

**ASSESSING THE PROGRESS AND PITFALLS AMONG CHILDREN WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS ENROLLED IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SET-UP IN
KERALA**

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ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF SPEECH AND HEARING

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **“Assessing Progress and Pitfalls among Children with Special Needs enrolled in an Inclusive Education Set-up in Kerala”** is a bonafide work submitted as part of fulfilment of the degree of **Master of Education – Special Education (Hearing Impairment)** of the student with Registration Number **P01II24E012005**. This has been carried out under the guidance of a faculty of this institute and has not been submitted earlier to any other university for the award of any other Diploma or Degree.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled "Assessing the Progress and Pitfalls among Children with Special Needs enrolled in an Inclusive Education Set-up in Kerala" has been prepared under my supervision and guidance. It is also being certified that this dissertation has not been submitted earlier to any other university for the award of any other Diploma or Degree.

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Assessing the Progress and Pitfalls among Children with Special Needs enrolled in Inclusive Education Set-up in Kerala**” is the result of my own study under the guidance of **Dr. Prithi Venkatesh**, Associate Professor of Special Education, Department of Special Education, All India Institute of Speech & Hearing, Mysuru. It has not been submitted earlier to any other University for another Diploma or Degree award.

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ABSTRACT

This study titled “Assessing the Progress and Pitfalls of Children with Special Needs enrolled in Inclusive Education Set-up in Kerala” looked at the status of children with special needs in inclusive schooling settings in terms of teacher support, parental involvement, social adjustment, infrastructure and accessibility to education, as well as the academic performance of children; a descriptive survey research design was utilized for the study. The study’s sample consisted of 50 children with special needs who had received early interventional services and are currently attending inclusive schools in the entire state of Kerala. The parent and teacher data were collected from the parents and teachers for those 50 children using researcher-developed measurement tools to measure parent and teacher supports and standardised measurement tools including Measuring of Learning Environment in Mainstream Schools (MLEM) and Social Skills Rating Scale (SSRS).

According to numerous studies, the contribution teachers made to creating plentiful opportunities for learning, social inclusion and overall student participation is undeniable. The role of parents as key supporters who provide academic support through educational expenses, emotional support in times of distress and social support through time spent together or volunteer work has also been established in many studies. Furthermore, results from this study indicate that children with disabilities demonstrated moderately to high levels of social adjustment, peer interaction and acceptance within the context of school environments that are inclusive; therefore supporting schools where the infrastructure and accessibility were rated positively by respondents. Further, children were able to show steady improvement in terms of their academic performance as a result of inclusive educational practices. Additionally, the study concludes that collaboration between parents, teachers and

schools creates an environment essential to successfully achieving an inclusive setting and is necessary for improving educational outcomes for children with special needs.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Children with Special Needs, Teacher Support, Parental Support, Social Adjustment and Academic Performance.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Policies on Inclusive Education

UNESCO states that education is a fundamental human right; furthermore, it contributes to the fulfilment of individual potential and fosters social development. According to UNESCO (1994), "Education shall be provided to all children, regardless of background, gender or disability." In 2009, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD) were enacted to ensure that all children, including those with disabilities, have equal educational opportunities. However, in practice, many children with disabilities continue to receive lower-quality educational opportunities than their peers without disabilities in India. Therefore, there is a clear disconnect between educational policy and actual practice (Singal, 2019).

International and national policy frameworks have promoted inclusive education. At the global level, the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), a Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD, 2006) and numerous other documents specified zero exclusion of school-aged children from schools.

The Person with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act (1995) and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) provided a set of equal opportunities and protections for students with disabilities. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA, 2001) stressed universal access to elementary education, thus all children with special needs would be able to be enrolled in regular schools. The National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) maintains and develops on the same goals of inclusive educational solutions by providing equitable access, creating barrier free environments and using assistive technology to assure all students, with a wide range of learning needs have similar opportunities to learn.

Children with disabilities can experience life-long physical disabilities (unable to use their arms or legs; unable to see or hear), emotional/behavioural disabilities (such as an actual brain injury) and/or intellectual disabilities (learning disabilities such as dyslexia) which create barriers to fully participating in society's daily activities (WHO, 2011). The RPwD Act (2016) identifies 21 different disability categories including: visual impairment (poor eyesight); hearing impairment (deafness); mobility impairment (difficulty Walking); intellectual disability (Learning disabilities such as dyslexia), autism spectrum disorder; and multiple disabilities). Research shows that children with disabilities face stigma, discrimination and limited access to quality education (Puri & Abraham, 2004). Therefore, understanding how children with disabilities experience inclusion will create conditions for equitable and just education.

Inclusive education refers to the opportunity for all children to attend school together regardless of their ability or disability (Ainscow, 2005). The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) encouraged all schools across the world to include all children, regardless of their differences. The National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) has built upon this and will provide opportunities for children with disabilities by creating flexible learning environments, identifying needs and providing appropriate resources to meet those needs. Inclusive schools are also recognised as having two major contributions to education: they improve learning and they support students with social development (Sharma, 2018).

Over the past few decades, inclusive education has gained global attention as a fundamental approach to ensuring equal learning opportunities for all children. The concept of inclusion emphasizes removing barriers that prevent children with disabilities from fully participating in educational systems. According to UNESCO (2017), inclusive education is not restructuring school cultures, policies and practices to respond to the diversity of learners. This perspective recognizes that every learner has unique strengths, needs and education

systems must adapt to accommodate these differences. In many developing countries, including India, inclusive education has been promoted as a strategy to achieve the broader goal of “Education for All” and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4), which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all learners (United Nations,2015).

In the Indian educational context, several government initiatives have been introduced to strengthen inclusive education practices in schools. Programmes such as Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) and later the Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) were designed to provide educational support to children with disabilities within regular school settings (MHRD, 2009). These programmes focus on providing aids and appliances, teacher training and financial assistance to promote the participation of children with special needs in mainstream schools. Furthermore, the Samagra Shiksha programme launched by the Government of India integrates various educational schemes to ensure a holistic approach to inclusive education from pre-school to senior secondary level (Government of India, 2018). Such initiatives reflect the government’s commitment to building an educational system that values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for every learner.

Another important aspect of inclusive education is the recognition of diversity in learning abilities and backgrounds. Scholars emphasize that inclusive education benefits not only children with disabilities but also the entire school community by promoting democratic values, cooperation and mutual respect (Slee, 2018). By learning together in the same environment, students develop empathy and understanding toward individuals with different abilities and perspectives. Therefore, inclusive education is increasingly viewed as a social justice approach that seeks to reduce discrimination and inequality in educational system.

Inclusive education is also closely linked with the principles of equity and social justice in education systems. It focuses on addressing inequalities that arise due to disability, socio-economic status, gender and cultural background. According to Armstrong and Spandagou (2011), inclusive education challenges traditional models of segregation and advocates for restructuring educational systems to accommodate all learners. This approach emphasizes that barrier to learning are not solely within the child but are often present in the environment, curriculum and teaching methods. Therefore, inclusive education requires systemic reforms that ensure equal participation and learning opportunities for every child.

Moreover, international agencies have repeatedly stated the importance of translating inclusive policies into practical action. The report on Global Education Monitoring (UNESCO, 2020) indicates that although numerous nations have established policies related to inclusive education, the implementation of those policies doesn't follow through with adequate resources, adequate trained personnel, and adequate follow-up techniques. Within India specifically, despite the fact that legislative frameworks are well-developed, educational quality has significant disparities for students with special needs across a wide range of geographic locations (Singal, 2016). This suggests that closing the gap between policy development and actual implementation is necessary to provide meaningful inclusion in education.

1.1 Positive impact of Inclusive Education on Children with Special Needs

Inclusive education in India has pointed to some positive benefits to children with special needs, especially regarding academic participation, social interaction and acceptance. Research in Telangana highlighted that children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms experienced better opportunities for learning and peer interaction, as families and educators demonstrated positive attitudes and readiness to support them, especially in urban areas

where resources were available (Rose Narayan, Matam & Sambram, 2021). For example, a study conducted in Pondicherry with students with autism and special needs indicated that mainstream classrooms delivered socialization, communication and confidence benefits to students, putting even more awareness out there for teachers and peers (Mukkiri; Kandasamy; Subramanian; Chandrasekaran; Kattimani, 2021). These findings indicate that inclusive education in the Indian context not only promotes learning but also builds a supportive environment that fosters acceptance, belongingness and holistic development for children with special needs.

Inclusive schools have been shown to nurture empathy, mutual respect and cooperative learning among both children with and without special needs. Research has indicated that inclusive classrooms create opportunities for students without disabilities to develop positive attitudes, patience and understanding of differences in students' abilities and experiences, which helps to create a more tolerant and compassionate school climate. Positive peer acceptance and inter-student relationships allow students with special needs to benefit from increases in self-esteem, motivation and participation in the learning process. In Karnataka, a study noted the marked reduction in stigma from inclusive practices in classrooms, which also supported equality and belonging for all students, improving student outcome academically and socially (Rao, Reddy & Ranganathan, 2020).

Inclusive education has also been associated with improvements in the overall academic engagement of students with special needs. When children with disabilities are provided with appropriate support such as individualized teaching strategies, assistive technologies and peer support they demonstrate higher levels of participation in classroom activities. Research conducted in different parts of India has shown that inclusive classrooms provide opportunities for collaborative learning, which enables students with disabilities to learn from their peers while simultaneously contributing to group activities (Sharma, Forlin & Loreman,

21017). Such interactions help in improving not only academic performance but also communication skills and problem solving abilities among students with special needs.

In addition to the academic benefits of inclusive education, providing children with disabilities an opportunity to belong to a regular classroom helps them form strong emotional connections with their classmates and fosters a sense of acceptance and belonging in a school community and develops self-esteem and confidence. It has been shown that students who are in inclusive classrooms have higher confidence levels than those who attend segregated schools (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). These students tend to have more chances to interact with their class mates, leading to more opportunities to participate in social and other activities, which support their overall social development.

Inclusion will also help students with disabilities to become able to live independently and participate in society after their school years. When children with disabilities are in regular education with other students, they develop social skills that they will need for work after they leave school and for participating in the community in the future. Inclusive schools help students with disabilities develop life skills and flexibility that they will need in order to successfully make the transition into adulthood (Lindsay, 2007). Therefore, inclusive education has a positive effect on both the academic progress of children with disabilities, but also prepares children with disabilities for integrating into society and the workplace long term. Inclusive education also enhances peer learning and cooperative interaction among students. When children with and without disabilities learn together, they engage in shared learning experiences that promote teamwork and mutual support. Research suggests that peer tutoring and group activities in inclusive classrooms improve academic outcomes for both groups of students (Gillies, 2007). These collaborative practices help children with special needs to better understand academic content, while students without disabilities develop leadership skills and a sense of responsibility.

In addition to contributing to a decrease in societal discrimination and creating long-term changes in attitudes towards those who have disabilities, inclusive education also contributes to societal reductions in prejudice and stereotyping. By providing students with opportunities to experience various forms of diversity, such as within the school system, students will develop a more positive attitude toward individuals with disabilities (De Boer et al., 2011), which will lead to a decrease in the development of prejudices and/or stereotypes about these individuals. Over time, the isolated experiences provide us with the foundation for an inclusive society, and acceptance and valuing of individuals with disabilities contributes to the inclusive experience. Therefore, inclusive education has benefits outside of the classroom and contributes to the overall shape of society's attitude toward individuals with disabilities and equality.

1.2 Factors contributing to the success of Inclusive Education

The development of inclusive education has become an international priority to provide fair and equal access to education for all students and its effectiveness lies in the interplay of a number of critical factors at the policy, school and classroom levels. For example, the 2020 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report states that “...in order to develop systemic conditions for inclusion, effective policy support, funding and accountability are essential.” There is a global consensus on the need for effective policy support, funding for whole systems and accountability to develop systemic conditions for inclusion (UNESCO, 2020). Strong inclusive leaders are instrumental in developing the systemic conditions for inclusion, as they promote and lead efforts with their colleagues to initiate a collective vision, mobilize resources and promote collaboration (Ainscow, 2020). Equally critical are teachers’ knowledge, positive attitudes and professional training, which determine the extent to which inclusive pedagogies can be effectively applied (Charitaki et al., 2022). Classroom strategies that include Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiation and interactive learning

environments enhance engagement and promote positive achievement for a variety of learners (Roldan et al., 2021). Moreover, collaboration between general and special educators, regular professional development and parental engagement contribute to stringer inclusive practices (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). Systematic reviews have consistently shown that the sustainability of inclusive education is linked not only to the availability of resources but also to a whole school culture that values diversity and actively works to reduce barriers (Mendoza, 2024; Oswal et al., 2025).

A crucial dimension in achieving effective inclusive education lies in the availability of infrastructure and resources. With respect to physically accessing classrooms, ramps, assistive technology and desk space are very useful in allowing children with disabilities to participate in ways that provide meaning and/or value to their engagement in learning activities. Clearly, inclusive pedagogical approaches have more significant impacts when schools utilize a resource room, support staff and teaching learning materials that are modified for learning diversity (Oswal et al., 2025). Beyond physical infrastructure, resource allocation such as reduced pupil teacher ratios, availability of trained aides and government funding for inclusive programs play a decisive role in the success of implementation (UNESCO, 2020).

Incorporating the social and academic aspects of inclusion is equally important to establish the equity in the classroom. Creating a safe environment where students interact with others who are supportive of them, where peers are trained to treat one another with kindness through cooperative learning and peer teaching opportunities, helps to create an atmosphere in which students can feel accepted and belonging (Roldan et al., 2021). Engaging families, communities and making efforts to raise awareness of disability issues builds the inclusive philosophy of a school by creating partnerships between home and school (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). Curricula that are built using UDL principles offer teachers flexibility and

responsiveness to meet the different learning needs of students. On-going training of teachers creates confidence and competence in delivering an inclusive education (Charitaki et al., 2022). Ultimately when combining these components of social, academic, infrastructure and resource with the intent outlined in the inclusivity plan then inclusive education can become more than a policy - it can become the experience of how to change schools so that they are equitable and learning spaces for all learners. Thus it can be summarized by saying inclusive education is not solely about the legislation or policy; rather it is about being a commitment through an educational and societal lens to provide equality, inclusion and well-rounded development for students who have disabilities. Although much progress has been made because of initiatives such as RTE Act (2009); RPD Act (2016); and National Education Policy (2020), the gap between policy and practice continues to be large particularly around teacher preparation, infrastructure and resource allocation (Singal, 2019; Sharma, 2018). Researchers have shown that when schools have enough resources, work together with families of students with disabilities and provide high-quality education for all students without regard to their abilities, students with disabilities perform better academically, receive social approval and feel emotionally secure (Rose et al., 2021; Rao, Reddy & Ranganathan, 2020). Therefore, true inclusion means closing the gap between effective policies and successful practices so that every child can benefit from high-quality educational experiences delivered within a diverse but supportive environment.

1.3 Supportive management leading to conducive learning environment

Effective school leadership and management are key components of inclusive education; without them, inclusive education cannot succeed. School leaders are the drivers behind establishing an inclusive vision and ensuring that diversity supports inclusive education. Research shows that principals/leaders that actively promote inclusivity will promote collaboration among staff and provide necessary resources/support to create and maintain an

inclusive environment (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). With principals/leaders providing leadership, a school culture can evolve whereby teachers, parents and students provide support to educators who work with students with disabilities.

Collaboration among teachers/teamwork is another essential component within successful inclusive educational settings. In many schools, inclusive practice can be identified to be stronger when general educators, special educators, school counsellors/and support staff work together to collectively develop instructional strategies for students with special needs. Planning collaboratively, teachers share their skill set to create individual educational plans for the unique needs of each student (Friend & Cook, 2013). Through effective teamwork, the method in which teaching is delivered can enhance the overall level of success in the delivery of services to students with equal access to educational course of study in general education classes. Furthermore, the use of technology has become increasingly important in promoting inclusive education. Assistive technologies such as screen readers, hearing aids, communication devices and digital learning platforms enable students with disabilities to access educational content more effectively. Studies suggest that integrating technology into teaching practices improves learning outcomes and allows students with diverse needs to participate more actively in classroom activities (Al-Azawei, Serenelli & Lundqvist, 2016). Therefore, technological support combined with teacher training and institutional commitment plays a significant role in strengthening inclusive education systems.

Another key contributor to the success of inclusive educators is parental involvement. Through working with teachers and participating in school activities, parents contribute to their child's education with special needs. Researchers have found that by being actively involved in their child's education, parents can help improve their child's academic performance, behaviour and confidence (Hornby, 2011). By communicating regularly with

parents, teachers can identify the needs of students with special needs and develop appropriate support strategies.

Also essential to the sustainability of inclusive practices are proper support from the implementing agency and adequate implementation of the policy. Poorly planned implementation will not achieve optimal effectiveness regardless of the amount of resources allocated and random on-going monitoring will be ineffective as well according to Mitchell 2015. In order to have a successful inclusive program, the education system must have mechanisms in place that integrate inclusionary policies, practices and evaluation tools. Even if an inclusive policy is well designed, without strong administrative support it will likely not produce the projected outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary to have coordinated efforts among governments at all levels in order to ensure an effective implementation and sustainability of an inclusive program.

1.4 Challenges faced by children with Special Needs in Inclusive Schools

Students with special needs in an inclusive educational environment are often faced with many barriers to achieving their development and learning goals. One of the key difficulties in regard to providing support for these students is there is no specific curricular or assessment framework available to reflect the individual needs of these students in achieving their learning goals. Teachers are frequently not trained to address the wide variety of learning needs they encounter and additionally, there are a very limited number of special assistant teachers available to provide individualized support. Furthermore, schools frequently lack many of the necessary facilities and infrastructures that would allow for opportunities for full participation in a variety of engaging experiences. Differences in perception about students with special needs between schools, communities and government authorities, create additional barriers to the inclusion of students with special needs within the

educational system. Thus, the efficacy of an inclusive educational environment is dependent on collaboration and cooperation between all of the involved entities in order to create a clear consensus regarding the education of students with special needs (Chairunnisa & Rismita, 2022).

Inclusive education is essential for how children develop and learn about themselves while they transition from preschool to college. Children cannot take advantage of all the opportunities available to them because they face many challenges, such as buildings that are not accessible, inadequate materials and equipment and trained teachers who cannot find jobs. Children who are teased by their classmates on a regular basis also have trouble developing successfully (Singhal, 2019). In addition to the above-mentioned challenges, policymakers and agencies across Canada have implemented numerous inclusion programmes; however, little is known about how well these policies are being implemented in schools. In particular, researchers should examine whether children who have disabilities are actually welcomed, included and involved in school.

Still another major challenge that children with special need face in an inclusive school setting is the on-going existence of social stigma and negative feelings towards disability. There are many communities where there persists a stigma associated with disabilities. This stigma negatively affects how children with disabilities are perceived and subsequently treated while in the school setting. These negative perceptions can lead to children's exclusion from group activities and/or inability to participate in classroom discussions. Research has indicated that negative perceptions from peers and in some cases teachers, can lower the perceived confidence and motivation of a child with special needs, which will in turn negatively impact on a child's academic success and a child's social acceptance (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Inclusive education policies are affected by the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, in addition to other barriers. While there are several policies that promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools, without systematic assessment of how inclusive these programs are, it is difficult to measure the impact of the inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream education. Research shows that many students with disabilities are enrolled in schools, but do not receive adequate supports for academic success or emotional well-being as a result of inadequate funding and lack of accountability measures (Singal 2019). Therefore, the benefits of inclusive education may not be fully realized.

Students with disabilities face an additional challenge in transitioning between the next levels of educational experience throughout their lives. For example, the transition from intermediary or primary school to secondary school places more emphasis on independent academic learning and an adjustment to a different level of social expectations, which may be difficult for those who do not have the benefit of appropriate educational services. Students who have disabilities will likely be unable to cope with the increased academic and social demands placed on them by their transition to higher classes if they do not receive appropriate counselling and guidance, as well as have a student-centred educational plan developed to address their individual needs (Sharma, 2018). As such, stakeholders in education (policymakers, teachers, parents and the community) will need to coordinate efforts to address these challenges and thereby make inclusive education a viable alternative for students with disabilities.

The lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials to meet the needs of children who have disabilities is another major challenge to providing an inclusive education. In many inclusive classrooms, the use of standard textbooks and instructional methods does not fully meet the different learning needs of all the students. This is causing problems for many students with special needs in terms of keeping up with their regular curriculum. Studies have

shown that when appropriate adapted learning materials or assistive devices are not available for students with disabilities, their ability to participate and achieve academically is limited (Mitchell, 2015). For that reason, providing modified instructional resources is very important to ensure that students are given meaningful opportunities to develop their potential.

The learning experiences of children with special needs in inclusive settings are also impacted by emotional and psychological challenges. Many students may feel isolated, anxious or have low levels of self-esteem because they don't have the ability to cope with the academic and social demands placed on them. Students with disabilities are more likely than their peers without disabilities to experience emotional stress, especially in learning environments that do not meet their needs, according to Frederickson and Cline (2009). Emotional stressors will have an impact on student motivation and overall participation in learning activities. Therefore, it is important to provide counselling services and develop a positive learning environment to support the emotional health of students with special needs.

1.5 Need for the study

Our country has policies in place aimed at ensuring that children with disabilities are able to attend regular public schools. Research has shown, however, that the vast majority of children with disabilities still experience significant barriers to inclusive schooling, such as social isolation, insufficient resources, and lack of adequate support from teachers and staff (Singal, 2019; Mukhopadhyay & Mani, 2002). Thus, it is critical to further understand how inclusive schools function for children with disabilities and what their actual experiences are, compared to what inclusive policies claim they will receive. This type of research will help to better understand what children with disabilities face in inclusive schools and how to reduce the gap between what is stated in policy versus what is actually delivered in practice.

In order for effective inclusion to take place there must not only be an attempt made at integrating children with disabilities into regular education schools but also there needs to be sufficient teacher training, and a system of supports in place to allow teachers to successfully implement what they have been trained to do. Teacher training programs include both diploma and B.Ed. special education programs that are accredited by the Rehabilitation Council of India, and in-service training as well as continuing professional development through SCERT and NCERT to give teachers the knowledge, skills, strategies and positive attitudes to adequately meet the needs of a number of learners. Similarly, early intervention programs are critical to helping identify children with developmental delays as well as provide therapy and pre-school readiness programs through early intervention. Some of the key agencies providing services to facilitate the transition of children with disabilities into inclusive programs are the district early intervention centre (DEIC), through the rashtriya bal swasthya karyakram; national institutes such as lipid and anisha; and a number of NGOs. As such, assessing the current status of children with special needs being educated in inclusive programs is important in determining the effectiveness of both teacher training and early intervention services.

To properly assess what successful outcomes are being achieved by children with disabilities that participate in inclusive environments, it is important to evaluate both their academic achievement and overall growth and emotional health. In addition, we need to identify what difficulties these children encounter within the classroom, as well as what types of supports have been put in place by the teacher, parent, or peer to assist with their development. Finally, we will attempt to identify the gap(s) between current policy and practice and make recommendations for improving the quality of inclusive educational environments. The project will accomplish these objectives through the following goals:

Aim of the study:

The aim of the study is to examine the status of children with special needs who have received early intervention services and are currently studying in inclusive educational setups.

Objectives of the Study:

The study will be taken up with the following objectives:

- 1) To explore teachers' contributions toward promoting the learning, participation and inclusion of children with special needs in inclusive setting.
- 2) To explore parent's contributions towards promoting the learning, participation and inclusion of children with special needs in inclusive settings.
- 3) To examine the social adjustment, peer interaction and acceptance of children with special needs in an inclusive environment
- 4) To evaluate the adequacy of physical infrastructure, accessibility features and classroom arrangements that support inclusive education.
- 5) To assess the academic performance of children with special needs in inclusive schools in Kerala using subjective assessment.

Research Questions

- 1) How do teachers contribute to promoting the learning, participation and inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools?

- 2) What forms of support do parents provide to enhance the learning, participation and inclusion of children with special needs in inclusive settings?
- 3) How do children with special needs experience social adjustment, peer interaction and acceptance in inclusive educational environments?
- 4) How adequate are the physical infrastructure, accessibility features and classroom arrangements in supporting the learning, participation and inclusion of children with special needs in inclusive educational settings?
- 5) How effective are inclusive educational practices in supporting the academic performance of children with special needs in Kerala?

Operational Definition

Assessing the progress and pitfalls among children with special needs

Assessing the progress of children with disabilities refers to determining the extent to which children achieve in an integrated setting compared to their peers without disabilities and the obstacles they face. The concept of 'progress' can encompass areas such as school achievement, social development, participation in group activities, expression of thoughts and feelings, and overall growth and development. The definition of progresses will include factors affecting disability for students who are educated in inclusive education settings. Factors affecting students' progress are barriers to their participation (i.e. the lack of educational resources, insufficient access to the school environment, and lack of support) as well as factors negatively impacting students with disabilities, such as behaviours that are disruptive in class and social interactions with their non-disabled peers. The data used to

assess children with disabilities' progress are teacher surveys, parent surveys, social skill rating scales, infrastructure assessment of schools, and academic records.

Children with Disabilities

The term 'children with disabilities' refers to children who are enrolled in the formal school system and have a diagnosis (as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). These children may have disabilities such as visual disabilities, hearing disabilities, intellectual and developmental disabilities, multiple disabilities or other related conditions. For this study, the term 'children with disabilities' refers specifically to students with disabilities who attend a general education classroom and are part of an inclusive educational program according to the Right to Education Act (2009) and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) in India.

Inclusive Educational Set Up

An inclusive educational set up is an environment of education in which children with and without disabilities are provided with an opportunity to attend the same class and receive the necessary accommodations, support services, and opportunities to participate equally. In this study, inclusive set up is defined as providing educational access to and support for children with special needs in mainstream schools located in Kerala.

The Supportive Role of Teachers

The supportive role of teachers is the amount of educational, instructional, emotional, and behavioural support they give to facilitate the learning and involvement of their students with special needs in an inclusive classroom. This can include things like adapting lessons, developing individual education plans, managing the classroom, working with students'

peers, monitoring student progress, and communicating with parents, counselling, and encouraging. This study uses the Teacher Support Scale, developed by the researcher, to measure the level of teacher support.

The Supportive Role of Parents

The supportive role of parents is the extent to which they help their child with special needs develop educationally, socially, and emotionally. This can include activities such as monitoring homework, communicating with teachers, encouraging participation, providing emotional support, and supporting their child's individual education plan. The study also uses the Parent Support Scale, developed by the researcher, to measure the level of parent support.

Performance in Academics

The academic performance of children with special needs in educational settings can be defined as the level of success displayed by students with special needs in relation to their school subjects and various curricular activities. Academic performance is comprised of a variety of factors including learning outcomes, participation in classroom activities, and progress made as recorded in academic records. The evaluation of academic performance in this study was conducted through subjective evaluations of the academic progress reports provided by parents and schools.

Interaction with Peers and Social Adjustment

Peer interaction and social adjustment are defined as the ability of children with special needs to effectively interact with other children; participate in school activities; follow social norms; communicate in socially acceptable ways; and create and maintain positive

relationships in the educational setting. The Socialization Skills Rating Scale (SSRS) will be used to assess social adjustment in children with special needs in this study.

Accessibility and Infrastructure

Accessibility and infrastructure refer to the availability and appropriateness of the physical features that serve to facilitate inclusion in the educational setting such as ramps, accessible toilets, classroom configurations, natural light and ventilation, resource rooms, assistive devices, and barrier-free environments. The Measuring Learning Environment Model (MLEM) will be used to assess accessibility and infrastructure for children with special needs in this study.

Resources

Resources are any type of supports an individual has for the inclusion of students with special needs into the educational system, including special educators; teaching and learning materials; assistive devices; and necessary support services, such as resource rooms and other support services needed for students with special needs to be fully educated. In the study, resources are examined as part of the school learning environment using the multi-level evaluation matrix (MLEM) tool.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Inclusive Education: Concept, Policies and Implementation

Over the last few decades, the international conversation about inclusive education has progressed from being mostly focused on student access to being more fully realized by emphasizing learner participation, equity and measurable learning results for all students. This broader view is embraced by the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report when it states, “All means all” but raises concerns because most education systems have not achieved true inclusion thus far. (UNESCO 2020) Therefore, this broader understanding clarifies that just putting children with disabilities (CWD) in a regular classroom does not guarantee that they will participate or do well; thus true inclusion needs to be viewed as a process that enables CWD to fully engage, learn and develop. In India, this global inclusive vision is espoused in policies such as the Right to Education Act (RTE) and other national policies, which place emphasis on universal access and equitable opportunities for all; however, while these national policy commitments are strong, research indicates that how they are put into practice varies around the country depending on the region, type of school and socio-economic status of the students/Government. Schools that serve as educational monitoring systems are primarily based on student enrolment and retention rates with little to no information collected about students’ participation in the classroom, how well the students are taught, and how well students with disabilities learn. (Education Profiles 2021; NCERT 2021). Academics believe that looking only at the number of students enrolled in a program does not allow us to look at how each student experiences being in an inclusive classroom. A lack of details in the operational guidelines for implementing policies can create a gap between how well a policy is supposed to work and the actual results that occur in the

classroom (Rangarajan & Mandaliya, 2025). This gap between what we would like to see happen and what actually happens is creating the current state of inclusive education in India. Research is needed on both the policies and procedures for successful implementation so we can see the difference between what should happen and what does happen in an inclusive school.

2.1 Inclusion and Infrastructural availability

The availability and adequacy of the physical and material infrastructure to support inclusive education is one of the most important aspects of inclusivity. Physical and material infrastructure directly affects the accessibility and participation of children with disabilities. UNICEF and the Indian Government (Ministry of Education) both state that inclusive infrastructure, such as ramps, accessible toilets, tactile pathways, appropriate signage and assistive devices, are essential in creating enabling learning environments (UNICEF & MoE, 2018). However, many empirical studies show that many schools (particularly in rural and government sectors) still do not have the basic facilities necessary to increase participation rates for students with special needs (Kumar & Choudhary, 2023). In addition to poor maintenance, the ineffective use of infrastructure generates physical and social barriers and reflects an absence of commitment from institutions to include all persons. Furthermore, the provision of adequate teaching/learning materials or assistive technology also limits the ability of a student with a disability to access the curriculum. Research demonstrates that access to appropriate learning materials is critical to supporting a student with a disability to fully participate and succeed academically; however, the availability of these materials is unevenly distributed in schools (Education Profiles, 2021). Therefore, when considering infrastructure as a key aspect of inclusive education, it should be viewed not only as a necessary physical element but also as an essential feature of providing access and experience for all students.

2.2 Inclusive Education and Teacher Competency

Teachers are a key part of making sure that all students are included in the classroom. Teachers translate what government policy says into action to make sure that these policies come to life in their everyday teaching. There is a lot of research that shows teachers' beliefs, attitudes and perceived self-efficacy have a significant impact on how willing and able they are to adopt inclusive practices. Sharma (2016) states that "beliefs matter for behavior" and that teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusion are more likely to implement practices that support diverse learners. There is some complexity within the context of India regarding this, and while many teachers support inclusive education theoretically, they encounter many practical challenges in implementing it (Tiwari, Das & Sharma, 2015). There are many things working against teachers when trying to support students with disabilities and deliver quality instruction. These include large class sizes, limited time, no specialized training and not having access to qualified support personnel (e.g., special educators and therapists). Because of these issues, many teachers are uncertain if they have the ability to teach students with disabilities, leading to a feeling of being inadequate, which may impact how they deliver instruction. However, researchers indicate that these challenges are not unresolvable based on their completion of studies demonstrating that professional development targeted at increasing teachers' competency and confidence in providing inclusive pedagogy is successful when tied to on-going support. The studies completed by Boniface et al. (2025) and Taneja-Johansson et al. (2023) indicate that contextually relevant training along with mentorship and collaborative learning opportunities provided in the school setting enhanced teachers' capacity to support diverse learners. The findings also suggest that teacher education programs also play an important role in helping develop teachers' confidence and competencies about inclusive education and there is evidence supporting that teachers who are provided with pre-service inclusive training are better prepared to support students with

disabilities successfully (Sharma & Sokal, 2015). The research supports the idea that investing in teacher capacity is the most important factor supporting inclusive education implementation.

2.3 Inclusion and Student outcomes

There have been numerous studies regarding how inclusive education can impact all student outcomes. Socially & academically, inclusive education is thought to be beneficial for students. However, one of the key lessons learned from research is that for students with disabilities, the results they achieve will ultimately depend on how well inclusive education is implemented and whether appropriate support mechanisms are provided. The results from multiple international meta-analyses show that when adequate supports exist, students will achieve positive or neutral results in terms of cognitive & psychosocial development in an inclusive setting (Krämer et al., 2021). Some studies provide evidence that students will have achievement gaps when proper accommodations and targeted instructional strategies have not been in place for them (Adjei et al., 2024). This indicates that simply having inclusive education is not enough to produce better academic results; rather, effective teaching methods such as differentiation, co-teaching, individualized assistance and the use of assistive technology will all help improve outcomes. According to Edyburn (2013), the use of assistive technologies can lead to improved levels of independence and overall academic performance, but many Indian schools still have limited availability and usage of assistive technologies due to both financial constraints and limited infrastructure (Das & Kattumuri, 2011). Therefore, understanding the relationship between inclusion and academic success is complicated by the number of variables operating in the educational setting and their shared influence on each other.

2.4 Inclusive Education and Social Dimensions

The social aspects of inclusive education are equally significant in influencing how students experience school based on their disability. For example, students with disabilities may be physically present in a mainstream classroom and may not have any physical limitations to joining their peers; however, they cannot participate fully in the same social groups (i.e. making friends, spending time together outside of school) as their typical peers. Das and Kattumuri (2011) also note the wide range of contexts for inclusion experiences, which are influenced by factors such as the level of facilitation offered by the teacher, the types of attitudes held by peers and the general attitude held within the school (ethos). Furthermore, studies conducted within South Asia highlight the impact of socio-cultural factors on inclusion. In particular, stigma associated with disability and the low expectations of academics and socially associated with disabilities can greatly limit the opportunities for participation of students with disabilities (Singal, 2015; Singal, 2016). In the context described above, parental involvement has surfaced as an important contributor; therefore, when there is strong cooperation between families and schools this provides additional opportunities for children to reach their academic and social potential. According to Hornby (2011), parents support the learning of their children by providing encouragement and advocating for their needs within the context of the broader community, however, many parents do not have the opportunity to participate because of the socio-economic barriers associated with the Indian cultural context. Peer-mediated strategies have also been found to be useful ways to promote inclusion in children; Carter et al.'s (2016) findings indicate that peer-mediated strategies have a positive effect on social interactions and participation in classrooms. All of this indicates that inclusion is addressed through social/cultural factors in addition to structural and pedagogical factors.

The implementation of inclusive education is also largely shaped by systemic and institutional factors, such as the leadership of the school, the governing structure of the school and the coherence of policies that support/influence inclusive education in schools. A large body of research shows that leadership in schools plays an important role in creating inclusive school culture and practice. In the view of Ainscow and Sandill (2010), inclusive schools usually have leaders who encourage collaboration, support innovative teaching by teachers and strategically allocate resources to meet the varying needs of all students. Such leadership creates an environment where the issue of inclusion is part of the school's core values, rather than as a separate responsibility. In India, Bhatnagar and Das (2014) have noted that schools with active, supportive leadership are more flexible in adapting curricula to accommodate all students and implement inclusive practices more effectively. The lack of education/training that school leaders have regarding inclusive education affects their ability to lead and support teachers and manage resources. Additionally, decentralized governance structures such as School Management Committees (SMCs) enhance accountability and participation from the community but depend on the capacity and engagement levels of the SMC members (Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2010), which suggests that enhancing ability and capacity around leadership/Gov. structures is critical for closing the gap between policy and actual implementation of inclusive education.

The importance of pedagogical frameworks like Universal Design for Learning (UDL) has become an essential factor in providing equitable educational opportunities to all students as the number of students with a range of different learning needs has continued to increase in recent years. The UDL framework provides teachers with an approach to designing curriculum and instruction in such a way as to not only accommodate different learner characteristics but also provide multiple means of engagement, representation and expression (Rose & Meyer, 2002). In doing so, UDL provides a new perspective in terms of

instructional design by emphasizing that the focus of the teacher should not be placed on how to adapt instruction to meet the individual needs of each student; rather, teachers should be focused on designing the overall learning environment in such a way as to minimize barriers for all students to access the same learning opportunities. Research has indicated that UDL-based practices can improve student engagement, motivation and participation, thereby supporting inclusive classrooms (Al-Azawei et al., 2016). However, implementing UDL in India presents several obstacles including rigid curricula, exam-oriented teaching practices and a lack of awareness among educators (Mishra, 2019). Teachers often encounter difficulties reconciling the perceived pressures of standardised assessments with the need to implement flexible teaching strategies resulting in a disconnect between the theoretical & practical aspects of teaching. Nonetheless, the principles of UDL provide a useful framework to support inclusive pedagogies and respond to the diverse needs of learners.

Another critical part of inclusive education is the function assisted technology serves in enabling, via various means and resources, access and involvement in educational activities by those students who have disabilities. According to Edyburn (2013), assistive technology ranges from various low-tech items, such as lenses or magnifying glasses, to very high-tech items such as screen readers and speech-to-text software. Assistive technology can, therefore, support learners with disabilities by significantly improving independence and academic outcomes. The situation in India, however, is that there is a very lack of consistent availability of assistive technologies; urban-rural and private-government school disparities exist (Das & Kattumuri, 2011). Furthermore, high costs, lack of repair, limited technology support and low levels of teacher preparation negatively impact the extent that assistive technologies can be used effectively. Furthermore, due to a lack of systematic means to identify and respond to students' individual learning needs, resources aren't used effectively. So, while there is tremendous potential for the use of Assistive Technology to assist with inclusion, any value

from the use of AT will be based on how well AT is integrated into the teaching-learning process and supported through sufficient training and infrastructure.

A number of researchers have criticized the assessment practices of inclusive education because they do not necessarily reflect the diverse learning needs of all students. The traditional method of assessment, based primarily on standardized tests, does not adequately measure the performance and growth of students with disabilities and thus limits their possibility of success. Black and Wiliam (2009) argue that formative assessment provides on-going feedback to the student and helps to shape their individual learning paths through the effective use of assessment as a means of (a) facilitating learning and (b) evaluating learning. This type of assessment is crucial because it will help students with disabilities develop their skills through consistent and on-going feedback, ultimately providing them with the necessary skills to achieve academic excellence. However, due to the prevalence of high-stakes examinations in India, teachers do not have much opportunity to incorporate flexible and inclusive assessment strategies into their instruction. The study conducted by Julka and Indu (2013) highlights the need to have better assessment procedures like portfolio assessment, project-based assessment and peer assessment, which could better validate the divergent abilities of learners. Furthermore, logical accommodations are required that may include extra time, dealing with special question papers and different assistive devices, etc. to ensure equal assessment. While policy supports such accommodations, the implementation of these is still irregular, which calls for heightened awareness and monitoring practices.

Further complicating the implementation of an inclusive education system is how each child's disabilities will cross-pollinate with other social factors (gender, caste, socio-economic status and language). Naraian (2017) notes that children with disabilities are frequently marginalized in numerous ways, compounding their educational disadvantage and

denying them access to educational opportunities. An illustration of this intersection is that girls with disabilities living in rural communities face additional barriers due to cultural norms, safety concerns and limited access to education resources. Likewise, students from economically disadvantage communities do not have access to healthcare, nutrition or learning support resulting in further diminishing their educational outcomes. The multiple and interlinked barriers that children face (due to these intersections) support a need for holistic and contextually sensitive approaches to inclusion, as there is a need to move beyond disability. Policies and practices need to consider and plan for the various and interconnected barriers learners face, therefore all interventions need to be tailored to meet their unique needs and conditions.

Stakeholders' collaboration as well as community participation contributes greatly to the successful implementation of inclusive education. According to research, sample-sized under adults, children and adolescents who interact actively with inclusive education generally receive better educational outcomes than those with limited or no access. For example, Govinda and Bandyopadhyay (2010) cited that community-based monitoring systems promote accountability and responsiveness in education systems and are particularly effective for decentralised educational systems. The community participation mechanisms' ability to promote effective community participation can vary greatly due to differing capacity, motivational levels and awareness of disability and other barriers limiting participation in education. Therefore creating a community support through capacity-building programs, awareness raising programs and collaborative decision-making processes, as a prerequisite to create a supportive environment in order to successfully implement inclusive education will improve outcomes of all stakeholders.

Inclusion of all learners is achieved through peer relationships and collaborative learning strategies. Studies indicate that peer-mediated interventions enable students to help one another learn, which in turn correlates with increased levels of engagement, improved communication skills and positive social interactions among students with disabilities. According to Carter et al. (2016), structured peer support programs can significantly improve the overall participation and inclusion of all learners in an inclusive classroom setting; particularly for those students who have moderate to severe disabilities. Academic benefits are only one part of the equation because by providing these types of environments; students develop greater empathy, understanding and respect for diversity among their peers, all of which contribute to creating a positive environment in the classroom. It should be noted that if peer support strategies are to be successfully implemented, they will require substantial planning, appropriate teacher guidance and preparation of all students so that their interactions will be meaningful and supportive.

Mental health and emotional health are increasingly considered core elements of inclusive education and affect students' ability to learn and be engaged in school. Disabled students often experience higher levels of stress, anxiety and social isolation than their non-disabled peers, which can directly affect their academic success and overall well-being.

Weare and Nind (2011) point out that a whole-school approach to promoting mental health, incorporating social-emotional learning within the curriculum and providing access to counselling and support services is important. While there are many initiatives and opportunities to increase mental health support for disabled students in schools, it is critical to note the limited existing mental health support in schools across India, as well as the few schools that have hired counsellors or developed a structured program to support students' social-emotional needs. Therefore, there is an urgent need for increased investment in mental

health services and increasing the number of well-being initiatives in inclusive education frameworks.

2.5 Inclusive Education and Leadership, Policy and Monitoring

The importance of policy coherence & inter-sectoral collaboration in achieving the successful execution of Inclusive Education cannot be overstated. Inclusive Education requires co-operation among the Education Sector and others, including Health, Social Welfare and others, in order to adequately address the needs of all learners with disabilities. Global leading organisations like the World Health Organisation (WHO) & The World Bank (2011) advocate for multi-tiered/multi-sectoral approaches to sustain inclusion. Unfortunately, in India, due to fragmented service delivery & lack of co-operation between departments it is often difficult to deliver a comprehensive support system for included students. Therefore, to achieve the goals of Inclusion we must strengthen Inter-Sectoral collaboration through the development of integrated policy frameworks, the establishment of shared responsibilities and the implementation of coordinated service delivery systems.

Monitoring and evaluation systems are generally recognized as the tools for assessing inclusive education effectiveness and improving inclusiveness, but the frameworks are often cumbersome such that practice including is compromised. While scores of indices and tools have already been developed for measuring progress, largely they have been confined to identification through quantitative indicators: enrolment, attendance and retention, while on the quality of interaction and learning experiences of students with disabilities no real emphasis is laid. Effective monitoring systems [must] take into consideration both quantitative and qualitative indicators-like classroom practices, student engagement and social inclusion...in order to do a complete justice to inclusion (UNESCO, 2017). The NCERT Index for Developing Inclusive Schools etc. are practical tools in the Indian context

for self-evaluation and benchmarking, still, the implementation of these systems across the schools has been poor (NCERT,2021).

Furthermore, data collection processes are often fragmented and lack reliability, making it difficult to assess progress accurately and develop evidence-based interventions. These limitations highlight the need for more robust and context-sensitive monitoring systems that can capture the multi-dimensional nature of inclusive education and support continuous improvement.

Another important area of focus in the literature is the role of culturally responsive pedagogy in promoting inclusive education, particularly in diverse and multilingual contexts such as India. Culturally responsive teaching emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing students' cultural backgrounds, experiences and identities in the teaching–learning process. Gay (2010) argues that such approaches enhance student engagement and learning by making education more relevant and meaningful to learners. In inclusive classrooms, culturally responsive pedagogy becomes especially important, as students with disabilities often belong to marginalized communities and may face multiple forms of exclusion. By integrating cultural relevance into curriculum and instruction, teachers can create more inclusive and supportive learning environments that address the diverse needs of all students. However, the implementation of culturally responsive practices requires teachers to possess a deep understanding of their students' backgrounds and to adopt flexible and reflective teaching approaches, which may be challenging in contexts with limited training and resources.

The sustainability of inclusive education initiatives is another critical concern highlighted in the literature, as many programs and interventions fail to produce long-term impact due to lack of continuity and systemic support. Fullan (2007) emphasizes that meaningful educational change requires sustained effort, collaboration and adaptation to evolving

contexts, rather than short-term or isolated initiatives. In the Indian context, inclusive education efforts are often implemented through specific schemes or projects, which may not be fully integrated into the broader education system. As a result, gains achieved through such initiatives may not be sustained once external support is withdrawn. Ensuring sustainability requires embedding inclusive practices into the core functioning of schools, including curriculum design, teacher education, assessment systems and institutional policies. It also necessitates continuous professional development for teachers, on-going monitoring and evaluation and strong leadership support to maintain momentum and drive improvement.

Recent empirical studies provide further insights into the effectiveness and challenges of inclusive education in practice. Dewi (2024) conducted a comprehensive study on inclusive education in culturally diverse classrooms and found that inclusive practices significantly enhance both academic and social outcomes for students. The study highlights that inclusive classrooms promote equitable participation, foster collaboration and encourage respect for diversity, thereby creating a positive learning environment for all learners. At the same time, the study identifies several challenges that limit the effectiveness of inclusion, including inadequate teacher preparedness, insufficient educational resources and persistent socio-cultural barriers to participation and acceptance. These findings reinforce the argument that while inclusive education has the potential to transform learning environments, its success depends on the availability of adequate support systems and the ability to address contextual challenges. The study also emphasizes the need for stronger policy support, increased funding for educational resources and technology and greater collaboration among stakeholders to enhance the implementation of inclusive education.

Similarly, Gale et al. (2022), in a scoping review of inclusive education practices in India, highlight the importance of adopting an asset-based and collaborative approach to inclusion.

Their findings suggest that successful inclusive education initiatives are those that empower teachers and school leaders, provide continuous professional development opportunities and foster a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility. The review also emphasizes the role of local knowledge and community engagement in shaping effective practices, noting that interventions are more likely to succeed when they are tailored to the specific needs and contexts of schools and communities. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of moving away from deficit-oriented perspectives, which focus on the limitations of students with disabilities, towards approaches that recognize and build on their strengths and capabilities. This shift in perspective is essential for promoting a more inclusive and equitable education system.

Inclusive education in India continues to be shaped by a range of socio-economic, cultural and systemic factors, which create both opportunities and challenges for its implementation. Issues such as poverty, gender inequality, caste-based discrimination and linguistic diversity intersect with disability to influence access, participation and learning outcomes. These factors highlight the need for context-specific interventions that address the unique challenges faced by different groups of learners. At the same time, they underscore the importance of adopting a holistic approach to inclusion that considers the broader social and cultural context in which education takes place. Policies and practices must therefore be designed to address not only the needs of students with disabilities but also the structural inequalities that affect their educational experiences.

Another emerging theme in the literature is the importance of innovation and flexibility in promoting inclusive education. Traditional models of teaching and learning, which are often rigid and standardized, may not be suitable for addressing the diverse needs of learners in inclusive classrooms. As a result, there is a growing emphasis on adopting innovative

approaches such as differentiated instruction, collaborative learning and the use of digital technologies to enhance teaching and learning. These approaches enable teachers to respond to individual learning needs and create more engaging and inclusive learning environments. However, the successful implementation of such innovations requires adequate training, resources and support, as well as a willingness to move beyond conventional practices. This highlights the need for systemic reforms that encourage experimentation, flexibility and continuous improvement in teaching and learning processes.

In addition, the role of teacher collaboration and professional learning communities has been identified as a key factor in supporting inclusive education. Research suggests that teachers are more likely to adopt inclusive practices when they have opportunities to collaborate with colleagues, share experiences and learn from each other. Collaborative approaches such as co-teaching, peer observation and reflective practice enable teachers to develop new skills and strategies for addressing diverse learning needs. They also provide a supportive environment in which teachers can discuss challenges and seek solutions, thereby enhancing their confidence and effectiveness. In the Indian context, however, opportunities for teacher collaboration are often limited due to heavy workloads and lack of institutional support, highlighting the need for policies and practices that promote professional collaboration and learning.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

3.0 Research Design

The present study uses a **descriptive survey research design**. The study aims to assess the progress and pitfalls among children with special needs enrolled in inclusive educational settings in Kerala. Since the study focuses on collecting detailed information regarding academic performance, social participation, infrastructural facilities and resource availability, the descriptive survey method was considered appropriate.

3.1 Variables of the Study

Independent Variables:

The independent variables are the factors that may influence the status and progress of children with special needs in inclusive educational settings. These include teacher support, parental support, peer interaction and acceptance, availability of infrastructure and accessibility features and educational resources provided within the school environment.

Dependent Variables:

The dependent variables are the outcomes observed among children with special needs in inclusive schools. These include academic performance, social adjustment and participation in school activities, peer relationships and the overall status of children with special needs in inclusive educational settings.

3.2 Description of the tool employed and details of sample selection and the participants:

The tool and techniques used for the study as well as the details and the sample selection are discussed in this section. This section gives a detailed description of the selection of the participants as well as the tool employed.

3.3 Selection of the participants:

The participants for the present study were selected from children with communication disorders who had completed training in a preparatory special preschool center and were later integrated into inclusive schools in Kerala. The researcher collected details of children who had passed out from the preschool center during the period 2015–2024 from the records maintained at the institution.

With the support of special educators working in the preschool center, the contact details of the children and their parents were obtained. The researcher initially identified a total of 64 potential participants and contacted the parents directly to determine whether the children were currently studying in inclusive schools. However, not all participants could be included in the study. Some children were studying in special schools, some families were residing outside Kerala and some parents could not be contacted due to unavailable or switched-off phone numbers. Based on the objectives of the study and the inclusion criteria, 50 participants were finally selected for the research.

The selected participants belonged to different inclusive schools in Kerala, including both government and private institutions. These schools follow the regular curriculum and provide opportunities for children with and without disabilities to learn together in the same classroom environment.

The students were selected based on the inclusion criteria:

3.4 Inclusion Criteria:

The following criteria were considered for selecting participants for the study:

- Children with special needs such as hearing impairment, autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability and multiple disabilities
- Children who are currently studying in inclusive schools
- Children who have received early intervention or preparatory special education services
- Children who have been studying in an inclusive setup for at least one year

3.5 Exclusion Criteria:

The following participants were excluded from the study:

- Children studying in special schools or segregated settings
- Children who have recently joined inclusive schools
- Children who have not received any form of early intervention services

The division of the children based on their diagnosis is given below:

3.1 Distribution of Participants Based on Provisional Diagnosis

Sl No	Provisional Diagnosis	Numbers	Male	Female
1	Hearing Impairment	8	5	4
2	Intellectual Disability	32	19	13
3	Autism Spectrum Disorder	9	5	3
4	Learning Disability	1	1	-
Total		50		

The above table presents the details of participants selected for the present study. A total of 50 children with communication disorders studying in inclusive school settings were included as

participants. The participants consisted of children with provisional diagnoses such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Intellectual Disability (ID), Hearing Impairment (HI) and Learning Disability (LD). Both male and female participants were included in the study to ensure representation of different genders. Among the selected participants, a greater number of children were identified with Intellectual Disability, followed by Autism Spectrum Disorder and Hearing Impairment. The participants were selected based on the objectives and inclusion criteria of the study from different inclusive schools across Kerala.

3.6 Selection of Schools for the study

For the present study, inclusive schools in Kerala were selected based on feasibility and accessibility of the researcher. The researcher approached parents and teachers of children with special needs studying in these schools to ensure their participation. The schools selected for the study follow the regular curriculum and provide opportunities for children with and without disabilities to learn together in the same classroom. Total of 50 inclusive schools across Kerala were selected for the study, these schools include both government and private institutions where children with special needs are studying along with other children.

3.2 Details of schools included for the study

Sl No	District	No of school
1	Thiruvananthapuram	3
2	Kollam	2
3	Alappuzha	1
4	Eranakulam	8
5	Thrissur	14
6	Palakkad	2
7	Malappuram	8
8	Kozhikode	3
9	Kannur	4

Total		50
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Out of the 50 schools selected, few of them were Government, some were Private and few came under the missionary and municipal corporation. Details of type of school and syllabus included for the study is given below:

3.3 Type of School and Syllabus followed

SI No	Type of School	Syllabus followed	Numbers
1	Government	SSC	22
2	Private	SSC/CBSE/ICSE	20
3	Missionary	SSC/CBSE/ICSE	6
4	Municipal Corporation	SSC	2
Total			50

The above table shows the details of schools selected for the present study from different districts of Kerala. A total of 50 schools were included in the study, covering districts such as Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Kannur. Among these districts, the highest number of schools was selected from Thrissur district (14 schools), followed by Ernakulam and Malappuram districts with 8 schools each. The selected schools included Government, Private, Missionary and Municipal Corporation schools following different syllabi such as State syllabus (SSC), CBSE and ICSE. The inclusion of different types of schools and syllabi helped the researcher obtain diverse information regarding the educational experiences and inclusion practices of children with communication disorders studying in inclusive school settings.

3.7 Details of Tool selection

For the present study, the researcher employed four tools for data collection along with the academic achievement progress reports of the children. Out of the four tools employed in the

study, two tools were developed by the researcher. One tool was developed to assess the supportive roles played by teachers in the inclusive education of children and the other was developed to assess the supportive roles played by parents in the inclusive education of children.

The remaining two tools were standardized tools. One standardized tool, *Measuring Learning Environment of Mainstream School (MLEM)* (Huddar, A.) was used to assess the availability, accessibility and adequacy of infrastructure and learning resources in inclusive schools. The other standardized tool, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) namely Social Skill Rating Scale (SSRS), was used to assess the socialization skills of children studying in inclusive schools. The details of tools and its purpose is given below:

3.4 Details of Tool Employed and their Purpose

SI No	Name of the tool employed	Purpose	Developed by
1	Supportive roles played by the teachers	To assess the supportive roles played by teachers in the inclusive education of children.	Researcher
2	Supportive roles played by parents	To assess the supportive roles played by parents in the inclusive education of children.	Researcher
3	Infrastructure and Resources	To assess the availability, accessibility, and adequacy of infrastructure and learning resources in	Existing Standardized tool - (Huddar, A.)

		inclusive schools.	
4	Socialization skills	To assess the socialization skills of children studying in inclusive schools.	Standardized tool Developed by WHO Socialization Skills Rating Scale (SSRS)

The description of each tool employed for the study is discussed in detail below:

Tool 1: Researcher-Developed Tool for Assessing the Supportive Roles Played by Teachers in Inclusive Education

The researcher developed a tool to assess the supportive roles played by teachers in the inclusive education of children studying in inclusive schools. For the development of this tool, the researcher reviewed various related research studies, books and standardized scales associated with inclusive education, teacher efficacy and teacher attitudes towards inclusion. The researcher referred to the *Teacher Efficacy to Implement Inclusive Practices (TEIP) Scale* developed by Umesh Sharma, Tim Loreman and Chris Forlin (2012), which focused on teachers' efficacy in implementing inclusive practices. The researcher also referred to the study conducted by Bhatnagar and Kumar Das (2014) regarding teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in New Delhi, India.

Based on the review of related literature and the objectives of the study, the researcher prepared the initial items for the tool covering different dimensions of supportive roles played by teachers in inclusive settings. The tool covered themes like lesson adaptation, individualized education plan, managing behavioural or learning difficulties, physical accessibility in classroom environment, etc. It was a five point Likert Scale assessing the opinion of the participants from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. It consisted of 15

items. The prepared tool was organized in tabular form and submitted to 10 experts/validators in the field of special education and inclusive education for content validation. The experts examined the relevance, clarity, appropriateness and suitability of each item and provided necessary suggestions and modifications. Based on the suggestions given by the validators, required corrections and modifications were incorporated and the final form of the tool consisting of 17 items was prepared and confirmed for data collection. (Appendix I)

Tool 2: Researcher-Developed Tool for Assessing the Supportive Roles Played by Parents in Inclusive Education

The researcher developed another tool to assess the supportive roles played by parents in the inclusive education of children studying in inclusive schools. For developing this tool, the researcher reviewed several research studies, books and literature related to parental involvement and inclusive education. The researcher referred to the study conducted by Hyassat et.al (2024) on special education teachers' perceptions of parental involvement in inclusive education. The researcher also referred to the study titled *Relation between Parental Involvement and Emotional Maturity of IX Standard Students* (2024) and the work of Epstein (2018) on school, family, and community partnerships.

Based on the review of related literature and the objectives of the study, the researcher prepared the items related to parental support and involvement in inclusive education. The tool was then arranged in tabular form and given to 10 experts/validators in the field of special education and inclusive education for validation. The validators examined the items and provided suggestions regarding the clarity, relevance and appropriateness of the statements. Necessary modifications and corrections were made according to the suggestions. (Appendix II)

Details of Tool Validation

For the purpose of tool validation, the two tools developed by the researcher were given to 10 validators. These validators had more than five years of experience in their field. The details of validators are given below:

3.5 Details of Validator for Tool Validation

Sl No	School Type	No of Validator	
1	Institute	8	Special Educators and parents
2	Teacher Education Institution	1	Head mistress
3	Inclusive school	1	Assistant professor
Total		10	

The validators validated the content and provided suggestions, which was incorporated in the final tool. Hence the two tools which had 30 items prior to validation, post validation, the number of items in each tool became 17 and 17 items respectively.

Tool 3: Standardized Tool for Assessing Infrastructure and Resources in Inclusive Schools

The researcher used a standardized tool titled *Measuring Learning Environment of Mainstream Schools (MLEM) for Being Disability Appropriate*, developed by the Huddar, A.. The tool was used to assess the availability, accessibility, and adequacy of infrastructure and learning resources in inclusive schools. The tool mainly focused on evaluating whether the school environment was disability appropriate and identifying the areas that required improvement for better inclusion of children with special needs. The tool included areas such as basic school information, school location, accessibility and barriers, classroom

environment, furniture and fixtures, resource units, disability orientation programmes, curricular adaptations, individualized educational support and family empowerment. The tool helped the researcher understand the extent to which inclusive schools provided supportive infrastructure and resources for children with special needs. (Appendix III)

Tool 4: Standardized Tool for Assessing Socialization Skills

The researcher used a standardized tool developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) namely Socialization Skills Rating Scale (SSRS) to assess the socialization skills of children studying in inclusive schools. The tool included items related to children's social interaction, communication, peer relationships, participation, cooperation and adjustment in school settings. The tool helped the researcher understand the level of socialization skills among children studying in inclusive educational environments.

For the purpose of data collection, the Socialization Skills Rating Scale (SSRS) was converted into a Google Form by the researcher. Since the children were not able to respond independently, the parents were requested to provide the responses based on the child's behaviour and social functioning. Before sharing the form, the researcher contacted the parents through phone calls and briefly explained the objectives of the study, the purpose of the tool, and the procedure for responding to the Google Form. The Google Form link was then shared through WhatsApp and email and the responses were collected from the participants for further analysis. (Appendix IV)

For assessing the academic achievement of children studying in inclusive schools, the researcher collected the academic progress reports of the participants from parents and schools. However, academic progress reports could not be obtained from all 50 participants. Only a limited number of progress reports were collected because many children had not yet

developed adequate writing skills and were not in a position to participate in formal written academic activities and evaluations. Therefore, academic records were available only for a few participants. The progress reports that were obtained from the participants were collected and attached as supporting documents for assessing the academic performance of the children included in the study.

3.8 Procedure of Data Collection

After validation, the final version of the tool was prepared and confirmed for administration. The researcher contacted each participant individually and obtained their willingness for tool administration. Since the tools had to be responded to by both parents and teachers, 50 parents and 50 teachers became the respondents of the study. The researcher personally called the parents and teachers, briefly explained the purpose and procedure of the study and shared the Google Form links for responding. Among the four tools, the tool assessing supportive roles played by parents and the socialization skills tool were administered to the parents, while the tool assessing supportive roles played by teachers and the tool assessing infrastructure and resources were administered to the teachers. As all four tools had to be administered to the participants, the researcher provided two weeks' time for the parents and teachers to respond to the questionnaires. The researcher followed up rigorously to ensure that the Google Forms were submitted.

The collected data was subjected to appropriate statistical analysis after the data collection

CHAPTER 4

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The study titled “Assessing the Progress and Pitfalls among Children with Special Needs enrolled in Inclusive Education Set-up in Kerala” was carried out with the purpose of identifying the opportunities and pitfalls encountered by Children with Special Needs studying in an inclusive set-up in Kerala. For this purpose the data was collected from 50 numbers of parents and 50 numbers of teachers teaching children with special needs in an inclusive setup. The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS software, and the results thus obtained are discussed below.

4.1 Result and Discussion pertaining to “Supportive Roles played by the teachers in helping children with special needs to learn and develop”.

The data collected from 50 participants i.e. teachers on their roles in providing support to children with special needs on various aspects is depicted in table No 4.1 and discussed thereby.

4.1 Supportive Role played by Teachers in Inclusive Education

Sl No.	Criteria	Responses (in %)			
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Lesson Adaptation	-	8.0 (4)	68 (34)	24 (12)
2	Extra Explanation & Practice Task	-	12 (6)	42 (21)	46 (23)
3	Individualized Education Plan	-	6.0 (3)	48 (24)	46 (23)
4	Frequent Communication for Progress Monitoring	-	12 (6)	44 (22)	44 (22)
5	Collaboration for Suitable Strategies	-	8.0 (4)	48 (24)	44 (22)
6	Positive Feedback Encouragement	-	10	42	48

	for developing confidence		(5)	(21)	(24)
7	Use of Assistive devices & other supports	-	12 (6)	52 (26)	36 (18)
8	Modified classroom assessment	-	12 (6)	56 (28)	32 (16)
9	Participation in school activities	-	18 (9)	40 (20)	42 (21)
10	Peer cooperation and collaboration	-	14 (7)	40 (20)	46 (23)
11	Attending workshops and trained programs	2.0 (1)	14 (7)	62 (31)	22 (11)
12	Physical accessibility in classroom environment	-	12 (6)	56 (28)	32 (16)
13	Inclusive Education for individuals with or without disabilities	-	8.0 (4)	62 (31)	30 (15)
14	Emotional Safety & Comfort	2.0 (1)	10 (5)	52 (26)	36 (18)
15	Ensuring safe feeling	2.0 (1)	8.0 (4)	68 (34)	22 (11)
16	Inadequate institutional support	2.0 (1)	10 (5)	66 (33)	22 (11)
17	Managing behavioural or learning difficulties	4.0 (2)	8.0 (4)	48 (24)	40 (20)

Most participants in this study reported having positive attitudes about inclusive practices, such as using inclusive teaching methods (e.g., adapted lessons for students with disabilities), providing assistance to children with special needs, facilitating student participation in school activities, keeping parents informed about their child's progress at home and creating an environment conducive to inclusion. Additionally, certain respondents expressed concerns regarding insufficient institutional support as well as challenges related to managing behavioural problems and education-related/learning problems. Overall, this research implies that there is a need for professional assistance and training along with sufficient materials/resources to achieve successful implementation of inclusive education practices.

The findings of the present study reveal that teachers play a significant supportive role in promoting the learning, participation, confidence and overall development of children with special needs in inclusive classrooms. A majority of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with practices such as lesson adaptation, individualized educational planning, positive encouragement, peer collaboration and progress monitoring. At the same time, certain challenges such as inadequate institutional support and difficulties in managing behavioural and learning issues were also identified. The study was also successful in answering the research question related to teacher's contribution to promoting the learning, participation and inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools.

The findings of the present study are supported by several previous studies related to inclusive education and the supportive role of teachers in the education of children with special needs. Teacher's capacity to adapt their teaching approaches as well as to support kids' engagement and create supportive environments will dictate how successful inclusive education systems can be (Ainscow, 2005). In addition, Booth and Ainscow (2011) describe cooperative practices of collaboration, personalized support and high levels of active participation in general to enhance and accelerate the academic and social success of children with special needs. A study conducted by Sharma, Loreman, and Forlin (2012) found that teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusion and adequate training were more effective in implementing inclusive practices and supporting diverse learners in classrooms. Furthermore, Forlin (2010) stated that professional training, classroom support and access to resources enhance teachers' confidence and competency in handling behavioural and learning difficulties among children with special needs. The findings of the present study are consistent with these earlier studies, as the majority of teachers reported positive inclusive practices such as lesson adaptation, individualized educational planning, peer cooperation,

encouragement and progress monitoring, while also identifying challenges related to inadequate institutional support and management of behavioural difficulties.

4.2 Result and Discussion pertaining to “Supportive Roles played by parents in helping children with special needs to learn and develop”.

The data collected from 50 participants i.e. parents on their roles in providing support to children with special needs on various aspects is depicted in table No 4.2 and discussed thereby.

4.2 Supportive Roles played by Parents in Inclusive Education

Sl No.	Criteria	Responses (in %)			
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Monitoring child's homework & daily assignments	2.0 (1)	6.0 (3)	48 (24)	44 (22)
2	Regular communication with teachers	2.0 (1)	12 (6)	38 (19)	48 (24)
3	Participation in parent teacher meeting	-	4.0 (2)	44 (22)	52 (26)
4	Patience while helping with homework	-	10 (5)	60 (30)	30 (15)
5	Providing Guidance and Support	4.0 (2)	12 (6)	36 (18)	48 (24)
6	Providing emotional encouragement	-	14 (7)	56 (28)	30 (15)
7	Participation in school events	-	16 (8)	40 (20)	44 (22)
8	Positive reinforcement at home	2.0 (1)	4.0 (2)	56 (28)	38 (19)
9	Assistive devices to be used at home	4.0 (2)	16 (8)	50 (25)	30 (15)
10	Encouragement to study with other students	2.0 (1)	14 (7)	42 (21)	42 (21)
11	Frequent communication for child's learning	4.0 (2)	4.0 (2)	54 (27)	38 (19)
12	Encouraging interaction	-	4.0 (2)	46 (23)	50 (25)
13	Monitoring child's social relationship and school behaviour	2.0 (1)	6.0 (3)	50 (25)	42 (21)
14	Regular attendance and punctuality	-	2.0 (1)	46 (23)	52 (26)

15	Stating of child's strength and weakness	-		50 (25)	50 (25)
16	Not sufficient time for supporting child's school activities	8.0 (4)	8.0 (4)	66 (33)	18 (9)
17	Unsure about how to help my child with their learning difficulties	6.0 (3)	28 (14)	42 (21)	24 (12)

Overall, findings of the study demonstrate that a large proportion of survey participants indicate that they provide substantial support and involvement in both their children's educational experiences and inclusive programming. According to survey data, parents monitor their children's homework and work with teachers/specialists to communicate with them, participate in school-related activities, provide emotional support and encourage their children to play and interact with children who have, or do not have, disabilities. Additionally, parents confirmed that they are following teacher's lead in supporting inclusion by ensuring their children regularly attend and participate in school-related activities. Despite this support and the level of involvement exhibited, some parents have expressed a lack of time available for providing support at-home for schoolwork and are unsure how to effectively support their children when faced with challenges in their learning. In general, the results of the study indicate the significance of parent involvement, guidance and cooperative working relationships with schools as critical elements for successful implementation of inclusive programming.

This research confirms that parents are a significant and supportive component of children's learning and development within an inclusive environment when they have children with special needs. The majority of parents indicated through survey responses that they monitor their children's homework and assignment completion, communicate regularly with teachers, support their child's participation in school activities, support their child's emotional well-being and motivate their child to engage socially with his or her peers and actively participate

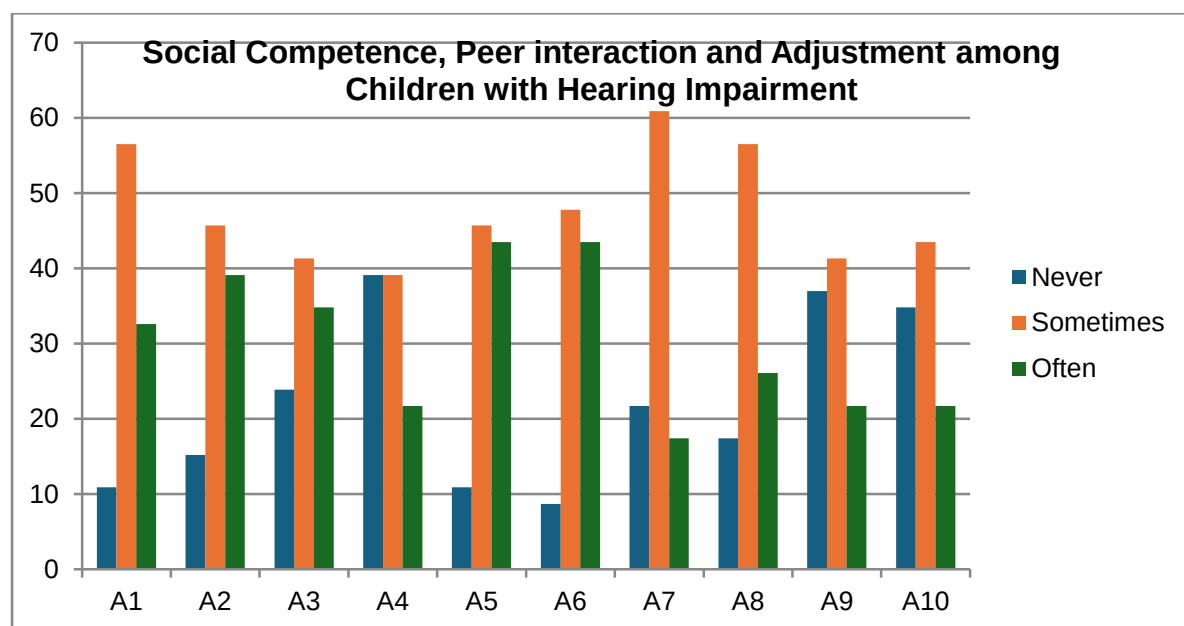
in an inclusive learning environment. Parents also provide a positive contribution to areas such as providing their child with a consistent schedule of school attendance and providing assistance to their child in navigating the process of learning from home and other inclusion-based educational experiences. Conversely, parents expressed concerns about various barriers such as limited time and uncertainty regarding how to assist their child in overcoming learning challenges. Moreover, this study accomplished its aim and the research question in examining to understand how parents are supportive of the development and learning process for children with special needs (CWSNs).

There is strong evidence in the literature that suggests parental involvement has a positive impact on both the academic and socio-emotional development of a child's education. Epstein's (2001) also reports that a positive relationship between parent involvement and educational outcomes. Hornby (2011) study supports this by discussing how effective partnerships between parents and schools enhances inclusive practices and supports students with special needs. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) state $\frac{3}{4}$ parent support, communication with the child's teacher and encouragement at home are all key contributors to children's socio-emotional adjustment and academic achievement. Blue-Banning et al.'s 2004 study supports the previous authors' findings asserting that, when families and schools work together as partners, children with disabilities will have increased participation in school, increased confidence and greater success in school. The present study confirms consistent results relative to the previous studies presented above. In this study parents were generally found to have positively participated in monitoring their children's learning activities, encouraging their children to play with others, maintaining communication with their children's teacher and providing emotional and academic support to their children. At the same time, however, parents in the current study experienced some difficulties in providing

adequate support with their children's learning and providing adequate time for supporting their children's education.

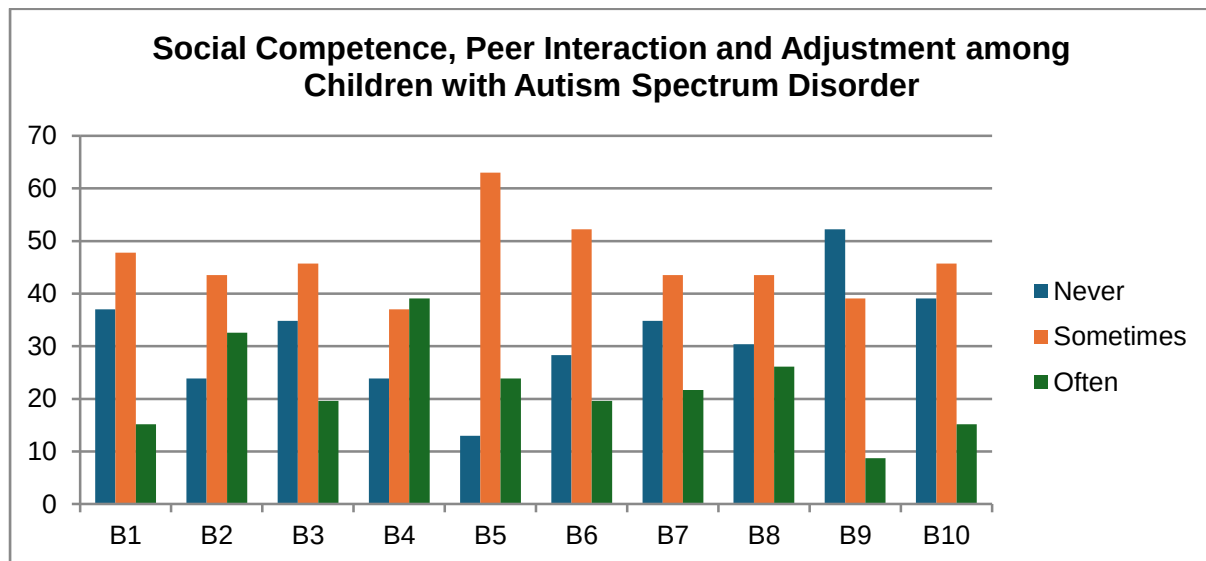
4.3 Result and Discussion based on the percentage obtained for social adjustment, peer interaction and acceptance of children with special needs in an inclusive environment.

Fig 1: Social Competence, Peer interaction and Adjustment among Children with Hearing Impairment



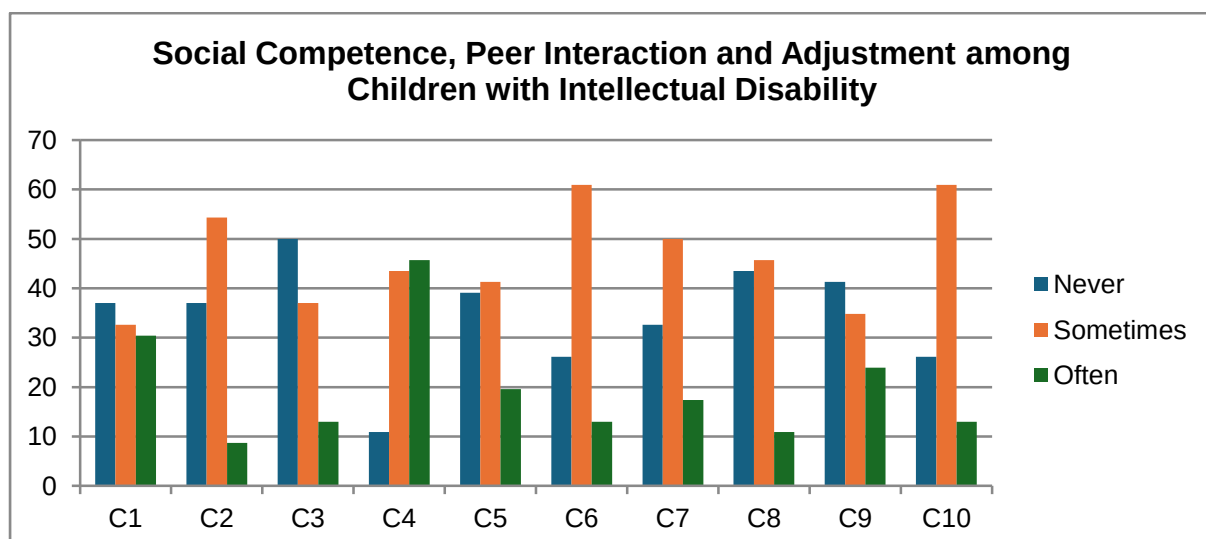
A1: I make friends easily, **A2 :** I say nice things to others when they have done something well, **A3 :** ask adults for help when other children try to hit me or push me around, **A4 :** am confident on dates, **A5 :** I try to understand how my friends feel when they are angry, **A6 :** upset or sad, **A7:** I listen to adults when they are talking to me, **A8 :** I ignore other children when they tease me or call me names, **A9 :** I ask friends for help with my problems, **A10 :** I ask before using other people's things.

Fig 2: Social Competence, Peer interaction and Adjustment among Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder



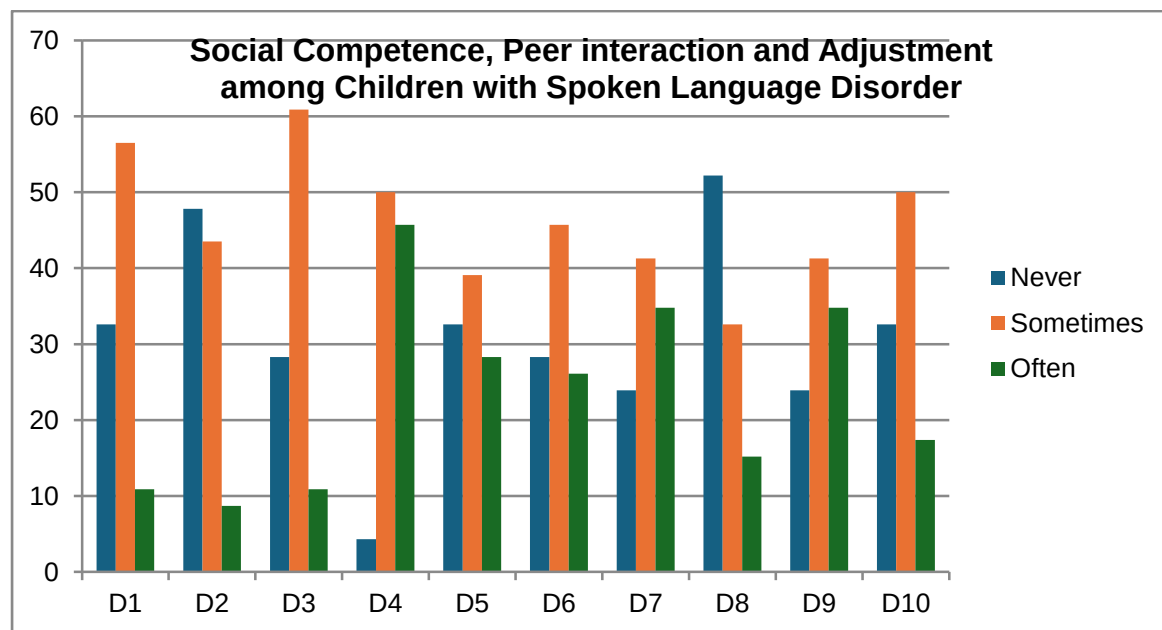
B1 : I disagree with adults without fighting or arguing, **B2**: I avoid doing things with others that may get me in trouble with adults, **B3**: I feel sorry for others when bad things happen to them, **B4**: I do my homework on time, **B5**: I keep my desk clean and neat, **B6**: I do nice things for my parents, like helping with household chores without being asked, **B7**: I am active in school activities such as sports or clubs, **B8**: I finish classroom work on time, **B9**: I compromise with parents or teachers when we have disagreements, **B10**: I ignore classmates who are clowning around in class

Fig 3: Social Competence, Peer interaction and Adjustment among Children with Intellectual Disability



C1: I ask someone I like for a date, C2: I listen to my friends when they talk about the problems they are having, C3: I end fights with my parents calmly, C4: I give compliments to members of the opposite sex, C5: I tell other people when they have done something well, C6: I smile wave, or nod at others, C7: I start conversations with opposite-sex friends without feeling uneasy or nervous, C8: I accept punishment from adults without getting mad, C9: I let friends know I like them by telling or showing them, C10: I stand up for my friends when they have been unfairly criticized.

Fig 4: Social Competence, Peer interaction and Adjustment among Children with Spoken Language Disorder



D1: I invite others to join in social activities, D2: I use my free time in a good way, D3: I control my temper when people are angry with me, D4: I get the attention of members of the opposite sex without feeling embarrassed, D5: I take criticism from my parents without getting angry, D6: I follow the teacher's directions, D7: I use a nice tone of voice in classroom discussion, D8: I ask friends to do favours for me, D9: I start talks with class members, D10: I talk things over with classmates when there is a problem or argument.

Studies examining social adjustment, peer interaction and acceptance among children with special needs who attend inclusive classrooms create evidence of diverse social skills across multiple domains. A majority of the participants responded with 'sometimes' or 'often' in relation to making friendships, understanding others' feelings, following teacher directives,

participating in school activities and interacting with peers, indicating moderate levels of both social participation and adjustment within inclusive settings. Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and who have Specific Learning Disabilities exhibited relatively greater peer interactions and better communication skills than those with other types of disabilities when listening to adults, demonstrating gratitude and starting a conversation. The children with an Intellectual Disability reported as having moderate levels of social participation. The children identified with an Autism Spectrum Disorder exhibited relatively poorer abilities in areas of emotional regulation, peer communication and conflict resolution. In addition, the findings suggested that children with special needs who attend inclusive schools are able to develop social relationships, gain social confidence and learn co-operative behaviours. However, the data collected indicate that there are still on-going challenges for children with special needs in areas of managing peer conflict, dealing with criticism, expressing their feelings and initiating social interactions independently. Based on the results of this study, the authors state that inclusive education has a positive effect on the social adjustment of children with special needs and will continue to provide or enable them with opportunities for social development.

The results of this study are also supported by Koster et al. (2010), who documented that inclusive education offers benefits to children with special needs through peer acceptance, social participation and an increase in the amount of interpersonal interactions they have with each other. Avramidis and Wilde (2009) found similar results and reported that children with disabilities attended regular schools and experienced a positive impact on social inclusion and confidence when provided with supportive classroom environments and positive peers. Similarly, Guralnick (2011) reported that inclusive education provides children with developmental disabilities with meaningful opportunities for the development of social competence and the development of peer relationships in inclusive educational settings.

4.4 Result and Discussion based on the percentage obtained on the adequacy of physical infrastructure, accessibility features, and classroom arrangements that support inclusive education.

4.3 Infrastructure, Accessibility and Classroom arrangements in Inclusive schools

Sl No.	Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Type of School	Government	22	44.0%
		Missionary	6	12.0%
		Municipal Corporation	2	4.0%
		Private	20	40.0%
2	Socio Economic Standard of Students	Below Poverty Line	1	2.0%
		Higher	2	4.0%
		Higher Middle Class	23	46.0%
		Lower Middle Class	24	48.0%
3	Medium of Instruction	English	16	32.0%
		English & Malayalam	5	10.0%
		Malayalam	29	58.0%
4	Curriculum	CBSE	11	22.0%
		ICSE	3	6.0%
		SSC	36	72.0%
5	Availability of Ramps	Yes	44	88.0%
		No	6	12.0%
6	Presence of Elevator/Lift	Yes	10	20.0%
		No	40	80.0%
7	Railings on Both Sides of Staircase	Yes	25	50.0%
		No	25	50.0%
8	Height of Steps	Safe & Manageable	50	100.0%
9	Natural Light & Ventilation	Adequate	14	28.0%
		Good	36	72.0%
10	Corridors & Passages for Wheelchair Movement	Appropriate	22	44.0%
		Most Appropriate	26	52.0%
		Not Appropriate	2	4.0%
11	Approach Road Condition	Manageable	21	42.0%
		Smooth	29	58.0%
12	Accessibility for Mobility	Crutches	3	6.0%

	Aids	No Mobility Aids	12	24.0%
		Walker	35	70.0%
13	Classroom Size	Spacious	50	100.0%
14	Seating Arrangement	Appropriate	50	100.0%
15	Space Between Rows	Adequate for Mobility	46	92.0%
		Not Adequate	4	8.0%
16	Bench Placement Suitable for CWSN	Appropriate	26	52.0%
		Most Appropriate	23	46.0%
		Not Appropriate	1	2.0%
17	Proper Lighting for Low Vision Students	Appropriate	17	34.0%
		Most Appropriate	33	66.0%
18	Blackboard Visibility	No Glare	44	88.0%
		Well Lit	6	12.0%
19	Teacher Position Clearly Visible	Appropriate	24	48.0%
		Most Appropriate	26	52.0%
20	Ventilation	Adequate	6	12.0%
		Good	44	88.0%
21	Furniture Suitable to Child's Height	Appropriate	15	30.0%
		Most Appropriate	35	70.0%
22	Movable & Noise-Free Chairs/Fans	Appropriate	29	58.0%
		Most Appropriate	16	32.0%
		Not Appropriate	5	10.0%
23	TLM Displayed in Visible Size	Appropriate	35	70.0%
		Most Appropriate	13	26.0%
		Not Appropriate	2	4.0%
24	Loop Induction/FM System	Appropriate	34	68.0%
		Most Appropriate	9	18.0%
		Not Appropriate	7	14.0%
25	Proper Display Boards	Appropriate	29	58.0%
		Most Appropriate	19	38.0%
		Not Appropriate	2	4.0%
26	Separate Resource Room Available	Yes	44	88.0%
		No	6	12.0%
27	Special Teacher Availability	Full Time	29	58.0%
		Part Time	21	42.0%
28	Storage Cupboard for Assistive Devices	Appropriate	40	80.0%
		Most Appropriate	9	18.0%
		Not Appropriate	1	2.0%

29	Availability of Assistive Materials	Appropriate	35	70.0%
		Most Appropriate	11	22.0%
		Not Appropriate	4	8.0%
30	Case Files of CWSN Maintained	Appropriate	31	62.0%
		Most Appropriate	17	34.0%
		Not Appropriate	2	4.0%
31	Accessible Toilets	Appropriate	13	26.0%
		Most Appropriate	35	70.0%
		Not Appropriate	2	4.0%
32	Drinking Water Access	Appropriate	9	18.0%
		Most Appropriate	41	82.0%
33	Safe Playground Access	Appropriate	23	46.0%
		Most Appropriate	27	54.0%
34	Emergency Evacuation Safety	Appropriate	29	58.0%
		Most Appropriate	21	42.0%

The analysis of the data indicates that, generally, enough infrastructures exist within the majority of schools, including accessible features and classroom arrangements that support an inclusive education. Most respondents reported that there were ramps, large classrooms, accessible toilets, enough light, adequate ventilation and seating arrangements that were suitable for students with disabilities, as well as resource rooms, assistive devices and special instruction. There was also evidence that the schools provided students with safe spaces to be in a classroom (i.e., clean, spacious) and accessible to children's wheelchairs. In addition, the schools had adequate access to drinking water, properly designed corridors for children in wheelchairs and safe play areas for students with disabilities.

However, the analysis also revealed some limitations in the school's infrastructure. 71 schools surveyed did not have elevators or lifts, railings along stairways or other types of assistive systems to assist children with mobility or hearing impairments. Respondents that reported challenges with gaining access to the classroom also indicated that there was a lack

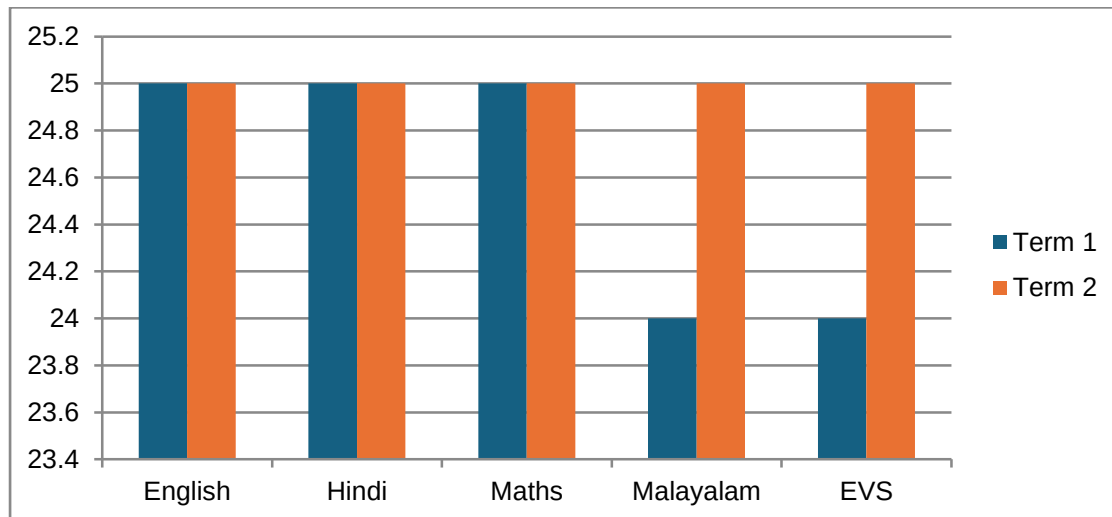
of space for moving around or creating accessibility arrangements in the classroom environment. While schools have made progress in developing an inclusive infrastructure, further work still needs to be completed to ensure access, safety and equal educational opportunities for all learners.

The study findings indicate the presence of varying types of structural and accessibility support in almost all schools along with a number of identified gaps. The study also met the research objective for evaluating the sufficiency of physical structure and accessibility availability supporting inclusive education, thereby answering the research question on the adequacy of physical infrastructure, accessibility features and classroom arrangements in supporting learning.

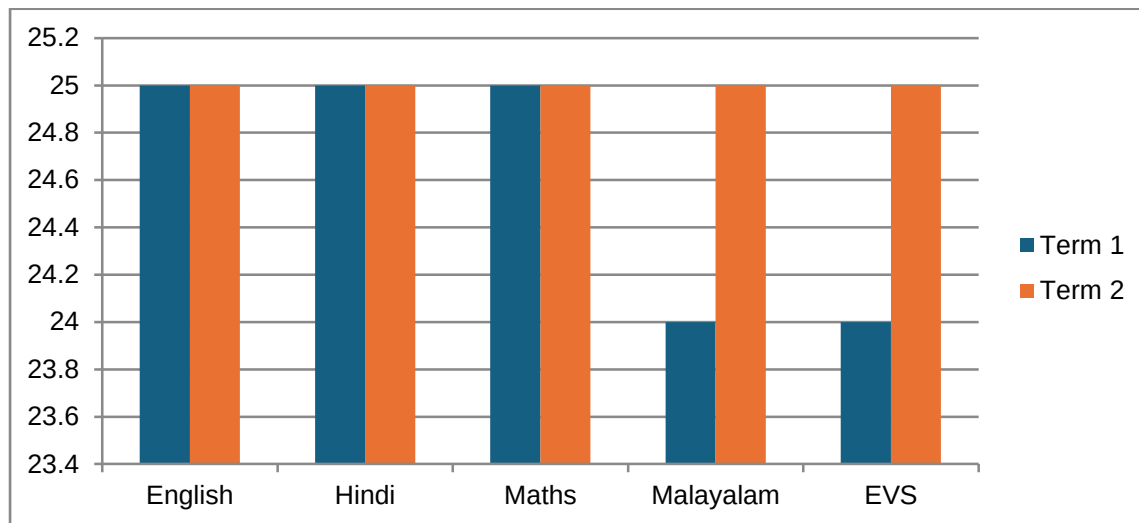
Results of the current study support a number of previously conducted studies regarding inclusive structure and accessibility in the school setting. Ainscow (2020), for example, stated that inclusive education works only when the school provides all three types of infrastructure (i.e., accessible environment: classroom arrangements; and additional physical support) to meet the needs of children with disabilities. Sharma and Deppeler (2018) provided evidence that the availability of ramps and resource rooms, as well as assistive devices and accessible classroom facilities, significantly enhances the ability of students with disabilities to participate and be independent in inclusive educational settings. Singal (2019) observed that developing inclusive school infrastructure, providing supportive arrangements in the classroom, and providing measures of accessibility to the educational environment are necessary for offering children with disabilities equal access to educational opportunities in India. Finally, UNESCO (2021) endorsed that access to school environments; safe and effective physical facilities; and inclusive arrangements of facilities within classrooms are important for promoting both equitable and high-quality education.

4.5 Result and Discussion based on the percentage obtained the academic performance of children with special needs in inclusive schools in Kerala using subjective assessment.

Fig 5: Academic Performance of Student A



The student A's performance across all subjects improved from Term 1 to Term 2. In English, the student's score increased from 10 to 19, while the student's score in Hindi increased from 3 to 15. Mathematics shows continued improvement with the score rising from 7 to 13. Malayalam had the largest increase going from 2 in Term 1 to 16 in Term 2 and EVS increased from 5 to 12 in Term 2. The data illustrates that A has made consistent gains in academics from Term 1 to Term 2 and that A has made the most considerable improvements in language based subjects.

Fig 6: Academic Performance of Student B

The bar graph depicts the student B academic performance over the course of two terms in five different subjects: English, Hindi, maths, Malayalam and Evs. The student achieved consistent success in English, Hindi and maths by obtaining 25 points out of a possible maximum of 25 for each term; therefore, these core subjects are indicative of stable, if not superb, success across the entire range of content investigation from each term. In contrast, the other two subjects of Malayalam and Evs each showed slight (1-point) improvements in scores from term 1 to term 2, resulting in total scores of 24 for each subject in term 1 and 25 for each in term 2. Thus, the graph suggests overall high achievement with consistency among the core subjects, and some growth in the other subjects; this indicates steady development about achieving expected learning outcomes.

For the assessment of academic performance, academic progress reports were collected from the participants. However, out of the 50 children included in the study, only 7 children were able to participate in formal examinations. The remaining children had not yet developed adequate writing skills and therefore were unable to appear for written examinations. Among the 7 children who attended examinations, only 2 children had academic records presented in the form of numerical marks, which allowed for a detailed analysis of their academic

progress. The academic performance of the remaining 5 children was reported using grades rather than numerical scores, making detailed comparison and analysis difficult. Therefore, the assessment of academic performance in the present study was based on the academic records of these 2 children whose progress reports contained measurable numerical marks.

Several earlier academic studies have substantiated findings similar to those of this study with regard to academic achievement and inclusive education. For example, Ainscow (2005) found that children with special needs perform better academically when they are part of a supportive, inclusive school environment than when they are part of a traditional school. Likewise, Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011) reported that diverse learners (i.e., those who have various needs) will achieve better results if their teachers utilise inclusive teaching strategies and provide individualised support. Sharma & Sokal (2016) found that when provided with on-going support, modified instruction and positive reinforcement, children with special needs make better academic gains within an inclusive setting. Additionally, UNESCO (2020) reported that by using inclusive educational practices, teachers can create equal opportunities for all students to learn and grow. Collectively, these past studies support the finding of the present study; that is, based upon the academic successes of students who have participated in inclusive education, there is conclusive evidence that inclusive educational practices, teacher support and subjective assessment methods, positively impact student learning.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

The current study named "Assessing the Progress and Pitfalls among Children with Special Needs Enrolled in an Inclusive Education Set-up in Kerala" aimed to evaluate the status of students with disabilities in Kerala's inclusive education system with regards to academic scores, social skills, physical infrastructure, accessibility features, arrangement of classrooms and inclusive supportive practices. Other aspects evaluated include teacher facilitation for inclusive education and provision of equal opportunities for participation for children with special needs to be able to learn within an inclusive educational setting.

This research study adopted a descriptive survey research design which attempted to assess progress and pitfalls among inclusive students with special needs educated in inclusive educational settings in Kerala. Data was collected on 50 students with special needs who are educated in the inclusive education system throughout the different districts in Kerala. All 50 students with disabilities were classified as having Hearing Impairment (HI), Intellectual Disabilities (ID), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Learning Disabilities (LD) and received an education in a Government, Private, Missionary or Municipal Corporation school using SSC, CBSE or ICSE syllabi. The children were selected using specific criteria including being enrolled in an inclusive education system, receiving early intervention services and having participated within an inclusive setting for at least one year.

The collection of data occurred via researcher-developed and standardized methods. Researcher-developed methods measured parents' and teachers' supportive roles in inclusive education; standardized methods, such as MLEM (Measuring Learning Environment of Mainstream Schools) and the Socialization Skills Rating Scale (SSRS) developed by World Health Organization (WHO), measured the socialization skills and infrastructure facilities

respectively. Academic progress reports were also obtained to assess children's academic achievement. The researcher collected data from parents and teachers through the use of Google Forms, following the explanation of the study's purpose and obtaining consent. Collected data were then analyzed with appropriate statistical methods for interpretation and drawing conclusions about inclusive educational practices that foster children's comprehensive development with special needs.

The findings of this study reveal that children with disabilities developing social skills in an inclusive environment revealed significant differences based on several provisos: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Down syndrome, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability (ID) and Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). The children exhibited moderate or good ability to use social skills including communication, interacting with peers, participating in the classroom, understanding emotions, cooperating with others, and self-managing themselves. However, some children experienced difficulty with emotional regulation, social interaction, managing conflicts and independent communication skills. The results indicate that by having the child included in a regular educational setting with teacher assistance significantly aided in the development of social skills.

Regarding the physical infrastructure and accessibility of the schools, the results revealed that schools had adequate inclusive infrastructural facilities (e.g., ramps, spacious classrooms, adequate lighting, adequate ventilation, accessible toilets, resource rooms, assistive devices and appropriate seating) within the school and the majority of schools maintained safe and accessible classroom environments and wheelchair accessible classroom arrangements. However, there were some limitations to infrastructure, including the lack of elevators/lifts, the use of inadequate railings and the limited availability of assistive technology in some

schools, which highlight the need for further improvement in infrastructure to enhance total accessibility and inclusion.

Regarding academic performance, the findings suggest the academic performance of children with special needs improved over time with the use of subjectively based assessment methods. When comparing the academic performance of children with special needs through the terms, there was evidence of improvement in the academic performance of children with special needs in language, mathematics and environmental studies. Positive influence on academic achievement and learning outcomes for children with special needs were due to inclusive educational practices, support from teachers, classroom modifications and on-going assessments of children with special needs.

As a result of the study's findings the research questions framed were answered appropriately. It was thereby determined that inclusive schools located in Kerala are significant contributors to the educational and social development of children with special educational needs; however, there still exists some level of challenge and infrastructural deficits.

Teacher support, infrastructure that allows for accessibility, modifications to classrooms, implementation of inclusive teaching practices and support provided by institutions, among others, are all critical to the successful implementation of inclusive educational practices. The findings demonstrate that inclusive education can be improved and enhanced by providing schools with appropriate levels of adequate resources; employing appropriately trained teachers; maintaining an appropriate and supportive learning environment; and by providing appropriate levels of access to facilities for children with special educational needs.

5.1 Limitations of the Study

- Only a limited number of inclusive teachers, schools, and children with special needs were included in the sample limiting generalisation.
- The inclusive schools included in the study were restricted to some local schools in the state of Kerala, India.
- Data was collected through a limited number of methods: questionnaire, subjective assessment and observation.
- The sample of children with special needs in the study may have impacted results on the type and severity of disability present in children with special needs.
- The study included only a limited number of dimensions in the analysis of children with special needs, namely academic, social, infrastructural and inclusive education.
- The long-term progress academically and socially for a child with special needs was not measured.
- The study did not measure or include specific intervention programs for promoting inclusion of students with special needs.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Suggestions for Schools and Educators

- School systems must implement on-going teacher training programs, workshops and activities that promote inclusive teaching in all settings.
- Individualized educational planning, classroom adaptations and behavioral management strategies must be prioritized for all children with special needs.

- School systems are required to enhance the physical accessibility of the school by providing elevators/lifts, railings, assistive technology and accessible classroom spaces.
- Teachers must facilitate peer-to-peer interaction, socialization, emotional development and cooperative learning activity among all children with special needs.
- All schools that are inclusive must provide sufficient assistive materials, resources and support services for all students with special needs.
- Schools must develop on-going communication and collaboration between parents, teachers and professionals to measure the effective progress of students with special needs.

5.2.2 Further Research Recommendations

- Conducting future research with a larger cohort of participants and across diverse Districts and States would help in generalizing findings from these studies.
- Future researchers may want to focus on particular categories of disabilities and how they relate to the educational needs of children in inclusive education settings.
- Experimental research may be conducted to determine the effectiveness of intervention programmes in improving academic and social skills for students who require special education services.
- Longitudinal research could assess how inclusive education models affect a student's academic achievements and social/behavioural adjustment.
- Future studies should evaluate how technology-supported methods of instruction, technology-assisted learning, and/or assistive technology devices help those with disabilities become more included in the classroom.

- Comparative research on outcomes and support systems of inclusive schools versus separate (special) schools could also be conducted to delineate between them.

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APPENDIX I

Tool- Supportive role played by teachers

5 Rating Likert Scale

1- Strongly Disagree

2- Disagree

3- Neutral

4- Agree

5- Strongly Agree

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Lessons in my class are adapted to meet the different learning needs of children with special needs					
2	I provide extra explanations or practice tasks whenever a child with special needs struggles					
3	Individualized education plans are effectively used to guide my teaching					
4	Communication between teachers and parents about the child's progress is maintained regularly					
5	Collaboration with special educators or resource teachers helps me plan suitable strategies					
6	Positive feedback and encouragement are given to build the confidence of children with special needs					
7	Assistive devices, visual aids or other supports are used to enhance learning in my classroom					

8	Classroom assessments are modified so that every child can demonstrate learning					
9	Students with special needs are encouraged to take part in all class and school activities					
10	Peer cooperation and mutual help are promoted among students					
11	I regularly attend training or workshops related to inclusive education					
12	My classroom environment is arranged to be physically and emotionally accessible for all learners					
13	Inclusion benefits both children with and without disabilities					
14	Institutional support for inclusive practices is inadequate in my school					
15	Managing behavioural or learning difficulties of children with disabilities is often beyond my ability.					

Validated Tool

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Lessons in my class are adapted to meet the diverse learning needs of children with special needs.					
2	I provide extra explanations or practice tasks whenever a child with special needs struggles.					
3	I use an individualised education plan for an effective teaching and learning process.					
4	Communication between					

	teachers and parents about the child's progress is maintained regularly.					
5	Collaboration with special educators or resource teachers helps me plan suitable strategies.					
6	Positive feedback and encouragement are given to build the confidence of children with special needs.					
7	Assistive devices, visual aids or other supports are used to enhance learning in my classroom.					
8	Classroom assessments are modified so that every child's performance is assessed.					
9	Children with special needs are encouraged to take part in all class and school activities.					
10	Peer cooperation and collaboration are promoted among students.					
11	Peer cooperation and collaboration are promoted among students.					
12	My classroom environment is arranged to be physically accessible for all learners.					
13	Inclusive education benefits both children with and without disabilities.					
14	My classroom environment promotes emotional safety and comfort for all learners.					
15	I ensure that all students feel safe and included by effectively addressing peer bullying.					
16	Institutional support for inclusive practices is inadequate in my school.					
17	<i>Managing behavioural or learning difficulties of children with disabilities is often beyond my ability.</i>					

APPENDIX II

Tool – Supportive Role played by Parents

5 Rating Likert Scale

1- Strongly Disagree

2- Disagree

3- Neutral

4- Agree

5- Strongly Agree

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I monitor my child's homework and daily assignments					
2	Regular communication is maintained with teachers regarding my child's progress					
3	I participate in parent teacher meeting and school events that involve inclusion					
4	Guidance suggested by teachers is followed at home to support learning					
5	Emotional encouragement is given when my child faces difficulties in schoolwork					
6	Patience and positive reinforcement are used while helping my child with homework					
7	Learning aids or assistive devices recommended by teachers are provided at home					
8	I believe my child benefits from learning together with other children					
9	Collaboration with teachers and special educators is a regular part of my involvement					
10	I motivate my child to interact and play with classmates of all abilities					
11	I keep track of my child's social					

	relationships and school behaviour					
12	I ensure regular attendance and punctuality for school					
13	Information about my child's strength and needs is shared openly with teachers					
14	Sometimes I find it difficult to give enough time to support my child's school activities at home					
15	I feel unsure about how to help my child when they face learning difficulties					

Validated Tool

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I monitor my child's homework and daily assignments.					
2	Regular communication is maintained with teachers regarding my child's progress.					
3	I participate in parent-teacher meetings related to inclusive practices in my child's school.					
4	I show patience while helping my child with homework.					
5	Guidance suggested by teachers is followed at home to support learning.					
6	Emotional encouragement is given when my child faces difficulties in schoolwork.					
7	I participate in school events that promote the inclusion of all children.					
8	I use positive reinforcement while helping my child with homework.					
9	Learning aids or assistive devices recommended by teachers are provided at home.					
10	I believe my child benefits from learning together with other children.					
11	I regularly communicate with					

	teachers and special educators regarding my child's learning and support needs.					
12	I motivate my child to interact and play with classmates of different abilities.					
13	I keep track of my child's social relationships and school behaviour.					
14	I ensure regular attendance and punctuality at school.					
15	Information about my child's strengths and needs is shared openly with teachers.					
16	Sometimes I find it difficult to give enough time to support my child's school activities at home.					
17	I often feel unsure about the best way to help my child with their learning challenges					

APPENDIX III

Instruction: Tick (✓) the most appropriate option for each item based on observation.

School Accessibility and Infrastructure Observation Schedule

A. General Information

Sl No	Item	Response options
1	Name of the School	-----
2	Type of School	Govt / Municipal Corporation / Private / Missionary
3	General Socio-Economic Standard of Students	Higher / Higher Middle Class / Lower Middle Class / Lower Income / Below Poverty Line
4	Standards Available	-----
5	Total Number of Students	-----
6	Medium of Instruction	-----
7	Day / Residential	Day / Residential
8	Girls / Boys / Co-Educational	Girls / Boys / Co-Educational
9	Curriculum	SSC / ICSE / CBSE / International
10	Children with Special Needs Currently Learning in School	-----

B. Physical Accessibility

Sl No	Item	Response option
1	Total Number of Floors	Ground + ____
2	Availability of Ramps	Yes / No
3	Presence of Elevator/Lift	Yes / No
4	Railings on Both Sides of Staircase	Yes / No
5	Height of Steps	Safe & Manageable / Not Safe
6	Natural Light and Ventilation	Good / Adequate / Poor
7	Corridors and Passages Wide Enough for Wheelchair Movement	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate

8	Approach Road Condition	Smooth / Manageable / Rough
9	Accessibility for Other Mobility Aids	Walker / Crutches / No Mobility Aids

C. Classroom Environment

Sl No	Items	Response options
1	Classroom Size	Spacious / Congested
2	Seating Arrangement	Appropriate / Cluttered
3	Space Between Rows	Adequate for Mobility / Not Adequate for Mobility
4	Bench Placement Suitable for CWSN	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate
5	Proper Lighting	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate
6	Blackboard Visibility	No Glare / Well Lit
7	Teacher Position Clearly Visible to Child	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate
8	Ventilation	Good / Adequate / Poor

D. Furniture and Teaching-Learning Resources

Sl No	Item	Response options
1	Furniture Suitable as per Child's Height	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate
2	Movable and Noise-Free Chairs/Fans	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate
3	TLM Displayed in Visible Size	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate
4	Loop Induction/FM System (if HI Child Present)	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate
5	Proper Display Boards	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate

E. Resource Room and Support Services

Sl No	Item	Response options
1	Separate Resource Room Available	Yes / No
2	Full-Time / Part-Time Special Teacher	Full Time / Part Time
3	Storage Cupboard for Assistive Devices	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate
4	Availability of Assistive Materials	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate
5	Case Files of CWSN Maintained	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate

F. Student Facilities and Safety

Sl No	Item	Response options
1	Accessible Toilets	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate
2	Drinking Water Access	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate
3	Safe Playground Access	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate
4	Emergency Evacuation Safety	Most Appropriate / Appropriate / Not Appropriate

APPENDIX IV

Social skills rating system (SSRS)

If you never do this behaviour, choose 0

If you sometimes do this behaviour, choose 1

If you very often do this behaviour, choose 2

Sl No	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Very often
1	I make friends easily			
2	I say nice things to others when they have done something well			
3	I ask adults for help when other children try to hit me or push me around			
4	I am confident on dates			
5	I try to understand how my friends feel when they are angry, upset or sad			
6	I listen to adults when they are talking to me			
7	I ignore other children when they tease me or call me names			
8	I ask friends for help with my problems			
9	I ask before using other people's things			
10	I disagree with adults without fighting or arguing			
11	I avoid doing things with others that may get me in trouble with adults			
12	I feel sorry for others when bad things happen to them			
13	I do my homework on time			
14	I keep my desk clean and neat			
15	I do nice things for my parents, like helping with household chores without being asked			
16	I am active in school activities such as sports or clubs			
17	I finish classroom work on time			
18	I compromise with parents or teachers when we have disagreements			
19	I ignore classmates who are clowning around in class			
20	I ask someone I like for a date			
21	I listen to my friends when they talk about the			

	problems they are having			
22	I end fights with my parents calmly			
23	I give compliments to members of the opposite sex			
24	I tell other people when they have done something well			
25	I smile wave, or nod at others			
26	I start conversations with opposite-sex friends without feeling uneasy or nervous			
27	I accept punishment from adults without getting mad			
28	I let friends know I like them by telling or showing them			
29	I stand up for my friends when they have been unfairly criticized			
30	I invite others to join in social activities			
31	I use my free time in a good way			
32	I control my temper when people are angry with me			
33	I get the attention of members of the opposite sex without feeling embarrassed			
34	I take criticism from my parents without getting angry			
35	I follow the teacher's directions			
36	I use a nice tone of voice in classroom discussions			
37	I ask friends to do favours for me			
38	I start talks with class members			
39	I talk things over with classmates when there is a problem or argument			