

An Analysis of Inclusive Education on Empowerment Programmes Through Elementary School Teachers with Special Reference to North 24 Parganas, West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education has emerged as a fundamental approach to ensuring equitable access to quality education for all learners, regardless of their abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, gender, or cultural diversity. Elementary school teachers play a pivotal role in implementing inclusive practices and promoting empowerment programmes that enhance students' academic, social, emotional, and life skills. The significance of empowerment programmes in strengthening teachers' competencies to create inclusive classroom environments. The role of professional development, pedagogical innovation, collaborative teaching, assistive technologies, and community participation in fostering inclusive education. Drawing upon contemporary educational policies and inclusive teaching frameworks, it emphasizes the need for continuous capacity-building initiatives to empower teachers as key agents of educational transformation. In this article; an analysis of inclusive education on empowerment programmes through elementary school teachers with special reference to North 24 Parganas, West Bengal were discussed.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Empowerment Programmes Elementary School Teachers, North 24 Parganas.*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has emerged as a fundamental principle of educational reform, emphasizing equal access, participation, and learning opportunities for all children irrespective of their socio-economic status, gender, disability, language, ethnicity, religion, or cultural background (Gupta, A.K. & Tandon, B., 2018). It is founded on the belief that every learner has the right to quality education within a supportive and inclusive environment that values diversity and promotes equity (Hermanto, H. & Pamungkas, B., 2023). Inclusive education seeks to eliminate barriers to learning and participation while fostering respect, social justice, and equal opportunities for every child. Elementary education serves as the foundation of lifelong learning and plays a crucial role in shaping children's cognitive, emotional, social, and moral development. At this stage, teachers are the key agents responsible for creating inclusive classrooms where every learner feels valued, respected, and supported. Their attitudes, pedagogical practices, professional competence, and commitment significantly influence the successful implementation of inclusive education. Therefore, empowering

elementary school teachers through well-designed training programmes is essential for achieving the objectives of inclusive education (Jena, S.S. et al., 2018). Teacher empowerment programmes encompass continuous professional development initiatives that enhance teachers' knowledge, pedagogical skills, inclusive teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, assessment practices, and the effective use of assistive technologies (Kalita, M., 2019). These programmes also strengthen teachers' confidence, leadership abilities, collaborative skills, and sensitivity towards learners with diverse educational needs. Empowered teachers are better equipped to identify learning barriers, adopt differentiated instructional approaches, engage parents and communities, and create equitable learning environments that support the academic and socio-emotional development of all students (Khanani, A.B., 2019). The implementation of inclusive education has gained significant momentum through international frameworks such as the Salamanca Statement (1994), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), and the Sustainable Development Goals, which advocate inclusive and equitable quality education for all. In the Indian context, policy initiatives including the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and the National Education Policy 2020 reinforce the commitment to inclusive education by emphasizing equitable access, teacher capacity building, and learner-centred pedagogical practices. Despite these policy advancements, several challenges continue to hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education, including inadequate teacher preparation, limited professional training, insufficient instructional resources, large class sizes, infrastructural constraints, and negative societal attitudes towards diversity (Kumari, P. & Nayan, R., 2018). These challenges underscore the necessity of comprehensive teacher empowerment programmes that equip elementary school teachers with the competencies required to address the diverse learning needs of all students. Against this backdrop, the present study explores inclusive education from the perspective of teacher empowerment programmes at the elementary level. It examines how systematic professional development, institutional support, and inclusive pedagogical practices enhance teachers' capacity to foster equitable, participatory, and learner-centred classrooms (Minsih et al., 2020). By focusing on the pivotal role of elementary school teachers, the study contributes to the understanding of how teacher empowerment serves as a catalyst for the successful implementation of inclusive education and the realization of quality education for all (Ponnusamy, P. & Sankar, S., 2022). The objective of the study is to an analysis of inclusive education on empowerment programmes through elementary school teachers with special reference to North 24 Parganas, West Bengal.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research is a systematic approach to inquiry. The process includes collecting data, documenting significant facts, and subsequently employing established methodologies recognized in academic and professional domains to assess and interpret such data and information. Research methodology denotes the systematic and theoretical analysis of the methods utilized within a specific domain.

Study Area: North 24 Parganas district was selected from the West Bengal state in India.

Variables:

Dependent Variables: Age, Gender.

Independent Variables: Inclusive Education, Elementary School, Teacher Empowerment.

Research Design:

The research design serves as a method for answering the research questions. The objective of qualitative research is to understand how individuals see the world. The objective of quantitative research design is to ascertain the quantity of individuals who believe, act, or feel in a particular manner. In this research, qualitative and quantitative research design were used.

Primary Data and Secondary Data:

Primary data denotes information derived from first-hand accounts or empirical facts, especially within the framework of research. It may also be termed as primary knowledge or unprocessed data. An external entity or agency conducts the analysis, necessitating investment and human resources, hence rendering the information compilation process costly. Researchers refer to secondary data as previously collected and documented material that does not directly relate to the current research problem. It is accessible as data collected from diverse sources, including governmental publications, censuses, internal organizational records, books, journal articles, websites, reports, and electronic resources. In this research, primary and secondary data were used.

Sampling Plan:

Sampling methodology pertains to the analysis of a population via data examination and information collection. Each element in the population possesses an equal and probable chance of selection for the sample when employing the simple random sampling method. In this research, simple random sampling plan was used.

Sample Size: 600.

Methodology:

The respondents were collected from the selected thirty schools of North 24 Parganas district, West Bengal through simple random sampling. The age of the respondents was within 30 to 60 years (Class I to Class IV Bengali medium). Same ratio of male and female respondents was selected for the study. The questionnaire sheet was provided in favour of each respondent after clearing the research objectives. Sufficient time was given to each respondent. After completion of the sheet, the data sheet was collected for further analysis and interpret based on the research objectives.

Research Tools:

A questionnaire is a series of questions or extra prompts that are meant to get information from a group of people. Respondents may answer questions utilizing a 5-point Likert scale—a psychometric method—by indicating their level of agreement across five points. The abbreviations: SA: Strongly Agree (5 points), A: Agree (4 points), N: Neutral (3 points), D: Disagree (2 points), SD: Strongly Disagree (1 point).

In this research, structured questionnaires (5 Point Likert Scale sheet) were used.

Tools Used:

- Training Pre-Arrangement Scale
- Training Content Relevancy Scale
- Training Programme Delivery- Strategy Approaches Scale

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Data analysis entails examining raw data to discern patterns, formulate conclusions, and inform decision-making. Data interpretation entails understanding, organizing, and extracting meaningful insights from data. In this research, pie charts were used.

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Personal Profile

Table 1: Age (in Years)

Options	Respondents	%
30-40 years	206	34.33
41-50 years	288	48
51-60 years	106	17.67
Total	600	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

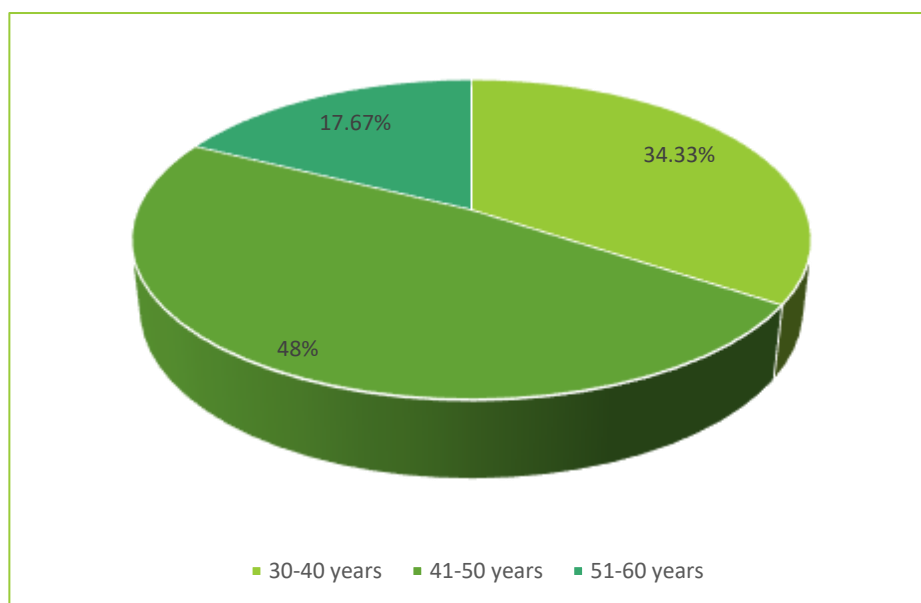


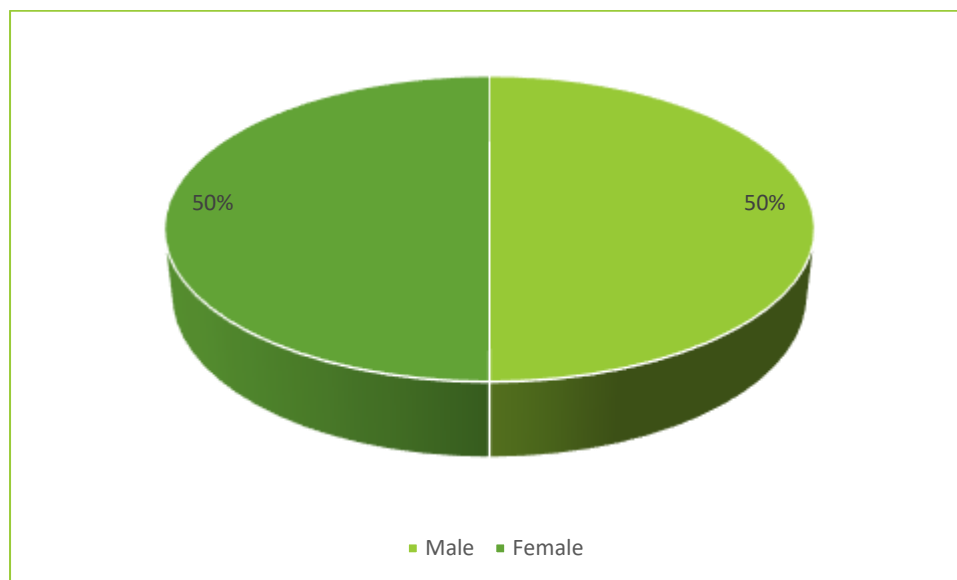
Figure 1: Age (in Years) (%)

From the above table & figure, it was found that the percentage of 30-40 years: 34.33%, 41-50 years: 48% & 51-60 years: 17.67%.

Table 2: Gender

Options	Respondents	%
Male	300	50
Female	300	50
Total	600	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

**Figure 2: Gender (%)**

From the above table & figure, it was found that the percentage of Male: 50% & Female: 50%.

b. Training Pre-Arrangement System Among School Teachers' Empowerment Programmes Towards Inclusive Education

Table 3. Teachers Will Generally Receive Notification Regarding Attendance at Each Teacher Empowerment Program Related to Inclusive Education Well in Advance

Options	Respondents	%
SA	86	14.33
A	126	21
N	104	17.33
D	169	28.16
SD	115	19.18
Total	600	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

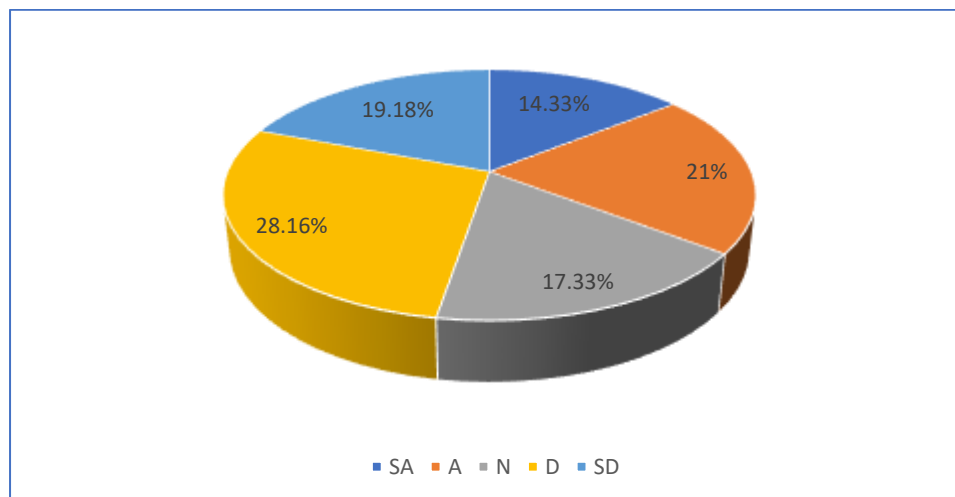


Figure 3: Teachers Will Generally Receive Notification Regarding Attendance at Each Teacher Empowerment Program Related to Inclusive Education Well in Advance (%)

From the above table & figure, it was found that the percentage of SA: 14.33%, A: 21%, N: 17.33%, D: 28.16% & SD: 19.18%.

Table 4: The Objectives of Training Programs Are Often Not Explicitly Specified in The Notification Letter to The Teachers

Options	Respondents	%
SA	192	32
A	168	28
N	66	11
D	81	13.5
SD	93	15.5
Total	600	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

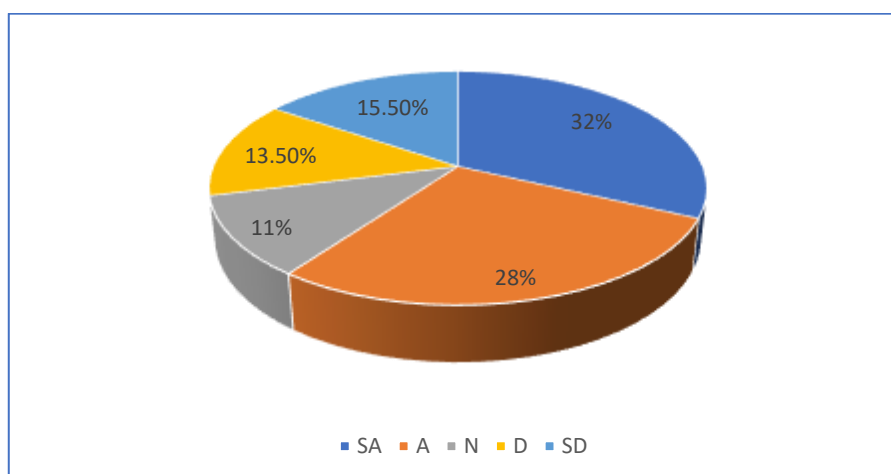


Figure 4: The Objectives of Training Programs Are Often Not Explicitly Specified in The Notification Letter to The Teachers (%)

From the above table & figure, it was found that the percentage of SA: 32%, A: 28%, N: 11%, D: 13.5% & SD: 15.5%.

Table 5: Typically, The Program Coordinators Request Information Regarding the Training Requirements Related to Inclusive Education (Academic) Prior to TEP

Options	Respondents	%
SA	145	24.17
A	156	26
N	75	12.5
D	118	19.66
SD	106	17.67
Total	600	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

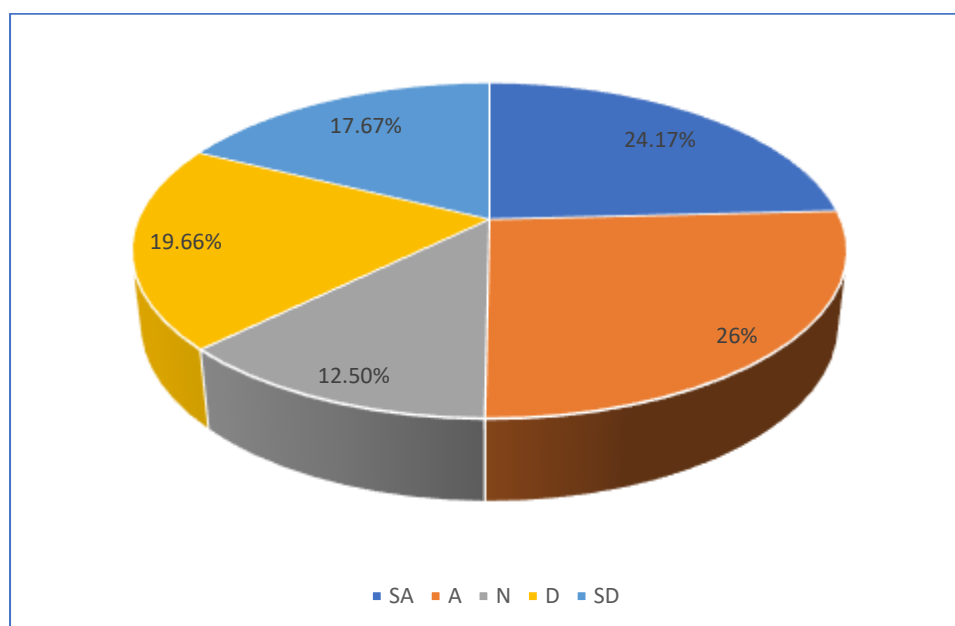


Figure 5: Typically, The Program Coordinators Request Information Regarding the Training Requirements Related to Inclusive Education (Academic) Prior to TEP (%)

From the above table & figure, the percentages were found to be: SA: 24.17%, A: 26%, N: 12.5%, D: 19.66% & SD: 17.67%.

c. Training Content Relevancy among School Teacher's Empowerment Programmes towards Inclusive Education

Table 6: Innovative Concepts in Inclusive Teaching and Learning Will Be Incorporated into TEP Sessions

Options	Respondents	%
SA	165	27.5
A	183	30.5
N	44	7.33
D	106	17.67
SD	102	17
Total	600	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

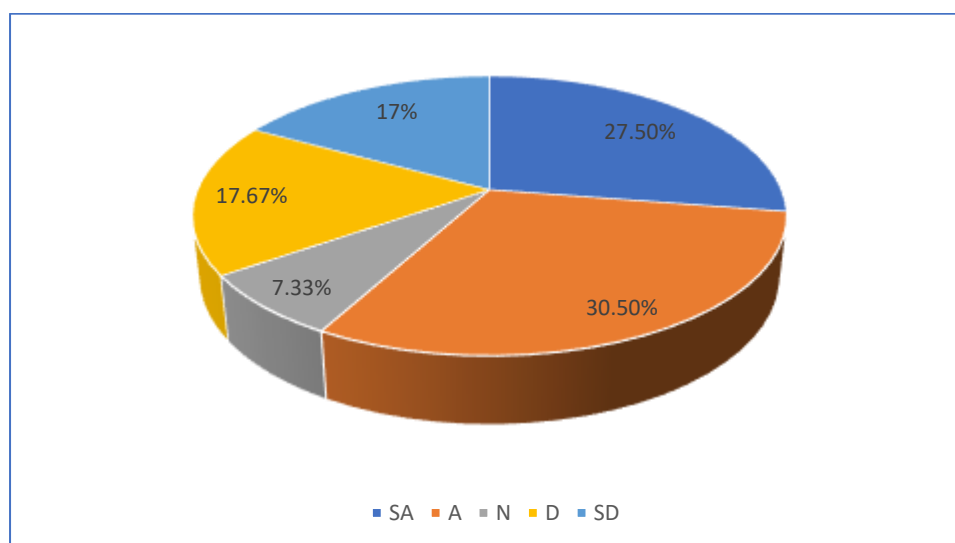


Figure 6: Innovative Concepts in Inclusive Teaching and Learning Will Be Incorporated into TEP Sessions (%)

From the above table & figure, it was found that the percentage of SA: 27.5%, A: 30.5%, N: 7.33%, D: 17.67% & SD: 17%.

Table 7: The Module's Contents Pertaining to Inclusive Education Are Exclusively Presented in TEP Sessions

Options	Respondents	%
SA	176	29.33
A	189	31.5
N	39	6.5
D	128	21.34
SD	68	11.33
Total	600	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

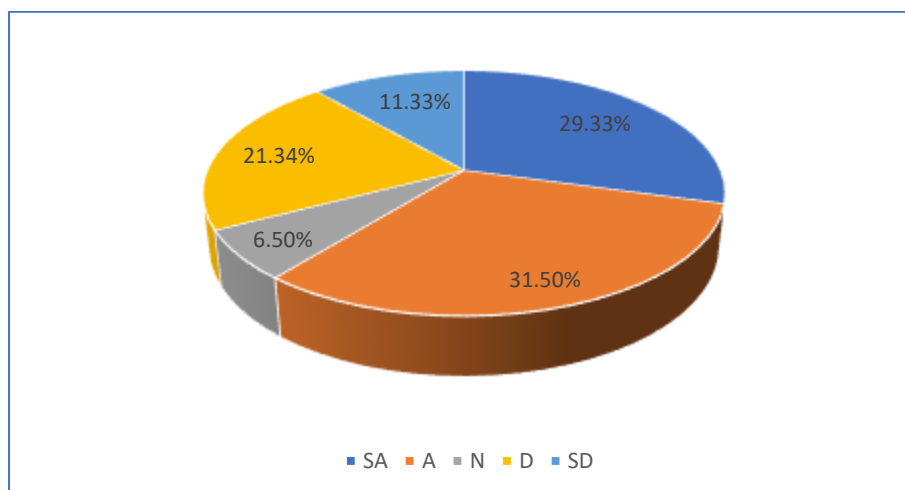


Figure 7: The Module's Contents Pertaining to Inclusive Education are Exclusively Presented in TEP Sessions (%)

From the above table & figure, it was found that the percentage of SA: 29.33%, A: 31.5%, N: 6.5%, D: 21.34% & SD: 11.33%.

Table 8: At The Participants' Request, The Resource Persons Will Occasionally Diverge from The Module to Engage in Conversations Pertaining to Inclusive Topics

Options	Respondents	%
SA	154	25.67
A	191	31.83
N	42	7
D	116	19.33
SD	97	16.17
Total	600	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

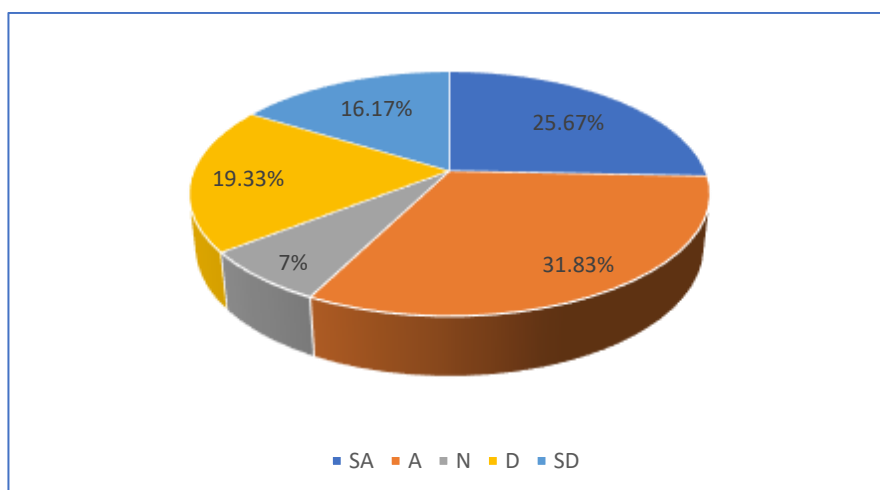


Figure 8: At The Participants' Request, The Resource Persons Will Occasionally Diverge from The Module to Engage in Conversations Pertaining to Inclusive Topics (%)

From the above table & figure, it was found that the percentage of SA: 25.67%, A: 31.83%, N: 7%, D: 19.33% & SD: 16.17%.

d. Training Programme Delivery-Strategy approaches among School Teacher's Empowerment Programmes (TEP) towards Inclusive Education

Table 9: TEP Concerning Inclusive Education Consistently Employs Strategies Such as Seminars, Talks, and Brainstorming

Options	Respondents	%
SA	164	27.33
A	157	26.17
N	59	9.83
D	142	23.67
SD	78	13
Total	600	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

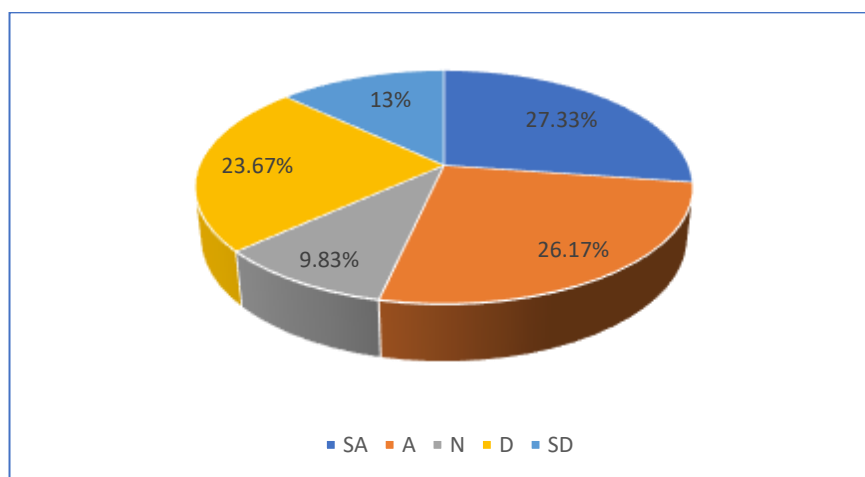


Figure 9: TEP Concerning Inclusive Education Consistently Employs Strategies Such as Seminars, Talks, and Brainstorming (%)

From the above table & figure, it was found that the percentage of SA: 27.33%, A: 26.17%, N: 9.83%, D: 23.67% & SD: 13%.

Table 10: Educators Effectively Employ the Expertise of Inclusive Education Specialists

Options	Respondents	%
SA	69	11.5
A	103	17.17
N	38	6.33
D	201	33.5
SD	189	31.5
Total	600	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

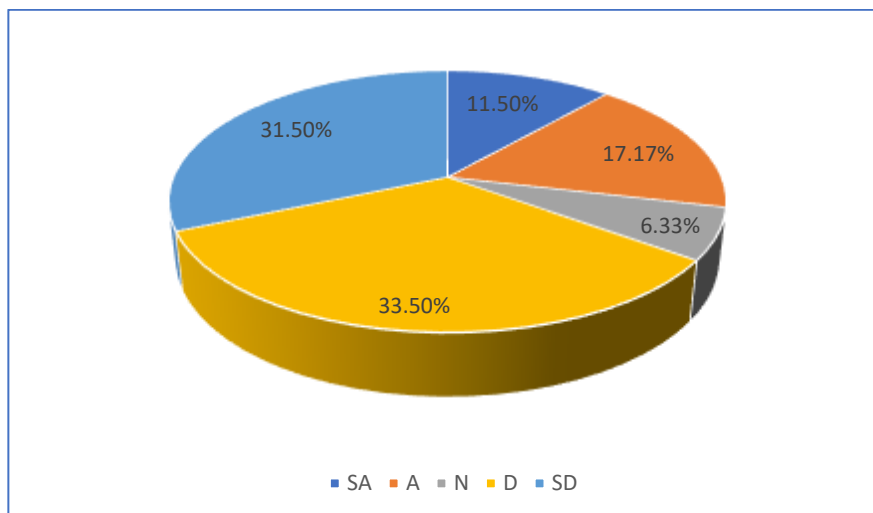


Figure 10: Educators Effectively Employ the Expertise of Inclusive Education Specialists (%)

From the above table & figure, it was found that the percentage of SA: 11.5%, A: 17.17%, N: 6.33%, D: 33.5% & SD: 31.5%.

Table 11: In The Majority of TEP Concerning Inclusive Education, Educators Acquire Academic Knowledge Solely Through Lectures

Options	Respondents	%
SA	165	27.5
A	188	31.33
N	46	7.67
D	112	18.67
SD	89	14.83
Total	600	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

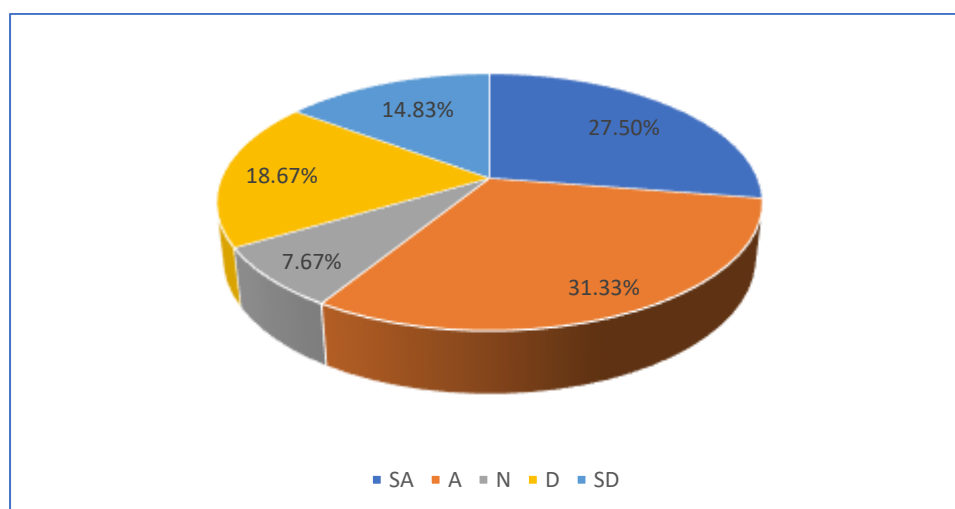


Figure 11: In The Majority of TEP Concerning Inclusive Education, Educators Acquire Academic Knowledge Solely Through Lectures (%)

From the above table & figure, it was found that the percentage of SA: 27.5%, A: 31.33%, N: 7.67%, D: 18.67% & SD: 14.83%.

CONCLUSION

Inclusive education has emerged as a transformative educational approach that seeks to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all children, irrespective of their socio-economic background, gender, disability, language, or cultural identity. The present study concluded that the successful implementation of inclusive education largely depends on the empowerment of elementary school teachers through comprehensive and continuous professional development programmes. Teachers serve as the primary agents of inclusion, and their knowledge, attitudes, pedagogical competencies and commitment significantly influence the effectiveness of inclusive classroom practices. The findings indicated that teacher empowerment programmes have positively contributed to enhancing teachers' awareness, instructional skills, classroom management strategies, and sensitivity towards learners with diverse educational needs. However, the effectiveness of these programmes is constrained by several challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teaching-learning resources, large class sizes, limited availability of special educators, irregular follow-up training, and gaps between policy provisions and classroom implementation. These issues remain particularly significant in many elementary schools of North 24 Parganas, West Bengal. The study further reveals that although national educational policies advocate inclusive education, effective implementation requires stronger institutional support, systematic monitoring, collaborative engagement among teachers, parents, school administrators, and local communities, and greater investment in accessible educational resources. Continuous capacity building, reflective teaching practices, and the integration of inclusive pedagogies are essential for sustaining teacher empowerment and improving educational outcomes for all learners. The research concluded that teacher empowerment programmes play a pivotal role in advancing inclusive education. Strengthening these programmes through need-based training, adequate resource allocation, technological integration, and sustained policy support will enable elementary school teachers to create inclusive, equitable, and learner-centred classrooms. Such efforts will not only improve the quality of elementary education in North 24 Parganas but also contribute to achieving the broader national goals of educational equity, social justice and sustainable human development.

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