

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-58825

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

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		X		
Techn. Quality		X		
Clarity	X			
Significance	X			

Reviewer's ID: JPR-212

Detailed Reviewer's Report

General Assessment

This paper presents a well-designed qualitative study examining secondary school teachers' readiness to implement inclusive education under India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The study employs a phenomenological approach to understand teachers' perceptions, experiences, challenges, and professional development needs. The research addresses a timely and significant topic, as NEP 2020 represents a transformative policy shift requiring substantial teacher preparedness. The study's focus on the Odisha context provides valuable regional insights that can inform policy implementation at the state level. The methodology is appropriate for the research questions, and the findings offer practical implications for teacher education and institutional support.

Strengths

- Timely and Relevant Topic:** The study addresses a critical policy implementation issue that is highly relevant to India's educational transformation under NEP 2020. The focus on teacher readiness is well-justified given the policy's emphasis on inclusive education.
- Clear Research Design:** The qualitative phenomenological approach is appropriate for exploring teachers' lived experiences and perceptions. The use of multiple data collection methods (semi-structured interviews, FGDs, open-ended questions) strengthens the credibility of findings.
- Well-Structured Presentation:** The paper follows a logical structure with clear objectives, research questions, methodology, findings, and recommendations. The thematic analysis is presented systematically with supporting participant quotations.
- Practical Implications:** The study offers actionable recommendations for professional development, resource allocation, and institutional support that can directly inform policy implementation.
- Comprehensive Literature Review:** The review covers recent studies (2022-2026) and demonstrates familiarity with both Indian and international scholarship on inclusive education and teacher readiness.

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Critical Issues Requiring Revision

1. Grammatical and Syntactic Errors (Major Concern)

Issue: The manuscript contains numerous grammatical errors, inconsistent verb tenses, missing articles, and awkward sentence constructions that affect readability and professional presentation.

Examples:

- Abstract: "The study involved 100 secondary school teachers from government secondary schools in Sadar and Harichandanpur Blocks of Keonjhar District, Odisha, selected through purposive sampling." → Should be: "were selected through purposive sampling"
- Page 8: "The sample of the present study was consisting of 100 secondary school teachers" → Should be: "consisted of"
- Page 9: "These methodsexplored" → Missing space
- Page 9: "The collected qualitative data are analysed" → Inconsistent tense
- Page 14: "It is found that, teachers believed" → Extra comma
- Page 15: "The successful implementation of this study depends largely" → Should be "of inclusive education" not "of this study"
- Page 16: "Ultimately, the study is proposed to contribute" → Awkward phrasing

Recommended Revision:

- **Conduct a thorough copyediting** of the entire manuscript
- **Ensure consistent tense usage** (past tense for methodology and findings, present tense for established facts)
- **Correct subject-verb agreement** throughout
- **Add missing articles** (a, an, the)
- **Consider using professional editing services** or having a native English speaker review the manuscript

2. Data Presentation and Analysis Limitations

Issue: The thematic analysis is presented primarily through frequencies (n=100) without qualitative depth in some sections. The use of percentages would enhance interpretability, and the relationship between themes requires more analytical integration.

Recommended Revision:

- **Add percentage calculations** alongside frequencies (e.g., "38 participants (38%) emphasized...")
- **Provide more detailed participant quotes** to illustrate each sub-theme
- **Add analytical connections** between themes (e.g., how understanding relates to readiness, how challenges affect confidence)
- **Include participant demographic information** (years of experience, subject taught, training received) to enable subgroup analysis

3. Theoretical Framework Integration

Issue: While the study identifies research gaps and provides literature review, it lacks an explicit theoretical framework to guide the analysis. A stronger theoretical grounding would enhance the study's contribution.

Recommended Revision:

- **Add a theoretical framework section** referencing established theories relevant to teacher readiness, such as:
 - Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (self-efficacy)
 - Fullan's Change Theory (educational change implementation)
 - Florian and Black-Hawkins' Inclusive Pedagogy framework
 - UNESCO's Teacher Competency Framework for Inclusive Education
- **Use the theoretical framework** to structure the analysis and interpretation of findings

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4. Sample Justification and Limitations

Issue: The rationale for selecting 100 teachers and the specific blocks (Sadar and Harichandanpur) requires clearer justification. The use of purposive sampling criteria (experience and involvement in implementation) needs elaboration.

Recommended Revision:

- **Add a subsection** in Methodology explaining why these two blocks were selected (e.g., representativeness, accessibility, diversity of schools)
- **Specify the criteria** for purposive selection more explicitly (e.g., minimum years of teaching, types of students taught)
- **Provide demographic profile** of participants (age, gender, qualifications, years of experience, training in inclusive education)
- **Discuss the sample size adequacy** in relation to phenomenology (typically 6-25 participants; 100 is large for phenomenology and may suggest a more generic qualitative approach)

5. Data Collection Procedures Need Clarity

Issue: The methodology section describes data collection methods but lacks procedural details about the interview protocol, FGD structure, duration, and data saturation.

Recommended Revision:

- **Add a detailed data collection procedure** section addressing:
 - Interview protocol development (how questions were designed)
 - Duration of interviews and FGDs
 - Number of FGDs conducted and group composition
 - Process for ensuring data saturation
 - Transcription procedures and verbatim accuracy
 - Ethical considerations (informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality)
 - Member checking procedures

6. Inconsistent Formatting and Numbering

Issue: The manuscript has inconsistent heading numbering and formatting. The literature review section lacks proper numbering while other sections are numbered.

Recommended Revision:

- **Standardize heading numbering** throughout the manuscript
- **Ensure consistent formatting** for tables and figures
- **Check that all references** are cited in the text (some references in the list are not clearly connected to citations)
- **Verify the "Figure 1: Understanding of Inclusive Education"** is properly labeled and described

Minor Issues

7. Research Gap Statement Redundancy

Issue: The "Research Gap" section on Page 6 effectively summarizes the gap, but similar points are repeated in the "Rationale of the Study" section.

Recommended Revision:

- **Merge these sections** or clearly differentiate between identifying the gap (what is missing) and justifying the study (why it matters)
- **Keep the Research Gap section** concise and move substantive justification to Rationale

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8. Operational Definition Concerns

Issue: The definitions are generally clear, but "implementation" is defined circularly as "the process by which secondary school teachers apply the principles and practices of inclusive education." A more precise operational definition would strengthen the study.

Recommended Revision:

- **Define implementation more specifically** in terms of measurable indicators (e.g., differentiated instruction, use of assistive technology, adaptation of materials, assessment modifications)

9. Discussion and Conclusion Quality

Issue: The Discussion section largely summarizes findings without deeper engagement with the literature or theory. The Conclusion has a significant error ("The successful implementation of this study depends largely").

Recommended Revision:

- **Strengthen the Discussion** by:
 - Comparing findings with each reviewed study explicitly
 - Explaining why findings differ from or align with previous research
 - Applying theoretical concepts to interpret findings
 - Acknowledging unexpected findings and offering explanations
 - Discussing implications for NEP 2020 implementation specifically
- **Correct the Conclusion** opening to: "The successful implementation of inclusive education depends largely..."
- **Add limitations of the study** section (distinct from delimitations)
- **Suggest directions for future research** (e.g., quantitative studies, intervention studies, comparison across states)

10. Reference List Completeness

Issue: Several references have incomplete bibliographic information:

- Imam and Andrews (2022) - "Zenodo" is not a standard publisher reference
- Singh and Sharma (2024) - "doi.org" is incomplete
- Some references lack DOI or publisher information

Recommended Revision:

- **Complete all reference entries** with:
 - Volume numbers where missing
 - Page ranges
 - DOI numbers where available
 - Correct journal names and publisher information
- **Standardize reference formatting** according to the journal's guidelines
- **Verify that all in-text citations** correspond to references in the list

11. Delimitations vs. Limitations

Issue: The paper presents "Delimitations of the Study" (scope boundaries) but lacks a "Limitations" section (methodological weaknesses that may affect validity).

Recommended Revision:

- **Add a Limitations section** addressing:
 - Qualitative findings not generalizable beyond the study context
 - Self-report data limitations (social desirability bias)

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- No observation of actual classroom practices
- Single-state focus limiting wider applicability
- Potential researcher bias in thematic analysis
- Language considerations (interviews conducted in Odia/Oriya vs. English reporting)

Suggestions for Enhancement

12. Adding Participant Voices

Recommendation: While the study includes some quotes, additional participant voices would enrich the qualitative findings. Consider adding:

- **More extended quotes** that capture the complexity of teacher experiences
- **Quotes in the original language** (Odia/Oriya) with English translation to preserve authenticity
- **Contrasting perspectives** to show the diversity of teacher experiences

13. Policy-Practice Gap Analysis

Recommendation: Since the study is framed around NEP 2020, a more explicit analysis of the gap between policy aspirations and classroom realities would strengthen the contribution:

- **Compare specific NEP 2020 provisions** with teachers' reported challenges
- **Identify where policy implementation has succeeded** and where it has failed
- **Discuss implications for policy revision** and implementation strategies

14. Comparative Dimension

Recommendation: The study could be strengthened by adding comparative elements:

- **Compare urban vs. rural teachers** (since the sample is from a predominantly rural district)
- **Compare teachers with and without inclusive education training**
- **Compare experienced vs. novice teachers**
- **Compare government vs. private school teachers** (for future research)

15. Visual Presentation Enhancement

Recommendation: Consider improving the visual presentation:

- **Add actual photographs** (with permissions) of inclusive classrooms or teaching materials
- **Create a conceptual framework diagram** showing the relationship between factors affecting teacher readiness
- **Use a more visually appealing bar chart** format with percentages
- **Add a consolidated summary table** showing all themes and sub-themes with representative quotes

Language and Writing Style

Strengths: The paper uses appropriate academic language and generally follows standard academic writing conventions.

Areas for Improvement:

- **Reduce nominalization** (using verbs instead of noun forms) for clearer writing
- **Avoid redundancy** (e.g., "positive understanding" could be "understanding")
- **Use more concise phrasing** in some sections
- **Ensure consistent use of British or American English** spelling throughout
- **Correct the "Research Gap" section** (Page 6) where the paragraph seems incomplete

Ethical Considerations

Not applicable - The study uses qualitative data from teachers through interviews and FGDs. However, the manuscript should include a brief statement regarding:

- **Informed consent** obtained from participants
- **Institutional approval** for conducting the research
- **Anonymity and confidentiality** protection measures
- **Data storage** and security procedures

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Overall Recommendation: Accept After Minor Revision

This paper makes a meaningful contribution to understanding teacher readiness for inclusive education in the context of India's transformative NEP 2020. The qualitative methodology provides rich insights into teachers' perceptions, challenges, and needs. With the recommended revisions, particularly regarding language editing, methodological clarity, and theoretical grounding, the paper will be suitable for publication.

Required Revisions Summary:

- Language and Grammar:** Conduct thorough copyediting to correct grammatical errors, ensure consistent tense usage, and improve sentence clarity throughout
- Methodological Clarity:** Add detailed procedures for data collection, including interview protocol, FGD structure, data saturation, transcription, and ethical considerations
- Sample Justification:** Provide clearer rationale for sample selection, participant demographics, and sub-group analysis
- Theoretical Framework:** Add explicit theoretical grounding to strengthen analysis and interpretation
- Discussion Enhancement:** Deepen the discussion by comparing findings with literature, applying theory, and addressing implications for NEP 2020 implementation
- Conclusion Correction:** Fix the opening error and add limitations and future research directions
- Reference List:** Complete and standardize all bibliographic entries
- Data Presentation:** Add percentages alongside frequencies and provide richer qualitative examples

Optional Enhancements:

- Add participant quotes in original language with translations
- Include an explicit analysis of the NEP 2020 policy-practice gap
- Develop a conceptual framework diagram
- Consider comparative analysis (urban/rural, trained/untrained teachers)

Final Rating Summary

Criteria	Assessment	Comments
Originality	Good	Addresses a gap in qualitative research on secondary school teacher readiness under NEP 2020; regional focus is valuable
Technical Quality	Good	Methodology is appropriate but needs more procedural detail and theoretical grounding
Clarity	Excellent	Findings are clearly presented despite language issues; organization is logical
Significance	Excellent	Timely policy-relevant findings with practical implications for teacher education and NEP 2020 implementation

Additional Comments for the Editor

This paper is well-suited for publication in an education journal focused on teacher education, inclusive education, or policy implementation in the Indian context. The study's focus on NEP 2020 makes it particularly timely, and the qualitative approach provides rich insights that complement existing quantitative studies.

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The most critical issue to address is the language editing, as numerous grammatical errors currently detract from the otherwise solid research contribution. Once this is resolved, the paper will make a strong case for the importance of comprehensive teacher preparation and institutional support in achieving NEP 2020's inclusive education goals.

The study's recommendations for continuous professional development, resource allocation, and institutional support are well-grounded in the findings and offer clear pathways for educational improvement