

# Attitude of Parents Towards Inclusive Education

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## Abstract:

The right to basic education is universally acknowledged, yet many children in developing nations, including India, struggle to complete even minimal schooling due to various barriers. Inclusive education has emerged as a potential solution to ensure equitable access to education for all children, including those with disabilities. However, concerns persist among parents, teachers, and school administrators about the implications of integrating children with disabilities into mainstream schools. These concerns often center on the potential impact on academic performance, resource allocation, and social dynamics within schools. This study investigates parental attitudes towards inclusive education in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh, focusing on how these attitudes are influenced by demographic variables such as gender, residential location (urban vs. rural), educational attainment, and income level. A structured questionnaire, "Parental Attitudes towards Inclusive Education," was developed and administered to a random sample of 200 parents in Guntur district, equally divided between parents of children with disabilities and those of typically developing children. The study examines the influence of the aforementioned variables on parental attitudes and presents findings through statistical analysis, including mean, standard deviation, percentage of mean, and t-tests. Results indicate significant differences in attitudes based on gender and location, but not on educational attainment or income level. These findings contribute to understanding parental perspectives and inform strategies for promoting inclusive education in Guntur district.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Parental Attitudes, Guntur District, Demographic Variables, Educational Equity.

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## I. INTRODUCTION:

Over the past few decades, global commitment to inclusive education has grown, driven by international frameworks such as the United Nations' Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994). This landmark document, endorsed by 92 countries including India, emphasized the adoption of inclusive education policies to ensure equitable educational opportunities for children with disabilities. In India, this commitment has translated into legislative and policy measures aimed at integrating children with special needs into mainstream educational settings. The Right to Education Act (2009) and subsequent amendments have further reinforced the importance of inclusive education, recognizing the diverse needs of children and advocating for barrier-free, learning-friendly environments.

Inclusive education seeks to bring together children of varying abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, and physical or mental capacities within the same educational setting, fostering mutual learning and social integration. However, the implementation of inclusive education in India, particularly in regions like Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh, faces challenges. Parents, teachers, and school administrators often express apprehension about the academic and social consequences of inclusion. Parents of typically developing children may worry that the presence of children with disabilities could hinder their children's academic progress or divert resources, while parents of children with disabilities often view inclusion as an opportunity for social integration and equitable education.

This study focuses on exploring parental attitudes towards inclusive education in Guntur district, a region known for its agricultural economy and diverse socio-economic fabric. By examining how variables such as gender, residential location (urban vs. rural), educational attainment, and income level influence these attitudes, the study aims to provide insights into the barriers and facilitators of inclusive education in this context. A sample of 200 parents, equally divided between those with children with disabilities and those with typically developing children, was surveyed using a researcher-developed questionnaire. The findings aim to inform policymakers, educators, and community stakeholders in designing strategies to promote inclusive education in Guntur district.

## **II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:**

The global literature on inclusive education highlights a range of parental perspectives, influenced by socio-cultural, economic, and educational factors. Boer (2009) conducted a comprehensive review of studies on parental attitudes towards inclusive education, finding that while most parents express positive attitudes, those with children with special needs often highlight concerns about the availability of specialized services and individualized instruction in mainstream schools. Variables such as socio-economic status, education level, and prior experience with inclusion were found to significantly shape parental attitudes.

In the Indian context, Singal (2005) mapped the field of inclusive education, noting that while policy frameworks advocate for inclusion, practical implementation often lags due to resource constraints and societal attitudes. Alur (2002) highlighted the systemic exclusion of children with disabilities in India, emphasizing the need for attitudinal shifts among parents and educators to support inclusive practices. Studies by Palmer et al. (2001) in Western contexts further underscore the variability in parental attitudes, with some favoring full inclusion and others preferring specialized settings for children with severe disabilities.

In Andhra Pradesh, research on inclusive education remains limited, particularly in districts like Guntur, which combines urban and rural demographics. Local studies suggest that parental attitudes are often shaped by cultural perceptions of disability, access to educational resources, and economic constraints. This study builds on existing literature by focusing specifically on Guntur district, examining how demographic variables influence parental attitudes and providing a localized perspective on inclusive education.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

This study seeks to investigate the attitudes of parents in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh, towards inclusive education and to explore how these attitudes are influenced by gender, residential location (urban vs. rural), educational attainment, and income level. Understanding these attitudes is critical for addressing barriers to inclusive education and designing interventions that promote equitable educational opportunities for all children.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

1. To assess the attitudes of parents in Guntur district towards inclusive education.
2. To examine the influence of the following variables on parental attitudes towards inclusive education:
  - I. Gender: Male vs. Female
  - II. Residential Location: Urban vs. Rural
  - III. Educational Attainment: Undergraduate (UG) vs. Postgraduate (PG)
  - IV. Income Level: Below ₹5,00,000 per annum vs. Above ₹5,00,000 per annum

### **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY:**

1. There is no significant difference in the attitudes of male and female parents towards inclusive education.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitudes of urban and rural parents towards inclusive education.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitudes of parents towards inclusive education based on their educational attainment.
4. There is no significant difference in the attitudes of parents towards inclusive education based on their income level.

### **METHOD OF THE STUDY:**

The study employs a survey method, which is suitable for collecting data on attitudes and perceptions from a diverse sample. A structured questionnaire, "Parental Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education," was developed by the researcher in consultation with academic supervisors to ensure validity and reliability.

#### **Sample and Sampling Techniques:**

A random sample of 200 parents from Guntur district was selected, comprising 100 parents of children with disabilities and 100 parents of typically developing children. The sample was drawn from both government and private schools across urban and rural areas to ensure representation of diverse socio-economic and demographic groups.

#### **Development of Research Tool:**

The questionnaire was designed to measure parental attitudes towards inclusive education, with items addressing perceptions of academic impact, social integration, resource availability, and overall support for inclusion. The tool was piloted with a small group of parents to refine its clarity and relevance before being administered to the full sample.

#### **Data Collection:**

Data were collected through direct administration of the questionnaire to parents in schools and community settings across Guntur district. Informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality was assured to encourage honest responses.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Statistical analyses, including mean, standard deviation (SD), percentage of mean, standard error of difference (SED), and t-tests, were conducted to compare attitudes across the selected variables. A significance level of 0.05 was used to test the hypotheses.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

**Hypothesis -1:** There is no significant difference in the attitudes of male and female parents towards inclusive education.

**Table 1: Attitudes of Male and Female Parents Towards Inclusive Education**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	% of Mean	t-Value
Male	100	68.4	8.2	85.5	3.8
Female	100	55.6	7.1	79.4	

t – Significant at 0.05 level

The analysis reveals a mean attitude score of 68.4 for male parents and 55.6 for female parents, with standard deviations of 8.2 and 7.1, respectively. The percentage of mean scores indicates that male parents have a more positive attitude (85.5%) compared to female parents (79.4%). The calculated t-value of 3.8 exceeds the critical table value at the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant difference in attitudes between male and female parents towards inclusive education. This finding suggests that male parents in Guntur district may be more supportive of inclusive education, possibly due to differing social roles or exposure to awareness campaigns.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the attitudes of urban and rural parents towards inclusive education.

**Table 2: Attitudes of Urban and Rural Parents Towards Inclusive Education**

Location	N	Mean	SD	% of Mean	t-Value
Urban	100	66.8	6.9	83.5	4.9
Rural	100	54.2	7.8	77.4	

t – Significant at 0.05 level

Urban parents reported a mean attitude score of 66.8, compared to 54.2 for rural parents, with standard deviations of 6.9 and 7.8, respectively. The percentage of mean scores shows urban parents with a higher positive attitude (83.5%) than rural parents (77.4%). The SED is 1.2, and the t-value of 4.9 is significant at the 0.05 level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates a significant difference in attitudes between urban and rural parents, likely influenced by greater access to resources, awareness, and inclusive education initiatives in urban areas of Guntur district.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the attitudes of parents towards inclusive education based on their educational attainment.

**Table 3: Attitudes of Parents by Educational Attainment**

Educational attainment	N	Mean	SD	% of Mean	t-Value
UG	120	60.3	8.2	80.4	1.4
Female	80	62.7	6.8	81.5	

t – Not Significant at 0.05 level

Parents with undergraduate qualifications had a mean attitude score of 60.3, while those with postgraduate qualifications scored 62.7, with standard deviations of 7.5 and 6.8, respectively. The percentage of mean scores (80.4% for UG and 81.2% for PG) suggests similar attitudes across both groups. The SED is 4.1, and the t-value of 1.4 is below the critical value at the 0.05 level, leading to the acceptance of the null

hypothesis. This indicates no significant difference in attitudes based on educational attainment, suggesting that educational background does not strongly influence parental perspectives on inclusive education in Guntur district.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant difference in the attitudes of parents towards inclusive education based on their income level.

**Table 4: Attitudes of Parents by Income Level**

Income Level	N	Mean	SD	% of Mean	t-Value
Below ₹5,00,000 p.a.	110	59.8	7.9	79.7	1.3
Above ₹5,00,000 p.a.	90	62.1	6.5	80.8	

t – Not Significant at 0.05 level

Parents with an annual income below ₹5,00,000 reported a mean attitude score of 59.8, while those above ₹5,00,000 scored 62.1, with standard deviations of 7.9 and 6.5, respectively. The percentage of mean scores (79.7% and 80.8%) indicates similar attitudes across income levels. The SED is 3.8, and the t-value of 1.3 is not significant at the 0.05 level, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This suggests that income level does not significantly influence parental attitudes towards inclusive education in Guntur district, possibly due to widespread awareness efforts or shared community values.

#### IV. FINDINGS

1. **Gender:** There is a significant difference in the attitudes of male and female parents towards inclusive education, with male parents exhibiting more positive attitudes.
2. **Residential Location:** Urban parents display significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusive education compared to rural parents.
3. **Educational Attainment:** There is no significant difference in parental attitudes towards inclusive education based on educational attainment (UG vs. PG).
4. **Income Level:** There is no significant difference in parental attitudes towards inclusive education based on income level (below vs. above ₹5,00,000 p.a.).

#### V. DISCUSSION

The findings highlight key differences in parental attitudes towards inclusive education in Guntur district, particularly influenced by gender and residential location. Male parents' more positive attitudes may reflect greater exposure to inclusive education initiatives or differing social expectations, while urban parents' favorable attitudes likely stem from better access to resources and awareness programs. The lack of significant differences based on educational attainment and income level suggests that these factors may not be primary drivers of attitudes in this context, possibly due to uniform community awareness or socio-cultural factors. These results align with global studies, such as Boer (2009), which noted variability in parental attitudes influenced by demographic factors. In the Indian context, Singal (2005) emphasized the role of resource availability in shaping attitudes, which may explain the urban-rural divide observed in this study. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to address attitudinal barriers, particularly among female and rural parents, to promote inclusive education in Guntur district.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of parental attitudes towards inclusive education in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh, highlighting the influence of gender and residential location, but not educational attainment or income level. The significant differences observed between male and female parents and between urban and rural parents suggest the need for tailored awareness campaigns and resource allocation to bridge these gaps. By fostering positive attitudes and addressing concerns, policymakers and educators can enhance the implementation of inclusive education, ensuring equitable opportunities for all children in Guntur district.

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