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An Investigation into the Barriers in Implementation of Inclusive Practices in Government Schools of Nalbari Districts in Assam

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Abstract:

Inclusive education is a crucial component of providing quality education for all students, including those with disabilities and from marginalized backgrounds. However, implementing inclusive practices in government schools in the Nalbari district of Assam, India, faces significant challenges. This study examines the barriers in implementing inclusive practices in these schools, drawing from data collected from teachers (N=30) working in Six different Government schools of Ghograpar cluster 1 under Nalbari district.

The study highlights the importance of the need for a systematic and comprehensive approach addressing the challenges which includes the lack of infrastructure, lack of knowledge and attitude of teachers, Physical and Educational resources available in school also to have orientation programmes for students as well as parents and fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for students with diverse needs. Addressing these barriers is essential to ensure equitable and high-quality education for all children in the region. Even to fulfil the National Curriculum Framework for School Education, 2023, National Education Policy 2020 and the Goal 4 (SDG4) of 2030 global agenda for sustainable development, which was adopted by India in 2015, and it seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. And it is a crucial need of the teachers as well as administrators to be professionally sound enough to have awareness and sensitivity towards inclusive practices and have an environment which can foster supportive quality learning environment for all.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Barriers, Government Schools, Teachers, Quality learning

1. Introduction:

Inclusive education is defined as an approach to education that seeks to cater to the needs of all children, regardless of their learning challenges or disabilities, by ensuring equal access to educational resources, support, and opportunities. The right to education for all children is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, with the Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009 further ensuring that children with disabilities have access to free and compulsory education. India has enacted various laws and policies for promotion of inclusive education. This has been reflected in its various policy measures and initiatives since the 1970s, culminating in the enactment of the historic



legislation. Also, there is The RPwD Act which has broadened the scope of disabilities and provided more comprehensive rights and protections for persons with disabilities.

Education plays an important role in every individual life and it is a fundamental right of every individual. It helps not just in changing a person's personality but also in societal change and it is a fundamental right of every individual. To fulfil this fundamental right Inclusive education plays a very crucial role. It stands as a fundamental pillar in the pursuit of equitable and quality education for all. It has also been given importance in the (SDGs) Sustainable development Goals and all together there are 17SDGs, it was the initiative taken by the United Nation it's a global agenda for sustainable development, and the Goal4 specially give importance to "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030 which was also adopted by India in 2015 itself. Even the NEP2020 gave emphasis on the same. Inclusive Education gives emphasizes the right of every child to quality education and full participation in school life, fostering respect for diversity and promoting social cohesion (UNESCO, 2020). However, to make this actually work in reality requires the implementation of inclusive practices, such as differentiated instruction, accessible infrastructure, use of assistive technology, and teacher collaboration. Many rural areas of India still face difficulty in fulfilling the same. To have a successful implantation of Inclusive Education one should give emphasis in the practices which act as guiding path towards Inclusive Education

2. Literature Review:

Most of the studies which has been conducted in Assam are mostly based on attitude of parents and teachers towards Inclusive Education there is a dearth of research especially on practices. [Doley \(2016\)](#) Conducted a study on practices and attitude of elementary school teachers towards Inclusive Education and this study has been conducted in West Golaghat District, Assam. Though it focuses on practices but it mostly talks about the attitude of teachers.

There are various policies and practices related to IE. India has progressively adopted inclusive education through key policies like the Integrated Education for Disabled Children:

IEDC (1974). The scheme, introduced in 1974 by the Government of India under the Ministry of Welfare, was an initiative sponsored centrally and designed for promotion of education among children with disabilities via mainstream schools.

SSA. (2001). The Government of India did introduce it back in 2001. This important project concentrates on ensuring basic schooling is available for everyone. Its primary goal is to freely as



well as compulsorily to educate children aged 6 to 14, as the 86th Amendment directed constitutionally.

Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2009). Launched in 2009 by the Government of India, the IEDSS scheme aids secondary school education for disabled students (Classes IX–XII). It replaced the IEDC scheme after 1974. The scheme provides financial aid toward resources, transport, and teacher training to promote inclusive learning and equal opportunities.

Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2020). The places strong emphasis upon inclusive as well as equitable education for all learners specifically those from marginalized and disadvantaged groups and this includes children with disabilities. It advocates for the removal of barriers since they present obstruction to participation and learning so that every child access quality education within an inclusive environment.

There are various other researches which have been conducted in this area and they are:
Saikia (2016) This study gave emphasis on understanding parents' attitudes towards Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in Kamrup District, Assam, India and it came out to be mostly positive.

Goswami (2022) Conducted a study which aimed to assess elementary school teachers' attitudes specially towards the inclusions of special needs children and also, they identified the challenges and barriers to implementing the same.

The Study of Baro (2017) is also similar to the paper mentioned above. It focused on parents and teachers' attitude towards inclusive education of deprived group of children giving special reference to Baksa district of assam.

Research of Dutta & Sinha (2024) focuses on the Level of Awareness of towards Inclusive Education at Elementary level which is a comparative Study conducted in Tinsukia District of Assam. It aims to investigate the disparities between government and private elementary schools regarding their mostly practices for inclusive education.

Soosai S (2024) their study focuses on the attitude of parents towards Inclusive education in Kamrup Rural and Nagaon District and the results shows a positive attitude specially fathers towards IE and also parents whose age is above 40.

Borah (2024) this study focuses on education of Special Needs children and the Barriers and Opportunities of it. It was conducted in Assam where the author's main objective was to focus on inclusive education status and role of SSA.

3. Research Gap:

There's still a dearth of research which focuses on inclusive practices especially in Assam despite having progressive policies and frameworks advocating for inclusive education, there is still a gap in



implementation of IE at the ground level particularly in rural and underserved areas such as Ghograpar cluster 1 of Nalbari District in Assam.

Ghograpar, like many rural regions of India, faces numerous socio-economic challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, lack of awareness, and limited access to educational resources. While the government has introduced various schemes to promote inclusive practices in schools, there are significant barriers that hinder their effective implementation. These barriers not only limit the participation of children with special needs but also affect the overall quality of education in these schools.

Hence from the review of the literature and observed gaps, we find that inclusive practices are very important for every school and the barriers to it is needed to address specially in an area like Ghograpar. Keeping such phenomena in action, the topic of the research was entitled.

4. The objectives of the Study:

- (i) To identify the barriers that prevent the effective implementation of inclusive practices in government schools of Ghograpar cluster 1 of Nalbari District, Assam
- (ii) To recommend strategies for overcoming the identified barriers

5. Methodology:

The present study aimed to investigate the barriers encountered in the implementation of inclusive practices in government schools of Ghograpar Cluster1 Nalbari District, Assam. The researchers used descriptive qualitative study employing a semi-structured interview schedule to gather data from N=30 government school teachers in the Ghograpar cluster 1. Thematic analysis was conducted and data have been coded mutually, and all the emerging patterns were grouped and revealed into several key themes which has been discussed under findings and discussion giving importance to the effective implementation of inclusive practices.

6. Findings and Discussion:

6.1. Infrastructure Challenge:

From the interview with the teachers, it has been found that one of the most significant barriers to inclusive practices in Goghrapar Cluster 1, Nalbari District is the lack of proper infrastructure. Most government schools in rural areas of Ghograpar are not equipped with the necessary resources, such as accessible classrooms, proper ramps for wheelchair users, and specialized learning tools for children with disabilities. The absence of basic facilities, such as accessible toilets and ramps, significantly hinders the participation of children with physical disabilities. Furthermore, many



schools lack adequate seating arrangements, assistive devices, and materials tailored to students with special needs because of which even the teachers face problem to teach students in proper way as even in some schools the student-teacher ratio is also high.

6.2. Lack of training:

Another major barrier identified is the insufficient training of teachers in inclusive education. While the government has made efforts to train teachers through various programs and workshops, many teachers in Ghograpar Cluster1 district lack the expertise and confidence required to implement inclusive teaching practices effectively. Teachers are often not familiar with differentiated instruction, the use of assistive technology, or strategies for managing diverse classrooms with children having varying abilities. Even most of them have not heard of UDL (Universal design for learning) though some of the teachers attended training programs but those are not practical based rather than just theoretical. Without proper professional development and continuous support, teachers struggle to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

6.3. Cultural and Social Attitude

Cultural attitudes toward disability and inclusion remain a significant challenge in Nalbari District. According to the interview some teachers still hold stigmatizing views regarding children with disabilities, which hampers the acceptance of inclusive education. In rural settings, there is often a lack of awareness about the potential of children with special needs, which leads to isolation and exclusion. This societal stigma often results in low enrollment rates for children with disabilities and a lack of support from the community to implement inclusive practices.

6.4. Resource Constraints:

Limited financial resources for government schools in rural areas make it challenging to provide the necessary support for inclusive education. Many schools struggle with a lack of teaching aids, specialized equipment, and educational materials that are crucial for accommodating children with disabilities. This financial constraint leads to a reliance on traditional teaching methods that are not conducive to inclusive education.

From the teachers of Ghograpar it has been found that they have received limited training related to inclusive educational practices and even from the viewpoints of some teachers it has been found that they even have a very limited knowledge towards Inclusive practices.

7.-Suggestions:

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions can be made to overcome the barriers to inclusive education in Ghograpar Cluster 1 of Nalbari district:



7.1 Improved Infrastructure:

Government schools must invest in creating accessible school environments by providing ramps, accessible toilets, and specialized learning materials. There should also be a focus on ensuring that the physical infrastructure of schools is conducive to the needs of children with disabilities.

7.2 Teacher Training and Professional Development:

Ongoing professional development and training programs for teachers are essential to enhance their skills in inclusive education. These programs should focus on strategies for differentiated instruction, classroom management, and the use of assistive technology. Collaboration with special educators and experts in the field of inclusive education should also be encouraged.

7.3. Community Awareness and Sensitization:

There is a need for comprehensive community awareness programs to address cultural stigmas surrounding disabilities. Engaging local communities, parents, and teachers in sensitization campaigns can help change attitudes and promote greater acceptance of children with special needs.

7.4. Strengthening Policy Implementation:

Government policies aimed at promoting inclusive education should be strictly enforced. Schools must be provided with adequate resources, and monitoring systems should be put in place to ensure that funds allocated for inclusive education are used effectively. Regular assessments and reviews of the implementation process can help identify gaps and ensure accountability.

7.5. Resource Allocation:

Adequate financial resources must be allocated to ensure that schools have the necessary tools and materials for inclusive education. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders could also help bridge the resource gap.

8. Conclusion:

Inclusive education is essential for ensuring that every child, regardless of their physical or learning challenges, has access to quality education. And it will be successful only when teachers will start the practices in schools. Inclusive practices are essential for the success of inclusive education. These practices play the most important role to bring inclusion in life inside the classroom. In Ghograpar cluster 1 Nalbari District, Assam, the barriers to implementing inclusive practices are significant but can also be tackled. By addressing issues related to infrastructure, teacher training, cultural attitudes, and policy implementation, government schools in Nalbari can create a more inclusive educational environment. The successful implementation of inclusive practices will not



only benefit children with disabilities but to all and it will also help in the overall change of the educational system in the district.

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