



# Inclusive Educational Practices in North-East India: An Exploratory Case Study in Nagaland

**Dr. Anu G. S.,**

Associate Professor & Principal Investigator of ICSSR MRP, Department of Education, Nagaland  
University (A Central University), Kohima Campus, Nagaland

## *Abstract*

*This article highlights the inclusive educational practices prevailing in one of the multi-cultural and multi-tribal northeast states, namely Nagaland. The entire derivatives of the paper and the arguments opined were based on the primary data collected with the help of an institutional case study at the Government Primary School in Lerie, which was located in the heart of the capital of Nagaland called Kohima. The findings of the study revealed that there is a disconnect between the desire for inclusive education & learning and the need for urgent teacher training, improved educational resources, and educational reforms to motivate teachers and implement inclusive educational practices in schools located in different sectors of northeast Indian states.*

**Keywords:** *Inclusive Education, North-East India, Exploratory Case study, Nagaland*

## **1.0 Introduction**

An education imparts to people the requirement to think seriously about issues, resolve them and also to pay a fair amount of attention to culture (Verger & Bonal, 2011). The Indian education and learning system is based upon the idea that all students must have equivalent discovering possibilities (*Right To Education Act*, 2009). In Nagaland which has among the greatest native practices in the nation, there has been a current fad in the direction of inclusive education (Akangjungla, 2023). The basis for equivalent accessibility to education and learning is inclusive education which intends to produce a discovering setting that allows learners with as well as without special needs to learn together in an inclusive environment (Lindsay, 2003). This research has been intended to better understand the current method of education in Nagaland culture, along with the challenges relating to it, in addition to developing feasible ways to ensure future integration of diverse learners to an effective level. Since the region has minimal facilities, a lack of teacher training, and a variety of social backgrounds among the pupils, it is difficult to give all learners an equal opportunity to gain a quality education in this area because several obstacles prevent equal academic opportunities (NBSE, 2024; Suresh Kumar et al., 2021). Nagaland has executed its requirements for inclusive education and learning under the (*Right To Education Act*, 2009) regardless of the obstacles (Nagaland Education Board, 2010; Nagaland Post, 2023). To ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education and learning programs, it is important to identify where the best areas for improvement can be found so that the implementation of the program can

go smoothly, along with how the current status of its implementation can be enhanced in the future. The purpose of this study was to analyze the current state of inclusive education and learning at a government primary school in Lerie, Kohima, Nagaland, India. This study was conducted to understand the present condition of inclusive education and learning in this school. The researcher used a qualitative study approach for much better comprehend the opportunities as well as obstacles associated with implementing inclusive education and learning programs. The outcomes of the study not only provide important insights into integration methods in Northeast India, but they also contribute to an ongoing conversation regarding inclusive education and learning methods that are going on in the region as well as contribute to the foregrounding of new approaches to inclusion and learning with cultural diversity.

## 1.2. Reflections of Literature Review on Inclusive Education

It is commonly identified that inclusive education describes positioning learners with as well as those without special needs in the same class (Haug, 2017). In inclusive education, physical presence is a good indicator of learning quality (Finkelstein et al., 2021) as well as a good metric of student outcomes in the classroom when compared to a segregated special education setting (Stiefel et al., 2017). There are several aspects to these research studies that are useful, but it is very difficult to determine what elements add to learners' achievement since they do not give adequate information about class context educational techniques coupled with unique ways to teach and learn (Starks & Reich, 2023). A single variable-- physical positioning – of special children in classrooms has been regularly looked into in inclusive education causing a void in studies that methodically take a look at just how contextual aspects affect the application of high-quality inclusive instructional techniques (Singal, 2019). Nonetheless comprehending the contextual elements that can affect the application of top-quality inclusive academic methods is essential for establishing efficient methods as well as treatments to effectively carry out special children incorporation in the classrooms. Moreover, it gives education and learning stakeholders, such as parents, educators and administrators, the capability of tailoring their educational approach to meet the particular needs of different learners and also promote inclusive classes that will produce positive outcomes for all students (Mbua, 2023). A research study, conducted by researchers in the field of education, may also provide useful insight that contributes to the continued growth of inclusive classes, as it considers the mentor context, the teaching methods, and the unique teaching approaches provided by institutions to special children. In an inclusive education context, it can be difficult to analyze a child's learning problems in the early years of their development. Although theoretical frameworks and policy definitions emphasize inclusive practices and processes (UNESCO, 1994), the experiences of children in mixed classrooms often differ from these inclusive ideals (Cruz et al., 2024). A solitary variable such as the physical positioning of children with diverse needs in an all-inclusive class restricts our understanding of just how to carry out top-quality inclusive academic techniques in very early childhood education for diverse students. Preferably there is extremely little research study on effective inclusive class particularly in the Indian context. Better research studies must concentrate on creating extra detail and an inclusive strategy for early childhood education setups. Such a research study might take a look at the efficiency of different methods, such as co-teaching along with peer tutoring, which has been revealed to advertise the growth of

social abilities in all learners no matter their varied requirements (Fuchs et al., 2023). India's dedication to inclusive education and learning is shown in its plan structure which consists of the (*Right To Education Act*, 2009) as well (RPWD Act, 2016). The National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) intends to reinforce India's dedication to inclusive education and learning by emphasising addition throughout the file far from a different area for unique academic demands. The (NEP, 2020) asks for an adaptable educational program with varied knowledge products plus educational methods that fit a large range of discovering designs as well as capabilities. It additionally highlights efficient educator training to guarantee that trainees with special needs are not deprived. Additionally, (NEP, 2020) stresses the demand for very early recognition of trainees with unique requirements together with the arrangement of ideal assistance systems. Personalized Education Plans (IEPs) can be customized to a trainee's particular requirements. The (NEP, 2020) recommends boosting the allocated inclusive education and learning efforts consisting of instructor training as well as assistive innovation and also facilities adjustments. The effective execution of inclusive education and learning in India needs a partnership between teachers, administrators, parents coupled with policymakers. The objective is to develop an understanding setting that proactively acknowledges multiculturalism and also incorporation to sustain the combination of all students in the nation.

This review discovers the development of inclusive education and learning in India, its thoughtful foundations the advantages it uses to all learners, and also the obstacles plus chances related to applying comprehensive academic methods. In tribal schools of Nagaland, the focus on physical change alone can be specifically damaging. To effectively apply inclusive instructional methods in tribal institutions, teachers are required to create an educational program that highlights the social level of sensitivity, conquers language obstacles, and also offers accessibility to appropriate sources. A placement-based design for effective inclusion in tribal areas can overlook the demand for teachers to adjust their teaching techniques to suit varied understanding designs and also their social histories.

### 1.3. Methodology

The methodology employed for the study was an institutional case study. The Institution selected for the case study was based on purposive sampling, and the institution was the Government Primary School in Lerie, Kohima, Nagaland, which is located in the Lerie Hills of Kohima, Nagaland. The purpose behind selecting this Government school in Kohima was that this was one of the Government schools where the enrolment rate is higher compared to other counterparts. The case study method was supplemented with semi-structured interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2016) to gain institutional information and learning practices. In this case study, various techniques, such as meetings with key stakeholders including class teachers from different grade levels as well as the school headmaster (Thomas, 2022), were provided to explore valuable insights into teacher experiences and institutional information on existing sources of inclusive educational practices. The thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) approach was employed to identify recurring patterns and dominant themes within the data, allowing for the construction of a comprehensive picture of the school's inclusive education environment.

## 1.4 Analysis and Findings Based on Thematic Analysis

The institutional data of the schools revealed that along with normal students 17 students with special needs are attending the Government Primary School in Lerie, Kohima, Nagaland. Among them, 10 are Homebased; 2 are Hearing Impaired, 1 is Autistic, 1 is Visually Impaired and 3 are Intellectually Disabled. In order to get a microscopic perspective on inclusive educational practices, a thematic analysis was made and the derivatives are given as follows

### 1.4.1. Theme (A): Teachers Navigating Institutional Limitations

Teachers dealing with institutional restraints was a significant factor that arose from the case study. Although educators are committed to producing an atmosphere that sustains inclusion for all students they still deal with substantial obstacles. Amongst these obstacles are the following:

#### 1.4.1.1. Teacher Obstacles

The verbatim of the teachers was given in quotes to know their reflections and expectations on various themes of inclusive education.

- **Absence of specialized training:** " ... we require a various source individual that is learnt those locations. However, as we do not have teachers that's why we learn from YouTube and also discover the standard indicator language to instruct him." Educators do not have specialized training in comprehensive educational programs, resulting in self-directed discovering together with YouTube video clips, stressing the demand for extensive programs to separate directions and deal with varied trainees.
- **Time constraints:** "We make lesson plans various for each kid, so for instructors, it's lengthy; however, for the pupils, it is extremely handy." The existing system has trouble organizing tailored lessons for varied trainees resulting in educator burnout and also possibly influencing guidelines because of insufficient sources as well as absence of personnel assistance."
- **Inflexible curriculum:** "... a learner with intellectual impairment ... we would certainly take a part of it [the curriculum] ... develop the lengthy response concerns to several selection concerns ..." The present educational program does not position much focus on fitting various discovering designs. This leads to instructors needing to continuously adjust the product, which positions an extra concern on their time and also experience and emphasizes the requirement for a comprehensive and adaptable educational program that adjusts to the requirements of all trainees.

- **Limited resources:** *"However previously there are great deals of difficulties as well as we desire several points that need to be right here ..."* Trainees with special needs cannot join institution tasks since the institution does not give adequate sources for comprehensive education and learning like assistive innovation, unique products as well as peaceful areas.
- **Need for specialists:** *" ... we require a various source individual that is learnt those locations ... we view YouTube as well as find out the fundamental indicator language to educate him."* Educators are typically compelled to take care of pupils with handicaps past their training because there are no experts such as speech or work-related specialists to aid them, which can cause trainees to be hindered in their development.

#### 1.4.1.2. Teacher Successes

Despite dealing with a vast array of obstacles throughout the year, the study highlights the commitment as well as the durability of the school's instructors. Their successes consist of the following:

- **Individualized planning:** *"Before intending the lesson strategy, initially we instructors... go over the assumptions of the moms and dads for their child ... we make the lesson strategy."* Educators adjust lesson preparation to the particular requirements of each trainee. This shows the inclusivity of the program yet it additionally needs extra assistance to make it lasting.
- **Creative adaptations:** *"If he or she is unable ahead up with lengthy solution inquiries, we would certainly develop ... [them] to numerous selection concerns or unbiased kind inquiries."* instructors reveal imagination when it concerns customizing discovering products along with tasks to their pupils' stamina plus capacities. This shows their dedication to dominating barriers coupled with advertising incorporation for their pupils.
- **Patience and understanding:** *"Contrasted to basic trainees, educating learners with unique demands is more difficult ... we discover to regulate those unfavourable feelings, we discover to be client ..."* An instructor's perseverance as well as understanding in the direction of pupils with impairments is outstanding plus aids to develop a favourable and also encouraging discovering setting where trainees are more probable to be involved as well as energetic day-to-day.
- **Commitment to inclusion:** *"Whatever we instruct in school the very same point we send out the same products to the moms and dads to enhance them when they go to the house ..."* Educators go above and beyond to sustain pupils discovering past the class such as sending out residence finding out products for support by moms and dads. This dedication is essential to trainee success.

#### 1.4.2. Theme (B): Institutional Strengths as well as Obstacles

A range of toughness, together with obstacles, were determined within the institution's institutional structure as an outcome of this research.

##### 1.4.2.1. Strengths:

The teachers dealing with students with special needs in the inclusive classroom opined the following attributes. They are listed below

- **Committed staff:** *“Whatever we instruct in the institution the same point we send out the same products to the moms and dads to enhance them when they go home ... Parents are urged to act on the lessons instructed in school.”* Teachers are dedicated to comprehensive education and learning coupled with dealing with moms and dads past the class.
- **Positive parental response:** *“Mom's frame of mind ... Till currently the moms and dads that are bringing their learners to our school I am favourable as well as I wish that they're extremely pleased with the school ... they additionally intend to be confessed to this school so the moms and dads are participating ...”* Parents are proactively associated with the institution and also share complete satisfaction with the inclusive atmosphere supplied at the institution. Students should have the ability to prosper as a result of this collaboration.
- **Supportive leadership:** *“Positive this year the division plus the authorities are offering much passion ... they're pleased plus they claimed that they'll give the products whatever are required in this class. So, we are really satisfied regarding that.”* The school management reveals a solid rate of interest in comprehensive education and learning and also really hopes that the federal government will certainly supply even more resources for the school to meet its goal.
- **Increased government interest:** *“... this year the division, as well as the authorities, are revealing many rates of interest ... they're pleased plus they claimed that they'll give the products ...”* This enhanced federal government rate of interest can work as a sign of expect plan modifications as well as better allotment of sources for comprehensive efforts.

#### 1.4.2.2. Obstacles:

- **Resource Limitations:** *“However till currently there are great deals of difficulties plus we desire numerous points that need to be right here ...”* There is an absence of necessary sources readily available at the school to make sure that comprehensive education and learning is applied efficiently.
- **Inflexible Curriculum:** *“Curriculum from the division side, we did not obtain any kind of certain educational program for them ... there is no certain educational program from the division side.”* The addition of varied students in the present educational program is resisted because it is not created to fit them.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** *“In the single class, the school has executed thoughtful arrangements to satisfy different demands.”* All trainees' requirements should be resolved properly at the solitary class degree as a result of its restrictions.

## 1.5. Conclusion

This research on the government primary school in Lerie, Kohima, supplies a fascinating point of view on the challenging problem of inclusion in the institution. Regardless of preliminary initiatives together with the growth of personalized lesson strategies, the institution still deals with obstacles such as insufficient training, excessive workloads, a lack of resources, and a rigid curriculum that hinders progression. Learners with special needs undergo limitations that threaten the quality of their education and learning. The study particularly recommends extensive instructor training, even more sources, educational program modifications and also the facility of joint campaigning for the team to deal with these problems. It additionally highlights the variety of inclusive methods and professional abilities plus supporting technologies that are necessary for all learners. This entails educating teachers along with creating an atmosphere that promotes inclusion and secures parental approval, both of which are highly influential when ensuring that all stakeholders are delegated as much power as possible for accomplishing inclusive education objectives. It is also imperative that parents attend all meetings and know the rules for participation. To conclude, the research advises that the government should produce motivation as well as awards to schools that promote inclusive education as a way to increase its popularity.

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