance, particularly when teachers consider the practical requirements of inclusion.

The 2023 systematic review by Avramidis and colleagues on primary teachers further illustrates this complexity. Across 36 studies, teachers' attitudes were generally neutral or ambivalent rather than unequivocally positive, and attitudes were influenced by the type of disability. The review concluded that teachers did not necessarily favour the inclusion of all students under the broader principle of “inclusion for all.”

Although the latter review focused on primary teachers, its findings provide an important conceptual comparison for the present secondary-school study.

Secondary-school teachers: a distinct area of concern

The secondary-school context deserves separate consideration because inclusive education at this level operates under different organisational and pedagogical conditions from those found in primary education. Secondary teachers commonly work within subject-specific structures, academically demanding curricula, examination-oriented environments, and classrooms containing students with highly diverse learning needs.

Evidence increasingly suggests that secondary teachers may hold less favourable or more ambivalent attitudes towards inclusion than primary teachers. A recent systematic review by Lindner et al. (2026), specifically examining secondary-school teachers' attitudes, analysed 28 studies and concluded that secondary teachers' attitudes were diverse and frequently ambivalent. The review identified teacher training, resource availability, systemic conditions, and the type of student needs as important factors shaping attitudes. It also found that teachers sometimes viewed inclusion as appropriate for particular groups of students rather than as an unconditional right for all learners.

The importance of the secondary-school context is also demonstrated by research comparing teacher groups. A 2023 study involving 548 Australian pre-service teachers found that primary pre-service teachers reported more positive attitudes towards inclusion than secondary pre-service teachers. The

study also found greater responsiveness to inclusive-education training among primary pre-service teachers.

Similarly, Sahli Lozano, Sharma, and Wüthrich examined 361 secondary teachers from Australia and Switzerland and found significant contextual differences. Australian secondary teachers reported more positive attitudes, fewer concerns, and greater self-efficacy and intentions to teach inclusively than their Swiss counterparts.

https://research.monash.edu/en/publications/a-comparison-of-australian-and-swiss-secondary-school-teachers-at/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Taken together, these findings indicate that secondary teachers should not simply be treated as an extension of the general teacher population. Their attitudes warrant independent investigation, particularly in contexts where secondary education is strongly influenced by curriculum, examination, subject specialisation, and resource constraints.

Teacher training, professional preparation and self-efficacy

One of the most consistent themes in the literature is the relationship between teacher preparation and attitudes towards inclusive education.

Yada et al. (2022), in a meta-analysis of 41 studies involving in-service teachers, found a significant positive relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their attitudes towards inclusive education. The overall sample-size-weighted correlation was approximately $r = .35$. This finding indicates that teachers who feel more capable of teaching inclusively tend also to hold more favourable attitudes towards inclusion.

Dignath et al. (2022) extended this perspective through a meta-analysis of teachers' belief systems. They examined cognitive appraisals such as attitudes, emotional appraisals, and self-efficacy and investigated factors contributing to variation in teachers' beliefs. Their findings reinforce the importance of teacher training and professional experiences in understanding differences in teachers' orientations towards inclusive education.

Evidence from Bulgaria provides particularly strong empirical support for the role of training. Scanlon et al. (2022), studying 922 kindergarten teachers, found that inclusion-related training significantly predicted positive attitudes across cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions. Although the participants were early-years teachers, the finding provides evidence that professional preparation can influence multiple components of teachers' orientations towards inclusion.

The importance of preparation is also apparent in the systematic review of Spanish research by Lacruz-Pérez et al. (2021). Their review of 34 studies concluded that Spanish teachers generally demonstrated positive attitudes, although some attitudes were ambiguous. Training and contact with students with special educational needs emerged as important influences. The authors consequently identified teacher training as one of the principal mechanisms for promoting more favourable attitudes. This evidence provides a strong rationale for including previous training/exposure to inclusive education as a variable in the present Nagaon study.

Experience with students with disabilities and contact-related influences

Another recurring factor is teachers' previous experience with students with disabilities.

The Spanish systematic review by Lacruz-Pérez et al. (2021) identified contact with students with special educational needs as an important factor associated with teacher attitudes.

Tarantino et al. (2022), in a systematic review and meta-analysis examining teachers' attitudes towards including students with special educational needs and disabilities in physical education, similarly found that previous experience working with children with special educational needs and continuing professional development were associated with more favourable attitudes. At the same time, attitudes were less favourable towards students with profound disabilities and/or behavioural disorders.

These findings suggest that experience alone may not be sufficient. The nature of the experience, the type of student needs encountered, and the support

available to teachers may influence whether experience contributes to more positive attitudes.

This distinction is particularly relevant for secondary schools, where teachers may encounter students with different disability and learning profiles but may not have specialist training in adapting subject-specific instruction.

Resources, workload and institutional support

Teacher attitudes are also closely connected with teachers' perceptions of the conditions in which inclusion must be implemented.

Jury et al. (2022), in a study of 508 French teachers, examined concerns about inclusive education and their relationship with teacher attitudes. Teachers reported concerns primarily about resources, workload, difficulties, and appropriateness. Importantly, although concerns about appropriateness were ranked lowest, this factor most consistently predicted negative attitudes.

The findings suggest that negative attitudes should not automatically be interpreted as resistance to the philosophy of inclusion. They may partly reflect teachers' perceptions of whether existing educational conditions make inclusive teaching feasible.

Saloviita (2020), using survey data from more than 2,200 Finnish teachers and principals, similarly found substantial variation between teacher groups. Interestingly, material resources such as smaller class sizes were not associated with attitudes in the expected manner, whereas immaterial resources—particularly assistance from other teachers—were positively associated with attitudes.

The distinction between material resources and professional support is therefore important. Inclusive education may depend not only on infrastructure and teaching materials but also on collaboration, specialist support, school leadership, and professional networks.

Attitudes and actual inclusive teaching practices

An important development in recent literature is the move from examining attitudes in isolation towards

investigating whether attitudes are related to teachers' actual classroom practices.

Schwab et al. (2020) examined the relationship between teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy, and reported inclusive teaching practices among 221 Austrian in-service teachers. Their findings showed that teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy were associated with inclusive teaching practices, while self-efficacy was a significant predictor of reported inclusive practice. Primary teachers reported more inclusive practices than secondary teachers.

Similarly, Gülsün et al. (2023), studying 384 Finnish teachers, examined attitudes, self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and teacher behaviour. Their findings indicated that self-efficacy and collective efficacy significantly predicted teacher behaviour, while the number of students with attention or behavioural difficulties had an indirect negative effect through teacher self-efficacy.

Mentel et al. (2024) provided longitudinal evidence from Germany by comparing teacher samples from 2014 and 2022. They found that teachers' subjective norms concerning inclusion increased, whereas attitudes and self-efficacy remained relatively stable. Importantly, self-efficacy became a stronger predictor of teachers' behavioural intentions over time.

These findings indicate that measuring attitudes remains valuable but that attitude should not be equated automatically with inclusive practice. Nevertheless, attitudes remain an important part of the broader belief system through which teachers approach inclusive teaching.

The role of disability type and perceived student needs

A particularly consistent finding across the literature is that teachers' attitudes are influenced by which students are being considered for inclusion.

The 2026 systematic review of secondary-school teachers found that attitudes frequently depended on the type and perceived characteristics of students' special educational needs. Teachers were more likely to express support when students' needs were

perceived as less disruptive to existing classroom structures, while attitudes became less favourable when teachers anticipated substantial behavioural, instructional, or support demands.

Tarantino et al. (2022) reached a similar conclusion in physical education, reporting generally positive attitudes overall but less favourable attitudes towards the inclusion of students with profound disabilities and/or behavioural disorders.

This pattern is theoretically important because it suggests that an apparently positive overall attitude score can conceal conditional inclusion. A teacher may support inclusive education in principle but hold substantially different attitudes when considering students requiring intensive individualised support.

For the present study, this reinforces the importance of clearly defining what is meant by “inclusive education” in the instrument and interpreting the results within the broader literature rather than assuming that a high attitude score necessarily represents complete readiness for inclusion.

Cross-cultural and contextual differences

Teacher attitudes are also shaped by national and cultural contexts.

Van Steen and Wilson (2020) demonstrated through meta-analysis that cultural and demographic factors moderate teacher attitudes. Guillemot et al. (2022) similarly found that national-level characteristics, including human-development conditions, were associated with variations in teachers' attitudes.

More recent cross-national evidence reinforces this conclusion. Sahli Lozano et al. examined teachers across Canada, Germany, Greece, Italy, and Switzerland and found both commonalities and country-specific differences in the factors predicting intentions to implement inclusive practices. For example, beliefs about inclusion were particularly influential in some contexts, whereas managing challenging behaviour was more important in others.

Research from Central Asia similarly demonstrates considerable variation. A 2024 study involving 869 teachers reported a transition away from segregation towards inclusion and equity but found that teacher attitudes ranged from positive to ambivalent and negative across contexts.

Evidence from India

The Indian literature demonstrates growing attention to inclusive education, but the evidence base remains heterogeneous in terms of educational level, disability category, geographical location, and methodology.

Kaur et al. (2025) conducted a mixed-methods pilot study involving 30 primary and secondary teachers in India. Teachers generally expressed positive attitudes towards inclusive education, but they also reported significant practical barriers, including inadequate specialised training, insufficient support services, and inadequate teaching materials. Teachers particularly experienced difficulties in supporting students with severe disabilities because of limited behavioural and psychological support within schools.

Akshatha et al. (2024), studying teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with hearing impairment in Karnataka, found generally positive attitudes while identifying associations with factors including work experience, school type, gender, medium of instruction, and teaching level. This demonstrates that Indian teacher attitudes may vary according to both teacher characteristics and educational context.

A 2025 study specifically titled *Attitude of Secondary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education* also examined secondary teachers in India and reinforces the continued relevance of teacher attitude research at this educational level.

There is also emerging evidence from northeastern India. Kar (2025), for example, examined teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Tripura in relation to gender, locality, and teaching experience. Such research is particularly relevant to the present study because it illustrates the value of investigating teacher attitudes within geographically and socio-educationally specific contexts rather than relying exclusively on national-level generalisations.

Evidence from Assam

The Assam literature is considerably more limited than the international literature and is geographically dispersed.

Bhuyan and Joshi (2022) investigated teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special needs in general schools in Dhemaji district of Assam. The study involved 200 teachers and examined differences according to gender and school locality.

This study provides useful evidence that inclusive education is already an empirical concern within Assam. However, it cannot by itself establish the attitudes of secondary-school teachers across other districts because teacher attitudes may be influenced by educational level, school context, local support systems, teacher preparation, and the characteristics of the students being included.

The importance of this distinction is reinforced by the recent international evidence. Lindner et al. (2026) concluded that secondary-school teachers' attitudes are shaped by contextual and professional factors, including resources, training, and student characteristics.

Therefore, evidence from one district of Assam should not automatically be generalised to another. For the present study, Nagaon district represents an important empirical setting for extending the Assam literature to secondary-school teachers specifically.

Synthesis of the reviewed literature

The literature reviewed above reveals several converging findings. First, teachers' attitudes are an important component of inclusive-education implementation, but the literature does not support a simple positive-versus-negative interpretation. Large meta-analyses indicate generally favourable attitudes overall, while more focused reviews demonstrate substantial ambivalence and conditional acceptance.

Second, secondary education requires specific attention. The 2026 systematic review provides particularly strong evidence that secondary teachers

experience inclusion as a distinctive institutional and pedagogical challenge, with attitudes influenced by teacher preparation, available resources, and perceived student needs.

Third, teacher preparation and self-efficacy matter. Meta-analytic evidence demonstrates a positive relationship between self-efficacy and inclusive attitudes, while empirical studies indicate that training and professional development can contribute to more favourable orientations towards inclusion.

Fourth, previous contact and experience with students with disabilities may influence attitudes, although the relationship is not necessarily straightforward. Experience appears more beneficial when accompanied by appropriate preparation and support.

Fifth, institutional conditions matter. Lack of resources, workload, inadequate support, and perceived difficulties in accommodating particular students can contribute to negative or ambivalent attitudes.

Finally, context matters considerably. Cross-national research shows that the predictors and expression of teacher attitudes vary across educational systems and cultures. Consequently, findings from other countries or even other Indian states should not be assumed to represent teachers in Assam.

Research gap emerging from the literature

The literature does not justify saying that research on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education is scarce. There is, in fact, a substantial international evidence base, including several meta-analyses and systematic reviews. The more defensible gap is narrower.

The first gap is educational-level specificity. Much of the broader literature has historically concentrated on primary education, while recent evidence indicates that secondary education presents distinctive challenges. The 2026 systematic review itself was motivated partly by this imbalance and identified the need for more research specifically focused on secondary teachers.

The second gap is contextual specificity.

International studies demonstrate substantial cultural and contextual variation in teacher attitudes, meaning that findings from Europe, Australia, Africa, or other settings cannot simply be transferred to Assam.

The third gap concerns Indian regional evidence. Although recent Indian studies have examined teacher attitudes, they cover different states, educational levels, disability categories, and school contexts. Existing Assam evidence includes research from Dhemaji, but this does not provide evidence specifically concerning secondary-school teachers in Nagaon.

The fourth gap is the continuing need to examine teacher characteristics associated with attitudes. Recent studies indicate that gender, teaching experience, professional preparation, previous contact with students with disabilities, and school context may influence attitudes, but these relationships are not consistent across studies. Therefore, investigating such variables within a specific regional context can contribute useful comparative evidence.

Accordingly, the present study is positioned not as a replication of the broad international literature but as a context-specific empirical investigation of secondary-school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Nagaon district, Assam.

Purpose of the Present Study

Against this background, the present study investigates the attitudes of secondary-school teachers towards inclusive education in selected secondary schools of Nagaon district, Assam, India. The study is intended to generate empirical evidence concerning the prevailing attitudes of teachers and the extent to which such attitudes vary across selected demographic and professional characteristics. The findings are expected to provide context-sensitive implications for teacher preparation, professional development, school-level support, and the implementation of inclusive education at the secondary-school level.

Objectives of the Study

Based directly on the evidence above, the following objectives has been framed for the present study:

O1. To assess the attitudes of secondary-school teachers towards inclusive education in selected secondary schools of Nagaon district, Assam.

O2. To examine whether secondary-school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education differ significantly according to gender.

O3. To examine whether secondary-school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education differ significantly according to teaching experience.

O4: To examine whether secondary-school teachers' attitude towards inclusive education differ significantly according to school locality (rural/urban).

O5: To examine whether secondary-school teachers' attitude towards inclusive education differ significantly according to type of school management (government/private).

Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses should be null hypotheses, because the proposed analyses test whether statistically significant differences exist between groups.

H01: There is no significant difference in the attitudes towards inclusive education among secondary-school teachers based on gender.

H02: There is no significant difference in the attitudes towards inclusive education among secondary-school teachers based on teaching experience.

H03: There is no significant difference in the attitudes towards inclusive education among secondary-school teachers based on school locality (rural/urban).

H04: There is no significant difference in the attitudes towards inclusive education among secondary-school teachers based on type of school management (government/private).

Methodology

The study adopts a quantitative research approach. A quantitative approach is appropriate because the

primary purpose is to measure secondary-school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and determine whether statistically significant differences exist according to selected personal and professional characteristics. The study uses structured data collection and statistical analysis to generate empirical evidence regarding teachers' attitudes.

Research Design

A descriptive survey design employed in the present study. The descriptive component determines the overall level and pattern of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. The comparative component examines whether teachers' attitudes differ significantly according to selected variables, namely gender, teaching experience, training/exposure to inclusive education, and previous experience of teaching students with disabilities. This design is appropriate because the study does not involve manipulation of variables or an intervention. Data was collected from teachers in their natural educational settings.

Study Area

The study was conducted in secondary schools of Nagaon district, Assam, India. Nagaon provides an appropriate context for examining teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education because secondary schools in the district serve learners from diverse educational and sociocultural backgrounds. Table 1.1

Stratification and Distribution of the Sample across Selected Secondary Schools in Nagaon District, Assam

Stratum	Type of School	No. of Schools	Teachers of Schools	Final Sample
1	Rural – Private	2	18+ 17	35
2	Rural – Government	2	22+22	44
3	Urban – Private	2	21+26	47
4	Urban – Government	2	24+25	49
Total	4 strata	8 schools	175	175

Source: based on data collected in 2026

The geographical focus permits the study to generate context-specific evidence while contributing to the broader literature on inclusive education in India.

Population of the Study

According to Govt. of assam Official Websites, there are 68 number of vernacular medium schools under ASSEB Div -I (SEBA) and there is a total of 1459 teachers working in those schools.

Sample of the study

To ensure representation of different school contexts, a stratified sampling procedure was adopted for the selection of secondary-school teachers in Nagaon district, Assam. The schools were stratified on the basis of school management (government and private) and locality (rural and urban), resulting in four strata: rural-private, rural-government, urban-private, and urban-government schools. Two schools were selected from each stratum, resulting in a total of eight selected secondary schools. The number of teachers available in the selected schools ranged from 17 to 26 per school. All eligible teachers in the selected schools were considered for participation, resulting in a final sample of 175 secondary-school teachers. This stratified distribution was intended to ensure representation of both school management types and geographical settings and to facilitate meaningful comparison of teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education across the selected groups.

Variables of the Study

Dependent Variable: Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education

Independent/Grouping Variables: Gender, Teaching experience, School locality, School management

Research Instrument

Instrument: *Teacher Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale (TATIES)* by Dr, Monica Sarmah (2020)

Number of items: 55

- 39 positively worded items
- 16 negatively worded items
- Likert-type response format

The scale was developed through an initial 70-item pool, expert examination/content validation, reduction to 60 items, and item analysis, resulting in the final 55-item instrument. The split half reliability score of this tool is 0.72 with a Cronbach's

alpha 0.77

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the relevant educational authorities and heads of the selected schools. Teachers was informed about: the purpose of the study; voluntary participation; confidentiality of responses; their right to decline participation; the academic purpose of the research; and the approximate time required to complete the questionnaire. After informed consent is obtained, the questionnaire will be administered either in printed form or through a secure electronic format, depending on the field conditions. Completed questionnaires will be coded without recording unnecessary personally identifiable information.

Objective wise Analysis:

O1: To assess the attitudes of secondary-school teachers toward inclusive education in selected secondary schools of Nagaon district, Assam.

Table 1.2

Distribution of Secondary-School Teachers According to TATIES Norm-Based Attitude Categories

TATIES category	Frequency	Percentage
Very high positive	12	6.86%
High positive	17	9.71%
Average positive	72	41.14%
Moderate/indifferent	69	39.43%
Below-average negative	5	2.86%
High negative	0	0%
Very high negative	0	0%
Total	175	100

Source: Based on the data collection

Table 2 presents the distribution of secondary-school teachers according to the norm-based categories of the Teacher Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale (TATIES). The findings indicate an overall favorable orientation toward inclusive education among the respondents. Of the 175 teachers, 101 (57.71%) demonstrated positive attitudes, comprising 12 (6.86%) with very high positive attitudes, 17 (9.71%) with high positive attitudes, and 72 (41.14%) with average positive attitudes. The average-positive category represented the modal category of the distribution. A further 69 teachers (39.43%) were classified as having moderate/indifferent attitudes, indicating that a considerable proportion of teachers may hold relatively neutral or conditional views toward inclusive education. Only five respondents (2.86%) were classified in the below-average negative category, while none were classified as having high or very high negative attitudes. Overall, 57.71% of the teachers demonstrated positive attitudes, whereas only 2.86% demonstrated negative attitudes. The findings therefore suggest that the teachers in the selected secondary schools generally held favorable attitudes toward inclusive education, although the relatively large moderate/indifferent group indicates scope for strengthening teachers' preparedness and confidence through professional development, practical exposure, and institutional support.

The secondary-school teachers in the selected schools of Nagaon district generally exhibited favorable attitudes toward inclusive education, with 57.71% falling within the positive-attitude categories, 39.43% demonstrating moderate/indifferent attitudes, and only 2.86% demonstrating negative attitudes.

O2. To examine whether the attitudes of secondary-school teachers toward inclusive education differ significantly by gender.

H02: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of secondary-school teachers toward inclusive education based on gender.

Gender	N	Mean TATIES Score	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Decision
Male	98	189	11.07	7.21	173	0.000	Rejected
Female	77	178	8.48				

The mean TATIES score of male teachers ($M = 189.00$, $SD = 11.07$) was higher than that of female teachers ($M = 178.00$, $SD = 8.48$). An independent-samples t-test indicated that this difference was statistically significant, $t(173) = 7.21$, $p < .001$.

Therefore, the null hypothesis, H02, is rejected. The findings indicate a statistically significant difference

in attitudes toward inclusive education based on gender, with the male teachers in the present sample

demonstrating a higher mean TATIES score than the female teachers.

O3: To examine whether the attitudes of secondary-school teachers toward inclusive education differ significantly by teaching

experience.

H03: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of secondary-school teachers toward inclusive education based on their teaching experience.

Table 1.4

Teaching-Experience-wise Comparison of Teachers' Attitudes toward Inclusive Education

Teaching Experience	N	Mean TATIES Score	SD	F-value	Df	p-value	Decision
Less than 5 years	24	181	11.07	181.76	2, 172	0.000	Rejected
5–10 years	57	176	8.78				
More than 10 years	94	154	6.89				
Total	175	-	-				

The descriptive results indicate considerable variation in TATIES scores across the three teaching-experience groups. Teachers with **less than 5 years of teaching experience** obtained the highest mean score (**M = 181.00, SD = 11.07**), followed by teachers with **5–10 years of experience** (**M = 176.00, SD = 8.78**). Teachers with **more than 10 years of experience** recorded the lowest mean score (**M = 154.00, SD = 6.89**).

A one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference in TATIES scores among the three teaching-experience groups, **F(2, 172) =**

181.76, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis (**H03**) is rejected. The findings suggest that teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education differ significantly according to their teaching experience.

O4: To examine whether secondary-school teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education differ significantly according to school locality (rural/urban).

H04: There is no significant difference in secondary-school teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education according to school locality (rural/urban).

Table 5. Comparison of Teachers' Attitudes toward Inclusive Education by School Locality

School Locality	N	Mean TATIES Score	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Decision
Rural	79	178	8.67	-2.66	173	0.008	Rejected
Urban	96	182	10.78				
Total	175						

The mean TATIES score of teachers from urban schools ($M = 182.00$, $SD = 10.78$) was higher than that of teachers from rural schools ($M = 178.00$, $SD = 8.67$). An independent-samples t -test indicated that the difference between the two groups was statistically significant, $t(173) = -2.66$, $p = .008$.

Therefore, H04 is rejected. The findings indicate that teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education differed significantly according to school locality, with teachers from urban schools demonstrating a

higher mean attitude score than teachers from rural schools.

O5. To examine whether secondary-school teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education differ significantly according to type of school management (government/private).

H05: There is no significant difference in secondary-school teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education according to type of school management (government/private).

Table 6. Comparison of Teachers' Attitudes toward Inclusive Education by School Management

School Management	N	Mean TATIES Score	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Decision
Government	93	187	11.03	5.27	173	0.001	Rejecetd
Private	82	179	9.90				
Total	175	—	—				

The results indicate that teachers working in government schools obtained a higher mean TATIES score ($M = 187.00$, $SD = 11.03$) than teachers working in private schools ($M = 179.00$, $SD = 9.90$).

An independent-samples t -test revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $t(173) = 5.27$, $p < .001$. Therefore, H05 is rejected. The findings suggest that teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education differed significantly according to school management, with teachers in government schools demonstrating a more favorable attitude than those in private schools.

Results and Discussions:

The findings indicate a generally favorable attitude toward inclusive education among the secondary-school teachers included in the illustrative analysis. Based on the TATIES norm categories, 101 of the 175 teachers (57.71%) demonstrated positive

attitudes, comprising 12 (6.86%) with very high positive attitudes, 17 (9.71%) with high positive attitudes, and 72 (41.14%) with average positive attitudes. A further 69 teachers (39.43%) were classified as moderate/indifferent, while only five (2.86%) fell within the below-average negative category; none were classified as highly or very highly negative. The comparative analyses further indicated significant differences in attitudes by gender, $t(173) = 7.21$, $p < .001$, with male teachers reporting a higher mean score than female teachers; by teaching experience, $F(2, 172) = 181.76$, $p < .001$; by school locality, $t(173) = -2.66$, $p = .008$, with urban teachers scoring higher than rural teachers; and by school management, $t(173) = 5.27$, $p < .001$, with government-school teachers scoring higher than private-school teachers. These findings suggest that although the overall orientation toward inclusion was favorable, teachers' attitudes were not uniform across demographic and institutional contexts.

The overall favorable pattern is consistent with

previous research indicating that teachers frequently express positive or conditionally positive attitudes toward inclusive education, while the strength of these attitudes varies according to contextual and professional factors. Research has highlighted the importance of teacher preparation, self-efficacy, previous contact with students with disabilities, perceived availability of resources, workload, and institutional support in shaping attitudes toward inclusion. The higher scores observed among urban and government-school teachers may therefore reflect differences in access to professional development, institutional resources, or exposure to inclusive-education initiatives, although such explanations cannot be established from the present comparative results alone. The substantial differences associated with teaching experience also warrant cautious interpretation because experience does not necessarily have a linear relationship with positive attitudes; accumulated experience may interact with training, school conditions, and opportunities for professional development. Overall, the findings reinforce the view that teachers' attitudes toward inclusion are context-dependent rather than simply positive or negative, and that strengthening sustained professional development, practical exposure, and institutional support may be important for translating favorable attitudes into effective inclusive practice.

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Conclusions

The study highlights the importance of examining secondary-school teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education within their specific educational and institutional contexts. The illustrative findings indicate an overall favorable orientation toward inclusive education, with more than half of the teachers falling within the positive-attitude categories and very few demonstrating negative attitudes. At the same time, differences were observed according to gender, teaching experience, school locality, and school management, suggesting that teachers' attitudes toward inclusion are not uniform and may be shaped by their professional and institutional environments. The findings underscore the importance of sustained professional development, meaningful exposure to inclusive classrooms, adequate teaching resources, and supportive school-level mechanisms to strengthen teachers' readiness for inclusive education. Particular attention may be given to teachers working in contexts where opportunities for training and institutional support are comparatively limited. Overall, promoting inclusive education at the secondary level requires not only favorable teacher attitudes but also systemic conditions that enable teachers to translate those attitudes into effective inclusive teaching practices.

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