

# **Inclusive Classroom Practices for Children with Intellectual Disability: A Study in Nadia District of West Bengal**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION:**

### **1.1 Background and Context**

Inclusive education has emerged as a transformative approach to ensure equity, participation, and quality learning for all children, including those with intellectual disabilities. Traditionally, children with disabilities were educated in segregated special schools, which often limited their social interaction and violated their right to equal educational opportunities. The shift toward inclusive education reflects a broader human rights perspective, emphasizing that all learners should be educated together within the same school environment.

An inclusive classroom refers to a setting where children with and without disabilities learn together, with appropriate adaptations in curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment practices. It is not merely about physical placement but about ensuring meaningful participation and learning for every child.

Children with intellectual disability often face challenges in cognitive functioning, adaptive behavior, communication, and social skills. Therefore, inclusive classroom practices must go beyond general teaching and incorporate individualized supports, differentiated instruction, and structured learning strategies. Evidence-based practices such as visual supports, behavior modification, and systematic instruction have been found effective in supporting these learners.

In the Indian context, inclusive education has been strengthened through policies such as the Right of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 and the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which mandate equal educational opportunities and promote integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools. In Nadia district of West Bengal, the elementary education system includes thousands of schools, where efforts are being made to implement inclusive practices in line with these policies. However, the extent and effectiveness of implementation vary across institutions.

Despite policy support, several challenges persist in the successful implementation of inclusive classroom practices. These include:

- Lack of teacher training and professional preparedness
- Inadequate infrastructure and learning resources
- Negative attitudes or lack of awareness among stakeholders
- Difficulty in adapting curriculum to meet diverse needs
- Shortage of special educators and support services

Such barriers can limit meaningful inclusion and hinder the academic and social development of children with intellectual disabilities.

At the same time, research indicates that inclusive education benefits not only children with disabilities but also their peers, by fostering social acceptance, empathy, collaboration, and diversity awareness. It also prepares all learners for participation in an inclusive society.

In districts like Nadia, where rural and semi-urban educational settings dominate, the implementation of inclusive practices requires context-specific strategies, including teacher training programs, community awareness, resource support, and continuous monitoring. Institutions such as DIET (District Institute of Education and Training) play a role in enhancing teacher capacity and promoting inclusive classroom practices through training and field-based studies.

Therefore, studying inclusive classroom practices for children with intellectual disability in Nadia district is essential to understand the current status, identify gaps, and suggest practical interventions. Such a study contributes to improving the quality of inclusive education and ensuring that no child is excluded from meaningful learning experiences.

## **1.2 Understanding ID (Definition and about)**

Intellectual Disability (ID) is a condition where a person has:

- Below-average intellectual functioning (difficulty with thinking, learning, problem-solving)
- Limitations in adaptive Behaviour (skills needed for daily life like communication, self-care, and social skills)

These challenges begin before the age of 18.

Intellectual disability is a neurodevelopmental condition marked by significant limitations in intellectual functioning, such as reasoning and problem-solving, and adaptive behavior, which includes every day, social, and practical skills, first evident during childhood. Causes can include genetic conditions like Down syndrome, complications during pregnancy, or issues during birth. Diagnosis involves standardized testing of intellectual and adaptive functioning, and while there's no cure, therapies and special education can significantly help individuals achieve their highest potential.

Children with **Intellectual disability (ID)** often face challenges in cognitive functioning, adaptive behavior, communication, and social interaction. Inclusive classroom practices help address these challenges by promoting individualized instruction, supportive peer interaction, and appropriate teaching strategies. Inclusive education not only improves academic development but also fosters social integration, self-confidence, and independence among children with intellectual disability

## **1.3 Inclusive Education and Inclusive Classroom:**

Inclusive Education and Inclusive Classroom are closely related concepts focused on ensuring that *all learners*, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, have equal access to quality education.

Inclusive education is a broad philosophy and approach where *all students*—including those with disabilities, learning differences, or social disadvantages—learn together in the same education system.

### **Key Features:**

- Equal opportunities for all learners
- Respect for diversity (disability, language, gender, culture, etc.)
- Removal of barriers to learning and participation
- Focus on holistic development of every child

Inclusive education refers to an educational approach that provides equal learning opportunities for all children, including those with disabilities, within a shared classroom environment. This approach focuses on eliminating barriers to participation and establishing supportive learning conditions, enabling children with diverse abilities to learn together. In inclusive classrooms, children with intellectual disabilities are educated alongside their peers in mainstream schools, where teaching methods, curricula, and classroom environments are modified to address their varied needs.

Inclusive education is an educational approach that guarantees all learners, regardless of abilities, disabilities, backgrounds, or learning styles, have equitable access to quality education and are encouraged to participate fully in the learning environment. This approach requires schools and teaching methods to be adapted to address the diverse needs of every student, promote a sense of belonging, and prepare students to succeed in a diverse society. Essential components include developing accessible environments, supplying appropriate learning materials, providing teacher training, and addressing discrimination to eliminate exclusion.

UNESCO thus, promotes an inclusive education system that strives to remove the barriers limiting the participation and achievement of all learners.

The concept of inclusive education respects diverse needs, abilities and characteristics of all children from various backgrounds.

Inclusive education can eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environments of all children, by addressing the learning needs of all children through access to common pre-school provisions, schools and community educational settings.

## **1.4 Inclusive Classroom:**

An inclusive classroom is the practical implementation of inclusive education within a classroom setting. It is designed to meet the diverse needs of all students.

Features of an Inclusive Classroom:

- Flexible teaching methods (visual, auditory, hands-on learning)
- Differentiated instruction (adapting lessons for different abilities)
- Collaborative learning (group work, peer support)
- Positive classroom environment (respect, empathy, acceptance)
- Use of assistive tools (hearing aids, screen readers, etc.)

**Example:** A teacher uses videos, group discussions, and simplified notes so every student can understand the lesson in their own way.

Effective inclusive classroom practices include **differentiated instruction, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and the use of assistive technologies**. Teachers may adapt teaching materials, simplify instructions, use visual aids, and provide additional time for learning activities to accommodate students with intellectual disabilities. Collaborative teaching between general educators and special educators also plays a vital role in supporting inclusive classrooms.

Another important principle is **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**, which involves designing teaching methods and classroom environments that are accessible and beneficial for all learners from the beginning. This approach encourages the use of multiple ways of presenting information, engaging students, and assessing learning outcomes.

### **1.5 Inclusive Education's Significance in the Context of Nadia District**

Inclusive education refers to an approach where all children—regardless of disability, gender, caste, socio-economic status, or other differences—learn together in the same classroom. Its significance becomes especially important when examined in the context of Nadia district, which has a rich educational tradition but also faces social and economic disparities.

In the context of **Nadia district of West Bengal**, inclusive classroom practices are particularly significant because many government and aided schools are gradually implementing policies aligned with national frameworks such as the **Right to Education Act (2009)** and **National Education Policy (2020)**. These policies emphasize inclusive education, teacher training, and equal access to education for children with special needs. Studying inclusive practices in this district can help understand how schools accommodate children with intellectual disabilities, the challenges teachers face, and the effectiveness of inclusive strategies in improving learning outcomes and social participation.

### **1.6 Research Objectives:**

This study aims to examine the existing inclusive classroom practices, teacher preparedness, support services, and the overall effectiveness of inclusive education for children with intellectual disability in Nadia district.

## **II. RESEARCH BACKGROUND:**

### **2.1 Review of Literature:**

**Chakraborty, B. et al. (2025).** This study examines the influence of mental pleasure on knowledge acquisition and academic success among special learners in inclusive educational settings. The study was carried out in the Bagdah Block of North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, using a sample of 30 special learners from three inclusive schools across seven villages. Utilizing a quantitative study approach, data were collected via structured questionnaires and standardized academic assessments. The results indicate a substantial positive association between students' mental contentment and their academic achievement. Mental happiness was recognized as a crucial psychological element that improves cognitive engagement and retention. The research underscores that inclusive education, combined with psychosocial support and well-being-focused interventions, can enhance educational outcomes for special learners in rural educational environments. The findings highlight the necessity of cultivating emotionally supportive educational settings to guarantee both equity and excellence in inclusive education. This study examined the complex relationship between mental contentment, knowledge acquisition, and academic accomplishment among special learners in inclusive educational environments within the Bagdah Block of the North 24 Parganas district. The sample comprised 30 special learners selected from seven villages across three inclusive educational institutions. This study utilized quantitative analysis of primary data to assess the psychological experiences of special learners and their educational outcomes. The results affirmed that mental happiness is crucial for improving cognitive performance and academic achievement. A robust positive link was identified between learners' emotional well-being and their levels of knowledge acquisition. Furthermore, regression analysis identified mental happiness as a statistically significant predictor of academic performance. The results confirm the premise that emotional elements are essential in the learning process of differently-abled youngsters. The survey also uncovered disparities in gender distribution and socio-economic status, with a higher prevalence of male learners and pupils from low-income families. Moreover, students with learning disabilities were the predominant segment of special learners, highlighting the necessity for a more varied and inclusive support framework. The study concludes that inclusive education is most effective when it transcends physical integration and attends to the psychological requirements of learners. Emotional fulfillment, social belonging, teacher support, and adaptive school environments are crucial for the academic and personal development of exceptional learners. Mental contentment is not a secondary or peripheral issue; it is fundamental to significant learning and comprehensive growth. Consequently, the study underscores the significance of mental well-being as a fundamental component of inclusive education, asking educators, policymakers, and administrators to

integrate emotional and psychological assistance into educational systems, instructional design, and support services.

**Das, A., Ghosh, B. & Mondal, S. (2025).** Inclusive education seeks to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students, irrespective of their skills or limitations. In West Bengal, initiatives have been established to advance inclusive education; yet, considerable obstacles remain in its execution. This study examines the present condition of inclusive education in West Bengal, analyses the challenges encountered in implementing these policies, and offers solutions for successful integration. A mixed-method research methodology, incorporating surveys and statistical analysis, has been utilized to comprehend the actual conditions. The results underscore deficiencies in educator preparation, facilities, and cultural perceptions, requiring immediate action. Inclusive education in West Bengal possesses a robust policy framework yet encounters challenges in implementation. The absence of qualified educators, insufficient infrastructure, and sociocultural obstacles persist as considerable hurdles. Resolving these challenges via systematic teacher training, infrastructure enhancements, and community involvement can augment the efficacy of inclusive education. Future research ought to concentrate on longitudinal studies to evaluate the temporal effects of policy. This extensive issue cannot be addressed inside a confined region. A comprehensive examination will be conducted in forthcoming research papers.

**Islam, A. & Tamang, A. (2025).** This study investigates the availability, accessibility, and quality of educational options for individuals with disabilities (PWD) in the secondary madrasahs in West Bengal. "It also addresses the implementation of inclusive education policies, infrastructural modifications, educator training, and support services". The findings demonstrate the challenges and opportunities in facilitating inclusive education, emphasizing the necessity of enhanced infrastructure, competent educators, and community awareness. The research proposes strategies for improving the academic performance and social inclusion of PWD students in madrasahs. Madrasahs in West Bengal have consistently been instrumental in providing education to marginalized communities. Nonetheless, the implementation of inclusive education for children with disabilities remains a challenge. This article examines the present state of inclusive infrastructure in West Bengal madrasahs, highlighting both challenges and opportunities for advancement. The endeavor for inclusive infrastructure in West Bengal madrasahs signifies a vital advancement in guaranteeing equal education for all, including pupils with disabilities. This study underscores the diverse obstacles confronting madrasahs, including insufficient physical infrastructure, a scarcity of accessible learning materials, unqualified educators, and societal stigma. Notwithstanding these obstacles, substantial opportunities exist to convert madrasahs into inclusive educational environments by deliberate interventions and collaboration. Government programs such as the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan provide a potential framework for enhancing accessibility; nevertheless, their execution at madrasahs requires greater consistency and strength. Community engagement, collaborations with NGOs, and the utilization of technology can significantly contribute to closing the existing gaps. Special education teacher training programs, along with dedicated financing for infrastructure enhancement, can foster an inclusive atmosphere for all students. Inclusive infrastructure is not only a structural necessity but also a manifestation of a society's dedication to fairness and social justice. By confronting problems and using available opportunities, West Bengal madrasahs can exemplify inclusive education that respects both traditional values and contemporary educational norms. This study's results and recommendations seek to assist policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in cultivating an inclusive educational environment that enables all students, irrespective of their ability, to achieve their maximum potential.

**Kumar, A. (2025).** Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in India, including Chandigarh, encounter numerous problems, particularly in accessing adequate schooling for various reasons. Inclusive education refers to the delivery of services to students with special needs within their educational institutions. This entails delivering the necessary support services, such as specialized curricula, resources, and infrastructure for both students and educators. Various names pertain to inclusive education, specifically integrated education, special education, and mainstreaming. Despite the initiatives of the central government and local administration, inclusive education remains an elusive reality for Children with Special Needs (CWSN), as the provision of special education is severely inadequate in both government and private schools in Chandigarh, and the teaching staff lacks proper training. The document emphasizes a significant transformation in acknowledging the educational requirements of Children with Special Needs (CWSN) initiated with the introduction of the Integrated Education of the Disabled Children (IEDC) in 1974. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, aims to ensure that individuals with disabilities get equal respect, integrity, dignity, and rights as their peers. The Rights of Persons with Impairments Act encompasses 21 impairments. The current total of Children with Special Needs (CWSN) enrolled in schools and receiving Home Based Education in Chandigarh is 4,302. The aim of this study is to examine the state and challenges of inclusive education and mainstreaming, specifically addressing resource deficiencies, accessibility, enrolment of children with special needs (CWSN), special schools, qualified educators, inclusion policies, and teacher anxiety. Inclusive education can eradicate discrimination within educational institutions. The document examines the resource teacher support system, early identification of Children with

Special Needs (CWSN), and various strategies to address their educational requirements. It also considers policy modifications in accordance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and the National Education Policy 2020, aimed at enhancing education and skills to foster inclusivity for CWSN in Chandigarh.

**Oswal, N. et al. (2025).** This systematic analysis rigorously analyses inclusive education strategies for Students of Determination (SoDs) inside Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), with particular emphasis on the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The study will illustrate optimal practices, principal obstacles, and the most and least investigated domains. This review, adhering to the PRISMA framework and employing thematic analysis, consolidates the data from 41 peer-reviewed papers that examine instructional approaches, technology solutions, staff training, and institutional support. The findings indicate that, worldwide, higher education institutions (HEIs) are progressively embracing inclusive education policies; however, they encounter significant difficulties in properly executing these practices, particularly in the UAE. Significant impediments encompass constrained educator training, inconsistent institutional procedures, and accessibility challenges. Moreover, the implementation of assistive technologies has demonstrated beneficial results; yet, it continues to be underutilized due to inadequate infrastructure and insufficient training for staff and students. This study provides evidence-based recommendations for educational institutions, such as colleges and universities, to enhance inclusivity through improved teacher training, refined institutional regulations, and the integration of assistive technologies. The findings offer UAE-specific policy recommendations that highlight the necessity of a clearly articulated national framework to promote SoDs. Future research should be longitudinal, assessing the degree to which the techniques influence the academic achievement and social inclusion of students with disabilities.

**Xuejiao, L. & Potmesil, M. (2025).** Childhood is a pivotal developmental phase, particularly for children with special educational needs (SEN), as it can significantly influence their growth and future welfare. To evaluate the research landscape on inclusive education for children with special educational needs (SEN) over the past decade, 1,024 documents from the Web of Science (WoS) core collection were examined. A full analysis of CiteSpace encompassed an overview of the area, keyword distribution, research focal points, and rising trends. This study found that research on inclusive education for children with special educational needs generally focuses on education, psychology, and the development of these children. Moreover, forthcoming study should encompass education, psychology, sociology, medicine, rehabilitation, public policy and legislation, neuroscience, and family studies. Primary research inquiries should focus on the efficacy of education and learning outcomes for children with special educational needs (SEN), their social and emotional development, familial support and engagement in education, educational policy and practice, as well as professional development and training for educators in inclusive education. We anticipate that future research on children with special educational needs will evolve to be more multifaceted and comprehensive. The study emphasis should transition to comparative analyses of the developmental trajectories of children with special needs and their counterparts. The methodological combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches is crucial. From a research standpoint, greater focus ought to be placed on cross-national comparative studies. Furthermore, the enhancement of interdisciplinary research and collaboration is essential to augment the theoretical framework and knowledge system of inclusive education for children with special needs, thereby establishing more substantial evidence base for inclusive practices.

## **2.2 Research Gap:**

A research gap is a question or a problem that has not been answered or addressed by any of the existing studies or research within the related areas. Sometimes, a research gap exists when there is a concept or new idea that hasn't been studied at all.

Previous records of research reflect that several research works had been conducted on "Special Education Program for Mental Retardation" but the same research work was not conducted in West Bengal state. But this is an important area which is untouched and require extensive research work. Hence there is a Research Gap.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research Area: Nadia district.

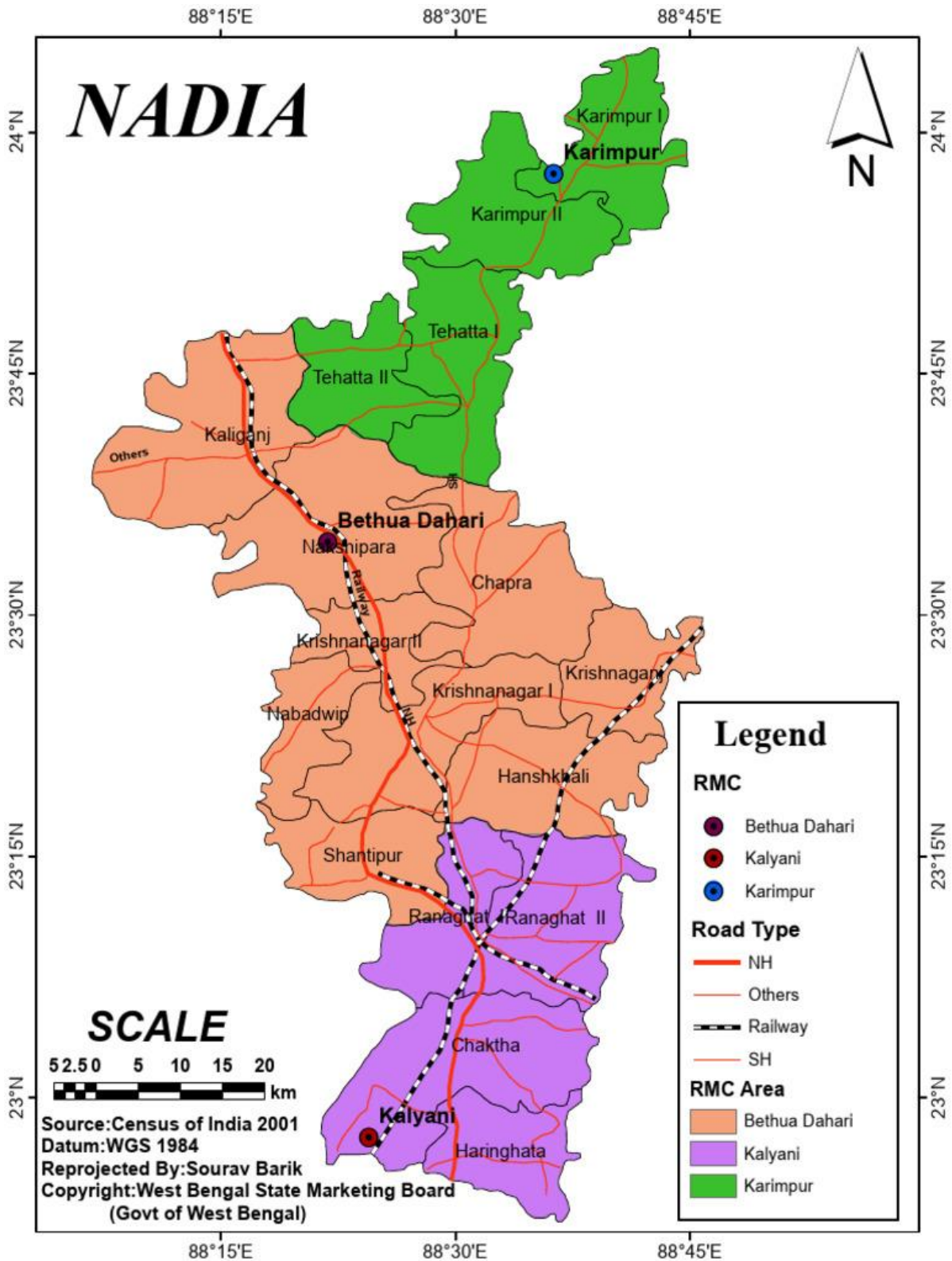


Figure : Nadia District Map , Source Secondary Data , <https://www.scribd.com/document/699069435/nadia-lat-long>

**Total Nos. of Schools selected for the Research: 30**

**Type of Schools:** Government aided elementary schools which include primary schools and upper primary schools.

**Age Group of the Children: 10-12 Years** (Reading in class 4, 5 and 6).

**Total nos. of Teachers selected for the Research: 90**

(3 teachers were selected from each school and hence total nos. of teachers were 30X3=90)

**Data Collection:**

Data was collected from three categories of respondents through Survey method.

- a) Guardian of Mentally Challenged child.
- b) Teachers
- c) Special Education Teacher.

#### **IV. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:**

##### **Qualitative Analysis of the Objective**

The qualitative analysis of the objective “*To examine the existing inclusive classroom practices, teacher preparedness, support services, and the overall effectiveness of inclusive education for children with intellectual disability in Nadia district*” focuses on understanding the experiences, perceptions, and practices of teachers, school authorities, parents, and students within inclusive educational settings.

An analysis of **inclusive classroom practices** demonstrates how teachers seek to integrate children with intellectual disabilities into mainstream classrooms. Classroom observations and interviews indicate that many teachers adapt their teaching strategies by employing simplified instructions, visual aids, peer support, and activity-based learning. The extent of inclusive practice implementation often depends on factors such as teacher training, class size, and the availability of learning materials. In numerous instances, inclusive practices are limited to basic adjustments rather than fully individualized teaching approaches.

Second, the study **investigates teacher preparedness for inclusive education**. Qualitative responses reveal that although many educators endorse inclusive education, a substantial proportion report inadequate training for working with children with intellectual disabilities. Teachers commonly cite insufficient specialized training, limited experience with special education methodologies, and a lack of professional development opportunities. This insufficient preparation negatively impacts their confidence and ability to address diverse learning needs.

Third, the analysis **examines the availability of support services in schools**. Support services, including special educators, resource rooms, counselling facilities, and assistive learning materials, are critical for effective inclusion. The findings indicate that although some schools possess limited support mechanisms, many institutions in Nadia district experience shortages of trained special educators and specialized resources. In several instances, general teachers are required to manage inclusive classrooms without sufficient institutional support.

The overall effectiveness of inclusive education is evaluated **based on stakeholders’ perceptions**. Parents and teachers report positive outcomes, including enhanced social interaction, increased peer acceptance, and greater confidence among children with intellectual disabilities. Nevertheless, challenges such as large class sizes, inadequate infrastructure, limited awareness, and insufficient policy implementation impede the achievement of inclusive education objectives.

#### **V. CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS:**

##### **Major Challenges and Barriers are:**

###### **Attitudinal Barriers**

- Negative attitudes of teachers, peers, and parents remain a primary obstacle.
- Social stigma and misconceptions about intellectual disability led to exclusion and discrimination.
- Many stakeholders still view disability as a limitation rather than a diversity factor.

###### **Lack of Teacher Training and Preparedness**

- General teachers often lack specialized training in inclusive pedagogy.
- Difficulty in handling diverse learning needs in a single classroom.
- Limited knowledge of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and adaptive teaching methods.

###### **Inadequate Infrastructure**

- **Schools in rural Nadia often lack:**
  - Resource rooms
  - Assistive devices
  - Barrier-free infrastructure
- Overcrowded classrooms reduce individual attention.

###### **Curriculum and Pedagogical Barriers**

- Rigid curriculum not adapted for children with intellectual disabilities.

- Lack of flexible teaching-learning materials.
- Assessment systems focus on uniform achievement rather than individual progress.

#### **Communication Barriers**

- Children with intellectual disabilities may have difficulties in:
  - Language comprehension
  - Expression
  - Social interaction
- Teachers are often not trained in alternative communication methods.

#### **Resource Constraints**

- Shortage of:
  - Special educators
  - Teaching aids
  - Funding for inclusive programs
- Limited government monitoring at the district level.

### **VI. CONCLUSION:**

Inclusion education is a framework that guarantees all students, irrespective of their skills, impairments, backgrounds, or learning styles, have equitable access to high-quality education and are encouraged to engage fully in the educational setting.

The qualitative findings suggest that while inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities is being practiced in schools in Nadia district, its effectiveness is primarily influenced by teacher training, institutional support, and the availability of suitable resources. Enhancing professional development programs, support services, and policy implementation may substantially improve the quality of inclusive classroom practices.

### **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To enhance West Bengal's special education for the inclusive education of children with intellectual disabilities, essential recommendations encompass improving accessibility, offering specialized training for teachers and para-educators, modifying curricula and instructional materials, providing resource support, encouraging parental and community engagement, establishing early identification systems, and creating a supportive classroom atmosphere through adaptable practices and smaller class sizes.

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