

UNDERSTANDING THE TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EDUCATION OF MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN IN WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the educational experiences of mentally retarded children. Their attitudes, beliefs, and practices have a profound impact on the academic, social, and emotional development of these students. Researcher employed 50 teachers as sample of study by using descriptive research. Female teachers, on average, have more positive attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children compared to male teachers. Urban and rural teachers also showed a statistically significant difference in attitudes. Urban teachers, on average, have more positive attitudes compared to their rural counterparts. Special teachers, who likely have training or experience in special education, exhibited significantly more positive attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children compared to regular teachers. These conclusions suggested that certain demographic and professional factors influences teacher attitudes in West Bengal. Female teachers, urban teachers, and those with special education training tend to have more positive attitudes. These findings underscore the importance of addressing these demographic and training-related disparities to promote more inclusive and supportive educational environments for mentally retarded children. To enhance inclusive education for mentally retarded children, it is essential to provide targeted support, training, and resources to teachers, particularly those in rural areas and with limited special education backgrounds, in order to bridge these attitude gaps and create more inclusive learning environments.

Keywords: Teacher attitudes, mentally retarded children, Inclusive education, Special education, West Bengal.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs encountered difficulty in social interactions with regular class peers and teachers. Many people had little information about students with special needs and this lack of knowledge could create fear and prejudice. Children with special needs were often laughed at, or devalued in many ways during interaction. One attitude that influenced teachers' attitude was labeling, when students were identified by a negatively perceived label, for examples; mentally retarded. Dodson and Boss (1985) opined that teachers were less able to objectively observe, rate and plan appropriate intervention for their behaviours. Another factor that could contribute to the rejection of children with special needs by regular teachers and administrators was lack of special training. Many teachers were afraid that they did not have skills necessary for teaching special needs children. Others felt that working with these children was not gratifying as working with normal individuals. Researchers had observed that the hardest burden to bear by special needs children was not their exceptionality, but the attitudes of people toward them (Marsh and Friedman, 1972). Attitude was one of affective areas which had been very much studied. An investigation by Ikpaya (1988) into the teachers' attitude toward special needs children varied significantly. He also found that some teachers had more positive attitude toward gifted children than their normal counterparts. The education of mentally retarded children is a critical and challenging aspect of the educational system in West Bengal, as well as in many parts of the world. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on inclusive education, which seeks to provide equitable educational opportunities for children with diverse abilities, including those with mental retardation. Inclusive education not only benefits the students with disabilities but also enriches the overall educational environment and promotes social inclusion. However, the successful implementation of inclusive education depends, to a significant extent, on the attitudes and perceptions of the teachers responsible for the education of these children. Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the educational experiences of mentally retarded children. Their attitudes, beliefs, and practices have a profound impact on the academic, social, and emotional development of these students. In West Bengal, a state with a rich cultural heritage and a diverse population, understanding the attitudes of teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children is of paramount importance. This research aims to delve into the multifaceted aspects of teacher attitudes and their implications for the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal. Providing quality education to these children is essential for their individual development, empowerment, and integration into society. It is in line with the principles of equality and social justice, as enshrined in the Indian Constitution and international conventions on the rights of persons with disabilities. Understanding teacher attitudes is crucial because it directly impacts the quality of education that these

children receive. It seeks to explore the factors that influence teacher attitudes, the challenges they face, the extent to which they adhere to inclusive education principles, and the potential areas for improvement. By shedding light on these issues, this study endeavors to contribute to the enhancement of educational opportunities and outcomes for mentally retarded children in West Bengal.

1.1. Background of Study

Individuals with mental retardation often faced neglect, discrimination, and exclusion from educational opportunities. Attitudes towards them were largely negative, and they were often institutionalized. The field of special education has evolved significantly over the years to address these issues and promote more inclusive and supportive educational environments. In recent decades, there has been a shift towards inclusive education, which aims to provide children with mental retardation access to regular education settings. This shift has led to changes in teacher attitudes, as they are increasingly responsible for teaching students with a wide range of abilities. Today's classrooms are more diverse than ever, with students from various backgrounds and abilities. Teacher attitudes play a critical role in the success of inclusive education. Positive attitudes can lead to more effective teaching strategies, increased student engagement, and improved academic and social outcomes for students with mental retardation. On the other hand, negative attitudes can hinder the inclusion process and lead to negative outcomes. Teachers must adapt to meet the individual needs of each student, including those with mental retardation. Teacher attitudes can significantly influence the success and overall experience of mentally retarded children in the classroom. A positive attitude can foster a supportive learning environment, while negative attitudes can hinder a child's growth and development. Despite progress in changing teacher attitudes, challenges still exist, and there is room for improvement. Some teachers may continue to hold negative attitudes, and there may be a lack of adequate training and support for educators in inclusive settings. The study of teacher attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children is a significant area of research with practical implications for improving the quality of education and support provided to these students. Positive teacher attitudes are essential for fostering inclusive and supportive learning environments that promote the well-being and development of all children, regardless of their abilities.

1.2. Statement of Problem

Inclusive education is a widely acknowledged approach for providing quality education to mental retardation. It promotes the integration of students with mental retardation into regular classroom settings, offering them the opportunity to learn alongside their typically developing peers. Teacher attitudes are pivotal in determining the success of inclusive education programs, as these attitudes significantly influence teaching practices and the overall learning experience for students with mental retardation. There is evidence to suggest that some teachers may still harbor negative attitudes and misconceptions about mental retarded children, which can hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education. The negative attitudes of teachers can adversely affect the academic, social, and emotional development of children with intellectual disabilities. This, in turn, can lead to lower educational outcomes and the perpetuation of inequalities. This study seeks to address these issues to provide a comprehensive analysis of teacher attitudes and their impact on the education of mentally retarded children. By identifying the factors influencing these attitudes and their effects on educational outcomes, it aims to offer insights for educational policymakers, administrators, and teacher training programs to create more inclusive and supportive learning environments for all students. Thus, the study entitled as "Understanding the Teacher Attitudes towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in West Bengal."

1.3. Need and Significance of Study

West Bengal, like many other regions, has been making efforts to implement inclusive education policies. Understanding the attitudes of teachers towards educating mentally retarded children is crucial, as it directly affects the success of these policies. The need for this study arises from the state's commitment to providing quality education to all children, regardless of their abilities. There is a limited amount of research specific to West Bengal on this topic. Conducting a study on teacher attitudes in this region can fill knowledge gaps and provide insights into the unique cultural, social, and educational context of West Bengal. This research can offer a localized perspective on teacher attitudes. The attitudes of teachers significantly influence the quality of education provided to children with intellectual disabilities. Positive attitudes lead to more effective teaching and better educational outcomes. By understanding the prevailing attitudes in West Bengal, the study can identify areas for improvement and interventions to enhance the quality of education. The findings of this study can inform policy development and reforms in West Bengal's education system. It can help policymakers tailor strategies to address specific challenges related to teacher attitudes and the inclusion of mentally retarded children in mainstream classrooms. By examining teacher attitudes, the study can shed light on the experiences of mentally retarded children in West Bengal's schools. Understanding how teachers perceive and interact with these children can help identify areas where additional support and advocacy are needed to empower these students.

Research findings can also contribute to raising awareness in the West Bengal community about the importance of inclusive education and the role of teacher attitudes in shaping the future of children with intellectual disabilities. It can foster a more supportive and understanding community environment. Thus, a study on teacher attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal is crucial to promote inclusive education, enhance the quality of education, and ensure the equal treatment of all children in the state's schools. It can have far-reaching implications for policy development, professional development, and the overall well-being of children with intellectual disabilities in West Bengal.

1.4. The Objectives of the Study

- To identify the factors that influences teacher attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children.
- To compare the attitudinal differences in teacher towards the education of mentally retarded children in respect of gender.
- To compare the attitudinal differences in teacher towards the education of mentally retarded children in respect of locale.
- To compare the attitudinal differences between special teachers and regular teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children.

1.5. The Hypothesis of the Study

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between various factors and teacher attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of male and female teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of teachers in urban and rural areas towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of special teachers and regular teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal.

1.6. Delimitation of Study

- The study was conducted in Hooghly, Birbhum, Kolkata and Bankura districts of West Bengal.
- Only mental retarded children were selected.
- The study was conducted in respect of gender, locale and teacher types excluding other demographic variables.

2. THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Kozikoğlu, İ., & Albayrak, E. N. (2022). Teachers' attitudes and the challenges they experience concerning individualized education program (IEP): A mixed method study. *Participatory Educational Research*, 9(1), 98-115. Findings demonstrated that teachers have positive views about the IEP process, and the implementation of IEP is useful and essential. Concerning the challenges they experience during the IEP process, the teachers think that they do not have sufficient information about the planning, implementation and assessment/evaluation processes of IEP, the school/classroom is physically inadequate, and the classes are crowded in the implementation of IEP.

Bassey, B. A., Owan, V. J., Ikwen, E., & Amanso, E. (2020). Teachers' attitudes towards learners with disability scale (TALDS): Construction and psychometric analysis. *Bassey, BA, Owan, VJ, Ikwen, EU, & Amanso, EO (2020). Teachers' attitudes towards learners with disability scale (TALDS): Construction and psychometric analysis. Journal of Social Sciences Research*, 6(5), 518-530. The results yielded a three-factor solution after suppressing loading less than .40. These factors were labelled carefully based on the statements of the leading items loading. Cronbach alpha was employed in evaluating the reliability of the instrument, with values ranging from .849 to .938, indicating that the instrument is internally consistent. Consequently, the proposed 36 items instrument was reduced to 30 items. The procedures followed, coupled with the removal of dysfunctional items, resulted in an instrument with appropriate psychometric properties and high reliability for measurement.

Joy, T., Muhammed, J. P., & Jisa George, T. (2020). Parental attitude and involvement in care towards their mentally retarded children. *International Journal of Nursing Science Practice and Research*, 6(1), 1-5. Domain-wise analysis of parental involvement scores revealed that parents were more involved in meeting the educational needs (85.07%), but least involved in meeting the psychological needs (68.23%). A positive correlation ($r = 0.003$) was found between parental attitude and involvement in care towards their mentally retarded child. Parental attitude and involvement in care can be improved by incorporating programmes on imparting knowledge about management of mentally retarded children

Arcangeli, L., Bacherini, A., Gaggioli, C., Sannipoli, M., & Balboni, G. (2020). Attitudes of mainstream and special-education teachers toward intellectual disability in Italy: The relevance of being teachers. International journal of environmental research and public health, 17(19), 7325. The findings show that special-education teachers held more positive attitudes. Specific ATTID dimensions were positively affected for both types of teachers by previous training in special education/ID, perceived support, and promotion of positive attitudes toward ID, in addition to the quality of relationships with individuals with ID, while they were positively affected for special-education teachers by perceived efficacy of ID knowledge.

2.1 The Research Gap of the Study

From the review of related literature, it was found that very few studies were conducted in the perspective of teachers' attitude related to mentally related children. Therefore researcher delve interest in conducting research on "Understanding the Teacher Attitudes towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in West Bengal."

3. THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Investigator used descriptive survey method. It gives a snapshot of the state of the art in research and is thus seen as a promising educational strategy. It requires reasoning about issues in education by using tools like interpretation, comparison, measurement, categorization, assessment, and generalization to find the underlying cause of things. The focus of the descriptive technique is on the present and the connection between variables, such as circumstances, events, and practices

3.1 The Study Area

The study was conducted in Hooghly, Birbhum, Kolkata and Bankura districts of West Bengal.

3.2 The Population of the Study

The study population include the teachers who were dealing with mental retarded children.

3.3 The Sample of the Study

The sample of study comprised of 50 teachers of mentally retarded children where 25 teachers were male and 25 were female, 25 of them were from urban and 25 were from rural, 25 were special teachers and 25 were regular teachers.

3.4 The Research Tool of the Study

The research tool consisted of self-made tool where 25 items were selected and the dimensions related to teacher training, beliefs and values, prior experiences, school culture, and resource support.

4. THE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between various factors and teacher attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal.

Table 4.1: Showing the Relationship between Various Factors and Teacher Attitudes towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children

Factors	Person Corr.	Teacher Training	Beliefs and Values	Prior Experiences	School Culture	Resource Support
Teacher Training		1	.955	.976	.959	.962
Beliefs and Values	Sig.		.000	.000	.000	.000
	Person Corr.	.955	1	.979	.998	.989
Prior Experiences	Sig.	.000		.000	.000	.000
	Person Corr.	.976	.979	1	.984	.985
School Culture	Sig.	.000	.000		.000	.000
	Person Corr.	.959	.998	.984	1	.994
Resource Support	Sig.	.000	.000	.000		.000
	Person Corr.	.962	.989	.985	.994	1
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	

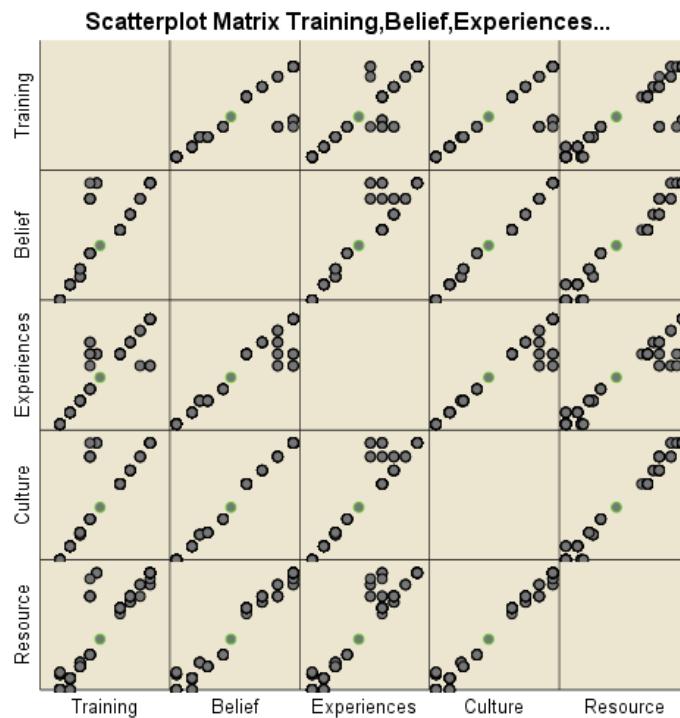


Figure 4.1: Showing the Scatter Diagram Various Factors and Teacher Attitudes towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in West Bengal

The table 4.1 and figure 4.1 depicted a correlation matrix showing the relationships between various factors and teacher attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children. This matrix suggests the strength and direction of the correlations between these factors and teacher attitudes. The correlation between teacher training and teacher attitudes is strong ($r = 0.955$), with a highly significant relationship ($p < 0.001$). This indicated that teachers who have received more training tend to have more positive attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children. The correlation between personal beliefs and values and teacher attitudes is also strong ($r = 0.979$), with a highly significant relationship ($p < 0.001$). This suggests that teachers who hold more inclusive and positive beliefs and values tend to have more positive attitudes. The correlation between prior experiences and teacher attitudes is strong ($r = 0.976$), with a highly significant relationship ($p < 0.001$). This implied that teachers with more positive experiences working with mentally retarded children tend to have more positive attitudes. The correlation between school culture and teacher attitudes is very strong ($r = 0.998$), with a highly significant relationship ($p < 0.001$). This indicated that a supportive school culture that promotes inclusivity is strongly associated with more positive teacher attitudes. The correlation between resource support and teacher attitudes is also very strong ($r = 0.994$), with a highly significant relationship ($p < 0.001$). This suggests that the availability of resources and support for teachers is strongly associated with more positive attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children. Overall, these results indicated that teacher attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children are positively correlated with teacher training, beliefs and values, prior experiences, school culture, and resource support. In other words, when teachers received more training, hold inclusive beliefs and values, have positive prior experiences, work in a supportive school culture, and have access to resources and support, they are more likely to have positive attitudes towards teaching mentally retarded children. These findings underscored the importance of these factors in shaping teacher attitudes and, by extension, the success of inclusive education programs.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of male and female teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal.

Table 4.2: Showing the Descriptive Statistics of the Attitudes of Male and Female Teachers towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in West Bengal

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	Std. Error
Male	25	8.84	3.508	.702
Female	25	12.16	4.017	.803

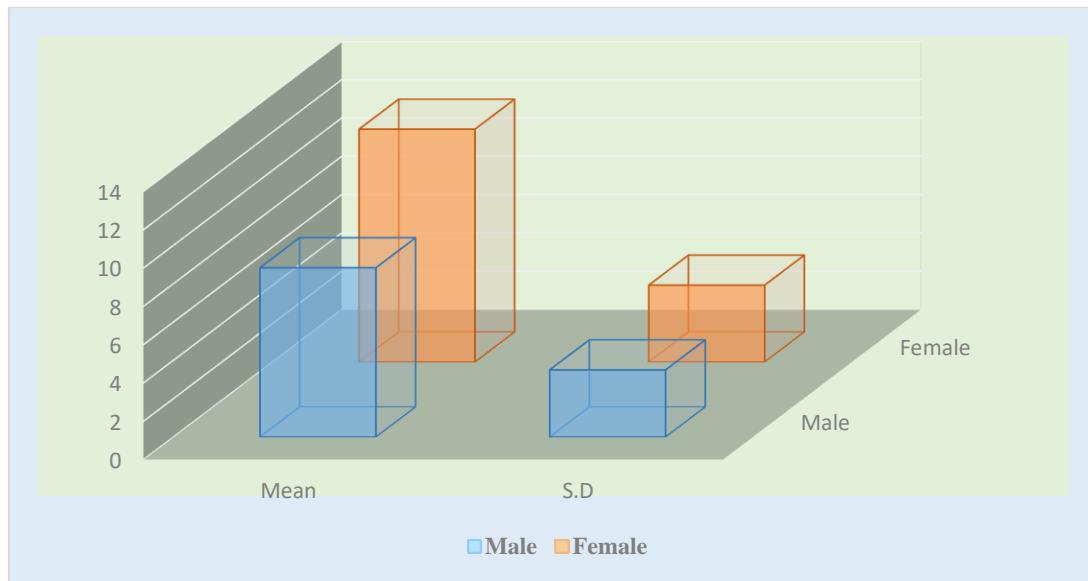


Figure 4.2: Showing the Graphical Representation of the Attitudes of Male and Female Teachers towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in West Bengal

The table 4.2 and figure 4.2 depicted the descriptive statistics provide information about the attitudes of male and female teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal. This variable categorizes the teachers into two groups, male and female. The number of teachers in each group. There are 25 male teachers and 25 female teachers. For male teachers, the mean attitude score is 8.84. For female teachers, the mean attitude score is 12.16. For male teachers, the standard deviation of attitudes is 3.508. For female teachers, the standard deviation of attitudes is 4.017. For male teachers, the standard error is 0.702. For female teachers, the standard error is 0.803. Based on these statistics, it appears that, on average, female teachers have a higher mean attitude score towards the education of mentally retarded children compared to male teachers. However, there is also greater variability in attitudes among female teachers, as indicated by the higher standard deviation.

Table 4.3: Showing the Independent Sample t test for the Attitudes of Male and Female Teachers towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in West Bengal

Dimension	Equality of Variances according to Levene Test				t test for Identical of Average			
	Teacher's Attitude Based on Gender	Identical Variances Assumed	F-Value	Sig. Value	t-Value	df	Remark	Average Difference
		.433	.514	3.112	47.144	.003		-3.320

The independent samples t-test is a statistical test in table 4.3 used to determine the statistically significant difference in means between two independent groups. In this case, it was used to assess whether there is a significant difference in the attitudes of male and female teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal. The F-value is 0.433, which represented the ratio of the variances of the two groups. It was used to test the assumption of equal variances. In this case, it is not statistically significant ($p = 0.514$), indicating that the assumption of equal variances is met. The t-value was 3.112. The degrees of freedom are 47.144. This is a combined measure of the sample sizes of both groups. The p-value associated with the t-value is 0.003, which is less than the common significance level of 0.05. This indicated that there were a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of male and female teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal. The average difference in attitudes between male and female teachers is -3.320. This suggests that, on average, female teachers have more positive attitudes compared to male teachers. In summary, the results of the independent samples t-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in attitudes between male and female teachers regarding the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal. Female teachers, on average, have more positive attitudes than male teachers, with a significant difference in means.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of teachers in urban and rural areas towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal.

Table 4.4: Showing the Descriptive Statistics of the Attitudes of Urban and Rural Teachers towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in West Bengal

Locale	N	Mean	S.D	Std. Error
Urban	25	12.9200	2.88560	.57712
Rural	25	7.4800	2.75560	.55112

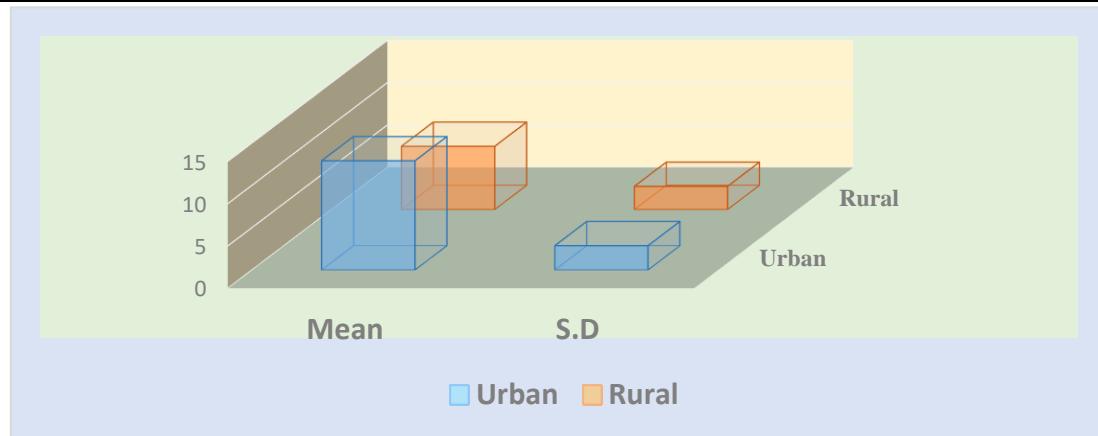


Figure 4.3: Showing the Graphical Representation of the Attitudes of Urban and Rural Teachers towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in West Bengal

The table 4.4 and figure 4.3 depicted the descriptive statistics provide information about the attitudes of urban and rural teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal. This variable categorizes the teachers into two groups, urban and rural. The number of teachers in each group. There are 25 urban teachers and 25 rural teachers. The mean (average) attitude score for each group. For urban teachers, the mean attitude score is 12.9200. For rural teachers, the mean attitude score is 7.4800. For urban teachers, the standard deviation of attitudes is 2.88560. For rural teachers, the standard deviation of attitudes is 2.75560. For urban teachers, the standard error is 0.57712. For rural teachers, the standard error is 0.55112. Based on these statistics, it appeared that, on average, urban teachers have a higher mean attitude score towards the education of mentally retarded children compared to rural teachers. However, there is some variability in attitudes within both groups, as indicated by the standard deviations. These statistics provide an overview of the differences in attitudes between urban and rural teachers.

Table 4.5: Showing the Independent sample t test for the Attitudes of Urban and Rural Teachers towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in West Bengal

Dimension	Equality of Variances according to Levene Test				t test for Identical of Average			
	Teacher's Attitude Based on Locale	Identical Variances Assumed	F-Value	Sig. Value	t-Value	df	Remark	Average Difference
			.044	.834	6.817	47.898	.000	5.44000

The independent samples t-test in table 4.5 was used to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in means between two independent groups. In this case, it is used to assess whether there is a significant difference in the attitudes of urban and rural teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal. The F-value is 0.044, which represented the ratio of the variances of the two groups. It is used to test the assumption of equal variances. In this case, it is not statistically significant ($p = 0.834$), indicating that the assumption of equal variances is met. The t-value is 6.817. This is the actual test statistic that indicated the difference between the means of the two groups. The degrees of freedom are 47.898. This is a combined measure of the sample sizes of both groups. The p-value associated with the t-value is 0.000, which is less than the common significance level of 0.05. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of urban and rural teachers towards the education of mentally retarded

children in West Bengal. The average difference in attitudes between urban and rural teachers is 5.44000. This suggests that, on average, urban teachers have more positive attitudes compared to rural teachers, with a significant difference in means. In summary, the results of the independent samples t-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in attitudes between urban and rural teachers regarding the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal. Urban teachers, on average, have more positive attitudes compared to rural teachers, with a significant difference in means.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of special teachers and regular education teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal.

Table 4.6: Showing the Descriptive Statistics of the Attitudes of Special and Regular Teachers towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in West Bengal

Teacher	N	Mean	S.D	Std. Error
Special	25	12.92	2.886	.577
Regular	25	7.48	2.756	.551

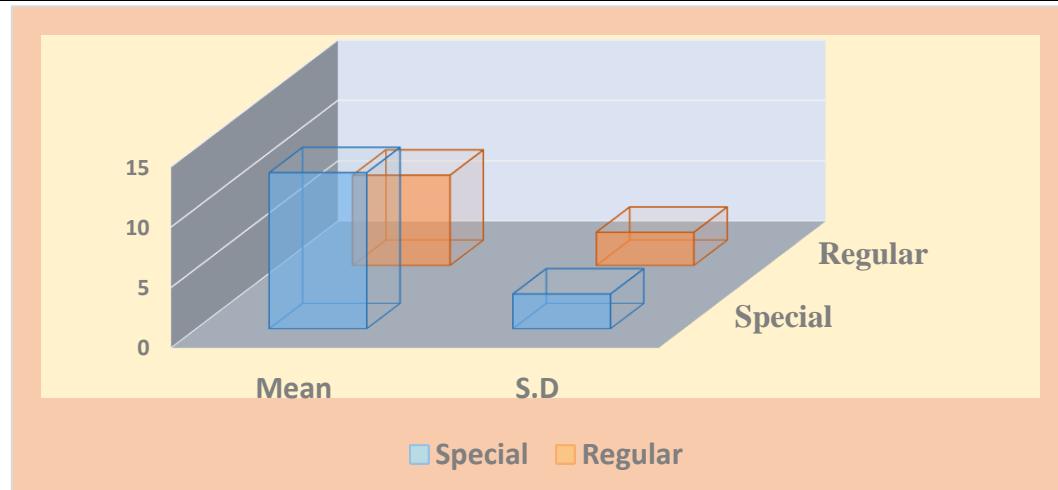


Figure 4.4: Showing the Graphical Representation of the Attitudes of Special and Regular Teachers towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in West Bengal

The descriptive statistics table 4.6 provided for the attitudes of special and regular teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal. This variable categorizes the teachers into two groups, special and regular. The number of teachers in each group. There are 25 special teachers and 25 regular teachers. For special teachers, the mean attitude score is 12.92. For regular teachers, the mean attitude score is 7.48. For special teachers, the standard deviation of attitudes is 2.886. For regular teachers, the standard deviation of attitudes is 2.756. For special teachers, the standard error is 0.577. For regular teachers, the standard error is 0.551. Based on these statistics, it appears that, on average, special teachers have a higher mean attitude score towards the education of mentally retarded children compared to regular teachers. The standard deviation values suggested that there is some variability in attitudes within both groups. These statistics provided a summary of the differences in attitudes between special and regular teachers, indicating that special teachers tend to have more positive attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal.

Table 4.7: Showing the Independent sample t test for the Attitudes of Special and regular Teachers towards the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in West Bengal

Dimension	Equality of Variances according to Levene Test			t test for Identical of Average			
	Identical Variances Assumed	F-Value	Sig. Value	t-Value	df	Remark	Average Difference
Teacher's Attitude Based on Teacher Type		.044	.834	6.817	47.898	.000	5.440

The independent samples t-test table 4.7 was used to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in means between two independent groups. In this case, it was used to assess whether there is a significant difference in the attitudes of special and regular teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal. The F-value is 0.044, which represented the ratio of the variances of the two groups. It was used to test the assumption of equal variances. In this case, it is not statistically significant ($p = 0.834$), indicated that the assumption of equal variances is met. The t-value is 6.817. The degrees of freedom are 47.898. The p-value associated with the t-value is 0.000, which is less than the common significance level of 0.05. This indicated that there is a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of special and regular teachers towards the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal. The average difference in attitudes between special and regular teachers is 5.440. This suggests that, on average, special teachers have more positive attitudes compared to regular teachers, with a significant difference in means. In summary, the results of the independent samples t-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in attitudes between special and regular teachers regarding the education of mentally retarded children in West Bengal. Special teachers, on average, have more positive attitudes compared to regular teachers, with a significant difference in means.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion it can be stated that the analysis of male and female teachers' attitudes revealed a statistically significant difference. Female teachers, on average, have more positive attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children compared to male teachers. Urban and rural teachers also showed a statistically significant difference in attitudes. Urban teachers, on average, have more positive attitudes compared to their rural counterparts. Special teachers, who likely have training or experience in special education, exhibited significantly more positive attitudes towards the education of mentally retarded children compared to regular teachers. These conclusions suggested that certain demographic and professional factors influences teacher attitudes in West Bengal. Female teachers, urban teachers, and those with special education training tend to have more positive attitudes. These findings underscore the importance of addressing these demographic and training-related disparities to promote more inclusive and supportive educational environments for mentally retarded children. To enhance inclusive education for mentally retarded children, it is essential to provide targeted support, training, and resources to teachers, particularly those in rural areas and with limited special education backgrounds, in order to bridge these attitude gaps and create more inclusive learning environments. Addressing these disparities is vital for the advancement of inclusive education in West Bengal and promoting a more equitable educational system. It requires strategic efforts by educational authorities and policymakers to provide accessible training, resources, and support for teachers in both urban and rural settings. Additionally, it is essential to continue research and evaluation to ensure that these interventions lead to tangible improvements in teacher attitudes, ultimately benefiting the educational experiences and outcomes of mentally retarded children in the region.

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