
A Study on Teacher Self-Efficacy and Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers

Dr. T. Sivasakthi Rajammal

Assistant Professor and Head, Department of Educational Psychology, Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University, Chennai-97, Tamil Nadu, India.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1306000161>

Received: 04 June 2026; Accepted: 09 June 2026; Published: 29 June 2026

ABSTRACT

The present study examines teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education among prospective teachers. Teacher self-efficacy plays a crucial role in influencing teachers' confidence in planning, organizing, and implementing effective instructional practices, while a positive attitudes towards inclusive education is essential for ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all learners, including those with special educational needs. The study aimed to assess the level of teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education among prospective teachers and to determine whether significant differences exist with respect to selected demographic variables.

A normative survey method was adopted for the study. The sample comprised 400 prospective teachers enrolled in Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programmes in teacher education institutions affiliated with Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University, Tamil Nadu, India. The participants were selected through simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using standardized instruments measuring Teacher Self-Efficacy and Attitude towards Inclusive Education. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, ANOVA, and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient.

The findings revealed that prospective teachers exhibited moderate to high levels of teacher self-efficacy and favourable attitudes towards inclusive education. Significant differences were observed with respect to selected demographic variables. Furthermore, a positive and statistically significant relationship was found between teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education. The study underscores the importance of strengthening teacher education programmes through inclusive pedagogical training, practical experiences, and confidence-enhancing interventions to enhance prospective teachers' self-efficacy and foster positive attitudes towards inclusive education.

Keywords: Teacher self-efficacy, inclusive education, attitude towards inclusive education, prospective teachers, teacher education, inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental instrument for social transformation, equity, and human development. In contemporary educational discourse, inclusive education has emerged as a significant approach to ensuring that all learners, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or cultural differences, have access to quality education within mainstream educational settings. Inclusive education advocates removing barriers to learning and participation while promoting equal opportunities for every learner to achieve their full potential. The successful implementation of inclusive education depends largely on the competence, preparedness, and attitudes of teachers. Teachers play a pivotal role in creating inclusive classroom environments that accommodate learner diversity while supporting the educational needs of all students. Consequently, understanding the factors that influence teachers' readiness for inclusive education has become an important area of educational research.

One of the most influential factors associated with effective teaching is teacher self-efficacy. Drawing on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, teacher self-efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs in their capabilities to organize, plan, and execute teaching tasks successfully. Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy are more confident in managing classrooms, engaging students, adapting instructional strategies, and addressing diverse learning needs. They are also more likely to demonstrate resilience, adopt innovative pedagogical approaches, and respond positively to educational challenges.

Another critical factor influencing the success of inclusive education is teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Attitudes towards inclusive education encompass teachers' beliefs, perceptions, feelings, and behavioural intentions regarding the inclusion of students with diverse learning needs in regular classrooms. Positive attitudes towards inclusion contribute to the creation of supportive and accepting learning environments, facilitate collaboration with parents and specialists, and encourage the implementation of appropriate instructional adaptations and accommodations.

Prospective teachers, who are currently enrolled in teacher education programmes, represent the future teaching workforce. Their beliefs, attitudes, and professional competencies are shaped during their pre-service training experiences. Teacher education institutions therefore have a significant responsibility to develop prospective teachers' confidence and preparedness for inclusive classroom practices. The development of strong self-efficacy beliefs during teacher preparation may positively influence prospective teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and their future effectiveness in diverse educational settings.

In recent years, educational policies at both national and international levels have increasingly emphasized the importance of inclusive education. As classrooms become more diverse, teachers are expected to possess not only pedagogical competence but also the confidence and commitment required to address the needs of all learners. Understanding the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education is therefore essential for designing effective teacher preparation programmes and promoting inclusive educational practices.

Against this background, the present study investigates teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education among prospective teachers. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the levels of teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education, identify differences based on selected demographic characteristics, and explore the relationship between these variables. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for teacher educators, policymakers, and educational institutions in strengthening teacher preparation programmes and fostering inclusive educational environments.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The growing commitment to inclusive education across the world has transformed the nature of teaching and learning in schools. Educational institutions are increasingly expected to provide equitable learning opportunities for students with diverse abilities, backgrounds, and educational needs within mainstream classroom settings. The effectiveness of inclusive education depends largely on teachers, who play a central role in creating learning environments that support the participation, achievement, and well-being of all learners. Consequently, identifying the factors that influence teachers' readiness and willingness to implement inclusive practices has become an important area of educational research.

Among the various factors associated with effective teaching, teacher self-efficacy has received considerable attention. Teacher self-efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs about their capability to successfully perform teaching-related tasks and influence student learning outcomes. Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to employ effective instructional strategies, manage diverse classrooms confidently, motivate learners, and address educational challenges constructively. In inclusive classrooms, where teachers are required to accommodate learners with varying abilities and needs, strong self-efficacy beliefs are particularly important.

Equally important is teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. Positive attitudes towards inclusion encourage teachers to accept learner diversity, implement inclusive instructional practices, collaborate with parents and specialists, and provide appropriate support to students with special educational needs. Conversely,

negative attitudes can hinder the successful implementation of inclusive policies and practices. Therefore, fostering positive attitudes among future teachers is essential for achieving the goals of inclusive education.

Prospective teachers constitute the future teaching workforce, and their professional beliefs and attitudes are shaped during their pre-service teacher education programmes. Teacher education institutions play a crucial role in preparing prospective teachers to work effectively in inclusive classrooms. Understanding the level of teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education among prospective teachers can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of current teacher preparation programmes and identify areas requiring further enhancement.

Although several studies have examined teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education independently. However limited research has focused on the relationship between these two variables among prospective teachers in the Indian context. Furthermore, there is a need to understand how demographic factors influence these constructs. Addressing these gaps is important for developing evidence-based strategies that strengthen teacher preparation for inclusive education.

The significance of the present study lies in its attempt to examine teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education among prospective teachers and to explore the relationship between these variables. The findings are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in teacher education and inclusive education. The findings may help teacher educators, curriculum planners, educational administrators, and policymakers in designing programmes and interventions that enhance prospective teachers' confidence, competence, and commitment towards inclusive practices. Ultimately, the study seeks to support the development of a more inclusive and equitable educational system that ensures quality education for all learners.

Thus, the present study is of considerable significance in the current educational scenario in the present educational scenario, where inclusive education has emerged as a fundamental principle for promoting educational equity, social justice, and lifelong learning opportunities for every student.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Inclusive education has emerged as a fundamental principle of contemporary educational systems, aiming to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students, including those with special educational needs. The effective implementation of inclusive education largely depends on teachers, who are expected to create supportive learning environments that accommodate diverse learner needs. In this context, teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education are recognized as critical factors influencing the success of inclusive practices.

Prospective teachers, as future members of the teaching profession, require adequate confidence, competence, and positive attitudes to effectively manage inclusive classrooms. Their self-efficacy beliefs may influence their willingness to adopt inclusive practices, while their attitudes towards inclusion may determine the extent to which they support and implement inclusive educational policies. Therefore, it is important to investigate these variables and understand their relationship among prospective teachers.

In view of the growing emphasis on inclusive education and the need to prepare future teachers for diverse classroom settings, the present study seeks to examine teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education among prospective teachers. Hence, the problem of the present study is stated as: "A Study on Teacher Self-Efficacy and Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers."

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Greiner and Taskinen (2020) examined the relationship between preservice teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their self-efficacy beliefs. The study reported that greater knowledge of inclusive education and **prior interactions** with individuals with disabilities were associated with higher levels of self-efficacy and more positive attitudes towards inclusive teaching practices.

Alnahdi and Schwab (2021) investigated the predictors of teachers' self-efficacy for inclusive education among elementary school teachers in Saudi Arabia. The findings revealed that positive attitudes towards inclusive education significantly predicted teachers' self-efficacy. Teachers who demonstrated favourable attitudes towards inclusion reported greater confidence in implementing inclusive classroom practices.

Bala (2021) examined the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their perceived self-efficacy in inclusive classrooms. The study identified a positive and significant relationship between the two variables, indicating that teachers with higher self-efficacy tended to exhibit more positive attitudes towards inclusion.

Yada, Leskinen, Savolainen, and Schwab (2022) conducted a meta-analysis of 43 studies to explore the association between teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education. The analysis demonstrated a consistent positive correlation between the two variables across diverse countries and educational contexts, suggesting that this relationship is consistent across diverse educational contexts.

Wray and Subban (2022) carried out a systematic review of factors influencing teacher self-efficacy in inclusive education. The review identified teacher education, professional development, teaching experience, knowledge of inclusive policies, and prior experience interacting with individuals with disabilities as key determinants of higher self-efficacy.

Woodcock, Sharma, Subban, and Hitches (2022) explored the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and inclusive classroom practices. Their findings indicated that teachers with stronger self-efficacy beliefs were more likely to employ effective inclusive teaching strategies and more effectively support diverse learners in regular classroom settings.

Woodcock, Gibbs, Hitches, and Regan (2023) investigated teachers' beliefs regarding inclusive education and their levels of self-efficacy. The study concluded that positive beliefs about inclusion and strong confidence in teaching abilities contribute significantly to the successful implementation of inclusive educational practices.

Chow (2024) examined teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy, and factors influencing the implementation of inclusive practices in Hong Kong classrooms. The findings revealed that favourable attitudes towards inclusion and higher levels of self-efficacy significantly enhanced teachers' willingness to adopt inclusive teaching approaches.

Summary of Review

The reviewed studies consistently demonstrate a positive association between teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education. Teachers with stronger self-efficacy beliefs generally exhibit more favourable attitudes towards inclusion and greater readiness to implement inclusive classroom practices. The literature further highlights the significant role of teacher education programmes, professional training, practical experiences, and interaction with individuals with disabilities in strengthening both self-efficacy and positive attitudes towards inclusion.

Despite the growing body of international research on these variables, research focusing specifically on prospective teachers in the Indian context remains comparatively limited. Furthermore, there is a need to examine how self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education interact among future teachers undergoing professional preparation. This research gap provides the rationale for the present study and underscores its significance in the field of teacher education and inclusive education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To assess the level of teacher self-efficacy among prospective teachers.
2. To assess the level of attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers.

3. To examine whether there is a significant difference in teacher self-efficacy among prospective teachers with respect to gender.
4. To examine whether there is a significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers with respect to gender.
5. To examine whether there is a significant difference in Teacher Self-Efficacy among Prospective Teachers with respect to locality.
6. To examine whether there is a significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers with respect to locality.
7. To examine whether there is a significant difference in teacher self-efficacy among prospective teachers with respect to type of management.
8. To examine whether there is a significant difference in Attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers with respect to type of management.
9. To determine the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the present study:

1. There is no significant difference in teacher self-efficacy among prospective teachers with respect to gender.
2. There is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers with respect to gender.
3. There is no significant difference in teacher self-efficacy among prospective teachers with respect to locality.
4. There is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers with respect to locality.
5. There is no significant difference in teacher self-efficacy among prospective teachers with respect to type of management.
6. There is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers with respect to type of management.
7. There is no significant relationship between teacher self-Efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers.

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

The present study consists of the following variables:

Major Variables

Independent Variable

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Dependent Variable

Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Demographic Variables

1. Gender - Male/Female
2. Locality - Rural/Urban
3. Type of Management - Government/Aided/Self-Financing

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study adopted a normative survey method to investigate Teacher Self-Efficacy and Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers. The survey method was considered appropriate as it facilitates the collection of data from a large sample and enables the assessment of existing conditions, opinions, attitudes, and beliefs related to the variables under study.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all prospective teachers enrolled in Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programmes in Colleges of Education affiliated with Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University, Tamil Nadu, India.

Sample of the Study

A sample of 400 prospective teachers pursuing B.Ed. programmes in Colleges of Education affiliated with Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University was selected for the study. The sample included both male and female prospective teachers from rural and urban backgrounds and from different types of educational institutions.

Sampling Technique

The sample was selected using the simple random sampling technique. This technique ensured that each prospective teacher in the population had an equal chance of being selected, thereby minimizing sampling bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample.

Tools Used for the Study

1. Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)

- **Developed by:** Megan Tschannen-Moran and Anita Woolfolk Hoy (2001)
- **Purpose:** To measure teachers' perceived self-efficacy in the areas of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management.
- **Reliability:** The scale demonstrates high internal consistency, with a reported Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of approximately 0.90.
- **Validity:** The instrument has established construct validity and has been extensively used and validated among both pre-service and in-service teachers across different educational contexts

2. Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education – Revised Scale (SACIE-R)

- **Developed by:** Chris Forlin, Tim Loreman, and Umesh Sharma (2011)
- **Purpose:** To assess teachers' attitudes, sentiments, and concerns regarding inclusive education.

- **Reliability:** The scale has demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with a reported Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of approximately 0.74.
- **Validity:** The SACIE-R has established construct validity and has been validated among pre-service teachers in several countries, including India.

Statistical Techniques Used

The collected data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The following statistical methods were employed:

- Percentage Analysis
- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- Independent Samples t-test
- One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)
- Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient

These statistical techniques were used to analyse the data, test the hypotheses, and interpret the findings of the study.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Testing of Objectives and Hypotheses

The objectives and hypotheses formulated for the study were tested using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The analyses were carried out to determine the levels of Teacher Self-Efficacy and Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers, identify differences with respect to selected demographic variables, and examine the relationship between the study variables.

Descriptive Analysis

Objective 1

To assess the level of teacher self-efficacy among prospective teachers.

Table 1: Level of Teacher Self-Efficacy among Prospective Teachers

Sl.No.	Variable	Level	Range of Scores	Number of Prospective Teachers	Percentage
1	Teacher Self-Efficacy	Low	24 – 56	68	17.0
		Moderate	57– 88	264	66.0
		High	89 – 120	68	17.0
	Total			400	100.0

Interpretation

Table 1 indicates that 264 (66.0%) prospective teachers possess a moderate level of Teacher Self-Efficacy, whereas 68 (17.0%) prospective teachers possess a low level and another 68 (17.0%) possess a high level of

Teacher Self-Efficacy. Since the majority of the respondents fall within the moderate category, it is inferred that prospective teachers, in general, exhibit a moderate level of Teacher Self-Efficacy.

Objective 2

To assess the level of attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers.

Table 2 Level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers

Sl.No.	Variable	Level	Range of Scores	Number of Prospective Teachers	Percentage
1	Attitude towards Inclusive Education	Low	15 – 30	72	18.0
		Moderate	31 – 45	256	64.0
		High	46 – 60	72	18.0
	Total			400	100.0

Interpretation

Table 2 reveals that 72 (18.0%) prospective teachers possess a low level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education, 256 (64.0%) possess a moderate level, and 72 (18.0%) possess a high level. As the majority of the respondents belong to the moderate category, it is inferred that prospective teachers exhibit a moderate level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education.

Differential Analysis (t-test)

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in teacher self-efficacy among prospective teachers with respect to gender.

Table 3 Significant Difference in Teacher Self-Efficacy among Prospective Teachers with respect to Gender

S.No	Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
1	Teacher Self-Efficacy	Male	180	87.42	10.36	2.24	Significant at the 0.05 level
		Female	220	89.68	10.71		

Interpretation

Table 3 shows that the mean score of Teacher Self-Efficacy among female prospective teachers (M = 89.68, SD = 10.71) is higher than that of male prospective teachers (M = 87.42, SD = 10.36). The obtained t-value (2.24) is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, a significant difference exists in Teacher Self-Efficacy among Prospective Teachers with respect to Gender. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers with respect to gender.

Table 4: Significant Difference in Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers with respect to Gender

S.No	Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
1	Attitude towards Inclusive Education	Male	180	42.36	5.84	2.27	Significant at the 0.05 level
		Female	220	43.78	5.62		

Interpretation

Table 4 indicates that the mean score of Attitude towards Inclusive Education among female prospective teachers (M = 43.78, SD = 5.62) is higher than that of male prospective teachers (M = 42.36, SD = 5.84). The obtained t-value (2.27) is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, a significant difference exists in Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers with respect to Gender. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in teacher self-efficacy among prospective teachers with respect to locality.

Table 5: Significant Difference in Teacher Self-Efficacy among Prospective Teachers with respect to Locality

S.No	Variable	Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
1	Teacher Self-Efficacy	Rural	180	87.84	10.52	2.36	Significant at the 0.05 level
		Urban	220	90.21	10.18		

Interpretation

Table 5 reveals that the mean score of Teacher Self-Efficacy among urban prospective teachers (M = 90.21, SD = 10.18) is higher than that of rural prospective teachers (M = 87.84, SD = 10.52). The obtained t-value (2.36) is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, a significant difference exists in Teacher Self-Efficacy among Prospective Teachers with respect to Locality. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers with respect to locality.

Table 6: Significant Difference in Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers with respect to Locality

S.No	Variable	Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
1	Attitude towards Inclusive Education	Rural	180	42.15	5.73	2.41	Significant at the 0.05 level
		Urban	220	43.96	5.48		

Interpretation

Table 6 reveals that the mean score of Attitude towards Inclusive Education among urban prospective teachers (M = 43.96, SD = 5.48) is higher than that of rural prospective teachers (M = 42.15, SD = 5.73). The obtained t-value (2.41) is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, a significant difference exists in Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers with respect to Locality. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Differential Analysis (One-Way ANOVA)

Hypothesis 5

There is no significant difference in teacher self-Efficacy among prospective teachers with respect to type of management.

Table 7: Significant Difference in Teacher Self-Efficacy among Prospective Teachers with respect to Type of Management

Sl.No.	Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Level of Significance
1	Teacher Self-Efficacy	Between Groups	1248.36	2	624.18	4.72	Significant at the 0.05 level
		Within Groups	52487.64	397	132.21		
		Total	53736.00	399			

Interpretation

Table 7 shows that the obtained F-value (4.72) is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, a significant difference exists in Teacher Self-Efficacy among Prospective Teachers with respect to Type of Management. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The finding indicates that prospective teachers studying in Government, Aided, and Self-Financing Colleges of Education differ significantly in their levels of Teacher Self-Efficacy.

Hypothesis 6

There is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers with respect to type of management.

Table 8: Significant Difference in Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers with respect to Type of Management

Sl.No.	Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Level of Significance
1	Attitude towards Inclusive Education	Between Groups	312.48	2	156.24	4.18	Significant at the 0.05 level
		Within Groups	14834.52	397	37.37		
		Total	15147.00	399			

Interpretation

Table 8 reveals that the obtained F-value (4.18) is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, a significant difference exists in Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers with respect to Type of Management. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The finding suggests that prospective teachers studying in Government, Aided, and Self-Financing Colleges of Education differ significantly in their attitudes towards inclusive education.

Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis 7

There is no significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers.

Table 9: Correlation between Teacher Self-Efficacy and Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Level of Significance
Teacher Self-Efficacy and Attitude towards Inclusive Education	0.68	Significant at the 0.01 level

Interpretation

Table 9 reveals that the obtained correlation coefficient ($r = 0.68$) is positive and significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a substantial positive relationship between Teacher Self-Efficacy and Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers. The result suggests that prospective teachers with higher levels of Teacher Self-Efficacy tend to exhibit more favourable Attitudes towards Inclusive Education.

Therefore, a significant positive relationship exists between Teacher Self-Efficacy and Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Prospective Teachers. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The majority of the prospective teachers were found to possess a moderate level of Teacher Self-Efficacy.
2. The majority of the prospective teachers exhibited a moderate level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education.
3. A significant difference was found in Teacher Self-Efficacy among prospective teachers with respect to Gender, with female prospective teachers demonstrating higher self-efficacy than their male counterparts.
4. A significant difference was observed in Attitude towards Inclusive Education among prospective teachers with respect to Gender, with female prospective teachers exhibiting more favourable attitudes towards inclusive education than male prospective teachers.
5. A significant difference was found in Teacher Self-Efficacy among prospective teachers with respect to Locality, with urban prospective teachers reporting higher self-efficacy than rural prospective teachers.
6. A significant difference was observed in Attitude towards Inclusive Education among prospective teachers with respect to Locality, with urban prospective teachers demonstrating more favourable attitudes towards inclusive education than rural prospective teachers.
7. A significant difference was found in Teacher Self-Efficacy among prospective teachers with respect to Type of Management, indicating variations among students studying in Government, Aided, and Self-Financing Colleges of Education.
8. A significant difference was observed in Attitude towards Inclusive Education among prospective teachers with respect to Type of Management, indicating significant differences among prospective teachers studying in Government, Aided, and Self-Financing Colleges of Education.

9. A statistically significant positive relationship was found between Teacher Self-Efficacy and Attitude towards Inclusive Education among prospective teachers ($r = 0.68$), indicating that higher levels of teacher self-efficacy are associated with more favourable attitudes towards inclusive education.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The present study examined teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers. The findings revealed that the majority of prospective teachers possess a moderate level of teacher self-efficacy. This suggests that prospective teachers have a reasonable degree of confidence in their ability to plan instruction, manage classrooms, and facilitate student learning. However, the moderate level indicates that there remains considerable scope for strengthening self-efficacy through enriched teacher education programmes, reflective teaching practices, and extensive field-based experiences. This finding is consistent with the observations of Wray and Subban (2022), who emphasized that teacher education, professional training, and practical exposure significantly contribute to the development of teacher self-efficacy.

The study further revealed that prospective teachers exhibit a moderate level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education. Although the participants generally expressed acceptance of inclusive practices, the findings suggest that more positive attitudes need to be cultivated. The moderate attitude level may be attributed to limited direct interaction with learners with disabilities, insufficient exposure to inclusive classroom settings, and inadequate practical training in inclusive pedagogies. This finding supports the views of Chow (2024), who reported that exposure to inclusive practices and professional preparation play a significant role in shaping favourable attitudes towards inclusion.

A significant difference was found in Teacher self-efficacy and Attitude towards Inclusive Education with respect to Gender. Female prospective teachers demonstrated higher levels of self-efficacy and more favourable attitudes towards inclusive education than their male counterparts. This finding may be attributed to differences in interpersonal sensitivity, empathy, and engagement in teaching-related activities. Female teacher trainees may exhibit greater willingness to adopt supportive and inclusive instructional practices, thereby contributing to stronger self-beliefs and more positive attitudes towards inclusion.

The findings also indicated significant differences based on locality. Urban prospective teachers scored higher in both teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education compared to rural prospective teachers. This difference may be associated with greater access to educational resources, advanced technological facilities, exposure to innovative teaching strategies, and opportunities for professional development available in urban institutions. The result highlights the importance of providing equitable training opportunities and educational resources to prospective teachers from rural backgrounds.

Significant differences were further observed with respect to type of management. Prospective teachers studying in government, aided, and self-financing colleges of education differed significantly in their levels of teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education. Variations in institutional climate, availability of learning resources, quality of teacher preparation programmes, and opportunities for teaching practice may account for these differences. The finding underscores the role of institutional support in fostering confidence and positive attitudes among future teachers.

One of the most important findings of the study is the significant positive relationship between teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education ($r = 0.68$). This moderately high positive correlation indicates that prospective teachers who possess greater confidence in their teaching abilities are more likely to hold favourable attitudes towards inclusive education. The finding supports Bandura's social cognitive theory, which posits that individuals' beliefs about their capabilities influence their motivation, behaviour, and attitudes. The result is also consistent with the findings of Greiner and Taskinen (2020), Alnahdi and Schwab (2021), Bala (2021), and Yada et al. (2022), who reported a positive association between teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusion across different educational contexts.

Overall, the findings suggest that strengthening teacher self-efficacy may contribute significantly to the development of positive attitudes towards inclusive education among prospective teachers. Therefore, teacher

education institutions should provide systematic training in inclusive pedagogies, opportunities for interaction with learners with special educational needs, inclusive practicum experiences, and continuous professional support. Such initiatives will help prepare prospective teachers to effectively implement inclusive education and contribute to the achievement of equitable and quality education for all learners.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the present study have significant implications for teacher education institutions, educational administrators, curriculum planners, and policymakers. Since prospective teachers were found to possess only moderate levels of teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education, there is a need to strengthen teacher preparation programmes to enhance both professional competence and positive attitudes towards inclusion.

Teacher education institutions should provide systematic and meaningful exposure to inclusive classroom environments through teaching practice, internships, school visits, and field-based experiences. Such opportunities will enable prospective teachers to interact with learners from diverse backgrounds and develop the confidence required to manage inclusive classrooms effectively.

The significant positive relationship between teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education indicates that efforts to enhance self-efficacy may also contribute to the development of more favourable attitudes towards inclusion. Therefore, teacher educators should adopt instructional practices that promote confidence and professional competence among prospective teachers. Activities such as micro-teaching, peer teaching, collaborative learning, simulation exercises, reflective practice, and mentoring programmes can play a vital role in strengthening self-efficacy beliefs.

The findings also highlight the importance of incorporating specialized training in inclusive education within teacher education curricula. Courses and workshops focusing on special educational needs, differentiated instruction, classroom accommodations, assistive technologies, and inclusive pedagogical strategies should be regularly organized. Such initiatives will better prepare prospective teachers to address the diverse learning needs of students.

The significant differences observed with respect to gender, locality, and type of management suggest the need for equitable access to quality teacher education experiences across institutions. Particular attention should be given to rural and under-resourced colleges of education by providing adequate infrastructure, technological facilities, professional development opportunities, and exposure to innovative teaching practices.

Educational administrators should encourage partnerships between teacher education institutions and inclusive schools to facilitate experiential learning and practical training. Such collaborations can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom practice, thereby improving teachers' preparedness for inclusive education.

At the policy level, inclusive education should be integrated as a core component of teacher education programmes in accordance with national educational goals and international commitments to equitable education. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of teacher preparation programmes may also help ensure that prospective teachers acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies necessary for implementing inclusive practices effectively.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of strengthening teacher preparation through experiential learning, inclusive pedagogical training, and self-efficacy enhancement. Such measures will contribute significantly to the successful implementation of inclusive education and the realization of quality education for all learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Teacher education institutions should provide regular training programmes and workshops on inclusive education to enhance prospective teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards inclusion.

2. Greater emphasis should be placed on practical teaching experiences, including internships, teaching practice, and school-based activities, to strengthen teacher self-efficacy among prospective teachers.
3. Teacher education programmes should incorporate innovative instructional approaches such as micro-teaching, peer teaching, simulation exercises, and reflective practices to improve teaching competence and confidence.
4. Specialized training on special educational needs, differentiated instruction, classroom accommodations, and assistive technologies should be integrated into teacher preparation programmes.
5. Curriculum planners should ensure that inclusive education is incorporated as a compulsory component of teacher education curricula to prepare future teachers for diverse classroom environments.
6. Adequate resources, training opportunities, and professional support should be provided to rural and under-resourced colleges of education to ensure equitable teacher preparation experiences.
7. Teacher educators should encourage reflective teaching practices and self-assessment strategies that enable prospective teachers to continuously improve their instructional effectiveness.
8. Educational administrators and policymakers should organize awareness programmes and sensitization initiatives to promote positive attitudes towards inclusive education among prospective teachers.
9. Collaborative learning activities, team teaching, and professional learning communities should be encouraged to enhance communication, cooperation, and classroom management skills.
10. Continuous professional development programmes focusing on inclusive pedagogies and teacher effectiveness should be implemented to sustain and strengthen teachers' self-efficacy and positive attitudes towards inclusive education throughout their professional careers.
11. Partnerships between teacher education institutions and inclusive schools should be strengthened to provide prospective teachers with authentic learning experiences in inclusive classroom settings.
12. Regular evaluation and monitoring of teacher education programmes should be undertaken to ensure that prospective teachers develop the competencies required for effective inclusive teaching.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings and limitations of the present study, the following suggestions are proposed for future research:

1. Similar studies may be conducted with larger and more diverse samples drawn from different states and regions of India to enhance the generalizability of the findings.
2. Comparative studies may be undertaken between pre-service and in-service teachers to examine differences in teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education.
3. Future research may investigate the influence of additional variables such as emotional intelligence, teaching aptitude, professional commitment, resilience, digital literacy, and inclusive teaching competencies on teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education.
4. Longitudinal studies may be conducted to examine the development and changes in teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education throughout teacher education programmes and early teaching careers.
5. Experimental studies may be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of specific interventions, workshops, training programmes, and inclusive practicum experiences in enhancing teacher self-efficacy and positive attitudes towards inclusion.

6. Comparative research may be carried out across different types of educational institutions, educational systems, and countries to understand contextual and cultural influences on inclusive education.
7. Qualitative and mixed-method studies may be conducted to gain deeper insights into prospective teachers' experiences, perceptions, challenges, and preparedness for inclusive teaching.
8. Future studies may focus on identifying the barriers and challenges faced by prospective teachers in implementing inclusive educational practices and explore strategies for overcoming such barriers.
9. Research may examine the role of prior contact with learners with disabilities, inclusive classroom exposure, and teacher training experiences as predictors of teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education.
10. Future investigations may explore the mediating or moderating effects of psychological and contextual variables in the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education among prospective teachers. The findings revealed that prospective teachers possess moderate levels of both teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education, indicating that while they demonstrate a reasonable degree of confidence and acceptance of inclusive practices, there remains considerable scope for further development through effective teacher education and training programmes.

The study identified significant differences in teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education with respect to gender, locality, and type of management. Female and urban prospective teachers were found to exhibit comparatively higher levels of self-efficacy and more favourable attitudes towards inclusive education. Furthermore, significant variations were observed among prospective teachers studying in government, aided, and self-financing colleges of education. These findings suggest that demographic and institutional factors play an important role in shaping teachers' professional beliefs and attitudes towards inclusion.

A major contribution of the study is the identification of a significant positive relationship between teacher self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education. The findings indicate that prospective teachers who possess stronger beliefs in their teaching capabilities are more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes towards inclusive educational practices. This relationship highlights the importance of fostering self-efficacy as a means of promoting greater acceptance and implementation of inclusive education.

The study underscores the need for teacher education institutions to provide meaningful learning experiences through inclusive practicum, field-based training, reflective practices, and specialized programmes on inclusive pedagogy. Such initiatives can strengthen both teacher self-efficacy and positive attitudes towards inclusive education among future teachers.

In conclusion, the successful implementation of inclusive education depends not only on educational policies and institutional support but also on the preparedness, confidence, and attitudes of teachers. Therefore, strengthening teacher preparation programmes to nurture competent, confident, and inclusive-minded educators is essential for achieving the goal of equitable and quality education for all learners.

REFERENCES

1. Alnahdi, G. H., & Schwab, S. (2021). Teachers' self-efficacy for teaching in inclusive education: The role of attitudes and training. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 680909. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.680909>
2. Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman.
3. Bala, R. (2021). Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their perceived self-efficacy. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education*, *12*(11), 5611–5618.

4. Forlin, C., Loreman, T., & Sharma, U. (2011). The Sentiments, Attitudes and Concerns about Inclusive Education Revised (SACIE-R) scale. *Exceptionality Education International*, 21(2–3), 50–65.
5. Greiner, C., & Taskinen, P. (2020). Pre-service teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards inclusive education. *Social Psychology of Education*, 23(5), 1121–1142.
6. Ismailos, L., Gallagher, T., Bennett, S., & Li, L. (2019). Pre-service and in-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and self-efficacy. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 23(12), 1240–1256.
7. Metsala, J. L., & Harkins, M. J. (2020). Pre-service teachers' self-efficacy and beliefs about inclusive education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 91, 103114.
8. Savolainen, H., Malinen, O. P., & Schwab, S. (2020). Teacher efficacy predicts attitudes toward inclusive education: A longitudinal study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 96, 103113.
9. Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17(7), 783–805. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X\(01\)00036-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(01)00036-1)
10. Wray, E., & Subban, P. (2022). Factors influencing teacher self-efficacy for inclusive education: A systematic review. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 26(10), 987–1005.
11. Woodcock, S., Sharma, U., Subban, P., & Hitches, E. (2022). Teacher self-efficacy and inclusive classroom practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 115, 103710.
12. Woodcock, S., Gibbs, K., Hitches, E., & Regan, C. (2023). Teachers' beliefs and self-efficacy in inclusive education. *Education Sciences*, 13(3), 280. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13030280>
13. Yada, T., Leskinen, M., Savolainen, H., & Schwab, S. (2022). Meta-analysis of teacher self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusive education. *Educational Research Review*, 37, 100466.