



Status of Secondary Special Schools in West Bengal: Resources, Teacher Roles, and Curriculum

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Abstract

Inclusive education aims to provide equal educational opportunities for students with impairments. In India, regulations such as the Right to School Act and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act prioritize the inclusion of children with special needs in the formal educational system. However, the operation of secondary special schools remains a challenge, particularly in states such as West Bengal. This review looks at the current literature on the state of secondary special schools in West Bengal, focusing on resource availability, teacher roles and readiness, and curriculum adaptation. The findings highlight ongoing problems, including inadequate infrastructure, limited access to assistive technologies, insufficient teacher preparation, and rigid curricula that fail to address students' diverse needs. Furthermore, policy execution remains inconsistent due to funding constraints and ineffective monitoring procedures. Despite these challenges, teacher commitment, community participation, and inclusive pedagogical approaches provide opportunities to improve the quality and equality of secondary special education.

Keywords

Special schools, secondary education, teacher preparedness, curriculum adaptation, students with disabilities, West Bengal.

1. Introduction

Individuals with disabilities benefit greatly from education, as it promotes social inclusion and equitable opportunities. Over the last few years, there has been a global shift away from segregated special education toward inclusive educational systems that accommodate learners with diverse needs within mainstream classrooms. In India, this trend has been reflected in several policy efforts and legislative reforms that emphasise the rights of children with disabilities to equitable, high-quality education.

The growth of inclusive education in India has been influenced by international frameworks such as the Salamanca Statement and national regulations such as the Right to Education Act (2009) and the Rights



of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016). These policies aim to promote inclusive education and ensure access for children with disabilities. However, the translation of these policy commitments into successful educational practices varies by location and school level (Singal, 2006; Sharma and Das, 2015).

Secondary education is an important stage in the educational journey of students with disabilities. At this level, students face higher academic standards, social expectations, and preparation for future career options. Secondary special schools serve an important role in assisting students with disabilities who may require unique educational environments and support services. Despite their relevance, research shows that secondary special schools in India frequently face structural and institutional barriers that affect the quality of education for children with special needs (Chanana, 2014).

In West Bengal, the educational environment shows both progress and ongoing obstacles in inclusive education. Several studies have identified challenges including inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of trained teachers, limited curriculum adaptation, and gaps between policy formation and implementation (Kundu and Rice, 2019; Srivastava, 2019). These challenges limit secondary special schools' ability to effectively support students with disabilities and contribute to greater disparities in educational access and outcomes.

The literature also implies that teachers' tasks in inclusive and special education settings have become more complex. Teachers are expected not only to deliver education but also to collaborate with families, manage diverse classrooms, and adapt teaching practices to meet the needs of students with disabilities (Khanna & Kareem, 2024). However, many instructors report insufficient training and institutional support to properly perform these duties (Das et al., 2013).

Another major issue mentioned in the research is curricular adaptability. Curricula for inclusive education must be flexible enough to meet a wide range of learning needs and abilities. However, many schools continue to use standardized curriculum frameworks that are not sufficiently customized for students with disabilities (Kumari et al., 2024). This constraint limits students with special needs' educational involvement and academic progress.

Given these problems, it is critical to review previous research on secondary special schools in West Bengal to better understand the current state of educational resources, teacher preparedness, and curriculum practices. This review article will integrate the available literature to provide a full overview of these difficulties and identify potential areas for improvement.

2. Methodology of Literature Selection

This review takes a systematic approach to identifying and synthesizing current literature on the situation of secondary special schools in West Bengal. The literature search concentrated on research that investigated resource availability, teacher roles, curriculum adaptation, and policy implementation in inclusive and special education settings. The search method began with the creation of many key queries about the research topic. These search queries included phrases like "status of secondary special schools in West Bengal," "inclusive education resources and teacher roles in India," and



"curriculum adaptation in special education." Using these search terms, an initial set of 64 research publications was discovered.

Citation chaining strategies were utilized to ensure that the topic was covered thoroughly. Backward citation analysis entailed reviewing the reference lists of selected studies to uncover previous fundamental research. Forward citation analysis was also used to identify other current studies that mentioned these key papers. During this approach, 43 additional relevant papers were identified. After evaluating the literature for relevance to the research issue, 105 papers were identified as relevant, with 50 regarded as very relevant for further analysis. The papers chosen comprised qualitative research, quantitative surveys, case studies, and systematic reviews conducted in India and other comparable educational settings.

These studies' findings were thematically examined to discover major themes regarding resource availability, teacher roles and training, curriculum adaptation, policy implementation, and challenges to inclusive education.

3. Resource Availability in Secondary Special Schools

One of the most frequently mentioned concerns in Indian inclusive and special education literature is the availability of resources. Many studies have found that secondary special schools confront considerable resource constraints, limiting their ability to provide adequate educational support to students with disabilities. Several studies have found deficiencies of physical infrastructure, instructional resources, and assistive technologies in special schools (Kundu & Rice, 2019; Kaur & Salian, 2024; Kumari et al., 2024). These constraints are especially visible in government schools and rural locations, where budgetary and administrative constraints further influence resource allocation (Taneja-Johansson et al., 2021). Assistive technologies are essential in meeting the learning needs of students with impairments. However, many schools do not have access to technology like screen readers, Braille materials, and other specialized teaching aids (Pujari, 2022). The lack of such resources inhibits students' capacity to participate in academic activities actively and thus their educational outcomes. In addition to technology resources, the literature emphasizes the scarcity of specialized support services such as psychologists, therapists, and rehabilitation specialists. These services are critical for meeting the varied requirements of children with disabilities, but they are limited in many secondary special schools (Kaur & Salian, 2024). Despite these challenges, some research provides evidence of inventive resource utilization practices. For example, cluster models and collaborative resource-sharing approaches have been proposed as methods for optimizing existing educational resources (Fauzi et al., 2025). These methods enable schools to pool resources and deliver specialized services more efficiently. Overall, the literature demonstrates that enhancing resource allocation is an essential component of strengthening secondary special education in West Bengal.

4. Teacher Roles and Professional Preparedness

Teachers are vital to the success of inclusive and special education programs. Their attitudes, expertise, and skills have a substantial impact on the learning experiences of students with disabilities. However,



research regularly shows that instructors in secondary special schools confront various obstacles due to position ambiguity and insufficient professional preparation. Teachers in inclusive environments frequently take on additional responsibilities outside of the classroom. These responsibilities include mentoring students, working with parents, cooperating with support providers, and modifying educational materials (Khanna & Kareem, 2024). While this multidimensional job might improve educational support for kids, it can also cause role overload and stress for teachers. Several research studies have shown that many teachers lack specialized training in inclusive and special education techniques (Das et al., 2013; Bansal, 2017). As a result, teachers may feel underprepared to meet the different learning demands of children with disabilities. Professional development programs are consequently regarded as critical for developing teacher competency in inclusive education. Continuous training opportunities can assist instructors in developing abilities such as differentiated instruction, behavioral management, and inclusive assessment techniques (Misquitta & Joshi, 2022). Interestingly, despite these limitations, research shows that many teachers have a good attitude toward inclusive education. Teachers frequently indicate a readiness to help students with impairments and modify their teaching methods accordingly (Behera, 2018). Positive attitudes alone are insufficient; teachers must also receive proper training and institutional support to effectively adopt inclusive practices.

5. Curriculum Adaptation and Pedagogical Practices

Curriculum adaptation is another important aspect of inclusive education. Curricula must be adaptable and responsive to the various learning requirements of students with disabilities in order to be effective in inclusive education. However, several research studies indicate that curricular adjustments in secondary special schools are restricted and insufficient. Schools frequently use standardized curricula that are geared toward mainstream learners and do not sufficiently accommodate kids with special needs (Kumari et al., 2024). A lack of curriculum flexibility can have a negative impact on academic engagement and learning results for students with disabilities. Traditional teaching approaches and evaluation processes may fail to address the students' diverse learning styles and abilities (Pradhan & Gochhayat, 2023). Recent research has underlined the use of frameworks like Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in fostering inclusive curriculum design. These frameworks motivate educators to design adaptable learning environments that can accommodate a wide range of learners (Fauzi et al., 2025). However, many schools still struggle to implement such techniques due to a lack of expertise and resources. Teachers may lack the necessary information or assistance to develop and implement effective customized learning strategies.

6. Policy Implementation and Institutional Challenges

India has created numerous policy frameworks to encourage inclusive education, such as the Right to Education Act, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, and the National Education Policy 2020. These policies emphasize the necessity of giving equal educational opportunities to children with impairments. Despite these policy pledges, the literature shows major disparities between policy intentions and actual behaviors in schools (Srivastava, 2019). Many schools struggle to implement inclusive education programs due to financial restrictions, insufficient administrative assistance, and



inadequate monitoring mechanisms (Sarangapani et al., 2013). Fragmented governance systems also add to implementation issues. Special education responsibilities are frequently split amongst numerous government departments, resulting in coordination issues and inconsistent policy enforcement (Narayan, 2006).

7. Barriers and Enablers of Inclusive Education

The literature cites numerous impediments to the effective implementation of inclusive education. Inadequate infrastructure, restricted resources, and a shortage of educated teachers are all examples of structural impediments. These challenges have an impact on schools' ability to provide adequate education to kids with disabilities (Kaur & Salian, 2024). Sociocultural issues also have an important impact. Negative attitudes and stigma associated with disability can deter families from enrolling their children in school and limit community support for inclusive education (Pujari, 2022). At the same time, the literature identifies various enabling elements that can help promote inclusive education. These include collaborative leadership in schools, strong teacher dedication, and active participation by families and communities (Annapriya, 2023).

8. Research Gaps and Future Directions

Although existing research gives useful insights into the issues that secondary special schools face, there are still several gaps. Many studies focus on primary education, leaving secondary special education largely unexplored. Future studies should include longitudinal studies to investigate the long-term effects of inclusive education programs. Such a study can shed light on how inclusive policies influence academic attainment, employment opportunities, and social participation among students with disabilities.

There is also a need for region-specific studies, such as in West Bengal, to better understand local problems and potential for inclusive education.

9. Conclusion

The literature on secondary special schools in West Bengal depicts a complicated educational landscape marked by both progress and continuing problems. While inclusive education regulations have established chances for students with disabilities to gain educational access, various structural and institutional impediments remain to impede the success of these initiatives. Limited resources, limited teacher training, and rigid curricula continue to be significant barriers to inclusive education. Teachers display a dedication to assisting children with disabilities, but they require further professional assistance and clearer role definitions.

To increase the quality and equity of secondary special education in West Bengal, policymakers and educational institutions must prioritize resource allocation, teacher capacity building, and adaptable curriculum design. More inclusive educational environments that support the academic and social growth of students with disabilities can be created via collaborative efforts among stakeholders.



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