

Attitude of Teachers Towards Children with Special Educational Needs (CWSN) in the Age of Inclusive Education

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Article Received: Nov 1, 2025 | Revised Article Received: Dec 19, 2025 | Final Acceptance: Dec 23, 2025

Abstract

In the age of globalisation in techno-pedagogy-based teaching-learning systems, there exist many weapons and strategies for providing good guidance simultaneously to develop every aspect of the SENs with normal children together under one roof. The teacher's attitude is most important to deal with the great activity. In the study the researchers want to determine the level of attitude & attitude towards CWSN of teachers based on gender, stream, nature of service, teacher education and teaching experiences. The study is an empirical descriptive type of quantitative survey research. A total of 105 teachers (59 male & 46 female, 71 arts & 34 science, 75 full-time & 30 para teachers, 70 trained & 35 non-trained, 72 with up to 15 years of teaching experience & 33 with more than 15 years) have been selected from different schools of secondary education in Krishnagar-II Block in Nadia district, West Bengal, utilising a simple random sampling technique. The data have been gathered by the researchers' made & standardised tool: Attitude Scale for Teachers on CWSN, administered on the sample. The statistics-mean, SD and "t" test-have been run to analyse the collected data and interpret the results in this study. In the study six null hypotheses (formulated on different categorical variables of all strata) have been accepted and are insignificant at the .05 level. Thus, the researchers have revealed that the teachers' attitude towards CWSN is **at a favourable level**, and gender, stream, nature of service, teacher education & teaching experience do not differentiate in teachers' attitude towards CWSN. In the participant teachers the male, arts stream, Para, non-trained and up to 15 years of teaching experience categories of teachers need training about CWSN and teaching skills for diversified classrooms. The researchers have suggested that the teachers have to know many aspects of CWSN students before interaction in the classroom to guide effectively.

Keywords

Children with Special Educational Needs (CWSN), Mainstream secondary school, Teachers and Attitude.

1. Introduction

Human life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes from conception to death. If these developments are hindered at any stage in the span of development, the normal lifestyles of children will be interrupted. Thus, they will be moved apart from normal children and will become inconsistent and unacceptable to the society. Such children have been separated from society by the name of special needs children. They are neglected by the society's attitude, as they need more support than normal children due to the fact that they come with some mental and physical problems by birth or environment. The societal attitude towards the CWSN can make them as normal as children. To maintain the success of the current educational environment and to maintain the flow of the uniform education system, there is a need for a positive attitude of society towards CWSN. If we want to create a uniform classroom system for every child or one structure suitable to all, the CWSN should be treated as normal children. It is possible through the desire of the people to create special facilities in normal situations for CWSN and with the positive attitude of teachers and the society. The Government has ensured by the announcement of the Indian Supreme Court that it is wrong to say that disabled children can only be taught in special schools (Sing & Bajaj, 2018). Now all the mainstream schools (except Nabadaya Vidyalayas, Army Schools and Kendriya Vidyalaya) are going into inclusive schools. The mainstream schools are the address of all pupils, including CWSN. In the present schooling system, teaching is provided to every child under the same roof. So, the normal children and CWSN learn together under one umbrella where the teachers, classroom, sitting place, curriculum, and mode of transactions are uniform. The CWSN takes admission in the mainstream school, and the number of CWSN is increasing day by day in the school. The teachers are responsible for organising and introducing effective and equitable quality teaching for the diversified needs of pupils along with normal pupils in the same period within the uniform classroom system. So, the successful teaching and desirable learning outcomes are affected by the attitude of the teachers towards CWSN. Obviously, the attitude of teachers towards CWSN needs to be familiarised.

The problem of the attitude of teachers towards CWSN is to be focused on by the researchers, and it should be desirable. The Krishnagar II block of Nadia district in West Bengal is one of the rural parts of Nadia district covered by 60.98 per cent of the literacy rate (Census India-West Bengal, 2011). The CWSN are enrolling but not being retained in schools, and dropouts are ongoing from class five (Gupta, 2016). The present status of mainstream schools in Nadia districts is not readily available for inclusiveness (Chintapatra & Sen Gupta, 2021). According to the Census (2011), 1.82 per cent of populations with disabilities are children aged 10 to 19 out of 2.21 per cent. Only 1.17 per cent of students with disabilities are enrolled in schools (Mehta, 2015, cited by Gupta, 2016). Gupta (2016) argued that there is a need to modify the school transaction system, teacher's role, and environment for enrolling and retaining the CWSN in schools to sustain inclusiveness. So, this study must be needed in the contemporary scenario of Krishnagar-II block, Nadia, West Bengal, India.

2. Literature Review

Anjum & Ray (2025) explored that the attitude of teachers towards CWSN had changed from the past ten decades but not effectively, and the teachers had not acquired the necessary skills for dealing with the CWSN. They further explored that the journey of inclusion of CWSN for successful inclusiveness encountered trouble and difficult struggle due to a lack of acceptance from the society, stakeholders, peers, and good sense of special needs, sufficient finance, teaching resources, and teamwork.

Akshatha et al. (2024) found a positive attitude of teachers towards inclusive education, and it significantly differed for sex, types of schools, experience, level of teaching and medium of instruction. The study further found that attitude varied for level of teaching and experience. They suggested that teachers need more awareness programmes for the specially abled children for inclusiveness.

Singh (2023) explored teachers' positive attitudes towards special children, noting that these attitudes were influenced by factors such as training, personal beliefs, and support systems, which in turn led to improved academic performance, self-esteem, and social integration.

Bhuyan & Chutia (2021) found that prospective teachers having prior experience and understanding about children with special needs had significantly more desirable attitudes than those who had none, but sex indicated no difference.

Amaireh (2017) had done his Ph.D. on "Teachers' attitude towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in Jordanian ordinary schools." He revealed that the teachers had a neutral perception, and their attitude towards CWSN was related to teachers' training & teaching experiences. The teachers were not prepared to teach the CWSN. They had not properly known about CWSN.

Offor & Akinlosotu (2017) researched "Teachers' Attitude towards Special Needs Students in Secondary Schools in North Senatorial of Edo State, Nigeria". The findings of their study were that gender didn't differentiate in teachers' attitudes towards CWSN, but stream & teaching experiences differentiated in the attitudes of the teachers towards CWSN.

Oluremi (2015) had investigated "ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TO STUDENTS WITH NEEDS IN MAINSTREAMED PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA: THE NEED FOR A CHANGE". The findings of the investigation ensured a positive attitude of 78.8% of the teachers, whereas 16.8% had a negative attitude & the rest had a neutral attitude towards SENs. Further found that gender didn't differentiate in the attitude of the concerned teachers towards CWSN.

Schmidt & Vrhovnik (2015) had done research work on "ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS THE INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS". The results showed that the secondary school teachers' attitude towards special educational needs was greater than that of primary school teachers. Most of the experienced & professionally qualified teachers agreed to teach & assist, but less experienced and non-professionally qualified teachers disagreed to teach & assist the SENs.

Tindall et al. (2014) had conducted a comparative qualitative experimental study on "Pre-service teachers' attitude towards children with disabilities: An Irish perspective". They observed that there was a positive change in the pre-service teachers' attitude and perception towards children with disabilities. The anxiety of pre-service teachers was decreased, and their confidence levels were increased to guide the students with disabilities.

Folostina et al. (2013) researched "Attitude of Teachers Towards Integrating Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Regular Schools in Romania". They had found that the attitude towards students with disabilities was positive among prospective participant teachers, and the participant teachers had regularly provided their effort to change the mental status of the students with disabilities effectively.

Fakolade et al. (2009) had investigated "Attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of special needs children in general education classrooms: The case of teachers in some selected schools in Nigeria." They had stated that the attitude of female teachers towards the inclusion of CWSN was more favourable than that of male teachers. They also found that there were distinctions in the attitude of the teachers based on gender & marital status. The positive attitude of trained teachers towards the inclusion of CWSN was greater than that of the non-trained teachers.

Avramidis et al. (2000) researched "Students' teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in the ordinary school". They observed that student-teachers' attitudes towards CWSN were positive, but the teachers had little competency to deal with CWSN.

3. Objectives of the study

The researchers aim to know the following objectives.

O₁: To know the level of attitude of the teachers towards the "Children with Special Educational Needs" (CWSN).

O₂: To determine the difference in attitude of teachers towards the "Children with Special Educational Needs" (CWSN) based on gender.

O₃: To understand the distinctions in attitude of the teachers towards the "Children with Special Educational Needs" (CWSN) on the basis of Stream.

O₄: To identify the distinctions in attitude of the teachers towards the "Children with Special Educational Needs" (CWSN) based on the of nature of service.

O₅: To reveal the difference in attitude of the teachers towards the "Children with Special Educational Needs" (CWSN) based on teacher education.

O₆: To know the differences in attitude of teachers towards the "Children with Special Educational Needs" (CWSN) based on teaching experiences.

4. Hypotheses of the study

The researchers have formulated the following null hypotheses.

H₀₁: There is no significant evidence of a very favorable level of attitude among teachers towards CWSN.

H₀₂: There is no significant distinction between the attitude of male and female teachers towards the “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN).

H₀₃: There is no significant distinction in attitude between arts and science teachers towards the “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN).

H₀₄: There is no significant distinction in attitude between full time and Para teachers towards the “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN).

H₀₅: There is no significant distinction in attitude between trained and non-trained teachers towards the “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN).

H₀₆: There is no significant distinction in attitude between teaching experiences up to 15 years and above 15 years teachers towards the “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN).

5. Method

5.1. Research Design

The researchers have followed the descriptive research method to deal with this study. The study is survey-type quantitative empirical research.

5.2. Population

All the teachers of mainstream government-sponsored Bengali-medium secondary schools in Krishnagar-II Block, Nadia district, affiliated with the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education, West Bengal, India, are the population of the present study.

5.3. Sample

The sample size is 105 teachers. A total of 105 teachers have been selected randomly from the different secondary schools as a sample for this study. This sample is further classified in **Table 01 below** based on gender, stream, nature of service, teacher education and teaching experience.

Table 01: Summary of sample

Total	Gender		Stream		Nature of service		Teacher education		Teaching experience	
	Male	Female	Arts	Science	Full-time	Para-teacher	Trained	Non-trained	<15 years	>15 Years
105	59	46	71	34	75	30	70	35	72	33

5.4. Sampling Technique

The researchers have followed a simple random sampling technique to recognise the sample size and selected the 105 teachers as a sample from different secondary schools in Krishnagar-II Block, Nadia.

5.5. Tool used for data collection

The researchers have developed and standardised an attitude scale for teachers on “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN). The tool has been composed of and arranged with 30 positive and negative items. The tool is a 5-point Likert scale with strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree alternatives in respect to each item. At first the researchers developed 47 items for the draft questionnaire. After expert review and a pilot study, the 30 items have been accepted for the final scale. The validity and reliability of the scale were in a satisfactory and acceptable range. So, the researchers have used the scale in the study.

5.6. Statistical Techniques Used

The researcher has applied descriptive statistics like mean and SD to analyse data and converted the data into a meaningful manner. The inferential statistic, the t-test, was utilised to reveal a significant distinction in attitude between the means of different demographic variables of the participants.

5.7. Procedure of the study

The researchers have administered the Attitude Scale for Teachers on “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN) to each individual subject of 105 sample teachers from the population randomly selected from different secondary schools. The data were gained through the filled-in questionnaire by each individual subject.

5.8. Calculation of Attitude Levels of Teachers

The total number of items was 30 in the questionnaire. The tool was a 5-point Likert scale. The highest score was 150, and the lowest score was 30. The range of total scores is 30-150. The levels of attitude are calculated by 5 levels. The following criteria were followed. According to John W. Best (1977)-

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{\text{Highest score} - \text{Lowest score}}{\text{Number of levels}} \\ & = \frac{150-30}{5} \\ & = \frac{120}{5} \\ & = 24 \end{aligned}$$

Table 02: Measuring the Score Range and Attitude Levels of Teachers: Measuring Criteria of Attitude Levels (According to Mandal & Barman, 2014)

Range of Score	Levels of Attitude
30-53	Very Unfavorable
54-77	Unfavorable
78-101	Moderate
102-125	Favorable
126-150	Very Favorable

6. Results

H₀1: There is no significant evidence of a very favorable level of attitude among teachers towards CWSN.

Table 03: Attitude Score of the Teachers Towards the “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN)

Category	N	Score Minimum-Maximum	Range	M	SD	Level of Attitude
Teachers	105	84 - 140	54	112.247	13.395	Favorable

Note. N = Number of Total samples, M = Mean Score, SD = Standard Deviation

The **Table 03** shows that 112.247 is the obtained mean score of attitudes of the participant teachers towards the CWSN. This mean score belongs to the range score of 102-125 and this score is **Favorable** level in Attitude Levels Measuring Criteria (see **Table 02**). Thus, the Null Hypothesis ‘**H₀1**’ is **accepted**.

H₀2: There is no significant distinction between the attitude of male and female teachers towards the “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN).

Table 04: Difference in Attitude towards the CWSN Between the Male and Female Teachers

Gender	n	M	SD	df	t-calculated value	t-critical value at .05 level	p value
Male	59	111.491	13.352	103	0.653	1.983	.515
Female	46	113.217	13.535				

Note. $p > .05$. n = Number of sub-samples, M = Mean Score, SD = Standard Deviation, df = degrees of freedom, p = probability value.

The **Table 04** shows that 111.491 is the obtained mean score & *SD* is 13.352 of 59 Male Teachers and 113.217 is the obtained mean score & *SD* is 13.535 of 46 Female Teachers. The degrees of freedom 103 and the calculated *t* value 0.653 & *p* value .515 ($p > .05$). The calculated *t* value 0.653 is lower than *t* critical value (table value) 1.983. The calculated *t* value is insignificant at .05 level of significance. Thus, the Null hypothesis **H₀2 is accepted**.

H₀3: There is no significant distinction in attitude between arts and science teachers towards the “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN).

Table 05: Difference in Attitude of the Teachers Towards CWSN Between Arts and Science Teachers

Stream	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	df	<i>t</i> -calculated value	<i>t</i> -critical value at .05 level	<i>p</i> value
Arts	71	111.225	12.920	103	1.131	1.983	.260
Science	34	114.382	14.297				

Note. $p > .05$. *n* = Number of sub-samples, *M* = Mean Score, *SD* = Standard Deviation, df = degrees of freedom, *p* = probability value.

The **Table 05** shows that 111.225 is the obtained mean score & *SD* is 12.920 of 71 Arts Teachers and 114.382 is the obtained mean score & *SD* is 14.297 of 34 Science Teachers. The degrees of freedom are 103 and calculated *t*- value 1.131 & *p* value .260 ($p > .05$). The calculated *t* value 1.131 is lower than *t* critical value (table value) 1.983. The calculated *t* value is insignificant at .05 level of significance. Thus, the Null hypothesis “**H₀3 is accepted.**”

H₀4: There is no significant distinction in attitude between full time and Para teachers towards the “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN).

Table 06: Difference in Attitude of the Teachers Towards CWSN Between Full Time and Para Teachers

Nature of Service	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	df	<i>t</i> -calculated value	<i>t</i> -critical value at .05 level	<i>p</i> value
Full-Time Teacher	75	113.04	13.782	103	0.958	1.983	.340
Para Teacher	30	110.266	12.373				

Note. $p > .05$. *n* = Number of sub-samples, *M* = Mean Score, *SD* = Standard Deviation, df = degrees of freedom, *p* = probability value.

The **Table 06** shows that 113.04 is the obtained mean score & *SD* is 13.782 of 75 Full-Time Teachers and 110.266 is the obtained mean score & *SD* is 12.373 of 30 Para Teachers. The degrees of freedom are 103 and calculated *t* value 0.958 & *p* value .340 ($p > .05$). The calculated *t* value .958 is lower than *t* critical value (table value) 1.983. The calculated *t* value is not significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the the Null hypothesis “**H₀4 is accepted.**”

H₀5: There is no significant distinction in attitude between trained and non-trained teachers towards the “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN).

Table 07: Difference in Attitude of the Teachers Towards CWSN Between Trained and Non-Trained

Teacher Education	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	df	<i>t</i> calculated	<i>t</i> value at 0.05 level	<i>p</i> value
Trained Teacher	70	113.557	14.127	103	1.423	1.983	.157
Non-Trained Teacher	35	109.628	11.542				

Note. $p > .05$. *n* = Number of sub-samples, *M* = Mean Score, *SD* = Standard Deviation, df = degrees of freedom, *p* = probability value.

The **Table 07** shows that 113.557 is the obtained mean score & *SD* is 14.127 of 70 Trained Teachers and 109.628 is the obtained mean score & *SD* is 11.542 of 35 Non-Trained Teachers. The degrees of freedom are 103 and calculated *t* value 1.423 & *p* value .157 ($p > .05$). The calculated *t* value 1.423 is lower than *t* critical value (table value) 1.983. The calculated *t* value is not significant at the .05 level of significance. Thus, the Null hypothesis **H₀5 is accepted.**

H₀6: There is no significant distinction in attitude between teaching experiences up to 15 years and above 15 years teachers towards the “Children with Special Educational Needs” (CWSN).

Table 08: Difference in Attitude of the Teachers Towards SENs Between Up to 15 Years and Above 15 Years of Teaching Experience

Teaching Experiences	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	df	<i>t</i> -calculated value	<i>t</i> -value at 0.05 level	<i>p</i> value
Up to 15 Years Teacher	72	111	12.456	103	1.416	1.983	0.159
Above 15 Years Teacher	33	114.969	15.092				

Note. $p > .05$. *n* = Number of sub-samples, *M* = Mean Score, *SD* = Standard Deviation, df = degrees of freedom, *p* = probability value.

Table 08 shows that 111 is the obtained mean score & *SD* is 12.456 of 72 teachers having teaching experiences up to 15 years, and 114.969 is the obtained mean score & *SD* is 15.092 of 33 teachers having teaching experiences above 15 years. The degrees of freedom are 103, and the calculated *t* value is 1.416 & *p* value .159 ($p > .05$). The calculated *t* value 1.416 is lower than *the t* critical value (table value) of 1.983. The calculated *t* value is not significant at the .05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis “**H06 is accepted at .05 level of significance.**”

7. Discussion

H01: This result is supporting the null hypothesis ‘**H01**’. There is not found the very favourable attitude of teachers towards the CWSN. The attitude level of the participant teachers is **favourable**. The finding is supported by **Avramidis et al. (2000); Oluremi (2015); and Akshatha et al. (2024)** which **states** that teachers’ attitudes were positive towards the CWSN in Nigeria and India. This finding is witness to increasing the level of attitude of teachers and leading to a higher level of attitude, as **Avramidis et al. (2000) found a positive attitude, but the level was very low.**

H02: There is not found the significant distinction in attitude of male & female teachers towards the CWSN. Gender doesn't differentiate in the attitude of teachers towards the CWSN. This result is supporting the null hypothesis “**H02**”. The result is related to previous literature. This result is the same as previous literature. Both the male and female participant teachers’ attitudes towards the CWSN are favourable and positive. But the obtained mean score of the female teachers is greater than the male teachers. In this respect the female teachers’ attitude is more favourable than the male teachers. The finding is in tune with the study of **Oluremi, 2015; Bhakta & Shit, 2016; and Offor & Akinlosotu, 2017; and Bhuyan & Chutia (2021)** but the result of the study is contradicted by the study of **Akshatha et al. (2024)**.

H03: There is not found the significant distinction in attitude of the arts & science teachers towards the CWSN. The stream doesn't differentiate in the attitude of the teachers towards the CWSN. This result is supporting the null hypothesis “**H03**”. This result is similar to the previous literature. The result was found to be the same as previous literature. Both the arts and science teachers’ attitudes towards the CWSN are favourable and positive. But the obtained “mean score” of science teachers is greater than the arts teachers. In this respect the science teachers’ attitude is more favourable than the arts teachers. The finding of the study is contradicted by **Offor & Akinlosotu (2017)**.

H04: There is not found the significant distinction in attitude of the full-time & para teachers towards the CWSN. The nature of service doesn't differentiate in the attitude of the participant teachers towards the CWSN. This result is supporting the null hypothesis “**H04**”. Both the full-time and para teachers’ attitudes towards the CWSN are favourable and positive. But the obtained “mean score” of full-time teachers is greater than that of the para teachers. In this respect the full-time teachers’ attitude is more favourable than the para teachers.

H05: There is not found the significant distinction in attitude of the trained & non-trained teachers towards the CWSN. The teacher education doesn't differentiate in the attitude of the participant teachers towards the CWSN. This result is supporting the null hypothesis “**H05**”. This result is supported by the

previous study. Both the trained and non-trained teachers' attitudes towards the CWSN are favourable and positive. But the obtained "mean score" of trained teachers is greater than the non-trained teachers; in this respect, the trained teachers' attitude is more favourable than the non-trained teachers'. The finding is contradicted by the study of **Offor & Akinlosotu, 2017; Bhakta & Shit, 2016; and Singh (2023)**.

H₀₆: There is not found the significant distinction in attitude of teaching experiences up to 15 years and above 15 years of teachers towards the CWSN. The teaching experience doesn't differentiate in the attitude of participant teachers towards the CWSN. This result is supporting the null hypothesis "H₀₆". Both the teaching experiences up to 15 years and above 15 years and the teacher's attitude towards the CWSN are favourable and positive. But the obtained mean score of teachers with over 15 years of teaching experience is greater than the teaching experience. Up to 15 years of teachers, in this respect, the teaching experience of teachers above 15 years is more favourable than the teaching experience of teachers "up to 15" years. This finding is contradicted by the studies of **Offor & Akinlosotu, 2017, and Maggio, 2020; and Akshatha et al. (2024)**.

8. Findings

It has been known that the attitude level of the participant teachers belongs to the positive-moderate. Their attitude towards the CWSN is **at a favourable level**.

It has been verified that gender doesn't differentiate in the attitude of participant teachers towards the CWSN. The teachers belong to the same level of attitude towards the CWSN based on gender.

It has been studied that the stream doesn't differentiate in the attitude of participant teachers towards the CWSN. The teachers belong to the same level of attitude towards the CWSN based on stream.

It has been identified that the nature of service doesn't differentiate in the attitude of the participant teachers towards the CWSN. The teachers belong to the same level of attitude towards the CWSN.

It has been found that teacher education doesn't differentiate in the attitude of the participant teachers towards the CWSN. The teachers belong to the same level of attitude towards the CWSN.

It is known that teaching experience doesn't differentiate in the attitude of the participant teachers towards the CWSN. The teachers belong to the same level of attitude towards the CWSN.

9. Conclusion

School is the second careering residence of a child after family. A normal childish attitude is created among the CWSN through the open interaction with normal pupils. This program is very much accelerated in school by the effect of the teachers' positive attitude towards the CWSN. In this

environment children find the social acceptance and pace of life. In order to maintain that dynamism, it is essential to maintain an integral part of the teaching process involved in inclusive education. The researchers recommended those male teachers, arts stream teachers, para-teachers, non-trained teachers and those teachers who have teaching experiences of Up to 15 years need training and knowledge about CWSN to guide them with special care. Also, they need to adopt teaching skills for diversified classroom needs. The teachers have to know many aspects, like CWSN's rights and needs, and have to study about CWSN before interacting with them in the classroom. That will help the teachers to guide effectively to the CWSN. In this way, the real empowerment can be provided to the CWSN.

The researchers thought that teaching skills of teachers, teaching aids, knowledge, awareness, attitude, activities, duties, resource rooms, school setup and materials are the secondary parts to teach the CWSN, but empathy, natural acceptance behaviour and connate mentality are the primary parts of teachers to educate the CWSN. This two-part process effectively determines the journey of inclusive education.

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