

## AWARENESS OF STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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### Abstract/Izvleček

This paper examines the level of awareness among stakeholders about inclusive education. The sample comprises thirty school heads, 108 class teachers, forty-four parents, and twenty-eight School Management Committee members. A thirty-item self-constructed awareness questionnaire was administered for data collection, and the data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings indicate that stakeholders are highly aware of inclusive education and that parents are the most aware among all categories of stakeholders. In terms of gender, female stakeholders proved to be more aware than their male counterparts. An influence of educational qualifications on awareness level is visible since stakeholders with a higher level of education demonstrated higher levels of awareness.

**Keywords:**  
awareness, Inclusive  
Education, Stakeholders.

**Ključne besede:**  
zavedanje, vključujoče  
izobraževanje,  
dejavnosti.

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### Ozaveščenost deležnikov o inkluzivnem izobraževanju

V prispevku preučujemo stopnjo ozaveščenosti deležnikov o inkluzivnem izobraževanju. Vzorec obsega 30 ravnateljcev šol, 108 razrednikov, 44 staršev in 28 članov vodstvenih komisij šol. Za zbiranje podatkov smo uporabili vprašalnik o ozaveščenosti s tridesetimi točkami. Podatki so analizirani z uporabo deskriptivne statistike. Ugotovitve kažejo, da so deležniki visoko ozaveščeni o inkluzivnem izobraževanju, kjer so med vsemi kategorijami deležnikov najbolj ozaveščeni starši. Kar zadeva spol, ugotovljamo, da so ženske bolj ozaveščene kot moški. Vpliv izobrazbene kvalifikacije na stopnjo ozaveščenosti je viden, saj so deležniki z višjo stopnjo izobrazbe izkazali višjo ozaveščenost.

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## Introduction

Inclusive education is a relatively new concept in India and one that is gaining popularity daily. At the school level, it involves an initiative to educate students with disabilities alongside non-disabled peers in the same physical, social, emotional, and educational environments, with requisite support services in the form of special teachers and special equipment, while at the same time adapting the school infrastructure to meet the unique needs of all students. The message of inclusive education is clear: accept classroom diversity as a strength. It aims to achieve equity, equality, and social justice in all domains of schooling. It values, accepts, and understands the differences among students in terms of abilities and talents. In inclusive schools students with and without disabilities sit and work together, making inclusive education a practice beyond physical proximity. Rather, it is a practice of respecting and enjoying diversity where the system of teaching and learning is adapted to meet the learning needs of all students. Inclusive education believes that the school head-teacher is a leader and not merely an administrator. It treats class teachers, parents, and other stakeholders as important agents of school change. A positive attitude among all stakeholders is critical to the success of inclusive education at all stages of the educational ladder.

Many research studies have confirmed that knowledge is a key factor in determining a person's attitude (Yadav, 2002). Research has also revealed that ignorance leads to misconceptions, and these further lead to unrealistic attitudes (Berwal, 2008). It is commonly believed that merely placing students with disabilities into inclusive settings does not guarantee their successful social and academic progress; however, a positive attitude among stakeholders can ensure their success. The positive attitude further depends on an individual's knowledge base (Berwal, 2008).

Many researchers have investigated people's feelings about the disabled and their knowledge about disability and inclusive education (WHO, 2011; McLennon, 2012). A proficient level of awareness and knowledge is considered essential to deliver satisfactory educational services and public life to students with disabilities.

Williamson (2014) has found that many students in inclusive schools are not educated about disabilities. This constrains their understanding and acceptance of, and empathy for their peers with disabilities. Morin, Rivard, Crocker, Boursier, and Caron (2012) and Lindsay, and McPherson (2011) have stressed that generating awareness about disability and inclusion is extremely important because it moulds

the attitudes of stakeholders in a more positive way toward services for students with disabilities. Researchers have found ignorance to be the main factor in the retention of negative attitudes towards students with disabilities (Sharp et al., 2010). When stakeholders feel well-informed about differences, disability, and inclusion, they are likely to develop a more positive attitude towards learners with diverse needs. Pandey (1991) has observed that persons with disabilities are unwelcome in public places and social functions in rural communities. Punani (2000) has argued that a low level of awareness among the general population is one of the greatest impediments to the promotion of inclusive education. An NCERT (n.d) document advocates generating disability awareness in schools to help teachers to establish an atmosphere of acceptance and to plan activities that promote inclusion. Lack of awareness among parents about the educational provisions and benefits of inclusion has been cited as one of the reasons that restrict students with disabilities from attending inclusive schools. Kuppusamy, Narayan, and Nair (2012) have found that owing to moderate awareness about legislation among family members of students with disabilities, students are staying away from inclusive schools. Behera, and Gowramma (2016) have stated that despite enrolment, students with disabilities are not going to Anganwadi Centres (AWC) because of a lack of awareness in the community. However, evidence by Singal (2006) and Jha (2002), cited in Gowramma, Gangme, and Behera (2018), suggests that awareness about inclusive education is not a guarantee of successful inclusive practices. Edwardraj et al. (2010) have highlighted that public awareness, education, and community-level interventions are essential to minimize the effects of the myths and misconceptions attached to disability.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to examine the existing level of awareness among head teachers, class teachers, parents, and members of the School Management Committees (hereinafter referred to as SMCs) towards the education of students with disabilities in inclusive settings, so that suggestions for producing effective changes in their knowledge base are made to ensure effective and efficient implementation of inclusive education in the Haryana State of India.

### *Objective*

The study is planned to gain an understanding of the level of awareness among stakeholders – i.e. head teachers, class teachers, parents, and members of the School

Management Committees (SMCs) – towards the education of students with disabilities in inclusive schools.

### *Sample*

The sample comprises thirty head teachers, 108 class teachers, forty-four parents, and twenty-eight SMCs members randomly chosen from eighty-four inclusive schools within four districts of Haryana State.

## **Research Method**

The descriptive survey method has been used.

### *Instrument for data collection*

A self-developed ‘awareness about disability’ questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire has thirty items. It was validated for content and face value.

### *Scoring and Analysis of the Data*

The respondents were required to indicate either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to each item on the questionnaire. In some questions, ‘yes’ was scored, while in some, ‘no’ was scored. One mark was given for each correct answer and zero for each wrong answer. So, the highest obtainable score on the questionnaire could be thirty, and the lowest could be zero. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics. The awareness level among stakeholders was assessed using extreme group analysis. In adopting extreme group analysis, the Q1 and Q3 limits have been considered: i.e., those scoring Q1 and below are treated as having low awareness levels and those scoring Q3 and above are considered to exhibit high levels of awareness.

### *Findings*

A demographic profile of all stakeholders according to their role position, gender, age, and educational level was prepared so as to have a glimpse of their background and its expected influence on their awareness about inclusive education. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of all stakeholders.

Table 1  
*Demographic Profile of the Stakeholders (N=210).*

Sr. No.	Stakeholders	Number	Percentage
1	<b>Role Position</b>		
	School Management Committee (SMC) Member	28	13.33
	Class Teacher	108	51.43
	Head Teacher	30	14.29
	Parents	44	20.95
	<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>
2	<b>Gender</b>		
	Male	125	59.52
	Female	85	40.48
3	<b>Age</b>		
	18-30 Years	21	10.00
	31-45 Years	106	50.48
	46-58 Years	77	36.67
	58-Above	6	02.85
4	<b>Level of Education</b>		
	Illiterate	5	02.39
	Primary	18	08.57
	Matric	18	08.57
	10+2	21	10.00
	Graduation	57	27.14
	Post-Graduate & above	91	43.33

Table 1 indicates that in total 210 stakeholders participated in the study and responded to the awareness questionnaire. Out of those 210 stakeholders, 28 (13.33%) are SMC members, 108 (51.43%) class teachers, 30 (14.29%) head teachers, and 44 (20.95%) are parents of students with disabilities. In terms of gender, 125 (59.52%) stakeholders are male and 85 (40.48%) female. The age for teachers and head teachers ranges from 18 to 58 years, while it exceeded 58 years for parents and SMC members. Twenty-one (10%) stakeholders belong to the age brackets of 18 to 30 years, whereas 106 (50.48%) belong to the age group of 30 to 45 years. A substantial number (n=77, 36.67%) of the stakeholders are between 45-58 years of age, while a small proportion (n= 6, 2.85%) is above 58 years. The educational levels of the participants vary from being illiterate to post-graduation and above.

In particular, 5 (2.39%) are illiterate, while 18 (8.57%) have primary education, 18 (8.57%) have Matric Pass (*Matric Pass: This term refers to individuals who have passed the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination, which includes education from grades 1 to 10*), 21 (10%) are ten-plus-two (*Ten-Plus-Two: This term indicates the additional two years of education after Matric typically completed in higher secondary school, covering grades 11 and 12*), 57 (27.14%) are graduates, and 91 (43.33%) have qualifications that are post-graduate and above.

### *Teachers Awareness of Inclusive Education*

Class teachers are important stakeholders in inclusive education. The success or failure of inclusive education largely depends on the attitudes, skills, and awareness of teachers. Table 2 depicts the mean scores of teachers on the 'Awareness about Inclusive Education' questionnaire.

Table 2  
*Mean Scores of Teachers on 'Awareness about Inclusive Education' Questionnaire.*

Sr. No.	Stakeholders	Number	Percentage	Mean Score
1	<b>Role Position</b> Class Teacher	108	51.43	20.38
2	<b>Gender</b> Male Female	64 44	59.26 40.74	20.37 20.40
3	<b>Age</b> 18-30 Years 31-45 Years 46-58 Years	12 59 37	11.11 54.62 34.25	21.08 20.91 19.37
4	<b>Level of Education</b> 10+2 Graduation Post-Graduate & above	7 37 64	6.48 34.26 59.26	17.42 20.29 20.81

Table 2 indicates that the overall mean score for this group (N=108) is 20.38, which means that the awareness level of teachers about inclusive education is 'high'. The mean of the scores for female teachers (n=44, m=20.40) is slightly higher than that of male teachers (n=64, m=20.37). The age of class teachers varies from 18 to 58 years. The younger class teachers (age 18-30 years) have a higher mean score (n=12, m=21.08) than those whose ages fall between 31 and 45 years (n=59, m=20.91). The group of teachers with the lowest mean score (n=37, m=19.37) is older than 45 years. The teachers who have the lowest mean score (n=07, m=17.42) among all sub-categories, having education up to 10+2.

It is evident from Table 2 that female teachers are more aware than their male counterparts. Similarly, the influence of age and higher education is visible on the levels of awareness since young teachers have a higher mean score than older colleagues, and teachers holding qualifications that are post-graduate and above prove to be more aware than their counterparts with lower qualifications.

These findings are slightly contrary to Dapudong (2014), who found that teachers had only moderate knowledge of inclusive education in Thailand. These findings are also contrary to those of Myreddi and Narayan (2000), Sharma and Deppeler (2005), and Sharma (2018), who observed that most school teachers in India have inadequate awareness of inclusion and classroom diversity but present findings support the results of Reddy and Sujathamalani (2005), Bala (2008), Pandey (2009), Johansson (2014), and Gowramma, Gangmei, and Behera (2018). The results of this study are not surprising because the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), the government of India (2015) claims that nearly 3 million teachers have received 2 to 3 days of in-service training on inclusive education, and 42% of teachers have been provided with 3 to 5 days of additional training with the support of special schools and other organizations. Every year the government of Haryana also provides in-service training over 3-5 days to general teachers on inclusive education. The younger teachers had higher scores on awareness than middle-aged and older teachers. This difference might be because the young ones have recently graduated from Education Colleges with some knowledge of special/inclusive education, while the older ones missed this aspect. Moreover, after the implementation of the Right to Education Act in 2010, passing a Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) has become a necessity in Haryana for getting a job in government schools, and the syllabus of the Haryana Teachers Eligibility Test (HTET) covers many topics on inclusive and special education. It invariably makes all those who have successfully passed HTET somewhat aware of emerging issues in the education of students with disabilities.

Moreover, this finding suggests that the next generation of teachers, owing to their greater awareness, may prove a major facilitator of and asset in inclusive education. The awakened and concerned teachers can minimize the tendency of children with disabilities to stay away from schools.

The highly qualified teachers were slightly more aware than their counterparts, which supports the findings of Sharda and Ranjan (2011), who find educational qualifications to be a significant factor in creating a difference in awareness level among teachers.

The importance of teacher education programmes in raising awareness among prospective teachers about inclusive education has been highlighted by many researchers. Cardona (2009) has suggested raising the level of awareness among pre-service teachers regarding disability issues. This is in line with the findings of Guðjónsdóttir et al. (2008), who urged change in the narrow view of inclusive education practices and using a holistic approach to address classroom diversity. A well-designed teacher education programme with inbuilt exposure to and experience of inclusion has been considered important by Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler, and Yang (2013), and Forlin, Kawai, and Higuchi (2014). It has been noted that such interactions lead to increased awareness among teachers about the needs and viewpoints of diverse learners.

#### *Head-Teachers Awareness of Inclusive Education*

Head teachers were another category of stakeholders who were assessed for awareness of inclusive education. It has been established that if head teachers are aware and knowledgeable about new concepts and policies on school education then it is easier to implement these successfully. Table 3 shows the mean scores of the group of head teachers on the 'Awareness about Inclusive Education' Questionnaire. It is evident from Table 3 that among the thirty head teachers who responded to the questionnaire, results indicate that they have a 'high' level of awareness. Most of these participants are male ( $n = 17$ , 56.67%), with fewer females ( $n = 13$ , 43.33%). The mean awareness score of male heads is greater than that of their female counterparts. The age of head-teachers ranges from 30 to 58 years, and the mean score for younger head-teachers ( $n=14$ ,  $m=20.78$ ) is marginally greater than older head teachers ( $n=16$ ,  $m=20.25$ ). A sizeable percentage of head-teachers ( $n=25$ , 83.33%) hold qualifications equal to post-graduate and above, while a few of them are only graduates ( $n=5$ , 16.67%).

Less qualified heads ( $n=5$ ,  $m=20.60$ ) have marginally better awareness than their more qualified counterparts ( $n=25$ ,  $m=20.48$ ).

School leadership is a crucial element in gearing the education system towards inclusive values (Ainscow, and Sandill, 2010); thus, it is important to generate awareness among school heads about the needs of children with disabilities. The slightly elevated level of awareness among school heads contradicts Banerjee's claim (2018) that "SSA's training provisions have suffered from poor outreach."



Table 3

*Mean Scores of Head-Teachers on 'Awareness about Inclusive Education' Questionnaire.*

Sr. No.	Stakeholders	Number	Percentage	Mean Score
1	<b>Role Position</b>			
	Head Teacher	30	14.29	20.44
2	<b>Gender</b>			
	Male	17	56.67	20.94
	Female	13	43.33	19.92
3	<b>Age</b>			
	18-30 Years	00	00	00
	31-45 Years	14	46.67	20.78
	46-58 Years	16	53.33	20.25
4	<b>Level of Education</b>			
	10+2	00	00	00
	Graduation	05	16.67	20.6
	Post-Graduate & above	25	83.33	20.48

*School Management Committee (SMC) members' Awareness about Inclusive Education*

The Right to Education Act (RTE) came into force with effect from April 1, 2010. Section 4 of the RTE Act stipulates that SMC is constituted in every school for better coordination of teaching-learning resources and to ensure community participation.

The SMCs are responsible for ensuring that all basic requirements for children with disabilities are met as per the Right to Education Act, 2010. Table 4 provides the mean scores of SMC members on the 'Awareness about Inclusive Education' questionnaire.

Table 4 shows that the overall awareness among 28 SMC members falls in the category of 'moderate' awareness. This group of SMC members consists of more males (n=20, 71.43%) than females (n=8, 28.57%). The male respondents reported a higher level of awareness than females. The age of this group ranges from eighteen to above 60 years. The younger members show considerably greater awareness than older members.

Table 4  
*Scores of SMC Members on 'Awareness about Inclusive Education' Questionnaire.*

Sr. No.	Stakeholders	Number	Percentage	Mean Score
1	<b>Role Position</b>			
	SMC Member	28	13.33	19.78
2	<b>Gender</b>			
	Male	20	71.43	20.05
	Female	08	28.57	19.12
3	<b>Age</b>			
	18-30 Years	01	3.57	20
	31-45 Years	12	42.86	20.41
	46-58 Years	12	42.86	19.17
	Above 58 Years	03	10.71	19
4	<b>Level of Education</b>			
	Illiterate	01	3.57	17
	Primary	10	35.71	18.5
	Matric	06	21.42	19.33
	10+2	06	21.42	22.33
	Graduation	05	17.86	20.4
	Post-Graduate & above	00	---	---

Education is also found to have an impact on the awareness level. It is clear that secondary school educated (n=06, 21.42%) members have greater awareness than illiterate (n=01, 3.57%) and primary pass (n=10, 35.71%) respondents. Interestingly, compared to secondary educated (n=06, 21.42%) respondents, graduates (n=05, 17.86%) also prove to be less aware. None of the SMC members has a postgraduate degree.

It has been emphasized that poor awareness of disability and inclusion is one of the main obstacles to making SMCs and schools inclusive. The UNESCO (2019) report revealed that there was poor awareness among members of SMCs on the provisions of the RTE Act and the Rights of Persons with Disability Act. Therefore, proper training of SMC members on their roles and responsibilities in planning, monitoring, and supervision of inclusive education is critical. Such training will be more effective if it is conducted at the village or school level instead of at the block or cluster level.

#### *Parental Awareness of Inclusive Education*

Inclusive education works on the principle of collaboration between the school management, special teachers, general teachers, parents, and the community. This collaboration is upset when any partner becomes indifferent or loses interest in the process because of ignorance, myths, or misconceptions.

Since parents are the main stakeholders and collaborators in inclusion, it is vital for them to be sensitized, aware, and knowledgeable to take care of the interests of their wards with disabilities. Table 5 provides the mean scores of parents on the 'Awareness about Inclusive Education' questionnaire.

Table 5 shows the overall mean scores of forty-four parents on the 'Awareness about Inclusive Education' questionnaire as well as their respective mean scores in three subcategories. In aggregate, parents possess a 'high' level of awareness about inclusive education, with mothers ( $n=20$ ,  $m=21.40$ ) proving to be more aware than fathers ( $n=24$ ,  $m=19.70$ ). Parents within the age range of 60 to 58 years possess the highest awareness scores in the group, with those over 58 being the least aware. With regard to educational qualifications, parents possessing a graduate degree are the most aware of all.

Table 5  
*Scores of Parents on 'Awareness about Inclusive Education' Questionnaire.*

Sr. No.	Stakeholders	Number	Percentage	Mean Score
1	<b>Role Position</b>			
	Parents	44	20.95	20.47
2	<b>Gender</b>			
	Male	24	54.55	19.70
	Female	20	45.45	21.40
3	<b>Age</b>			
	18-30 Years	08	18.18	21.50
	31-45 Years	21	47.73	19.71
	46-58 Years	12	27.27	21.83
	Above 58 Years	03	6.82	18.33
4	<b>Level of Education</b>			
	Illiterate	04	9.10	19.75
	Primary	08	18.18	18.87
	Matric	12	27.27	19.58
	10+2	08	18.18	21.25
	Graduation	10	22.72	22.30
	Post-Graduate & above	02	4.55	21.50

Recent research in the Indian context by the World Bank (2018) suggests that awareness among parents about educating their children with disabilities is growing. Despite being poor and illiterate, parents are making important decisions to educate their disabled offspring (Singal, and Muthukrishna, 2014). Similar findings have been reported in the World Bank study for rural India (Singal, 2013).

The findings indicate that the awareness programme for parents, peers, and the community is yielding fruitful results.

## Overall and category-wise Awareness of Stakeholders about Inclusive Education

Table 6 summarizes the overall and category-wise mean scores of 210 stakeholders on the 'Awareness about Inclusive Education' questionnaire.

Table 6  
*Overall and Category-Wise Mean Scores of Stakeholders (N=210) on 'Awareness about Inclusive Education' Questionnaire.*

Sr. No.	Stakeholders	Number	Percentage	Mean Score
1.	<b>Role Position</b>			
	School Management Committee (SMC) Member	28	13.33	19.38
	Class Teacher	108	51.43	20.38
	Head Teacher	30	14.29	20.44
	Parents	44	20.95	20.47
	Overall	210	100	20.27
2	<b>Gender</b>			
	Male	125	59.52	20.24
	Female	85	40.48	20.27
3	<b>Age</b>			
	18-30 Years	21	10.00	20.86
	31-45 Years	106	50.48	20.45
	46-58 Years	77	36.67	20.15
	58-Above	6	02.85	18.66
4	<b>Level of Education</b>			
	Illiterate	5	02.39	18.38
	Primary	18	08.57	18.67
	Matric	18	08.57	19.45
	10+2	21	10.00	20.33
	Graduation	57	27.14	20.90
	Post-Graduate & above	91	43.33	20.95

Table 6 presents overall response data to a 30-item questionnaire designed to identify the respondent's awareness as needed to support and promote inclusive education. The mean scores for different groups of respondents lie between 19.38 and 20.47, which indicates that separate groups of stakeholders are borderline cases, falling between moderate awareness and slightly 'high' awareness. Although a difference in mean scores was found between groups, yet the size of the mean differences is small enough to suggest little practical significance. Collectively, though, the higher mean scores for parents represent greater awareness of inclusive education.

The overall mean score for all stakeholders (N=210, M= 20.27) represents a 'high' level of awareness among them.

Compared to teachers (m=20.38), head teachers (m=20.44), and SMC members (m=19.38), and parents have a higher mean score (m= 20.47). This suggests that when compared to other groups of stakeholders, parents have a greater sense of efficacy when it comes to awareness about the concept, policies, and practices of inclusive education. This is especially important when we see that a greater percentage of stakeholders (43.33%), compared to parents, possess a master's degree. Given the organization of periodic counselling and awareness camps for parents and the holding of meetings of the Parent Teacher Association, these findings are not surprising and unexpected.

The average mean score of SMC members is markedly lower than those of other stakeholders. SMC members mean score indicates that they are less aware/informed/confident of their practical understanding of the provisions of inclusive education, in addition to the fact that they do not participate as much as parents in meetings and camps aimed at generating awareness. These findings indicate that more effort should be put into helping SMC members produce a good understanding of philosophy, concepts, and provisions. This can be achieved through periodic training, possibly in conjunction with State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT) and Panchayati Raj Institutions. If trained properly, the SMC with the help of other stakeholders can plan extensive community mobilisation activities to overcome the various barriers to inclusive education.

It is pertinent to mention that community awareness is an agenda in the annual enrolment drives of schools, as stipulated under the RTE Act. It *interalia* includes *kala-jathas* (Art groups), advocacy meetings, *nukkad nataks* (street plays) / sports tournaments, etc. Inclusive education is an essential component of the annual training of community leaders in every village and parental counselling camp. Moreover, parental counselling/ training as part of Home-Based Education, the celebration of the International day for Persons with Disabilities, etc. might have contributed to basic awareness among stakeholders, i.e. parents and teachers.

In the case of teachers, the mean scores indicate that although this group has the upper hand in comparison to the group of SMC members, their level of awareness is not encouraging. Teacher training programmes may need to be strengthened to make teachers adequately aware of how to work with students with diverse needs and abilities. Additionally, the school system needs to ensure that teachers attend all such meetings that are specifically called for fostering inclusion as

mandated under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) (*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All Campaign) is a programme launched by the Indian Government aimed at providing universal elementary education for children aged 6 to 14*) and RTE Act.

Data collected from the group of head teachers suggest that they do not have the level of awareness one might expect. Given the information provided by thirty respondents, the findings reflect structural limitations of the school system and insufficient academic/administrative backup. Thus, it is vital to provide them with opportunities to increase their knowledge base through short-term courses and to share information with other stakeholders.

In terms of gender, the female stakeholders ( $m=20.27$ ) are more aware than their male ( $m=20.24$ ) counterparts. This might be because females are more concerned about and associated with the education of their children, regularly attend SMC and PTA meetings, and participate in annual parent counselling and awareness camps.

Although most of the stakeholders are postgraduate, a marginal number of them are graduates and have a qualification of 10+2, matric, and primary. Some stakeholders are even illiterate. The number of matric and the primary pass individuals is equal. The influence of educational level on the awareness of stakeholders is visible since there are consistently lower mean scores towards the lower levels of education. Within the group, the mean score on awareness of the respondents ranged from 18.38 to 20.95. In particular, illiterate respondents have a mean score of 18.38, the primary school educated 18.67, Matric pass 19.45, ten plus two 20.33, graduates 20.90, and respondents with postgraduate qualifications and above 20.95. The mean scores reveal that there is better awareness among stakeholders having a postgraduate degree. This means when stakeholders had a higher level of education, they showed greater awareness about inclusive education.

## Conclusion

Collectively, the stakeholders hold a 'high' level of awareness about inclusive education although the size of the mean differences between 'moderate' and 'high' levels is marginal and practically insignificant. The study recommends generating greater insight among authorities by organising workshops, seminars, field visits, lectures, exhibitions, camps, dramas, talks, conferences, plays, and other capacity-

building programmes dealing with inclusive education and inviting and motivating the category of those stakeholders who have a moderate level of awareness or who are keen to further strengthen their knowledge base to better serve this unique category of students.

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