

# Secondary School Teacher's Readiness to Implement Inclusive Education in the Context of NEP-2020.

## Abstract

Inclusive education is an important component of equitable and quality education envisioned under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The effective implementation of inclusive education largely depends on teachers' preparedness, professional competence, confidence, and institutional support. The present study explores the readiness of secondary school teachers to implement inclusive education in the context of NEP 2020. A qualitative research approach with a phenomenological design was adopted to understand teachers' perceptions, experiences, challenges, and professional development needs. The study involved 100 secondary school teachers from government secondary schools in Sadar and Harichandanpur Blocks of Keonjhar District, Odisha, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and open-ended questions and analysed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that teachers generally demonstrated a positive understanding and willingness towards inclusive education. However, their readiness was moderate due to limited practical training, insufficient confidence, and inadequate classroom experience. Large class sizes, shortage of teaching-learning resources, lack of professional training, and time constraints emerged as major barriers to effective implementation. Teachers emphasized the need for continuous professional development, improved teaching-learning resources, administrative support, and collaboration with special educators. The study concludes that positive teacher attitudes alone are insufficient for successful inclusion; sustained capacity building and institutional support are essential for translating the vision of NEP 2020 into effective inclusive classroom practices.

**Key Words:** Inclusive Education, Teacher Readiness, Secondary School Teachers, NEP 2020, Professional Development, Implementation

## 29 Introduction

30 Education is a fundamental human right and an essential instrument for promoting equality,  
31 social justice, and sustainable development. It plays a vital role in the overall development of  
32 individuals and in building an inclusive society. Every child has the right to receive quality  
33 education without discrimination based on disability, gender, socio-economic status, language,  
34 religion, or cultural background. Inclusive education is an educational approach that ensures all  
35 learners learn together in regular classrooms, regardless of their individual differences. It is based  
36 on the principles of equity, equality, participation, respect for diversity, non-discrimination,  
37 accessibility, collaboration, and learner-centred education. Inclusive education aims to remove  
38 barriers to learning and create a supportive learning environment where every learner feels  
39 valued, respected, and empowered to achieve their full potential. It encourages schools to adopt  
40 inclusive teaching strategies, flexible curricula, and appropriate support services to meet the  
41 diverse learning needs of all students. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recognizes  
42 inclusive and equitable quality education as a major priority of the Indian education system. It  
43 emphasizes universal access, equity, inclusion, and quality education for all learners, including  
44 children with disabilities and those belonging to socially and economically disadvantaged  
45 groups. The policy also highlights the importance of strengthening teacher education, continuous  
46 professional development, inclusive pedagogy, and adequate institutional support to promote  
47 inclusive classrooms. Secondary school teachers play a crucial role in implementing inclusive  
48 education because they teach learners with diverse educational, social, emotional, and  
49 behavioural needs during an important stage of their academic and personal development. Their  
50 readiness to implement inclusive education depends on their knowledge, attitudes, pedagogical  
51 skills, confidence, professional competence, and willingness to address the diverse needs of all  
52 learners. Well-prepared secondary school teachers can create inclusive classroom environments  
53 that encourage participation, collaboration, equal learning opportunities, and the holistic  
54 development of every student. Despite the emphasis on inclusive education in NEP 2020, many  
55 secondary school teachers continue to face challenges such as inadequate professional training,  
56 limited teaching-learning resources, insufficient institutional support, and a lack of practical  
57 experience in inclusive teaching. These challenges may affect their readiness to implement  
58 inclusive education effectively. Therefore, understanding the readiness, experiences, and support

needs of secondary school teachers is essential for strengthening inclusive educational practices and achieving the vision of NEP 2020.

## **Review of literature**

**Zegeye (2022)** conducted a study on "Perception of Readiness for Implementing Inclusive Education among Primary School Subject Teachers: Implications for Teacher Education in Ethiopia." The study found that teachers had a low level of readiness to implement inclusive education due to inadequate training, limited knowledge and skills, and insufficient professional support. The study recommended strengthening teacher education and continuous professional development to improve teachers' readiness for inclusive education.

**Mistry (2022)** conducted a study on "Attitudes of Pre-service Teachers towards Inclusive Education for All in India." The study found that pre-service teachers generally had a positive attitude towards inclusive education. However, it emphasized that effective implementation requires comprehensive teacher preparation, practical training, and continuous professional development to equip teachers with the skills needed for inclusive classrooms.

**Sheeba and Manjula (2023)** conducted a study on "Inclusive Education in NEP 2020." The study examined the provisions of NEP 2020 related to inclusive education and found that the policy promotes equitable access, learner-centred pedagogy, and equal educational opportunities for all learners. The study concluded that successful implementation of inclusive education requires well-trained teachers, adequate resources, and continuous professional development.

**Rangarajan (2023)** conducted a study on "Inclusion and Equity in India's National Education Policy 2020." The study examined how NEP 2020 addresses inclusion and equity in education. The findings revealed that the policy provides a strong framework for inclusive education; however, its successful implementation depends on teachers' preparedness, adequate resources, and effective institutional support.

**Kalita (2024)** conducted a study on "NEP 2020 Policies for Inclusive Education." The study examined the provisions of NEP 2020 related to inclusive education and found that effective implementation depends on teacher preparedness, continuous professional development, inclusive pedagogical practices, and adequate institutional support. The study concluded that

strengthening teacher capacity is essential for achieving the goals of inclusive education under NEP 2020.

**Singh and Sharma (2024)** conducted a study on "Reshaping Teacher Education System in India through NEP 2020." The study examined the reforms proposed by NEP 2020 for teacher education and found that effective implementation requires well-prepared teachers, continuous professional development, multidisciplinary teacher education, and strong pedagogical competencies. The study concluded that strengthening teacher preparation is essential for improving the quality and inclusiveness of school education.

**Sanghavi (2025)** conducted a study on "Teacher Readiness and Implementation Challenges of NEP 2020: A Survey-Based Study." The study found that although teachers were aware of the objectives of NEP 2020 and were willing to implement its reforms, many required additional professional training, digital competence, and institutional support. The study concluded that teachers' readiness is a key factor for the successful implementation of NEP 2020.

**Shirode and Tambe (2025)** conducted a study on "NEP 2020 and Teacher Preparation for Inclusive Education." The study examined the role of teacher education in preparing teachers for inclusive education under NEP 2020. The findings revealed that effective teacher preparation requires training in inclusive pedagogy, technology integration, collaboration with parents and communities, and continuous professional development. The study concluded that well-prepared teachers are essential for creating inclusive classrooms and successfully implementing NEP 2020.

**Rakshit and Yadav (2025)** conducted a study on "Inclusive Education Practices in the Light of NEP 2020: A Mandate for Today's Teachers." The study found that the effective implementation of inclusive education depends on teachers' preparedness, professional training, and institutional support. It also identified challenges such as inadequate resources, limited training opportunities, and attitudinal barriers. The study concluded that continuous professional development and collaborative support are essential for strengthening teachers' readiness to implement inclusive education under NEP 2020.

**Manna and Chattopadhyay (2026)** conducted a study titled "NEP 2020, Inclusive Education and Attitudes of Teachers: A Micro Empirical Study in Kolkata." The study examined teachers'

attitudes towards inclusive education in the context of NEP 2020. The findings revealed that teachers generally supported inclusive education, but significant gaps in preparedness and professional training still existed. The study recommended continuous professional development and capacity-building programmes to strengthen teachers' readiness for inclusive education.

**Kundu (2019)** examined inclusive practices in secondary schools in West Bengal. The study found that although teachers had positive attitudes toward inclusion, inadequate training, limited resources, and insufficient administrative support hindered effective implementation. It recommended continuous professional development for teachers.

**Imam and Andrews (2022)** discussed teacher preparedness for inclusive education under NEP-2020. The study emphasized that teachers require competencies in inclusive pedagogy, classroom adaptation, and assistive technology to translate policy into practice.

**Doungel (2022)** analyzed stakeholders' roles in ensuring equitable and inclusive education. The study highlighted teacher capacity building as the cornerstone of successful implementation of inclusive education under NEP-2020.

**NCERT (2022)** highlighted that continuous professional development, inclusive curriculum planning, and teacher mentoring are essential for implementing NEP-2020 successfully.

**Gupta, Shrotriya, and Agrawal (2026)** conducted a systematic review and found persistent gaps between teachers' awareness of inclusion and their classroom implementation skills, recommending competency-based professional development aligned with NEP-2020.

**MHRD (2020)** stated that NEP-2020 requires every teacher to be equipped with inclusive pedagogical competencies, differentiated instruction, and sensitivity towards learner diversity.

Ministry of Education. (2020). National Education Policy 2020. Government of India.

**UNESCO (2020)** emphasized that quality teacher preparation is essential to achieve equitable and inclusive education under SDG 4.

**Adilang, Lantin, and Mendoza (2026)** reviewed studies on teacher readiness and concluded that teacher competence, self-efficacy, professional preparation, and institutional support consistently predict successful inclusive education.

## 143 **Research Gap**

144 The review of literature indicates that most recent studies (2022–2025) have focused on teachers'  
145 attitudes, teacher preparation, NEP 2020 policies, and the challenges of implementing inclusive  
146 education. While these studies emphasize the importance of teacher readiness, professional  
147 development, and institutional support, the majority have adopted quantitative or policy-based  
148 approaches. Very few studies have explored the readiness of secondary school teachers through a  
149 qualitative approach, particularly in the context of implementing inclusive education under NEP  
150 2020. Furthermore, there is limited evidence on teachers lived experiences, perceptions, and the  
151 practical challenges they face in implementing inclusive education in secondary schools. This  
152 gap provides the basis for the present study.

## 153 **Rationale of the Study**

154 The successful implementation of inclusive education under NEP-2020 largely depends on  
155 teachers' readiness, professional competence, and institutional support. Previous studies have  
156 consistently reported that although teachers generally demonstrate positive attitudes towards  
157 inclusion, they often lack adequate knowledge, practical skills, and confidence to address diverse  
158 learning needs effectively (Kundu, 2019; Zegeye, 2022; Mistry, 2022). Research further indicates  
159 that continuous professional development, inclusive pedagogy, technology integration, and  
160 administrative support are essential for strengthening teachers' preparedness (Sheeba & Manjula,  
161 2023; Rangarajan, 2023; Kalita, 2024; Singh & Sharma, 2024). Despite the policy emphasis of  
162 NEP-2020 and UNESCO's recommendations for equitable education (Ministry of Education,  
163 2020; UNESCO, 2020), empirical evidence on the readiness of secondary school teachers to  
164 implement inclusive education remains limited. Therefore, the present study seeks to assess  
165 teachers' readiness and identify factors influencing the effective implementation of inclusive  
166 education in the context of NEP-2020.

## 167 **Operational Definition of Key Terms**

### 168 **Secondary School Teachers:**

169 In the present study, secondary school teachers refer to teachers working in recognized secondary  
170 schools (Classes IX and X) who are responsible for teaching students in regular classrooms.

### **Teacher Readiness:**

Teacher readiness refers to the preparedness of secondary school teachers to implement inclusive education. It includes their knowledge, perceptions, confidence, skills, attitudes, and experiences related to inclusive teaching practices under NEP 2020.

### **Inclusive Education:**

Inclusive education refers to an educational approach in which all students, including those with disabilities and diverse learning needs, learn together in regular classrooms with appropriate support, equal participation, and equitable learning opportunities.

### **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:**

NEP 2020 refers to the National Education Policy introduced by the Government of India in 2020, which aims to transform the education system by promoting equitable, inclusive, multidisciplinary, and quality education for all learners.

### **Implementation:**

Implementation refers to the process by which secondary school teachers apply the principles and practices of inclusive education in their classrooms in accordance with the provisions and recommendations of NEP 2020.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To explore secondary school teachers' understanding of inclusive education in the context of NEP 2020.
2. To explore the readiness of secondary school teachers to implement inclusive education under NEP 2020.
3. To identify the challenges faced by secondary school teachers in implementing inclusive education under NEP 2020.
4. To explore the support and professional development needs of secondary school teachers for the effective implementation of inclusive education.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do secondary school teachers understand inclusive education in the context of NEP 2020?
2. How do secondary school teachers perceive their readiness to implement inclusive education under NEP 2020?
3. What challenges do secondary school teachers face while implementing inclusive education under NEP 2020?
4. What types of support and professional development do secondary school teachers perceive as necessary for the effective implementation of inclusive education?

## **Methodology**

The present study adopted a **qualitative research approach** to explore secondary school teachers' readiness to implement inclusive education in the context of NEP 2020. A **phenomenological research design** was used to understand teachers' perceptions, experiences, and preparedness regarding inclusive education.

## **Population**

The population of the present study comprised all secondary school teachers working in government secondary schools of Keonjhar District, Odisha. These teachers constituted the target population as they are directly involved in implementing inclusive education under NEP 2020 and are expected to provide valuable insights into their readiness, experiences, and challenges related to inclusive education.

## **Sample**

The sample of the present study was consisting of 100 secondary school teachers working in government secondary schools of Keonjhar District. The participants are selected from two blocks, namely Sadar Block and Harichandanpur Block. The teachers are selected through purposive sampling based on their experience and involvement in implementing inclusive education under NEP 2020.

## **Data collection tool and techniques**

Data collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and open-ended questions. These methods explored secondary school teachers' perceptions, experiences, readiness, and challenges in implementing inclusive education under NEP 2020.

### Techniques of data analysis

The collected qualitative data are analysed using thematic analysis. The interview, focus group discussion, and open-ended response transcribed, coded, categorized, and organized into themes to identify patterns related to secondary school teachers' readiness to implement inclusive education under NEP 2020.

## Analysis and Interpretation of data

### Objective 1

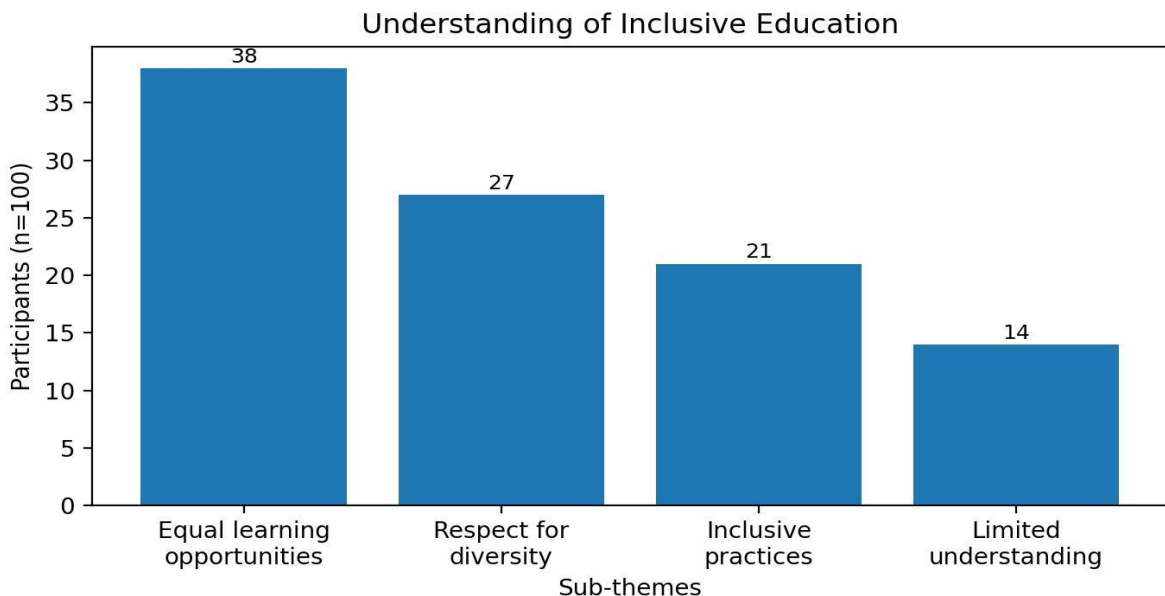
To explore secondary school teachers' understanding of inclusive education in the context of NEP 2020.

Research Question 1: How do secondary school teachers understand inclusive education in the context of NEP 2020?

### Theme 1: Understanding of Inclusive Education

| Sub-theme                     | Participants (n=100) |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Equal learning opportunities  | 38                   |
| Respect for diversity         | 27                   |
| Inclusive classroom practices | 21                   |
| Limited understanding         | 14                   |

Among the 100 secondary school teachers, 38 participants understood inclusive education as providing equal learning opportunities for all students. Twenty-seven teachers viewed it as promoting respect for diversity, while 21 participants associated it with inclusive classroom



practices that encourage the participation of every learner. However, 14 teachers demonstrated a limited understanding, mainly relating inclusive education only to students with disabilities.

The analysis revealed that most teachers viewed inclusive education as ensuring equal educational opportunities for every learner, irrespective of disability, gender, socio-economic background, or learning ability. Many participants explained that an inclusive classroom is one where every student actively participates and feels respected.

One teacher commented:

"Inclusive education means that every child should learn together in the same classroom and no student should feel excluded."

Another participant stated:

"Our responsibility is to adapt our teaching so that every learner can participate."

However, a small group of teachers associated inclusive education only with students with disabilities, indicating that a broader understanding of inclusion is still developing.

We found that teachers generally understood the philosophy of inclusive education, but some required a clearer understanding of its wider scope under NEP 2020.

## **Objective 2**

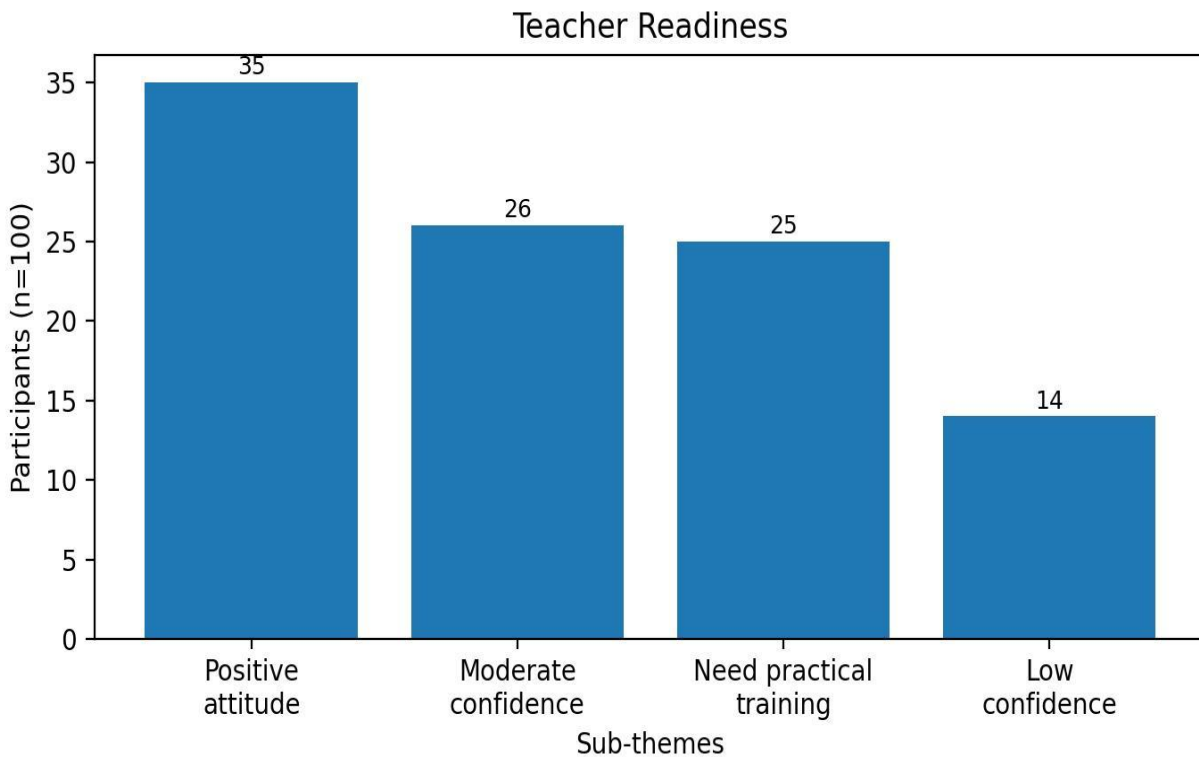
To explore the readiness of secondary school teachers to implement inclusive education under NEP 2020.

Research Question 2: How do secondary school teachers perceive their readiness?

### **Theme 2: Teacher Readiness**

| Sub-theme               | Participants |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Positive attitude       | 35           |
| Moderate confidence     | 26           |
| Need practical training | 25           |
| Low confidence          | 14           |

Among the 100 secondary school teachers, 35 participants expressed a positive attitude towards implementing inclusive education under NEP 2020. Twenty-six teachers reported moderate confidence in their ability to implement inclusive practices effectively. Twenty-five participants emphasized the need for practical training to address the diverse learning needs of students, while 14 teachers reported low confidence in implementing inclusive education.



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269 Most participants expressed a positive attitude towards inclusive education and believed it was  
270 their professional responsibility. Nevertheless, many admitted that they lacked sufficient  
271 practical skills to address diverse learning needs effectively.

272 Teachers frequently mentioned that while they were aware of NEP 2020, translating policy into  
273 classroom practice remained challenging.

274 One participant shared:

275 "I am willing to teach every child, but I need more practical training to handle different learning  
276 needs." Another teacher remarked: "We know the policy, but implementation requires classroom  
277 experience."

278 It is found that teacher readiness was moderate. Positive attitudes existed, but confidence  
279 depended heavily on professional preparation and practical experience.

### 280 **Objective 3**

281 To identify the challenges faced by secondary school teachers in implementing inclusive  
282 education under NEP 2020.

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284 Research Question 3

285 What challenges do secondary school teachers face while implementing inclusive education

286 under NEP 2020?

287 **Theme 3: Challenges in Implementation**

| Sub-theme                     | Participants (n = 100) |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Large classroom size          | 30                     |
| Lack of professional training | 27                     |
| Limited teaching resources    | 23                     |
| Time constraints              | 20                     |

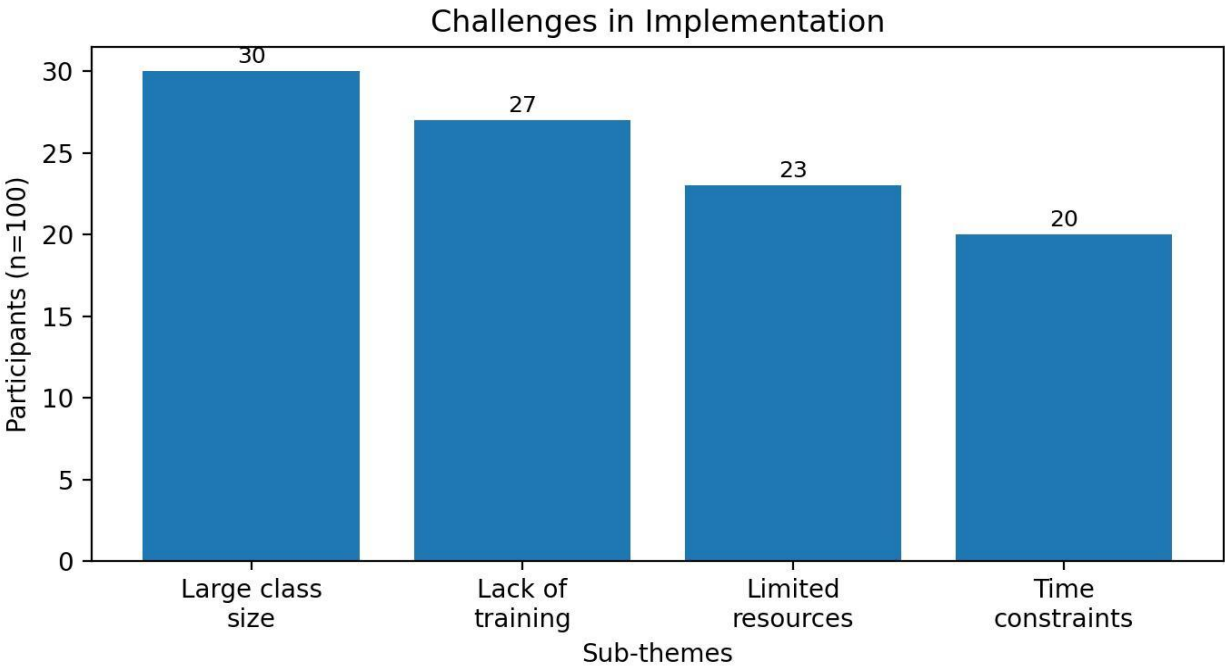
288 Among the 100 secondary school teachers, 30 participants identified large classroom size as the

289 major challenge in implementing inclusive education under NEP 2020. Twenty-seven teachers

290 reported a lack of professional training, while 23 participants highlighted limited teaching

291 resources as a significant barrier. Additionally, 20 teachers mentioned time constraints as a factor

292 affecting the effective implementation of inclusive practices.



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295 Nearly every participant described significant barriers to implementing inclusive education under

296 NEP 2020 effectively. Teachers reported overcrowded classrooms, limited instructional time,

297 inadequate teaching-learning materials, and insufficient assistive devices. Many teachers felt that

these barriers reduced their ability to provide individualized attention to students with diverse learning needs and affected the successful implementation of inclusive classroom practices.

One participant explained:

"When there are many students in one class, it becomes difficult to support every learner."

Another teacher observed:

"Without proper resources and specialised materials, inclusive teaching remains difficult."

The findings indicate that large classroom size, lack of professional training, limited teaching resources, and time constraints are the major challenges faced by secondary school teachers while implementing inclusive education under NEP 2020. These structural and institutional barriers emerged as the most significant obstacles, rather than teachers' willingness to implement inclusive education. This finding directly answers Research Question 3 of the study.

#### **Objective 4**

To explore the support and professional development needs of secondary school teachers for the effective implementation of inclusive education.

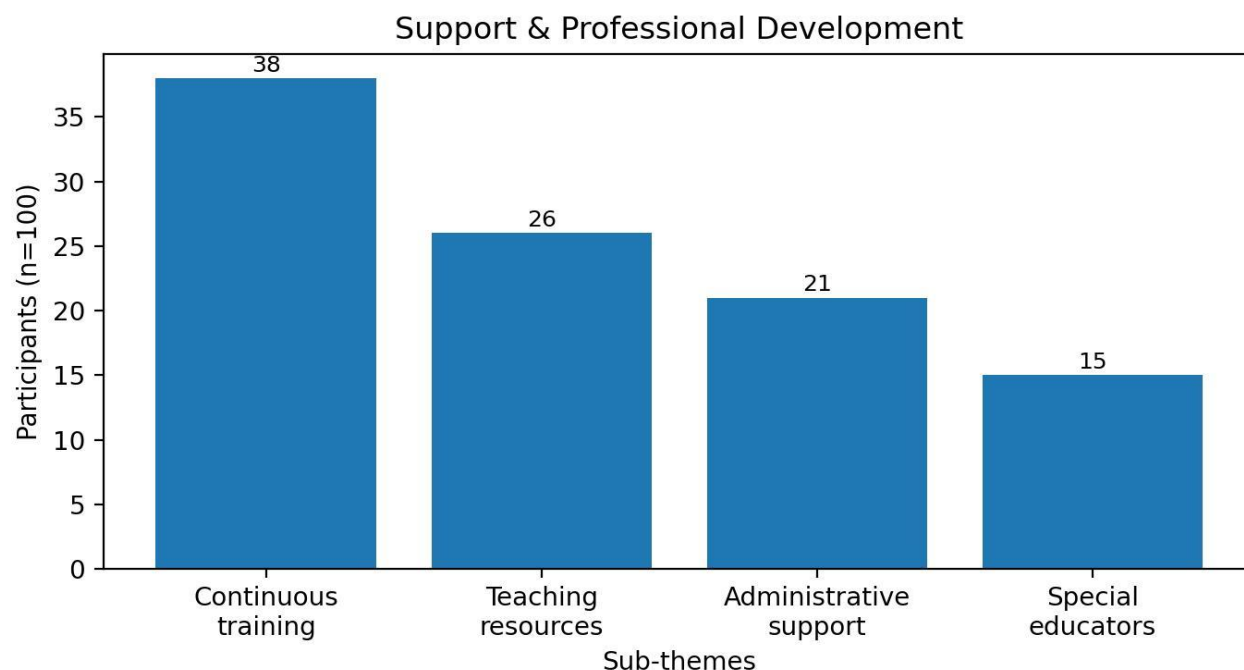
Research Question 4

What types of support and professional development do secondary school teachers perceive as necessary for the effective implementation of inclusive education?

#### **Theme 4: Support and Professional Development**

| Sub-theme                            | Participants (n = 100) |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Continuous professional training     | 38                     |
| Better teaching-learning resources   | 26                     |
| Administrative support               | 21                     |
| Collaboration with special educators | 15                     |

Among the 100 secondary school teachers, 38 participants emphasized the need for continuous professional training to effectively implement inclusive education under NEP 2020. Twenty-six teachers highlighted the importance of better teaching-learning resources, while 21 participants stressed the need for administrative support from school leadership. Additionally, 15 teachers identified collaboration with special educators as essential for addressing the diverse learning needs of students.



Teachers consistently emphasized that effective implementation of inclusive education requires continuous professional development rather than one-time orientation programmes. Participants suggested regular workshops, mentoring, collaborative planning, access to inclusive teaching materials, and stronger institutional support.

One teacher stated:

"Regular training will help us gain confidence and improve classroom practice."

Another participant noted:

"School leadership should provide resources and encourage collaboration among teachers."

It is found that, teachers believed that ongoing professional development, adequate resources, and institutional support are essential for the effective implementation of inclusive education under NEP 2020. These findings directly answer Research Question 4, indicating that teachers perceive continuous training, improved teaching-learning resources, administrative support, and collaboration with special educators as necessary for successfully implementing inclusive education.

## **Delimitations of the Study**

1. The study is delimited to government secondary school teachers of Keonjhar District, Odisha.

2. The study is confined to two blocks of Keonjhar district, namely Sadar Block and Harichandanpur Block.
3. The sample of the study consists of 100 secondary school teachers.
4. The study focuses only on teachers' readiness to implement inclusive education in the context of NEP 2020.
5. The study adopts a qualitative research approach and uses semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and open-ended questions for data collection.

## **Discussion of the result**

The thematic analysis revealed that secondary school teachers generally possess a positive understanding of inclusive education and recognise its importance in achieving the vision of NEP 2020. The findings indicate that teachers are willing to implement inclusive education and are committed to providing equal learning opportunities for all students. However, their readiness to implement inclusive education is influenced by factors such as practical training, classroom experience, availability of teaching-learning resources, and institutional support. The study also found that teachers face several challenges, including overcrowded classrooms, inadequate professional training, limited teaching-learning materials, and time constraints, which affect the effective implementation of inclusive practices. Furthermore, participants consistently emphasised the need for continuous professional development, regular capacity-building programmes, improved infrastructure, adequate teaching-learning resources, administrative support, and collaboration with special educators to strengthen inclusive classroom practices.

Overall, the findings suggested that the successful implementation of inclusive education under NEP 2020 depends not only on teachers' positive attitudes and willingness but also on strengthening teacher preparation, enhancing institutional support, and providing adequate educational resources. These findings directly address the objectives and research questions of the study and are consistent with the qualitative thematic analysis approach adopted in the research.

## **Recommendation**

1. Continuous professional development programmes should be provided to improve teachers' knowledge and skills in inclusive education.
2. Schools should ensure the availability of adequate teaching-learning materials and inclusive classroom resources.

3. School leadership should create a supportive environment that encourages inclusive teaching practices.
4. Greater collaboration among teachers, special educators, and parents should be encouraged to meet the diverse needs of learners.
5. Educational authorities should strengthen the implementation of NEP 2020 by providing regular guidance, monitoring, and support for inclusive education.

## Conclusion

The successful implementation of this study depends largely on the readiness of secondary school teachers, who play a vital role in addressing the diverse learning needs of students. Exploring teachers' understanding, readiness, experiences, challenges, and support needs is essential for strengthening inclusive educational practices. The findings of the study provided valuable insights into the preparedness of secondary school teachers to implement inclusive education under NEP 2020. The study may help teacher educators, school administrators, and policymakers identify areas requiring improvement in teacher education, professional development, institutional support, and school practices. Ultimately, the study is proposed to contribute to the effective implementation of inclusive education and the achievement of the goals of NEP 2020 by promoting inclusive, equitable, and learner-centred education in secondary schools.

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