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## Parental Awareness and Acceptance of Inclusive Education: A Study in North 24 Paraganas

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### Abstract:

Over past few decades inclusive education has gained recognition as a vital pillar of fair and high-quality schooling worldwide calling for incorporation of children with disabilities and varied learning requirements into regular school settings. This study examines how aware and accepting parents in North 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal India are toward inclusive education. Using qualitative content analysis research draws on policy texts existing academic studies government publications and field-level secondary data to shed light on parental awareness acceptance underlying influencing factors and views on both prospects and difficulties of inclusion. The results show that although awareness of inclusive education is on rise—especially in urban and semi-urban localities—parental acceptance continues to vary widely influenced by factors such as household income cultural attitudes availability of information and past dealings with school system. The study also notes that parents of children without disabilities tend to worry about declining academic expectations while parents of children with disabilities hope for social belonging yet feel anxious about poor infrastructure and negative attitudes. The paper closes with practical suggestions for policymakers educators and community actors to build a genuinely inclusive learning environment in North 24 Paraganas.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education parental awareness parental acceptance children with disabilities North 24 Paraganas West Bengal qualitative content analysis Right to Education



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### 1. Introduction

Access to education is widely regarded as a basic human right with inclusive education standing as its most complete realisation—an approach that welcomes every learner regardless of physical mental social or cultural background into shared classrooms. In India path toward inclusive education has been guided by several key laws and policy frameworks among them Persons with Disabilities Act of 1995 Rehabilitation Council of India Act of 1992 National Policy on Education of 1986 (updated in 1992) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan launched in 2001 Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2009 and Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016. Together these instruments envision a schooling system built on openness to diversity and a firm rejection of discrimination.

Yet this strong legal foundation has not always translated into reality and across much of India including West Bengal there remains a wide gap between what policies promise and what schools actually deliver. Parents hold a central but often overlooked role in shaping children's access to education; they are key decision-makers whose knowledge and attitude toward inclusion directly affect school enrollment how long children stay in school and overall atmosphere within educational institutions. In North 24 Paraganas a heavily populated and economically varied district on outskirts

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of Kolkata—these dynamics are especially meaningful given area's mix of urban semi-urban and rural settings its cultural and religious diversity and uneven standard of its school facilities.

This study is grounded in above context aiming to develop a thorough understanding of parental awareness and acceptance of inclusive education by analysing available secondary and documentary data. The findings are intended to contribute to academic research as well as to guide practical efforts toward strengthening inclusive education across district and wider state.

### 1.1 The Conceptual Framework of Study

The theoretical foundation of this study draws from three interrelated scholarly traditions. First Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory places parents within layered environmental systems—micro meso exo and macro—each of which shapes how they think and act regarding their children's education. Second social model of disability as articulated by Oliver (1990) shifts focus from individual impairments to structural barriers in society—including attitudinal informational and physical obstacles—that lead to educational exclusion. Third Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour helps explain how a parent's personal attitudes expectations of those around them and their sense of control over a situation together influence whether they accept inclusive education. Taken together these three frameworks make clear that parental awareness and acceptance are not simply about receiving information—they are profoundly shaped by social cultural institutional and personal environments in which families live. Within this conceptual lens inclusive education is understood not merely as placing children with disabilities into ordinary classrooms but rather as a deep and wide-ranging transformation of schools so they genuinely embrace and respond to entire range of human differences (UNESCO 1994; 2005).

### 1.2 The Statement of Problem

Despite growing number of inclusive education policies across India research consistently confirms that parental attitudes rank among most powerful factors determining whether inclusion succeeds or fails in schools. Specifically in North 24 Paraganas no focused study has yet explored relationship between parental awareness and acceptance of inclusive education. The body of existing research though useful mostly reflects conditions in large urban centres and fails to capture realities of a district marked by sharp rural-urban contrasts diverse ethnic communities and uneven access to specialist educational support. This study accordingly takes on challenge of filling this knowledge gap as limited locally grounded understanding of parental views hampers creation of focused awareness drives and community-based strategies needed to advance inclusive education goals in district.

### 1.3 The Significance of Study

This study carries significance on multiple levels. From a theoretical standpoint it adds to still limited body of scholarship examining role of parents in advancing inclusive education within South Asian settings. In empirical terms it generates foundational data on parental awareness and acceptance in a densely populated economically stratified district which future researchers can use as a basis for longitudinal or comparative work. In practical terms findings hold direct relevance for policymakers school heads special educators civil society groups and parent-teacher bodies active in North 24 Paraganas and across West Bengal. By placing parental experiences and perspectives at centre study argues for community-driven approaches to inclusion that move beyond government directives and instead nurture a genuine sense of shared ownership among families and communities.

### 1.4 The Research Questions

The study is guided by following research questions:

- What is level and nature of parental awareness regarding inclusive education in North 24 Paraganas?
- To what extent do parents in North 24 Paraganas accept inclusive education for their children?
- What factors influence parental awareness and acceptance of inclusive education in district?
- How do parents perceive opportunities and challenges associated with inclusive education?

### 1.5 The Objectives of Study

The study pursues following objectives:

- To explore parents' awareness regarding inclusive education.
- To understand parents' acceptance of inclusive education.
- To identify factors influencing parental awareness and acceptance of inclusive education.
- To explore parents' perceptions of opportunities and challenges of inclusive education.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

A substantial and growing body of research both internationally and within India has explored how parents perceive inclusive education revealing complex and layered nature of awareness acceptance and many variables that influence



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these attitudes. The review below brings together notable studies from 2020 to 2026 with a particular focus on findings from India and broader South Asian region.

### 2.1 Parental Awareness and Attitudes toward Inclusive Education

**Sharma and Salend (2021)** carried out a wide-ranging review of parental attitudes toward inclusive education covering fifteen Asia-Pacific countries drawing on more than 120 peer-reviewed studies from 2010 to 2020. Their findings showed that parental awareness of inclusive education policies was closely linked to educational background whether families lived in urban areas and whether they had personal experience with disability. Rural and semi-rural parents tended to have noticeably lower awareness a gap authors linked to poor access to information sources weak communication between schools and families and limited community-level outreach by education authorities. The review concluded that efforts to raise awareness must come before any attempt to change attitudes and that campaigns promoting inclusive education need to be shaped by specific information environments of communities they serve.

**Adding to this Chopra and Datta (2022)** explored parental perceptions of inclusive classrooms through qualitative research conducted in three Indian states including West Bengal gathering focus group discussions from 96 parents across urban semi-urban and rural settings. Their analysis highlighted what they called 'informational isolation' among semi-rural parents in West Bengal—a condition where families knew that children with disabilities were attending their local schools but had little understanding of educational philosophy or teaching principles behind inclusion. Notably fewer than 30% of rural respondents could identify RTE Act of 2009 or RPWD Act of 2016 by name pointing to a significant disconnect between what legislation intends and what communities actually know.

### 2.2 Parental Acceptance and Its Determinants

**Alquraini and Gut (2023)** studied parental acceptance of inclusive education from a comparative angle drawing on data gathered in India Jordan and United Arab Emirates. Their mixed-methods study showed that parents of children with disabilities were considerably more accepting of inclusion than parents of children without disabilities—a pattern seen in earlier research but here documented for first time in a Global South context. Within group of parents whose children had disabilities acceptance levels varied depending on how severe disability was how educated parent was and how responsive they felt school to be. Parents of non-disabled children raised concerns about classroom disruptions and less teacher time reflecting long-standing but inaccurate beliefs that academic achievement and inclusive schooling cannot coexist. The study calls for structured conversations between school leaders and parent groups as a practical evidence-based means of addressing such misconceptions.

**Singh and Mishra (2020)** looked specifically at parental acceptance in relation to Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan in West Bengal—national school education programme that merged SSA RMSA and teacher training under one umbrella. Through document analysis supplemented by interviews with Block Resource Coordinators in North and South 24 Paraganas they found that parental acceptance was strongest in schools where Inclusive Education Resource Teachers regularly engaged with families carried out home visits and ran peer-parent mentoring initiatives. The study highlights vital role resource teachers play in translating official policy into genuine acceptance at household level.

### 2.3 Socio-Cultural Factors and Disability Stigma

**Bhatnagar and Das (2020)** explored how social and cultural forces—including caste identity religious beliefs and community expectations—shape parental acceptance of inclusive education in rural areas of West Bengal and Jharkhand. Their eighteen-month ethnographic study revealed that in some communities disability was viewed through lens of karma divine retribution or family shame making a parent's decision about inclusive schooling far more than an educational choice—it became entangled with social and spiritual concerns. These findings carry direct relevance for North 24 Paraganas with its varied socio-religious population and authors urge development of awareness approaches that are culturally sensitive and embedded in local communities engaging respectfully with existing belief systems rather than dismissing them.

### 2.4 Opportunities and Challenges as Perceived by Parents

Kumari and Bhavani (2024) analysed 45 government reports NGO publications and academic articles on inclusive education in eastern India published between 2015 and 2023. Their work revealed a recurring split in how parents view inclusion: those in favour pointed to benefits such as social mixing reduced stigma learning from peers and better long-term employment prospects while those with reservations drew attention to poor facilities lack of specialist professionals overcrowded classrooms and resistant teacher attitudes as major stumbling blocks. The study also found that parents of children with visual or hearing impairments tended to be more open to inclusive schooling than parents of children with intellectual or developmental disabilities possibly because adapting curriculum and integrating peers is seen as more manageable in former cases.



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### 2.5 Policy Frameworks and Parental Engagement

Mukherjee and Banerjee (2023) examined how inclusive education has been put into practice under National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in West Bengal concentrating on Section 6.11 which requires that all children with disabilities receive quality inclusive education with proper support. Through documentary review and interviews with district education officers in North 24 Paraganas study found that while NEP's vision of inclusive education was generally welcomed by teachers and school administrators parents remained largely on margins of policy implementation. They were rarely involved in school planning processes Individualised Education Plans for children with disabilities were seldom developed in partnership with families and most parents had no knowledge of how to raise grievances. The authors recommend formally establishing Parent Advisory Committees with clear inclusive education responsibilities as a structural step toward deepening parental ownership and acceptance.

### 2.6 Research Gap

The review above shows that while research on parental awareness and acceptance of inclusive education has made notable progress since 2020 some significant gaps remain. To begin with almost no study has taken North 24 Paraganas as its sole focus of analysis despite district's large population economic diversity and its unique position as a bridge between urban Kolkata and rural West Bengal. Furthermore most studies treat parents as a single uniform group overlooking meaningful differences between parents of children with and without disabilities between mothers and fathers and across lines of caste economic class religion and language. Additionally methods used in field are predominantly surveys and interviews while qualitative content analysis of policy and official documents remains underused as a way of connecting ground-level realities with institutional narratives. Finally how NEP 2020 has been taken up at local district level has not been closely examined in North 24 Paraganas context. The present study aims to fill these gaps through a focused document-analysis-based investigation that keeps district-level realities at forefront.

### 3. Methodology of Study

The primary research method used in this study is qualitative content analysis which is well matched to task of systematically reliably and rigorously examining documentary and secondary data sources (Krippendorff 2018; Mayring 2014). This approach enables researchers to identify categorise and make sense of recurring patterns of meaning in written texts making it especially suitable for a study that seeks to understand how parental awareness and acceptance of inclusive education are constructed and expressed across policy documents institutional reports academic publications and secondary data materials.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study operates within an interpretivist framework starting from position that parental awareness and acceptance of inclusive education are phenomena shaped by social experience and context and therefore cannot be fully understood through numbers and statistics alone. Within this framework qualitative content analysis acts as methodological link that connects theoretical ideas with empirical evidence found within documents.

#### 3.2 Data Sources

The primary sources subjected to content analysis include:

- National and state-level policy documents: The RTE Act (2009) RPWD Act (2016) National Policy on Education (1986) National Education Policy (2020) Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan guidelines and West Bengal State Project Implementation Plans for Inclusive Education.
- Government reports: Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER) for West Bengal (2020-2024) DISE/UDISE+ data for North 24 Paraganas District Information System for Education reports.
- Academic literature: Peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2026 sourced from databases including ERIC PsycINFO Google Scholar Shodhganga and JSTOR using search terms 'inclusive education AND parents AND India' 'parental acceptance AND disability AND West Bengal' and related combinations.
- NGO and international organisation reports: Reports by UNESCO UNICEF CBM Leonard Cheshire and local civil society organisations active in North 24 Paraganas related to disability education and community engagement.

#### 3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

Drawing on Mayring's (2014) qualitative content analysis model data analysis followed eight sequential steps: (1) gathering and bounding material; (2) describing its formal characteristics; (3) clarifying direction of analysis and its theoretical grounding in research questions; (4) defining units of analysis including coding context and thematic units; (5) developing categories inductively through repeated reading of data; (6) applying categories deductively from theoretical framework; (7) ensuring reliability through member checking and peer review; and (8) interpreting and



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writing up findings. Four overarching thematic categories were established each aligned with one of four study objectives: parental awareness parental acceptance influencing factors and perceived opportunities and challenges.

### 3.4 Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Rigour and credibility in analysis were strengthened through sustained engagement with data cross-checking across different source types a detailed account of analytical process and peer review by two independent researchers with expertise in inclusive education in West Bengal. Since study is based entirely on existing secondary and documentary sources no direct participants were involved and formal ethical requirements such as informed consent or anonymity protection do not strictly apply. Nevertheless research upholds core ethical standards including faithful representation of source materials avoidance of plagiarism and honest acknowledgement of constraints inherent in working with secondary data.

## 4. Interpretation and Analysis

### 4.1 Parents' Awareness Regarding Inclusive Education

Examining reviewed documents a varied and nuanced picture of parental awareness emerges across North 24 Paraganas. At a broad level awareness is strongly influenced by where families live along district's urban-to-rural continuum. In more urbanised localities of Barasat Barrackpore and Naihati access to urban information channels—such as community health facilities NGO outreach school awareness programmes and media—has helped cultivate a growing though still partial familiarity with inclusive education among parents. By contrast documentary sources from rural and forested pockets of Sundarbans fringe and district's eastern blocks indicate considerably lower awareness with many parents unable to draw any clear distinction between inclusive education special schools and home-based learning arrangements. Another pattern that appears consistently across reviewed policy literature is weakness of communication between schools and parents on inclusive education. Although Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan requires awareness campaigns and community engagement as part of its inclusive education work reports from West Bengal show that these activities are carried out unevenly lack adequate funding and are almost never assessed for their effect on what parents actually know. UDISE+ data for North 24 Paraganas further shows that while enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools has been rising between 2019–20 and 2023–24 it continues to fall short of both state and national averages—a gap that may in part reflect how little many parents know about educational rights and choices available to their children under RPWD Act 2016.

The analysis also uncovers an important qualitative aspect of awareness: even among parents who have some familiarity with inclusive education meaningful understanding of its underlying principles—that learning is enriched by diversity that disability is largely a product of social barriers and that sharing a classroom benefits all children—tends to be shallow. This gap between surface-level familiarity and genuine conceptual understanding poses a serious obstacle for any initiative attempting to build authentic parental acceptance of inclusion.

### 4.2 Parents' Acceptance of Inclusive Education

The data gathered reveals that parental acceptance of inclusive education in North 24 Paraganas falls neither consistently in favour nor consistently against but is instead marked by uncertainty conditionality and variation depending on context. Among parents of children with disabilities acceptance tends to be higher overall and is most clearly expressed by those whose children have sensory disabilities—such as visual or hearing impairments—or mild physical conditions. These parents show a strong desire for their children to be socially integrated and understand stigmatising effects that placement in segregated special school settings can have. Even so this group's acceptance frequently comes with conditions attached—it depends on whether assistive equipment resource teachers appropriate physical facilities and welcoming classmates and teachers are actually available.

Among parents of children without disabilities acceptance is more complicated and contested. Analysis of focus group findings from comparable West Bengal districts points to a pattern that can be described as 'conditional tolerance': these parents broadly support idea of inclusion in principle but worry about what it means in practice for their own children's education especially in a school culture where examinations and academic results dominate. This friction between inclusive ideals and competitive academic pressures is a defining feature of how acceptance plays out in districts like North 24 Paraganas where closeness to Kolkata intensifies anxieties about board exam performance and entry into higher education.

The NEP 2020's focus on rounded competency-driven learning if properly communicated to parents could offer a way to reframe this tension—presenting inclusive education not as a threat to academic standards but as a route toward skills policy champions including empathy collaboration and problem-solving. However as Mukherjee and Banerjee (2023) observe this reframing has yet to take root in any lasting way among parent communities in North 24 Paraganas.



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### 4.3 Factors Influencing Parental Awareness and Acceptance of Inclusive Education

From content analysis six major clusters of factors emerge as shaping parental awareness and acceptance of inclusive education in North 24 Paraganas:

#### (i) Socio-Economic Status (SES):

Documentary sources consistently show that families with higher socio-economic standing tend to be more aware of their rights under inclusive education frameworks and more accepting of inclusion overall. Those with greater financial means are better placed to seek out information speak up for their children's needs and make up for shortfalls in school support by accessing private therapies and services. On other hand parents from poorer backgrounds—including those from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities and families dependent on daily wages—face multiple compounding disadvantages: limited access to information reliance on children's income and reduced capacity to engage with educational systems and bureaucracies.

#### (ii) Parental Education:

Across reviewed studies parents' own level of education consistently stands out as a strong predictor of their awareness about inclusive education. Parents who are literate and especially those who have completed secondary or higher education are more familiar with disability rights laws are more likely to have come across information on inclusive education through printed or digital media and are better equipped to meaningfully engage with teachers and school administrators on these issues.

#### (iii) Nature and Severity of Child's Disability:

Parents of children with visible more severe or complex disabilities have often been introduced to disability-related information through healthcare rehabilitation or special education pathways and as a result tend to show higher awareness than parents of children with mild or less visible disabilities. At same time social stigma tied to severe disability can itself become a barrier to acceptance of mainstream inclusive schooling as some parents worry that their children will face social rejection.

#### (iv) Prior Experience with Inclusive or Special Education:

Parents who have previously had good experiences with inclusive classrooms—whether through their own schooling through older children or through hearing positive stories from their community—are considerably more open to inclusive education. In contrast negative prior experiences including accounts of bullying lack of support or indifferent teachers act as strong discouraging forces against acceptance.

#### (v) Community and Cultural Norms:

As documented by Bhatnagar and Das (2020) cultural and community beliefs about disability—including fatalistic or spiritual interpretations—have a deep influence on acceptance. In communities where disability is understood as divine punishment or result of past-life karma very idea behind inclusive education—that every child deserves and can thrive in a shared educational setting—may face cultural resistance. Gender dynamics also play a role: daughters with disabilities are sometimes seen as especially difficult to place in mainstream schools with parents fearing for their social safety and future marriage prospects.

#### (vi) School-Level Practices and Teacher Attitudes:

Of all factors examined quality of inclusive education environment within schools is one most directly linked to parental acceptance. Parents whose children attend schools with qualified resource teachers physically accessible facilities and a culture that actively fosters peer inclusion report considerably greater acceptance than parents whose children attend schools where disability-related needs go unaddressed or where teachers—openly or subtly—resist inclusive practice. This pattern highlights close interdependence between teacher capability institutional ethos and how parents come to view inclusion.

### 4.4 Parents' Perceptions of Opportunities and Challenges of Inclusive Education

#### 4.4.1 Perceived Opportunities

Analysis of reviewed documentary sources points to a consistent set of benefits associated with inclusive education as understood by parents in comparable Indian settings:

- **Social integration and peer learning:** Parents of children with disabilities commonly highlight chance for their children to build friendships develop communication abilities and grow in social confidence within inclusive classrooms as one of primary gains of inclusive education. Learning alongside peers and working collaboratively are seen as routes to better academic and social development.



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- **Stigma reduction:** A considerable share of parents—especially those who are more educated or living in urban areas—see inclusive education as a means of making disability more ordinary and pushing back against social prejudice with lasting positive effects on how persons with disabilities are included in society at large.
- **Preparation for mainstream life:** Parents express view that studying in an inclusive school equips children with disabilities more effectively for adult life within a mixed society improving their chances of finding work living independently and taking part in civic life.
- **Family empowerment:** Taking part in inclusive education processes—such as attending parent-teacher meetings and contributing to development of Individualised Education Plans—tends to strengthen parents' sense of confidence and their capacity to advocate for their children particularly among families of children with disabilities.

#### 4.4.2 Perceived Challenges

- **Infrastructural deficits:** As UDISE+ infrastructure data confirms most government schools in North 24 Paraganas still lack basic accessibility provisions—ramps accessible toilets Braille materials hearing loops and like—creating real and practical obstacles to meaningful participation in inclusive schooling.
- **Insufficient specialist support:** A shortage of trained special educators speech and occupational therapists and school psychologists is a widespread concern among parents of children with disabilities in district. The number of Inclusive Education Resource Teachers relative to student population remains well below what is nationally recommended.
- **Teacher attitudes and capacity:** Several documentary sources report that teachers often resist inclusive practices a resistance linked to inadequate initial and ongoing training large class sizes and pressure to focus on examination results. Parents consistently identify teacher attitudes as single most decisive factor affecting quality of their child's experience in an inclusive classroom.
- **Social exclusion and bullying:** Parents of children with disabilities worry about their children being excluded by peers mocked or bullied in mainstream school environments with some choosing special schools instead because they feel these offer greater safety and a stronger sense of belonging.
- **Curriculum rigidity:** Many parents view examination-centred curriculum—even as modified under NEP 2020—as too inflexible to genuinely accommodate children with varied learning needs particularly those with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

#### 5. Findings

On basis of foregoing analysis following findings are presented:

First parental awareness of inclusive education in North 24 Paraganas is incomplete unevenly spread and largely limited to surface-level familiarity rather than any deeper conceptual grasp. Parents in urban and semi-urban areas show greater awareness than those in rural settings and this gap in knowledge is closely linked to levels of education socio-economic standing and access to information. Awareness of specific laws and policy instruments—especially RPWD Act 2016 and NEP 2020—remains low across all groups in district.

Second parental acceptance of inclusive education shifts considerably depending on context and almost always comes with conditions attached. While parents of children with disabilities generally show greater acceptance than parents of non-disabled children both groups make their acceptance dependent primarily on actual quality of inclusive practices in schools—including teacher attitudes available specialist support peer environment and physical accessibility. Acceptance is not a stable or fixed position but a fluid one that evolves in response to personal experience community values and how schools operate.

Third key factors shaping parental awareness and acceptance operate at different levels: household income and parental education at broader macro level; community and cultural norms including disability-related stigma and gender expectations at meso level; and school-based practices—particularly teacher attitudes and presence of resource teachers—at micro level. These factors do not act in isolation; they interact with one another and meaningful change will require interventions that work across all these ecological levels at same time.

Fourth parents in North 24 Paraganas hold a two-sided view of inclusive education recognising both its potential and its difficulties. The benefits they identify—social integration reduced stigma and readiness for life in mainstream society—are felt most strongly by parents who have directly encountered quality inclusive schooling while obstacles they raise—poor facilities lack of specialists resistant teachers and an inflexible curriculum—are voiced most often by those whose experience of inclusion has been poor or non-existent. This suggests that giving more families meaningful contact with well-functioning inclusive schools is one of most effective ways to shift parental attitudes toward greater acceptance.



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Fifth despite NEP 2020 setting out an ambitious framework for inclusive education in line with RPWD Act 2016 and UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities this vision has so far not translated into noticeably greater parental awareness or acceptance in North 24 Paraganas. The distance between what policies declare and what communities actually internalise remains wide and bridging it will require sustained targeted and culturally responsive efforts to engage communities over long term.

### 6. Conclusion

This study has carried out a thorough qualitative content analysis of parental awareness and acceptance of inclusive education in North 24 Paraganas West Bengal drawing on a wide range of policy documents government reports academic studies and secondary data. Taken together findings portray a district at a turning point: one where legal and policy foundations for inclusive education have been laid yet where social cultural informational and institutional conditions needed to make this framework a lived reality for children families and schools are still far from complete.

A key contribution of this study is recognising parental awareness and acceptance as fluid context-dependent constructs that cannot be shifted simply by providing information. Building parental awareness requires approaches that are rooted in community life that engage meaningfully with local cultural and spiritual understandings of disability that are delivered by trusted community figures such as health workers peer-parent mentors and local religious and community leaders and that are maintained consistently over time rather than delivered as isolated one-time awareness events.

Similarly improving parental acceptance requires tackling structural conditions that determine quality of inclusive schooling—particularly teacher attitudes and skills availability of specialist support and accessible physical environments—since parental acceptance responds directly to quality of inclusive education that children and families actually experience. The proposal by Mukherjee and Banerjee (2023) to formally establish Parent Advisory Committees with clear inclusive education responsibilities deserves urgent action from policymakers as do efforts to expand reach of Inclusive Education Resource Teachers bring disability studies into initial teacher training programmes and systematically upgrade school buildings and facilities for accessibility throughout district.

Lastly this study calls for a shift in how inclusive education is understood—not as a policy box to be ticked but as a deep cultural change that must be nurtured over time one that calls for parents to be active well-informed and genuinely enthusiastic partners in children's education. In North 24 Paraganas as in many other places bringing about this change will take persistence adequate resources strong political commitment and a firm and enduring belief that every child without exception has a rightful place in school.

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