

## **Analysis of Teachers' Perspectives on Inclusion of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

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#### **KEY WORDS**

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Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Special education, Inclusive education, Mainstream classrooms, Integration

#### **ABSTRACT**

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The goal of this study was to explore how teachers perceived Inclusion of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Total hundred (100) teachers which are teaching the students with ASD in special education department Punjab were chosen as a sample for this research. This is a quantitative research study and the data was gathered using a questionnaire. The information gathered was evaluated using descriptive statistical techniques. To examine the differences between participants based on gender, rural region, low and high achievers, an independent sample t-test was used for students with ASD. We can conclude from this study and the literature on the subject that teachers who have positive beliefs about including students with ASD and who have access to resources and supports for assisting students with ASD in overcoming the challenges associated with fostering inclusion in mainstream classrooms are more likely to provide meaningful learning experiences for their students.

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## Introduction

The inclusion in normal classes of children with special needs is becoming common with attitudes and laws evolving in line with the practice of integrated education. Locally, these changes are reflected in the Action on Inclusion, an inclusive educational system designed to "provide the most adequate learning environments for all students, and opportunities to achieve their potential. With the increasing frequency of ASD, schools are challenged to regularly incorporate and design instructional programmers for these kids (Fombonne, 2003).

The number of children with ASD is gradually increasing (Autism Society of Canada, 2010), and since 2012 an increasing number of them has been integrated into mainstream schools. Despite this rise, models and tactics for properly integrating these kids are insufficient. ASD children and young people generate major problems for the school system due to issues and arguments on how these pupils may be supported and educated effectively (Mundschenk, & Helfin, 2011).

Inclusive education refers to students with disabilities receiving an education alongside their non-disabled peers in a general education setting (Pas et al., 2016). Students with ASD may benefit from inclusive education programs that help them improve their social communication skills while also being suitably challenged intellectually. Students with disabilities should be better served among non-disabled peers, according to literature from the United States and around the world (Garwood & Sherman, 2015).

Alberta Education's Action on Inclusion program promotes inclusive practices that will better educate teachers to work with students from diverse backgrounds. "Inclusion" in Alberta refers to all children, including those with autism spectrum disorder being fully integrated into the larger school community. Physical placement is fluid and variable, constantly challenging the success of the student. Inclusion does not only concern the context but also particularly plans education and assistance in neighborhood schools for kids with special needs. Instruction in this model helps teaching and assistance of children at their neighborhood school with special needs in normal classrooms. In this paradigm, instruction is important to success rather than configuration (Manrique et al., 2019).

Inclusion is a chance to be incorporated into a traditional learning environment completely and meaningfully. This includes the attitude, acceptance, and membership of all pupils to appreciate them as members of the school community (Horrocks et al., 2008). Inclusion does not only mean

the setting off but also carefully prepares lessons with adequate in-class assistance for kids who enroll in their neighborhood school in regular classrooms (Ainscow et al., 2006).

Because of their pupils' lack of cognitive capacities, some special education teachers may be reluctant to incorporate kids with ASD in their classes. Inclusion in mainstream schools provides for a greater focus on children's intellectual, social, and emotional needs. The authors reviewed the literature on inclusive education for children with autism spectrum disorders in their study. The study's results aided in closing the gap between research and practice in the education of children with autism spectrum disorder. A survey of special education teachers' perceptions on inclusive practices was required to establish a professional development plan for them. Students with disabilities may now be taught in an inclusive atmosphere due to conceptual and legal moves away from segregation in special education settings.

### **Research Objectives**

- To investigate the analysis of Teachers' Perspectives on Inclusion of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- To identify challenges to the development of inclusive classroom practice in primary schools of Punjab for Students with ASD.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Inclusion of students with ASD***

Schools have two possibilities of placement for ASD students in general education classes, either in segregated courses or in inclusive settings in a school. Students with ASD often get various forms of help from one-on-one para-professionals in both settings. It is vital to analyze parental viewpoints before we study the opinions of directors and instructors on the integration of children with ASD. Researchers investigated how characteristics such as a child's diagnosis, age, and level of education impacted parents' views toward inclusion. According to the findings, parents' satisfaction with their children's educational services in an inclusive classroom declined as parental age and the incidence of ASD increased. Over half of ASD parents are concerned about their children's present educational requirements, yet these concerns are not being met by an inclusive curriculum (Kasari et al., 1999).

In addition, children with ASD have difficulties in peer interactions and in comprehending social situations which provide further problems in an inclusive learning environment. Parents of children with ASD recognized specialist training as an essential part for a successful integrated education programs or even a specific teaching assistance program. Lastly, "all three

variables – the diagnosis, age and current programmed perceptions of parents” were found to impact children's schooling chances (Kasari et al., 1999).

While many classes in general education boasts of inclusive practices for students with special needs, the present organizational structure of various school systems does not lead to real proof of inclusion. Some misunderstandings appear to be given to what is genuinely inclusive although some colleges may disagree with educational procedures in their institutions. The inclusive classroom in many schools focuses on adapting the kid to the environment rather than providing adaptations to individuals whose needs differ in the classroom. In this review, it was found that the experience described among other handicap categories is more favorable than the experience recorded among ASD groups. Lynch and Irvine (2009) emphasize that it is obvious that children's demands in their school environment are being not fulfilled fully in the case of ASD and that educators are challenged to provide them with adequate assistance in inclusive settings (Lynch & Irvine, 2009).

Successful training methods for ASD students are crucial if they are to explore because ASD children provide educators with special obstacles in the planning of effective training programs. A synthesis of exhaustive reviews for identifying effective practices for individuals with ASD provides "description of the 6 key empirically-supported elements that can be incorporated in a comprehensive and sound education program for students with ASD" for (a) customized student and family support and services, (b) systemic education, (c) comprehensive/structured learning settings, (d) specialist curriculum material, (e) problem behavior functional approach, and (f) family engagement. Children with ASD were identified to offer particular problems in the educational system and these key components focus on school duties and provide guidance for school officials in the provision of suitable educational programs (Iovannone et al., 2003).

The thoughts of leaders to include children with autism spectrum disorder were obtained (White & Roberts, 2008). Variables like the number of years in the administrative role, formal education and experiences with students with ASD were predicted to correspond with the attitude of principal towards the inclusion of disabled children and recommendations for the placement of students with ASD. The results of this study indicated that one element overruled all others and the main factor was that all children with ASD may be taken into normal courses. Most of the principal polled were positively inclusive of children with disabilities; however, those who responded were also more likely to be favorable towards students with ASD in their positions toward the inclusion of children with other impairments.

Positive attitudes towards inclusion have been associated with professional experience with ADS diagnosed children and positive experiences with inclusion. Part of this study asked senior staff to make investment decisions based on five student profile descriptions. It was reported to directors that high levels for children with ASD were less likely to be recommended when the student's profile was essential for socializing and academic achievement. It was emphasized that managers need to comprehend ASD and be ready to respond and to use this diagnosis in children's programs (White & Roberts, 2008).

Research to look at the attitudes of instructors towards children with ASD examined teachers in a small town in the Midwest of the U.S. The younger the instructor the more positive their views tended to be and the negative relationship between their attitudes and school was noticed. This shows that primary school teachers were usually more favorable than middle and high-school teachers for ASD children. The female instructor showed a better attitude than their male colleagues to youngsters with autism. Teachers' favorable views toward students with ASD were shown to differ depending on demographic criteria such as age, gender, years of schooling, and experience in the profession. Other factors that may lead to favorable views, such as child-related characteristics, the severity of the disability condition, personal engagement or empathically inclination of instructors with autism were also mentioned (Park & Chitiyo, 2011).

More evidence of the importance of inclusion attitudes is shown in research in Scotland. McGregor and Campbell (2001) found that many of the respondents' questions expressed concerns about effects on mainstream pupils in search of the opinions of specialists and mainstream teachers regarding the benefits and disadvantages of the inclusion of ASD students but were also willing to participate in further education. As was predicted, expert educators had more positive opinions on ASD-related inclusion but noted that both groups of children could have disadvantages and stressed that the achievement of inclusion relies on the individual children.

Although research has indicated that certain ASD children can benefit from complete integration both socially and intellectually, this relies on strong and skilled assistance and even then the evidence does not show that this is appropriate for all ASD children. The survey found that proper planning, professional advice and enough support were important for all employees. It was observed that while assistance for special education in Scotland is strong, the level of formation in other schools is poor and comparable conditions may be expected. McGregor and Campbell emphasize the meticulous planning, competent advice and assistance (McGregor & Campbell, 2001).

Talmor and Wold-Zukeman, (2010) have utilized qualitative means to express their perceptions as Inclusion Coordinators in a recent study on the achievements and problems of schools incorporating children with ASD. The inclusion coordinators saw the success elements and problems of inclusion connect in particular to the surroundings. Here, greater experience and educational impact of the coordinators have on the effectiveness of inclusion of ASD children. The severity of the symptoms of the pupils in question was documented as a result of problems with the inclusion of ASD youngsters.

Some studies (Ivoannone et al., 2003) emphasize the necessity of particular training for everyone engaged, covering comportment, and learning, social and emotional issues. It has been observed that it is crucial for every facet of successful inclusion to choose the appropriate school and the right school. It's to constantly behave like autism and no behavior that would automatically exclude an individual from a demagnetization of autism," according to the National Research Council of Canada (2001).

In fundamental fields of function, including social disorders, communication and language deficiencies, intellectual functional variability, unexpected reactivity to sensory inputs, ritualistic or atypical behavior patterns and problem behaviors, ASD children have substantial deficient conditions. In most or all fields, some youngsters on the spectrum are greatly affected, others are very slightly affected. This allows children who have been diagnosed with ASD to have several features or to be impacted in different ways. ASD is not an individual illness but rather a spectral disorder that causes people with a wide variety of skills and limitations (Iovannone et al., 2003).

In inclusive classroom settings, children on the autism spectrum have significantly diverse assistance requirements. School administrators have a critical role in determining whether local schools would accept children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), therefore knowing how ASD diversity influences their roles and opinions on inclusive education is critical for determining how to proceed. Students with impairments are often separated from their "normal" peers. Literary review showed that children with a disability might be integrated with adequate academic and behavioral assistance into regular education settings (Blanck, 2019).

Teachers in general education should be conversant with academic and compartmental assistance for IEP-based students with disabilities. Academic and behavioral support to suit unique student requirements should be personalized. Formal testing done by qualified professionals determines student requirements and suggestions are given on the basis of evaluation results (Conroy & Yell, 2019).

### *Challenges of Including Students with ASD*

Lindsay (2013, 2014) found that their participants faced the following challenges: "understanding and managing behavior; socio-structural barriers (i.e., school policy, lack of training and resources); and creating an inclusive environment (i.e., lack of understanding from other teachers, students, and parents)" (Lindsay et al., 2013). The teachers who took part in the study thought they "lacked appropriate understanding on ASD," with eight out of twelve having completed special education additional qualification (AQ) courses. Many of them struggled to work with just one child without additional help. Some ASD kids' actions may interfere with the teachers' efforts to foster healthy relationships among all of their pupils (Lindsay et al., 2013). "Children [with autism] have trouble with social relationships, particularly in grasping the intricacies of social conduct. In fact, they may give the appearance that they are uninterested in connecting with others," according to the study (Robertson et al., 2003).

Researchers discovered that general education instructors have "closer and less conflictual interactions with pupils who have fewer behavioral difficulties" in the latter research (Robertson, Chamberlain, and Kasari, 2003). This may explain why special needs educators, often known as paraprofessionals, are generally in charge of teaching children with autism spectrum disorder when a normal teacher is unable to establish a continuous and healthy relationship with their ASD student (Robertson et al., 2003). Students will have a harder difficulty including them in their courses since they would not be able to spend as much time with them as it is required (Jordan et al., 2010).

Another significant issue noted is socio-structural impediments, such as "lack of training, resource availability, and school policies" (Lindsay et al., 2014). Some participants said that it was difficult for them to use inclusive teaching practices in their classrooms if they did not have extra special education credentials, mostly because they did not have the appropriate support (Lindsay et al., 2014). Teachers have suggested that the AQ course in special education should include a section on autism, in which teachers are introduced to effective teaching strategies for kids with ASD. It is insufficient for teachers to attend ASD training if they do not have access to proper tools and assistance at their school. Many instructors do not have access to educational assistants (EAs) or the training they require (Lindsay et al., 2013).

One instructor even stated that finding useful materials "for children with Asperger's syndrome or high-functioning autism is challenging since most resources are geared toward children with lower-functioning autism" (Lindsay et al., 2014). This is an exciting conclusion, and I would want to investigate

if this is also true for junior and intermediate kids with ASD for the sake of my research. Another obstacle worth considering for the sake of this study is parental involvement. Some parents opt not to disclose their child's illness, do not have an IEP, and so these are ineligible for resources and assistance (Lindsay et al., 2014). A teacher participant also mentioned that they had to deal with issues from parents other than those of children with ASD. "Without breaking their hearts," they had to convey to them that these youngsters have unique needs (Lindsay et al., 2014).

Finally, there are few problems those educators in mainstream classes have an impact on their attempts to build inclusive learning environments for ASD children. The next part will examine how instructors' preconceived notions about students with disabilities influence how they decide to include them in the classroom (Jordan et al., 2010).

### Research Methodology

**Research Design:** The nature of this investigation is quantitative. The study design was descriptive.

**Research Population:** The study population was exceptional education instructors from the province of Punjab.

**Research Sample:** The sample for this study consisted of 120 Special education school instructors who have expertise teaching children with autism spectrum disorder in inclusive classrooms in public special education schools in Punjab Province.

**Sampling Technique:** The sampling strategy utilized for this research was based on the practicality and availability of special education instructors teaching students with Autism Spectrum Disorder ASD in Inclusive Education.

**Research Tool:** For exploring the analysis of teacher's perspectives on inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorder, the researcher developed a questionnaire.

**Data Collection:** The researcher distributed the questionnaire instrument to participants in groups and individually. Those that couldn't be reached in person had been contacted directly through phone calls.

### Data Analysis

The data was collected, tabulated, and analyzed in SPSS. These results were obtained using descriptive and inferential statistics. To demonstrate the demographic items and questions, frequencies and percentages were computed, and the independent sample t-test and One-way ANOVA were used to show the differences in educators' viewpoints across demographic groups. The findings enabled for assumptions and recommendations to be made.



**Table 1**  
*Frequency Distribution of Demographic information (N=120)*

Variables	n	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	52	43
Female	68	57
<b>Age (years)</b>		
21-30	94	78
31-40	26	22
<b>Designation</b>		
SSET	19	16
JSET	19	16
Psychologist	5	4
Speech Therapist	2	1
Educator	40	34
Other	34	28
<b>School Location</b>		
Rural	38	21
Urban	82	79
<b>Experience (years)</b>		
1-5	102	85
6-10	18	15

Table 1 displays the frequency distribution of demographic information for 120 participants, presenting variables such as gender, age, designation, school location, and experience.

**Table 2**  
*Frequency Distribution for Teacher's View about educating children with ASD in Inclusive Education*

Question#	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	M	SD
1	67(56)	42(35)	0(0)	11(9)	0(0)	4.3	.88
2	60(50)	49(41)	7(6)	4(3)	0(0)	4.3	.73
3	72(60)	19(16)	17(14)	8(7)	4(3)	4.2	1.1
4	67(56)	37(31)	8(7)	7(6)	0(0)	4.3	.86
5	61(51)	43(36)	7(6)	8(7)	0(0)	4.3	.87
6	65(54)	44(37)	4(3)	7(6)	0(0)	4.2	.76

7	61(51)	47(39)	8(7)	4(3)	0(0)	4.3	.74
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Table 2 presents the frequency distribution for teacher's views on educating children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Inclusive Education. The Table includes responses in percentages for Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), along with the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for each question.

**Table 3**

*Frequency Distribution for Challenges in the Development of Inclusive Classroom Practices with ASD*

Question#	SA n(%)	A n(%)	UD n(%)	D n(%)	SD n(%)	M	SD
1	53(44)	70(52)	5(4)	0(0)	0(0)	4.40	.56
2	42(35)	58(58)	0(0)	3(3)	4(4)	4.17	.89
3	70(58)	49(41)	13(11)	0(0)	0(0)	4.37	.67
4	47(39)	58(48)	8(7)	7(6)	0(0)	4.20	.81
5	40(33)	66(55)	14(12)	0(0)	0(0)	4.21	.64
6	41(34)	65(54)	6(5)	5(4)	4(3)	4.12	.90
7	52(43)	59(49)	9(8)	0(0)	0(0)	4.35	.62
8	53(44)	47(39)	12(10)	5(4)	4(3)	4.17	.97
9	67(56)	32(27)	12(10)	8(7)	0(0)	4.32	.91

Table 3 illustrates the frequency distribution for challenges in the development of Inclusive Classroom Practices with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Table provides counts and percentages for Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) responses to each question, along with the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) scores.

**Table 4**

*Independent Sample t-test on Gender of Respondents.*

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	p-value
Male	52	150.50	19.250	118	1.130	.261*
Female	68	146.29	17.118			

\* $p > .05$  Level of Significance

Table 4 indicates that there is no significant difference in the opinion of males and females regarding analysis of teacher's perspectives on inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorder on the basis of gender of participants.

**Table 5***Independent Sample t-test on Area of Posting of Respondents.*

Area of Posting	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p-value
Rural	38	150.43	14.70	11	.921	.360
Urban	82	146.84	19.48			

Table 5 indicates that there is no significant difference in the opinion of teachers from rural areas and teachers from urban areas regarding analysis of teacher's perspectives on inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorder on the basis of area of posting of participants.

**Table 6***One-Way ANOVA Test on Age of Respondents*

Age of Respondents	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Between Groups	637.68	1	637.686		
Within Groups	30639.22	118	322.518	1.977	.163
Total	31276.90	119			

Table 10 indicates that there is no significant difference in the opinions of teachers from between groups and within groups regarding analysis of teacher's perspectives on inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorder on the basis of age of participants.

**Table 7***One-Way ANOVA Test on Designation of Respondents.*

Age of Respondents	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Between Groups	2908.09	6	484.682		
Within Groups	28368.81	113	315.209	1.538	.175
Total	31276.90	119			

\* $P < .05$  Level of Significance

Table 8 indicates that there is no significant difference in the opinions of teachers from between groups and within groups regarding analysis of

teacher's perspectives on inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorder on the basis of Designation of participants.

**Table 9**

*One-Way ANOVA Test on Work Experience of Respondents.*

Age of Respondents	SS	Df	MS	F	p-value
Between Groups	1579.77	1	1579.77		
Within Groups	29697.13	118	312.60	5.05	.027
Total	31276.90	119			

*\*P < .05 Level of Significance*

Table 9 indicates that there is a significant difference in the opinions of teachers from between groups and within groups regarding analysis of teacher's perspectives on inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorder on the basis of work experience of participants.

### Findings

According to the majority of respondents, instructors' willingness to make concessions for individual pupils varies depending on the type and severity of the student's disability. Teachers with autism and emotional behavioral disorders have expressed concern about having these students in their classes due to the children's lack of social skills and behavioral outbursts. Female instructors were more open to integrating students from diverse backgrounds than their male colleagues. Experience does not appear to influence much when it comes to how teachers feel about their students with impairments. This has far-reaching implications for the educational quality of these youngsters. Teachers have many misconceptions regarding autism and as a consequence they have a poor knowledge of it. This is a concern because instructors' perspectives on integrating children with special needs into general education classes are impacted by the information and knowledge they get about it. It was also shown that people with ASD have difficulty in understanding and managing their behavior which poses a substantial barrier to the progress of inclusion for individuals with the illness. People with autism spectrum disorders experience barriers to inclusion owing to underlying social and institutional problems. Inadequate planning and materials the impediment to maintaining students with Autism in regular schools, it is "the most difficult barrier" to accommodate additional students since they need new methods of teaching and assessment and other teachers, students, and parents' lack of understanding adds to the difficulty. Another common concern was lack of support from superiors and parents. The incorporation of persons with ASD into Appling's program was hindered by the latter's rigorous routines and

intolerance to change. Students on the autism spectrum may now find writing difficult and irritating and bullying is another big barrier to inclusive education.

### **Discussion**

The data confirm the notion that school leaders' decisions concerning inclusive education are influenced by a number of factors. Positive experiences with students with impairments and ASD, as well as special education training influenced instructors in this study to favor mainstreaming classrooms for children with ASD. Teachers' attitudes are influenced by the perceived severity of a child's ASD with administrators arguing more for the child's inclusion in mainstream classes if the child is deemed less severe (Mundschenk and Helfin, 2011). This study discovered comparable determinants for teachers' positive attitudes as Park and Chitiyo (2011), who discovered that teachers' personal and professional experiences influenced their perspectives. This emphasizes the significance of educators' views on inclusive education for children with ASD as well as the need to investigate how these perspectives might be improved. This study also emphasizes the need of researching how supervisors' professional growth influences the quality of their placement recommendations as well as their ideas regarding inclusive education. The findings suggest that administrators may lack the knowledge and abilities required to assist teachers in accommodating students with ASD. It is critical to expand the provision of appropriate assistance for both students and instructors in order to fulfil the needs of children with ASD in their local schools. While this study focused on instructors' intentions to include students with ASD, future research should investigate whether such intentions are really implemented; especially, should principals whose stated objective is to facilitate inclusive placement; does it truly do so? It would be intriguing to investigate if instructors' goals and attitudes affect or not the children with ASD.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of the study was the discussion about analysis of teacher perspectives on Inclusion of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). I found out the idea of including Children with ASD in primary schools for many years, students with mild Autism have been able to attend regular classes. Severe Autism students were generally placed in a different classroom. They may have been enrolled in painting or music lessons. Children with autism attend normal schools which allow them to socialize with other children. Early inclusion can assist children with autism develop both IQ scores and social skills. Teachers' views about educating children with ASD in inclusive education nature and severity of a child's disability has an effect on a teachers' willingness to accommodate a particular student. This has a significant impact

on how successful and effective teachers are at working with students with special needs. It was found that there are a few obstacles in the way of developing inclusive classroom practices for students with ASD. It is difficult to conduct research on the perspectives of teachers regarding the inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the classroom because there are not enough special education teachers who are able to devote their full attention to children with ASD who are enrolled in inclusive education. Due to the prevalence of myths and misunderstandings surrounding autism, educators have a limited understanding of the illness. The inflexibility of Appling's routines and resistance to new experiences made the diagnosis of autistic spectrum condition more challenging. Because there was a dearth of proper training and tools, it was difficult for students with autism to continue their education in regular schools. The absence of support from both the administration and the parents was one of the most common issues that arose in inclusive education.

### Recommendations

1. Special advocacy and awareness campaign should be launched to increase the awareness among parents and teacher about the factors which promotes inclusive education with ASD.
2. Incentives for teachers and staff should be offered working with children with ASD.
3. An echo system should be launched to develop a positive attitude of children among their teachers and peers.

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*Citation of this Article:*

Aftab, M. J., Mehmood, T. & Rehman, N., (2023). Analysis of Teachers' Perspectives on Inclusion of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). *Pakistan Journal of Educational Research and Evaluation*, 11(1), 49-63.