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Research Paper

Influence of Special Teachers' Attitudes and Competencies on Pedagogical Practices in Inclusive Education, Manipur

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ABSTRACT

This study critically examines how special teachers' attitudes and competencies affect their pedagogical practices in inclusive education in Manipur, a region marked by persistent implementation gaps and structural limitations. Using a census survey of 250 special educators, two self-developed standardised instruments like Special Teachers' Competency Scale (STCS), the Special Teachers' Practice Test (STPT), and the Multidimensional Attitude towards Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES) by Mahat (2008), assessed cognitive, affective, and behavioural attitudes toward inclusion, various professional skills, and inclusive teaching practices. Descriptive analyses revealed that teachers generally held positive attitudes, with behavioural attitudes (M = 30.60, SD = 5.56) exceeding cognitive attitudes (M = 25.65, SD = 4.62). Competency profiles varied, with the highest mean scores in professional ethics (M = 125.84, SD = 8.02) and the lowest in communication skills (M = 15.15, SD = 2.14). Pedagogical practices were moderate overall (M = 44.13, SD = 6.73), with the greatest emphasis on technology integration (M = 8.67, SD = 3.46). Friedman tests indicated significant differences across attitude domains (χ^2 (3) = 611.40, $p<.001$), competency domains (χ^2 (9) = 2215.56, $p<.001$), and practice dimensions ($\chi^2(5)=781.44$, $p<.001$). However, regression analyses found that teachers' overall attitude and competency did not significantly predict their inclusive practices ($R^2 = .007$, $p = .412$), suggesting that contextual factors play a larger role. The findings show that readiness for inclusion varies across domains, with systemic and contextual barriers in Manipur outweighing individual preparedness. It highlights the need for targeted policy reforms and training that focus on strengthening institutions and providing adequate resources to support effective and inclusive practice.

Keywords: *Attitude, Competence, Inclusive education, Manipur, Pedagogical practices, Special teachers*

The global movement toward inclusive education (IE) is fundamentally grounded in a rights-based approach, mandating that all children, including those with disabilities, must have equitable access to quality learning environments (Wangkheirakpam &

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Singh, 2017; Emam et al., 2025). This imperative is globally formalised by international instruments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006) and the reinforcement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4, 2015), which together call for systemic reforms to accommodate learners' diversity (United Nations, 2006; UNESCO, 2015). In line with these global commitments, India has established a strong national policy framework for inclusion (Sharma & Das, 2015). Key legislation includes the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) of 2009, which supports inclusive schools, and the landmark Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act of 2016, which explicitly guarantees children with disabilities the right to inclusive education and requires the development of Individualised Education Plans (IEPs) (Government of India, 2016; Government of India, 2009). Further, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to transform the system by integrating inclusive pedagogy into all teacher training programs (Government of India, 2020).

The practical success of these ambitious policy directives hinges critically on the disposition and capabilities of special educators, also referred to as special teachers (Das et al., 2013). These specialised professionals, whose training is regulated by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act (1992), are essential for translating policy into effective classroom practices by adapting curriculum, managing diverse classrooms, and executing mandated IEPs (Government of India, 1992; Wangkheirakpam & Singh, 2017). However, in contexts like Manipur, this vision faces significant implementation hurdles, resulting in a pronounced "quality paradox" (Singh et al., 2025). Empirical evidence from the region reveals serious systemic failures, including a lack of sufficient special education personnel and the near-total absence of functioning IEPs in surveyed inclusive schools (Wangkheirakpam & Singh, 2017; Dutta, 2021). Furthermore, pervasive negative attitudes and concerns over inadequate training among local educators impede inclusion (Singh, 2018; Tiwari, 2019), contributing to lower academic performance for children with special needs (Das et al., 2013).

Given these persistent gaps, it becomes crucial to evaluate the professional readiness of special teachers in Manipur systematically, examining their attitudes toward inclusion (cognitive beliefs, affective responses, and behavioural intentions), their competencies (skills and knowledge in pedagogy and collaboration), and their actual pedagogical practices (Wilson et al., 2019; Emam et al., 2025). Theory suggests that positive attitudes and high competency levels are critical preconditions for effective inclusive instruction (Pit-Ten Cate et al., 2018; Keppens et al., 2021). This study aims to fill the existing empirical gap by assessing the attitudinal, competency, and practice profiles of special teachers in Manipur and critically analysing the extent to which individual attitude and competencies influence their inclusive pedagogical behaviours. The findings will provide a necessary evidence base to inform targeted policy and professional development strategies designed to strengthen Manipur's inclusive education system (Kumar, 2021).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Inclusive education is a globally endorsed approach rooted in educational equity, aiming to ensure that learners with disabilities access to quality education in mainstream settings. International frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasise inclusive and equitable education systems (CRPD, 2006). In India, this commitment is reflected in national policies, including the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009), the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), and the National Education Policy (2020), all of which

underscore teachers' roles in effective implementation (Government of India, 2016; Government of India, 2020). Research highlights that successful inclusion depends largely on teachers' attitudes, competencies, and pedagogical practices, and understanding their interactions is vital, particularly in contexts such as India and Manipur.

Teacher attitudes toward inclusive education are widely recognised as multidimensional, comprising cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. The cognitive dimension reflects teachers' beliefs about the feasibility and benefits of inclusion, while the affective dimension involves emotional responses such as empathy or anxiety toward learners with disabilities. The behavioural dimension relates to teachers' intentions and perceived control over inclusive practices. Research indicates that cognitive beliefs and perceived behavioural control significantly predict teachers' inclusive behaviours and classroom adaptations (Wilson et al., 2019). Positive affective orientations facilitate inclusive practice, whereas negative emotions or fear of classroom challenges often act as barriers (Pit-Ten Cate et al., 2018). Overall, teacher attitude is considered one of the most influential determinants of successful inclusion (Duka & Haxhihyseni, 2022; Tiwari, 2019). While international studies suggest that special educators generally hold more positive attitudes than general teachers, evidence from India remains limited. Studies from Manipur reveal that many teachers display neutral attitudes, acknowledging the moral value of inclusion but expressing concerns about inadequate training and resources (Singh, 2018).

Teacher competencies constitute another critical factor in inclusive education. Effective inclusion requires a broad set of skills, including differentiated instruction, classroom management, assessment adaptation, collaboration, and emotional competence (Majoko, 2019; Emam et al., 2025). Emotional competence, encompassing empathy, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills, is particularly vital for sustaining inclusive interactions and partnerships with families and colleagues (Calandri et al., 2025). However, competence is shaped by institutional contexts; schools that effectively implement inclusive policies tend to enhance teachers' professional agency and skills (Emam et al., 2025). In India, literature consistently reports shortcomings in teacher preparation programmes, with many in-service teachers feeling underprepared for inclusive classrooms and lacking practical experience (Das et al., 2013; Kumar, 2021).

Pedagogical practices in inclusive classrooms encompass differentiated instruction, co-teaching, scaffolding, assistive technology, and learner support strategies. Studies show that teachers with positive beliefs about inclusion are more likely to employ adaptive instructional practices and collaborate with colleagues (Keppens et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2019). Collaboration between special and mainstream teachers has been identified as a key factor in enhancing the quality and consistency of inclusive practices (Emam et al., 2025). In India, however, empirical evidence on actual classroom practices is scarce, with reports indicating uneven implementation and limited instructional differentiation, particularly in resource-constrained regions (Kumar, 2021).

Ultimately, the literature suggests that teachers' attitudes, competencies, and pedagogical practices are interrelated. Positive attitudes motivate inclusive efforts, competencies provide the necessary skills, and supportive institutional conditions enable their practical application (Sharma & Das, 2015; Ahsan et al., 2012; Alamalky et al., 2023; Emam et al., 2025). The lack of context-specific empirical studies in India, particularly in Manipur, underscores the

need for research examining these variables together, which the present study seeks to address.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The current research utilised the descriptive survey method, which was selected for its suitability in systematically examining the existing conditions and interrelationships among the variables: special teachers' competence, pedagogical practices, and attitudes toward inclusive education in Manipur.

Population and Sample

The study employed a census survey approach, encompassing the entire study population of 250 special teachers. These teachers were employed in 23 recognised special institutions spanning 11 districts of Manipur between 2021 and 2024. The sample composition included 38 male teachers (15.2%) and 212 female teachers (84.8%).

Instruments and Data Analysis

Data were collected using three standardised instruments:

i. The self-developed ***Special Teachers' Competence Scale (STCS)*** demonstrated an acceptable reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.767**.**
ii. The self-developed ***Special Teachers' Practice Test (STPT),*** which showed high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.897**.**
iii. The ***Multidimensional Attitude towards Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES)*** by Mahat (2008), which also reported high reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.837**.**

Due to the violation of the assumption of normality for key variables, as indicated by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests ($p = .000$), non-parametric statistics were primarily utilised for inferential analysis. The analysis process included Descriptive Statistics, the Friedman Test, Correlation, and Regression Analysis using SPSS (Version 2021).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the overall attitudes of Special Teachers across cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains toward inclusive education.
2. To analyse the overall competency of teachers across various skills in inclusive education.
3. To analyse the overall pedagogical practices of special teachers towards inclusive education.
4. To examine the overall significant influence of teachers' competencies and attitudes on pedagogical practices of teachers in inclusive education settings.

Hypothesis

The study tested the following four null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant level of overall attitude among special teachers across the cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains toward inclusive education.
2. There is no significant level of overall competency among teachers across various skills related to inclusive education.
3. There is no significant level of overall pedagogical practices adopted by special teachers toward inclusive education.

4. Teachers' competencies and attitudes do not have a significant influence on their pedagogical practices in inclusive education settings.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Objective 1: To examine the overall attitudes of Special Teachers across cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains toward inclusive education.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Mean Rank

Descriptive Statistics						**Mean Rank**
Domain	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean Rank**
Cognitive	250	25.6520	4.61738	16.00	35.00	1.56
Affective	250	27.3040	6.01501	14.00	36.00	1.69
Behaviourial	250	30.6000	5.55585	24.00	36.00	2.75
Grand Total	**250**	**83.5560**	**13.45970**	**67.00**	**107.00**	**4.00**

Table 1 depicts the descriptive statistics and mean ranks of special teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education across cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains. The behavioural domain recorded the highest mean score (M = 30.60, SD = 5.56) and mean rank (2.75), indicating that special teachers demonstrate stronger action-oriented attitudes toward inclusive practices. The affective domain showed a moderate mean score (M = 27.30, SD = 6.02) with a mean rank of 1.69, reflecting generally positive emotional acceptance of inclusive education. The cognitive domain obtained the lowest mean score (M = 25.65, SD = 4.62) and mean rank (1.56), suggesting comparatively lower levels of conceptual understanding of inclusive education. The total mean score (M = 83.56, SD = 13.46) indicates an overall positive attitude among special teachers toward inclusive education, with greater emphasis on behavioural engagement than cognitive preparedness.

Table 2: Friedman's Test Statistics[a]

Test Statistics[a]	
N	250
Chi-Square	611.396
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. Friedman Test	

Table 2 presents the results of Friedman's Test conducted to examine differences in special teachers' attitudes across cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains. The test, applied to a sample of 250 teachers, yielded a chi-square value of 611.396 with 3 degrees of freedom, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.000$). This significant result indicates that the attitudes of special education teachers toward inclusive education differ substantially across the three domains. Accordingly, the null hypothesis, stating that there is no significant difference in overall attitude across the domains, is rejected. The findings confirm that behavioural attitudes are significantly stronger compared to cognitive and affective attitudes, highlighting domain-specific variations in teachers' attitudes toward inclusion.

Objective 2: To analyse the overall competency of teachers across various skills in inclusive education.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Mean Rank

Descriptive Statistics						**Rank**
Skills/Competencies	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean Rank**
Instructional Adaptability	250	18.35	1.201	16	20	2.34
Professional Collaboration	250	18.55	1.588	15	20	2.71
Effective Communication	250	15.15	2.139	12	19	1.04
Demonstrating Empathy and Compassion	250	32.60	3.043	27	35	6.22
Student Assessment and Evaluation	250	36.48	4.517	29	46	6.78
Applying Pedagogical Knowledge	250	44.86	4.910	38	52	8.00
Active Listening and Classroom Organisation	250	23.30	1.755	20	25	4.45
Exhibiting Patience and Preservation	250	22.78	2.547	19	25	4.46
Upholding Professional Ethics and Responsibility	250	125.84	8.019	108	135	9.00
Grand Total	**250**	**344.52**	**24.145**	**298**	**382**	**10.00**

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics and mean ranks of teachers' competencies across various skills related to inclusive education. The results indicate notable variation in competency levels among teachers. *Upholding Professional Ethics and Responsibility* recorded the highest mean score (M = 125.84, SD = 8.02) and the highest mean rank (9.00), suggesting that teachers demonstrate strong ethical awareness and professional commitment in inclusive classrooms. *Applying Pedagogical Knowledge* also showed a high level of competency (M = 44.86, SD = 4.91; mean rank = 8.00), followed by *Student Assessment and Evaluation* (M = 36.48, SD = 4.52; mean rank = 6.78) and *Demonstrating Empathy and Compassion* (M = 32.60, SD = 3.04; mean rank = 6.22). In contrast, *Effective Communication* recorded the lowest mean score (M = 15.15, SD = 2.14) and mean rank (1.04), indicating a relative deficiency in communication skills. The total mean score (M = 344.52, SD = 24.15) reflects an overall moderate to high level of competency among teachers, though domain-specific gaps remain.

Table 4: Friedman's Test Statistics[a]

Test Statistics[a]	
N	250
Chi-Square	2215.563
df	9
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. Friedman Test	

To test the null hypothesis, Friedman's Test was employed, and the results are presented in **Table 4**. The obtained chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 2215.563$, df = 9) was tatistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < .001$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding confirms that teachers' competencies differ significantly across skill domains, underscoring the need for targeted professional development in weaker areas such as communication and instructional adaptability.

Objective 3: To analyse the overall pedagogical practices of special teachers towards inclusive education.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics and Mean Rank

Descriptive Statistics						**Rank**
Sub-scales	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean Rank**
Creating Learning and Learner Support	250	7.2160	2.77708	2.00	13.00	3.52
Teaching-Learning Process	250	4.8640	1.42746	1.00	8.00	1.69
Assessment, Screening and Adaptation	250	5.8200	1.50354	2.00	9.00	2.69
Technology Integration in Teaching	250	8.6720	3.46242	3.00	13.00	3.99
Professional and Collaboration	250	6.5960	1.47563	2.00	9.00	3.11
Overall Teachers' Practices	**250**	**44.13**	**6.728**	**26**	**57**	**6.00**

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics and mean ranks of pedagogical practices adopted by special teachers toward inclusive education. Among the practice dimensions, *Technology Integration in Teaching* recorded the highest mean score (M = 8.67, SD = 3.46) and mean rank (3.99), indicating relatively greater use of assistive and instructional technologies in inclusive classrooms. This was followed by *Creating Learning and Learner Support* (M = 7.22, SD = 2.78; mean rank = 3.52) and *Professional and Collaborative Practices (M = 6.60, SD = 1.48; mean rank = 3.11), reflecting teachers' efforts in providing supportive learning environments and fostering* collaborative engagement. In contrast, the *Teaching–Learning Process* recorded the lowest mean score (M = 4.86, SD = 1.43; mean rank = 1.69), suggesting comparatively limited differentiation in instructional delivery. The overall teachers' practices score (M = 44.13, SD = 6.73) indicates a moderate level of pedagogical practice in support of inclusive education.

Table 6: Friedman's Test Statistics

Test Statistics[a]	
N	250
Chi-Square	781.441
df	5
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. Friedman Test	

Table 6 presents the results of Friedman's Test conducted to examine differences in pedagogical practices adopted by special teachers toward inclusive education. The test, applied to a sample of 250 teachers, yielded a chi-square value of 781.441 with 5 degrees of freedom, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level (p = .000). This significant result indicates that the levels of pedagogical practices differ substantially across the identified dimensions. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant level of overall pedagogical practices adopted by special teachers toward inclusive education is rejected. The findings confirm that pedagogical practices are unevenly implemented, emphasising the need to strengthen core teaching and learning processes to enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education.

Objective 4: To examine the overall significant influence of teachers' competencies and attitudes on pedagogical practices of teachers in inclusive education settings.

Table 7: Model Summary Regression Analysis

Model Summary									
Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	**Change Statistics**				
					R Square Change	**F Change**	**df1**	**df2**	**Sig. F Change**
1	.085[a]	.007	-.001	6.731	.007	.889	2	247	.412
a. Predictors: (Constant), Overall Attitude of Teachers, Overall Competency of Teachers									

Table 7 presents the model summary of the regression analysis examining the influence of teachers' overall competency and overall attitude on their pedagogical practices in inclusive education settings. The correlation coefficient (R = .085) indicates a very weak relationship between the predictor variables and pedagogical practices. The R^2 value (.007) indicates that only 0.7% of the variance in overall teachers' pedagogical practices is explained by the combined effect of their competencies and attitudes. The adjusted R^2 value (–.001) further suggests that the model has negligible explanatory power. Additionally, the change statistics indicate that the model is not statistically significant (F = 0.889, p = 0.412). This indicates that the inclusion of teachers' competencies and attitudes does not significantly improve the predictions of pedagogical practices. Overall, the regression model fails to establish a meaningful predictive relationship between the independent variables and pedagogical practices in inclusive education.

Table 8: Co-efficients[a]

Co-efficients[a]						
Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	52.996	6.700		7.910	.000
	Overall Competency of Teachers	-.022	.018	-.081	-1.273	.204
	Overall Attitude of Teachers	-.013	.032	-.027	-.423	.673
a. Dependent Variable: Overall Teachers' Practices						

Table 8 shows the regression coefficients for overall competency and overall attitude of teachers in predicting pedagogical practices. The constant value (B = 52.996, p = .000) indicates the baseline level of pedagogical practices when the predictor variables are held constant. The coefficient for overall teacher competency (B = – 0.022, β = – 0.081, t = – 1.273, p = 0.204) reveals a negative but statistically non-significant influence on pedagogical practices. Similarly, the coefficient for the overall attitude of teachers (B = – 0.013, β = – 0.027, t = – 0.423, p = 0.673) indicates a very weak and non-significant effect. Since both predictors have p-values greater than 0.05, neither teachers' competencies nor attitudes significantly influence pedagogical practices. Thus, the results do not support the predictive role of these variables in inclusive education settings.

Table 9: ANOVA[a]

ANOVA[a]						
Model		**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	Regression	80.547	2	40.273	.889	.412[b]
	Residual	11189.357	247	45.301		
	Total	11269.904	249			
a. Dependent Variable: Overall Teachers' Practices						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Overall Attitude of Teachers, Overall Competency of Teachers						

Table 9 presents the ANOVA results assessing the overall significance of the regression model predicting teachers' pedagogical practices. The regression sum of squares (SS = 80.547) is substantially smaller than the residual sum of squares (SS = 11189.357), indicating that most of the variation in pedagogical practices remains unexplained by the model. The obtained F-value (F = .889) is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level (p = .412). This confirms that the regression model as a whole is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that teachers' competencies and attitudes do not have a significant influence on their pedagogical practices in inclusive education settings is accepted**.** This suggests that other contextual or institutional factors, such as institutional support, availability of resources, training opportunities, or classroom context, may play a more influential role in shaping pedagogical practices than individual attitudes or competencies alone.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study present a nuanced understanding of special teachers' readiness for inclusive education in Manipur, highlighting strong professional intent alongside notable instructional and systemic limitations. Overall, teachers demonstrated positive attitudes toward inclusion, with the highest mean score recorded in the behavioural domain (M = 30.60), indicating a strong willingness to engage in inclusive practices. This supports prior evidence that special educators generally endorse inclusive ideals (Ahsan et al., 2012; Alamalky et al., 2023). However, the comparatively lower cognitive attitude score (M = 25.65) suggests gaps in conceptual understanding of inclusive education, echoing earlier findings from India that teachers often support inclusion in principle but lack theoretical clarity (Sharma & Das, 2015; Kumar, 2021). Similar disparities across attitudinal domains have been reported internationally (Wilson et al., 2019).

Analysis of teachers' competencies revealed both strengths and critical weaknesses. Teachers scored highest in Professional Ethics and Responsibility (Mean Rank = 9.00) and

Applying Pedagogical Knowledge (Mean Rank = 8.00), reflecting strong professional commitment and subject-related preparedness. However, Effective Communication recorded the lowest mean rank (1.04), indicating a significant deficit. This is concerning, as communication and collaboration are central to inclusive practice, particularly for coordinating with general educators, families, and support professionals (Majoko, 2019; Emam et al., 2025). Similar critiques have been raised in Indian literature, which notes that teacher preparation programmes often underemphasise practical communication and adaptive skills (Das et al., 2013; Kumar, 2021). The statistically significant variation across competency domains further suggests the need for targeted professional development interventions (Pit-Ten Cate et al., 2018).

Pedagogical practices were found to be moderate overall, with notable variation across dimensions. Teachers reported the highest use of Technology Integration (Mean Rank = 3.99), indicating increasing reliance on assistive and digital tools, consistent with global trends in inclusive education (Subban, 2016). In contrast, the Teaching–Learning Process dimension recorded the lowest mean rank (1.69), signalling limited instructional differentiation. This weakness undermines the core principle of inclusive pedagogy, which requires adapting instruction to meet the individual needs of learners. The finding resonates with Indian studies reporting uneven implementation of inclusive practices and limited use of Individualised Education Plans (Wangkheirakpam & Singh, 2017; Dutta, 2021).

Most critically, regression analysis revealed that teachers' overall attitudes and competencies did not significantly predict their pedagogical practices ($R^2 = 0.007$, $p = 0.412$). This contrasts with international research that identifies attitudes and self-efficacy as significant predictors of inclusive teaching (Keppens et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2019). The model's negligible explanatory power suggests that systemic barriers, such as inadequate resources, weak institutional support, and limited policy enforcement, overwhelm individual readiness and resilience. This interpretation aligns with Emam et al. (2025), who emphasise the mediating role of institutional contexts, and with Indian studies highlighting that without enabling conditions, even well-intentioned teachers struggle to enact inclusive practices (Sharma & Das, 2015; Kumar, 2021). Overall, the findings suggest that strengthening inclusive education in Manipur requires addressing systemic constraints, as well as enhancing teacher preparation.

Recommendations

Based on the study's significant findings concerning the attitudinal gap, institutional disparity, and competency deficits, the following multi-tiered recommendations are essential for strengthening inclusive education in Manipur:

A. ***Enforce Individualised Education Program (IEP) Implementation:*** Given the failure to meet the legal mandate for IEPs under the RPWD Act (2016), a mandatory, auditable system for IEP development and review must be established. Postgraduate teachers who demonstrate stronger proficiency in Screening and assignment adaptation should be leveraged to lead diagnostic and IEP support teams. Institutional funding should be conditional upon evidence of IEP compliance.

B. ***Equalise Institutional Resources and Support:*** To bridge the significant gap between private and government schools ($p = .000$), structural resource equalisation policies must be implemented. This includes securing dedicated funding for barrier-free infrastructure, providing specialised resource rooms, and ensuring equitable access to assistive technology (AT) and Teaching-Learning Materials (TLMs) in all

government special institutions. Special educators should be posted directly in inclusive schools to maximise classroom impact.

C. ***Bridge the Competence–Attitude Gap through Affective-Cognitive Training:*** RCI-affiliated training programs must be reformed to integrate philosophical and rights-based foundations of IE, emphasising why inclusion is necessary, not just how to implement it. Curricula should include explicit affective modules focused on empathy-building, self-reflection, and managing emotional commitment to sustain positive attitudes over time, especially since the Cognitive and Affective domains ranked lowest.

D. ***Target Critical Skill Deficits:*** Continuous Professional Development (CPD) must prioritise the two lowest-ranked competencies: Effective Communication and Instructional Adaptability. Training should focus on multimodal communication techniques, building parent–teacher partnerships, and intensive workshops on differentiated instruction strategies to enhance instructional flexibility.

E. ***Leverage Generational and Gender Strengths:*** Formal mentorship programs should be established to pair early-career teachers (high in communication and empathy, $p = .000$, $p = .019$) with mid-career and veteran teachers (high in ethical responsibility and experience). Furthermore, male teachers should receive targeted development in the relational and collaborative practices that female teachers excel in (Collaboration, $p = .016$; Assessment, $p = .031$).

CONCLUSION

This study provided a systematic assessment of the professional profile of special teachers in Manipur. While special teachers demonstrate an overall positive, behaviourally driven attitude and possess specific critical competencies (especially in professional ethics and core knowledge), these factors do not significantly influence the pedagogical practices adopted in inclusive settings. The acceptance of the final null hypothesis highlights a critical disconnect: individual readiness is currently subordinate to systemic and contextual constraints**.** To advance inclusive education in Manipur, policy efforts must move beyond assessing individual qualities and prioritise addressing the pervasive implementation gap by institutionalising structural supports, thereby creating an environment where teacher commitment and competence can finally translate into sustained, quality pedagogical practices.

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