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Addressing Problems in Inclusive Education for Quality Education Among Secondary School Students in Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

Inclusive education encompasses a broader spectrum than simply focusing on a particular group of students, such as those who have been or are likely to be excluded from schools, irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, academic achievement, or socio-economic status. Its purpose is to offer equal opportunities for learning to all learners, including students with varying needs. Implementation of inclusive education in secondary schools in Himachal Pradesh is confronted with numerous problems in accessibility, teacher training, and student-related issues. The present study investigates inclusive education-related problems among secondary school students in Shimla. A self-developed Secondary School Problem Assessment Inventory is employed as the data collection tool. Multiple Regression Analyses are applied to evaluate the impact of demographic variables (such as gender, caste, locality, religion, type of disability, use of assistive devices, Bonafide Himachali status, residence in rented houses, and levels of education among parents) on the administrative and educational problems of secondary school students. The findings indicate that the levels of education among fathers and the Bonafide Himachali status significantly impact the administrative and educational problems of the students. Meanwhile, other demographic variables did not exert significant impacts on the students' problems in these dimensions. The implications of this study highlight the importance of enforcing a multi-stakeholder strategy in addressing the multifaceted problems of secondary school students. Through the establishment of a supportive and inclusive learning environment that acknowledges and proactively addresses the administrative and educational problems identified through regression analyses, the students are likely to attain higher academic and personal success.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Quality Education, Administrative Problems, Educational Problems, Multiple Regression Analysis, Secondary School Students, Himachal Pradesh.*

1. Introduction

Inclusive education is founded on the very principle that access to education is a universal human right and a cornerstone for the evolution of a more just society. The notion that all learners, irrespective of their physical, cognitive, socio-economic, linguistic, or cultural differences are entitled to quality education in the general educational system is taken for granted (Singal 2019). Though there have been significant achievements both globally and nationally in the framing of inclusive policies, the implementation of these norms continues to be largely inadequate in many places, especially in those areas with glaring geographical and infrastructural constraints (Chakraborti 2017). In India, the inclusive education policies attempt to bring deprived groups like students hailing from economically backward classes, ethnic and linguistic minorities, rural and remote village children, and disabled persons into the mainstream education system (Grills et al 2019). Yet, the

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chasm between the policy objective and actual policy implementation at the grassroots level is immense. This chasm is very wide at the secondary education level, where the absence of age-related support systems, trained teachers, and accessible infrastructure has a tendency to give rise to structural exclusion. The dropout rate at this level is also greater (Padmanabhan 2023).

Himachal Pradesh as a hill state has the added disadvantage of rendering education inclusive due to its dispersed population, inaccessibility, and absence of schooling infrastructure. Students of secondary school are particularly confronted with cumulative problems which hinder their full participation in the process of learning. Such problems are physical inaccessibility of the school, absence of trained special educators, absence of awareness among stakeholders, and socio-cultural stigma related to disability and learning disability (Lakshmi 2018). The term "inclusive education" (IE) refers to a relatively recent method of teaching typically developing students alongside those who have disabilities or learning disabilities. It aims to help all kids learn, but especially those who are at risk of being left out or marginalized (Bhat et al 2017).

It means that all students, regardless of ability, should have equal access to high-quality pre-school programs, mainstream schools, and community-based learning environments supported by a robust system of services. Only an adaptable educational system that can absorb and fulfill the requirements of a wide variety of students can make this a reality (Lakshmi 2018). Rather than being a hypothesis to be investigated, inclusion is a principle to be upheld. Because they represent the nation's future, children with and without disabilities alike should have equal access to quality education. Considering that there isn't enough money to pay for adequate regular schools in India, it would be both immoral and impossible to conduct research that would force children with special needs to withdraw from regular classrooms and communities in order to test or prove anything (Joshi et al 2025). One way to teach students who have exceptional needs is via an inclusionary curriculum (CWSN). Students with disabilities interact mostly or exclusively with typically developing peers in an inclusive classroom (Kumar 2015).

Distinct from earlier ideas of mainstreaming and integration, inclusive education focuses on all students, regardless of aptitude, and challenges the assumption that students with disabilities or other "special educational needs" must undergo some kind of transformation before they can be considered "ready for" or "deserving" of mainstream accommodations (Sharma 2021). In contrast, inclusion emphasizes both the child's and the school's responsibility to welcome and include all students. To help educate children with disabilities, the Ministry of Welfare established the IEDC program in 1974 (Chakraborti 2017). Inclusive education focuses on ensuring that underserved populations, including girls, members of minority groups, children from low-income families, and children with disabilities, have equal opportunities to attend and complete formal education, especially in developing countries where there is a high concentration of children who do not attend school (Kumar 2015).

The issues encountered by secondary school children are complex and interconnected, such as academic stress, social exclusion, mental disorder, and system-level risks. It needs to be addressed through an interdisciplinary approach by policymakers, parents, educators, and mental health practitioners. Schools need to act proactively towards the welfare of students by implementing evidence-based interventions, promoting a healthy school environment, and encouraging positive teacher-student relationships. It is possible to develop productive learning environments that support academic success, resilience, and general well-being by identifying and resolving the issues of secondary school children.

The current research attempts to fill the gap between intentions of policies and their implementation through a critical assessment of the hurdles that secondary students face in the inclusive education milieu of Himachal Pradesh. The research endeavours to reveal systemic, infrastructural, and teaching barriers to inclusion and offers empirical suggestions to enhance education equity, quality, and justice for all the stakeholders.

The paper is structured into nine sections. Section 1 contains the document's introduction. Section 2 outlines the objectives. Section 3 deals the hypothesis. Section 4 provides a literature review of the cases and prior studies. Section 5 outlines the research methodology. Section 6 was followed by result consistent with the objectives. Section 7 proceeds with the findings. Section 8 encompasses discussion, implications, limitations, and section 9 deals with conclusion and recommendations for future research. References have been incorporated.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To study the influence of demographic variables (gender, caste, locality, religion, kind of disability, Use of assistive devices, Bonafide Himachali, Living in rented house, father's and mother's education) on the administrative problems of secondary school students.
- To study the influence of demographic variables (gender, caste, locality, religion, kind of disability, Use of assistive devices, Bonafide Himachali, Living in rented house, father's and mother's education) on the educational problems of secondary school students.

3. Hypotheses of the Study

H1: There is no significant influence of demographic variables (gender, caste, locality, religion, kind of disability, Use of assistive devices, Bonafide Himachali, Living in rented house, father's and mother's education) on the social problems of secondary school students.

H2: There is no significant influence of demographic variables (gender, caste, locality, religion, kind of disability, Use of assistive devices, Bonafide Himachali, Living in rented house, father's and mother's education) on the cultural problems of secondary school students.

4. Review of Related Literature

Whereas the selected authors have various foci and bring different solutions to bear, they all share a concern for systemic obstacles that do not allow quality and equitable education in India. Kumar (2024) and Kumar (2022) write on the education in the tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh and problems like migration, language barriers, and poor infrastructure; however, the 2024 paper on a larger scale examines socio-economic and cultural constraints as well as practical options for digital education and community engagement, they examines the obstacles and possibilities that facilitate the development of a new educational framework in the tribal regions of Himachal Pradesh. The education system in tribal communities of Himachal Pradesh shares similarities with the state's system, but operational mechanisms present unique challenges for equitable education, while the Kumar (2022) one looks more narrowly at language shifts to promote context-sensitive language policies.

Inclusion education, Mondal (2023) evaluates progress in inclusive education, focusing on CWSN-friendly toilets and ramps, analyzing state performance and resource allocation, and recommends improvements for a more inclusive education system. And Sharma (2018) characterize the gap between policy and practice as persisting on account of unhealthy infrastructure and societal attitudes. However, Mondal (2023) analyzes the implementation of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan for special needs children from a data-driven perspective, recommending strong policy implementation and the fair allocation of resources, whereas Sharma takes an account of the historical backdrop and stresses the need for deep systemic and attitudinal reforms. Choudhary (2023), Kamalakar and Kamala (2024), and Kumar (2023) somewhat into general and regional level educational challenges and reforms. They converge over sustained financing, technological integration, and multi-stakeholder collaboration but differ in their temporal emphases: Chaudhary states the weaknesses of the present system; Kamalakar and Kamala predict future trends as being dictated by the movement of emerging technologies alongside skill-based learning; Kumar tries to explain the advances and limits made by higher education reforms in Himachal Pradesh under NEP 2020.

Sector-specific studies by Gangotia et al. (2022) and Thakur et al. (2023) also identify gaps in the contextual educational praxis, Gangotia et al. pointing to the inefficiency of vocational tourism training, Thakur et al. portraying low environmental awareness via the waste management perspective. Masare et al. (2019) reported differences in behavior and emotional issues as indicated by parents and teachers, implying a lack of awareness of issues facing children. Harikrishnan and Sailo (2021) focused on the school type and emotional issues, implying that adolescents in urban settings face specific issues different from rural adolescents. Kamble and Ghorpade (2021) conducted a study of psychological issues among adolescents and concluded that adolescents in urban settings face unique social issues compared to rural adolescents. Rosand and Johansen (2024) reported that girls face more emotional issues compared to boys, as per peer and teacher support. This implies the need to create supportive school settings to address the unique issues of all students.

Overall, these studies imply the intricate set of issues facing adolescents, particularly in social, educational, and emotional settings. They highlight the significance of systemic reforms in educational practices, awareness, and support systems to enhance inclusivity and address the unique issues of diverse groups of students. Recent studies on the challenges of implementing inclusive education for secondary school students in Himachal Pradesh present a number of key challenges along with possible solutions: Educators' training and mindset are critical to the effective implementation of inclusive educational practices. Research indicates that most educators lack proper training to integrate students of special needs into regular classrooms (Crispel & Kasperski, 2019). Nevertheless, following coursework in special education, educators reported improved attitudes and their capacity to implement inclusion (Crispel & Kasperski, 2019). This indicates the need to include special education coursework in all teacher preparation programs to support inclusive practices. Interestingly, there are differences in teachers' attitudes toward inclusion across different levels of education. While educators in preschool and high school settings showed more positive attitudes, those in primary and secondary levels of education showed more concern (Galović et al., 2014).

This observation indicates the need for specific interventions and support for educators at different levels of their career to address their unique challenges in implementing inclusive education. To fill the gap in existing inclusive educational practices, an integrated approach is necessary. The application of these strategies, along with the encouragement of pro-social behaviors and resilience among students (Moore et al., 2023), may contribute to the development of a more inclusive educational environment in the secondary schools of Himachal Pradesh. With a view, it is possible to suggest a more well-rounded narrative over India's educational environment, wherein established structural impediments merge with local realities and evolutionary demands. Be it from the standpoint of tribal areas, inclusive education, vocational education, or environmental awareness programs-the authors consistently raise concerns about infrastructure absence, teacher inadequacies, socio-cultural constraints, and poor policy implementation to lag behind in fulfilling true equitable educational goals.

Their varied perspectives strengthen the discourse: immediate issues and solutions that Kumar (2024) and Mondal (2023) bring to light about local language integration, digital access, and facilities are conversely opposed by the need for longer-term systemic change and attitude-building toward an inclusive and future-compatible system at the hands of Sharma (2018) and Kamalakar and Kamala (2024). Sector-wise skills perspective also throws light that education must relate to local economy and local livelihood-related issues and so deserve timely intervention on curriculum and precise government intervention. Altogether, the inferences drawn must emphasize that educational preparations, such as NEP 2020 and Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, lay the bedrock; success, however, is dependent on active participation, sustained commitment and local-level planning to overcome the persistent divides in education across India. In aggregate, these studies underscore the multidimensional difficulties that adolescents experience, most particularly in the social, academic, and emotional domains. They underscore the necessity of far-reaching shifts in education practice, coupled with heightened attention and support initiatives to promote greater inclusiveness and address the particular challenges that each student population is confronting.

5. Research Methodology

The descriptive survey method of research was utilized in the present study. Descriptive survey method comprises classification, analysis, comparison, and interpretation of the problem, not simply the collection of data. Kerlinger (1983) found survey research as a best method of gathering personal, societal data and opinion of respondents.

5.1 Variables of the study

The dependent variables in this study are educational and administrative problems encountered by students in secondary school. The hypothesized independent variables that are likely to influence the dependent variables are gender, caste, locality, religion, specialization, utilization of assistive devices, being a bona fide Himachali, living in rented houses, and educational levels of both the parents and the mother. The aim of this study is to determine how the demographic and individual levels influence the problems encountered by students within the context of a secondary school. The structural design of the variables enables critical examination of the interaction between these variables and the problems encountered by the students.

5.2 Sample for the Study

20 schools in rural and urban parts and of Co - Education and Single Sex type of set of Education in 4 blocks: (Mashobra=7, Theog=2, Kusumpti=6 and Shimla itself=5) of Shimla district have been finally selected to fulfill the very objective of the study. 744 (333 boys and 411 girls) secondary school students were involved for providing the desired information to analyze the study in a scientific way. We have shared questionnaire to 744 person but 320 responded on the same. So targeted population is 320.

5.3 Data Collection Tools

An instrument was developed to measure problems encountered by ninth-grade students in Shimla government secondary schools, Himachal Pradesh. It employed a scale of 37 positive and 34 negative statements in administrative, educational, social, and cultural domains. Students marked with 'Always,' 'Sometimes,' or 'Never,' and scored 3, 2, and 1 for positive statements, and reverse for negative statements. Analysis employed the top and bottom 27% of scores to measure statement agreement. This resulted in the exclusion of 35 statements, and 27 were left in the final instrument. The final instrument consisted of 15 positive and 12 negative statements. For reliability, 320 ninth-grade Shimla students were employed. Split-Half method and Cronbach's Alpha tests yielded scores of 0.74 and 0.71, establishing reliability. The study employed face and content validity, but not predictive validity. Experts decided the tool's appropriateness and accuracy. Data from NCERT, IGNOU, and inclusive education books were employed. According to Lewis (1973, p.191), content validity is established by reliability index, which was found to be 0.71, yielding good content validity.

5.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Multiple regression analyses is a statistical technique that investigates the relationship between a single dependent variable and multiple independent variables. It enables researchers to determine how each predictor influences the outcome while accounting for the effects of other variables. This strategy is especially beneficial when the outcome is complex and influenced by multiple variables.

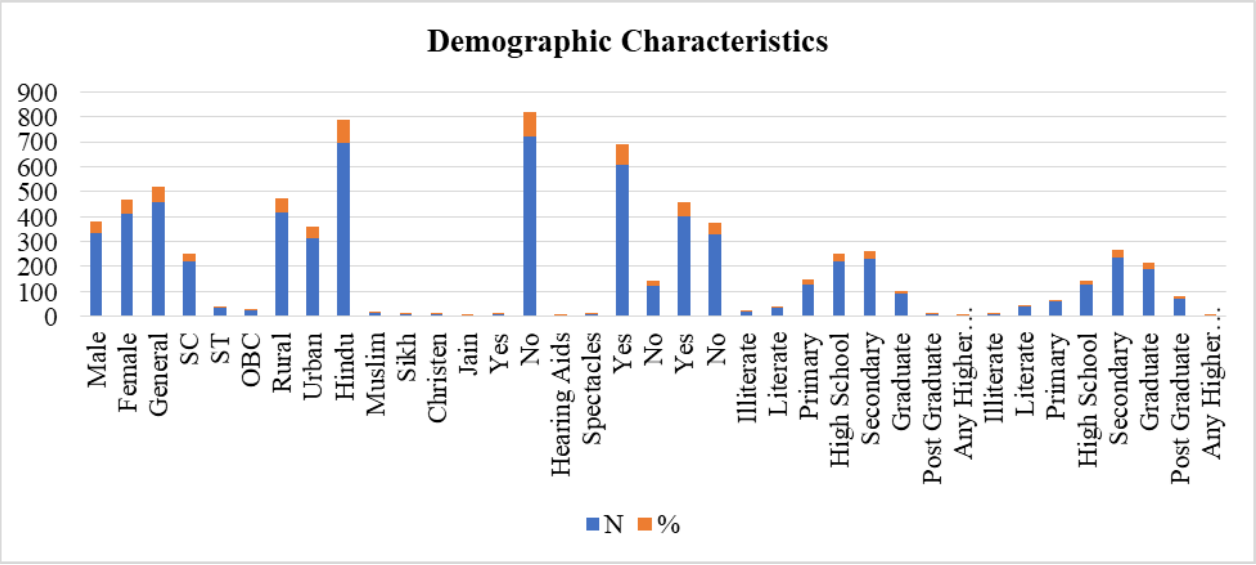
6. Results

Table 1: Demographic profile of the Respondents

Sr. No.	Demographic Variables	Characteristics	N	%
1	Gender	Male	333	45.37
		Female	411	56
2	Caste	General	456	62.13
		SC	220	29.97
		ST	33	4.5
		OBC	25	3.41
3	Locality	Rural	419	57.08
		Urban	315	42.92
4	Religion	Hindu	696	94.82
		Muslim	16	2.18
		Sikh	10	1.36
		Christen	9	1.23
		Jain	3	0.41
5	Specially Abled	Yes	11	1.5
		No	723	98.5
6	Assistive Devices Used	Hearing Aids	2	0.27
		Spectacles	9	1.23
7	Bonafide Himachali	Yes	609	82.97
		No	125	17.03

8	Rented Home	Yes	403	54.9
		No	331	45.1
9	Father's Education	Illiterate	19	2.59
		Literate	33	4.5
		Primary	130	17.71
		High School	220	29.97
		Secondary	229	31.2
		Graduate	89	12.13
		Post Graduate	11	1.5
		Any Higher Degree	3	0.41
10	Mother's Education	Illiterate	10	1.36
		Literate	38	5.18
		Primary	59	8.04
		High School	127	17.3
		Secondary	234	31.88
		Graduate	188	25.61
		Post Graduate	73	9.95
		Any Higher Degree	5	0.68

Figure 1: Demographic characteristics



The demographic data comprises a sample of 744 persons, mostly female (56%) and male (45.37%), with a little greater proportion of females. A predominant portion of the participants (62.13%) is from the General caste, followed by Scheduled Castes (29.97%), with little participation from Scheduled Tribes (4.5%) and Other Backward Classes (3.41%). A majority of respondents are from rural regions (57.08%), whilst urban dwellers account for 42.92%. The sample is mostly Hindu (94.82%), with little representation from Muslims (2.18%), Sikhs (1.36%), Christians (1.23%), and Jains (0.41%), indicating a fairly homogeneous religious demography presumably situated in Himachal Pradesh. Merely 1.5% of persons possess exceptional abilities, with the use of assistive equipment such as glasses (1.23%) and hearing aids (0.27%) being limited. A significant majority (82.97%) comprises authentic Himachalis, underscoring the study's regional emphasis. Over half of the participants (54.9%) dwell in rental accommodations, suggesting a possible tendency of transient living or financial limitations. Concerning paternal education, the majority possess secondary (31.2%) or high school (29.97%) qualifications, with a minor percentage achieving graduate (12.13%) or postgraduate/higher degrees (1.91%). Mothers exhibit a higher level of education, with a significant proportion possessing secondary (31.88%), graduate (25.61%), and

postgraduate qualifications (9.95%), indicating a favorable trend in female educational achievement. The data indicates a mostly rural, Hindu, General-caste population with intermediate educational attainment and a strong regional identity.

Problems of Secondary School Students in the Sampled Schools

Table 1 presents the findings on the administrative problems faced by secondary school students in the sampled schools. This table highlights key issues that need to be addressed to enhance student outcomes and facilitate a more supportive school environment.

Table 2: Summary of the Results of Multiple Regression Analyses for the influence of demographic variables (gender, caste, locality, religion, kind of disability, Use of assistive devices, Bonafide Himachali, Living in rented house, father's and mother's education) on the Administrative Problems of Secondary School Students

Variables R^2 F	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t - Value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Administrative Problems 0.057 4.357**					
Gender	0.211	0.137	.058	1.545	.123
Caste	0.015	0.091	.006	.169	.866
Locality	0.076	0.144	.021	.525	.599
Religion	-0.312	0.139	-.084	2.254	.024
Kind of disability	3.428	2.601	.229	1.318	.188
Use of Assistive Devices	1.470	1.402	.183	1.049	.295
Bonafide Himachali	-0.760	0.193	-.157	3.941	.000
Living in Rented house	-0.155	0.145	-.042	1.068	.286
Father's Education	0.027	0.068	.019	.398	.691
Mother's Education	0.088	0.064	.066	1.377	.169

Note: ** indicates significant at 0.01 level, level, R = .238, Adjusted R square = .044

Table 1 reveals that R^2 is 0.057, it indicates only 5.7% of the variance in administrative problems. This suggests that the demographic variables (gender, caste, locality, religion, kind of disability, Use of assistive devices, Bonafide Himachali, Living in rented house, father's and mother's education) included in the model have a limited impact on the administrative problems of secondary school students. Adjusted R square is .044 suggested that the explanatory power of the model drops slightly to 4.4% indicated that other unmeasured factors might be influencing administrative problems. As F – value is 4.357, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance meaning that collectively at least some of the demographic variables have a significant influence on administrative problems.

Further, Religion has a t – value 2.254 with p – value less than 0.05, indicating that it significantly influences administrative problems and Bonafide Himachali students have a t – value is 3.941 with p – value less than 0.01, indicated a highly significant influence on administrative problems. This suggested that local students have an advantage in dealing with administrative problems. Whereas, Gender, Caste, Locality, Kind of Disability, Use of Assistive Devices, Living in Rented house, Father's and Mother's Education have regression coefficients of .058, .006, .021, -.084, .229, .183, -.042, .019 and .066 the t – value is 1.545, .169, .525, 2.254, 1.318, 1.049, 1.068, .398 and 1.377 respectively, which are not – significant. The information presented in table 4.3 shows that there is a significant influence of religion and Bonafide Himachali on the administrative problems of secondary school students. Hence, it may interpret that Religion and Permanent Himachali are the significant predictors of administrative problems of secondary school students. Thus, the null hypothesis stated at serial number 1 that "there is no significant influence of demographic variables (gender, caste, locality, religion, kind of disability, Use of assistive devices, Bonafide Himachali, Living in rented house, father's and mother's education) on the administrative problems of secondary school students is partially rejected only for religion and Bonafide Himachali status.

Table 3: Summary of the Results of Multiple Regression Analyses for the influence of demographic variables (gender, caste, locality, religion, kind of disability, Use of assistive devices, Bonafide Himachali, Living in rented house, father's and mother's education) on the Educational Problems of Secondary School Students

Variables	R^2	F	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t - Value	Sig.
			B	Std. Error	Beta		
Educational Problems	.049	3.694**					
Gender			.564	.202	.105	2.787	.005
Caste			.240	.134	.066	1.790	.074
Locality			-.157	.213	-.029	.736	.462
Religion			.067	.205	0.012	.327	.743
Kind of Disability			3.623	3.850	.164	.941	.347
Use of Assistive Devices			2.107	2.075	.178	10.016	.310
Bonafide Himachali			-1.108	.286	-.164	4.090	.000
Living in Rented house			-.285	.214	0.053	1.330	.184
Father's Education			.093	.101	.044	.924	.356
Mother's Education			.038	.094	0.019	.407	.684

Note: ** indicates significant at 0.01 level, R = .220, Adjusted R square = .035

Table 2 reveals that R2 is .049 it explains only 4.9 % of the variance in educational problems. This indicates that the demographic variables included in this analysis have a very limited explanatory power regarding educational problems. Adjusted R^2 is 0.035 means that after adjusting for the number of predictors in the model, the explanatory power decreases slightly to 3.5%, which suggests that other unmeasured factors might have a greater impact on educational problems. As F – value is 3.694, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance, suggesting that some of the demographic variables included in the analysis are related to educational problems. Further, Gender has a t – value 2.787 with p – value less than 0.05, indicating that it significantly influences educational problems. Gender is a significant predictor of educational problems with males facing more educational problems than females. The positive unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.564) indicates that, on average, male students report more educational problems compared to female students. This might reflect broader societal or school - related challenges where male students may face different pressures or barriers in the educational environment. Bonafide Himachali students have a t – value is 4.090 with p – value less than 0.01, indicated a highly significant influence on educational problems. Being a Bonafide Himachali (a permanent resident of Himachal Pradesh) significantly reduces educational problems. The negative coefficient -1.108 indicates that students that are permanent residents of the region experience fewer educational problems. This might be due to better access to educational resources, more local support systems or familiarity with the administrative systems of the region. This result suggests a regional advantage in dealing with educational issues**.**

7. Findings

It was established based on the findings presented in the tables of the study that the demographic variables express together a negligible portion of the issues that secondary school students experience in the sampled schools in the field of administrative issues, and educational issues with the level of 5.7 percent and 4.9 percent respectively, which shows that it has a low level of predictiveness. In spite of this lull characteristic of explanatory variance, the regressions were significant overall, which demonstrates the presence of influence of demographic elements. In particular, the Bonafide Himachali status was noted to be a very strong predictor to both of the problems, with the suggestion that students holding Bonafide Himachali status are less likely to have administrative and educational problems than those who do not consistently reside in Himachal Pradesh because they are more familiar with the operations of the local administrative system, have a more support base of the community at large, and stronger social networks. Also, religion was found to be influential in matters

concerning administration showing that students under various religious affiliations might exhibit the peculiar administrative challenges in the school system. Gender was also mentioned as an important source of the educational problem, male students with their issues with education being more problematic than female ones, which can be described by gender differences in the levels of academic stress or social pressures. The other variables like caste, locality, type of disability, assistive devices, rented houses and the educational levels of parents were not significant enough to affect either of the nature of the problems as the regression findings indicate. These results also serve to demonstrate that, though some of the demographic factors can be seen to contribute to the nature and the extent of problems that the students come across, most of the variance is not explained by demographic factors alone, thus it is clear that the broad system issues such as the quality of infrastructure, preparedness of the teachers, gaps in policy implementations and community awareness play a critical role. This implies that intervention efforts that aspire to advance inclusive education and correct student failure in the state of Himachal Pradesh should extend beyond demographic factors and look at supporting urgent institutional capacity building and improved stakeholder partnerships and supportive, accessible, and inclusive learning environment that are effective in addressing the current student needs in a diverse environment.

8. Discussion

The present study throws light on the nature of multidimensional problems faced by secondary school students under the inclusive education system of Himachal Pradesh. Anchored in empirical findings and with support from the literature, the discussion reveals that demographic factors do intersect with educational and administrative challenges to present implications for understanding. The results of the regression analysis for administrative problems showed that only Religion and Bonafide Himachali status exerted a significant influence on the students' experiences and together accounted for just 5.7% of the total variance. Similarly, for educational problems, Gender and Bonafide Himachali status came to the forefront as significant predictors, yet they accounted for a mere 4.9% of the variance. Such findings emphasize how certain demographic factors do influence the experiences of students, but these alone cannot explain the hurdles faced by secondary school students today-the wider persisting issues. This finding reflects the observations made by Sharma's study in 2018 and Mondal's study in 2023 concerning how deep-rooted remains the gap between policy aspirations and ground realities.

The result that being a Bonafide Himachali is linked to less administrative and educational issues implies that students from Himachal Pradesh are able to take advantage of a more sophisticated support system and familiarity with state bureaucracies and cultural nuances. This is consistent with Kumar's (2024) study of the problems faced with regard to tribal education in Himachal Pradesh. The localized socio-cultural capital that was the advantage because of the geographical nature of the group seemed to provide a buffer against systemic inadequacies and limitations. Thus, those students who do not hold this regional belonging may feel they have to contend with the complexities of administrative actions and educational access and resources, heightening feelings of exclusion. The relatively large force that Religion had on administrative problems, albeit others may not have used in previous studies, can be associated with subtle socio-cultural biases or procedures in the region which have an influence on the way school administrations deal with individual students from minority religions or regions. This complements work by Gangotia et al. (2022) and Thakur et al. (2023) which suggests that community-contextual and connectivity norms and limitations of provisions, instantiate the systemic inefficacies associated with access to education in Himachal Pradesh.

Moreover, the finding that gender is a significant predictor of educational issues, with male respondents reporting more issues, fits well with Rosand and Johansen's (2024) point about gender differences in students' experiences and reactions to academic stressors. This demonstrates the need for gender-specific pedagogy and support for students, as highlighted by Mehta (2021) and Crispel & Kasperski (2019). Even though there were a few significant demographic predictors, the very low R^2 values show that structural and system-wide barriers, such as limited infrastructure, a lack of trained inclusive education teachers, and lack of awareness among community members, are clearly the most dominant contributors to students' problems. Sharma (2018), and Chakraborti-Ghosh (2017), have both argued for many years that inclusive education cannot be realized successfully without institutional, structural, training and resources, as well as, changes to the culture of the institution itself.

Furthermore, the literature illustrates that inclusive education is still mainly proclaimed in policy and that it is subject to serious implementation bottlenecks (Grills et al., 2019; Joshi et al., 2025). The current findings add empirical heft to this conversation: students' problems persist and are largely independent of personal characteristics which means that any interventions aimed at student characteristics cannot New Delhi Group was formed for persons traversing through this idea of inclusive education which is better aligned with the tights on rehabilitation, protecting resources, working within a problem solving cycle, developing practice and the systemic understandings and relevancy of education of young people with disabilities. Rather, we must think about holistic reform measures that account for structural ineptitude, teacher readiness (Mehta, 2021) and community development (Moore et al., 2023). In drawing a connection to the literature review, while we found some association with individual demographic variables (age/disability, religion, gender, affiliation, citizenship or nation), the realities are more a function of systems and institutions without the glaring deficits. We call for urgent, multi-tiered approaches at the state and provincial level which distinctions for policy systems, professional development, training and development, community development and structural deficits which include the policy conversation on the possibility of moving inclusive education from an aspirational slogan in Himachal Pradesh into practice.

9. Conclusion

The research examined the connection between demographic factors and issues of administration and education that face secondary-level students in inclusive settings within the Himachal Pradesh state. The finding showed that Bonafide Himachali status and father's education were statistically significant predictors of the issues. Overall variance explained by demographic factors was, however, negligible, showing that there is still even more widespread system, infrastructural, and instructional factors behind student life. The evidence suggests the presence of a stark gap between inclusive education policy and implementation at the community level. Local students seem to enjoy benefits specific to their location, whereas non-local students can suffer additional challenges based on unfamiliarity with the schooling system or weak support systems. The evidence suggests the necessity for context-specific solutions that go beyond mere demographic categorization and deal with institutional barriers and teacher readiness. This study adds to the increasing body of literature that confirms the transition of inclusive education from a policy aspiration to a concrete, working model aimed at providing equity and quality to all learners, particularly in geographically isolated and resource-scarce areas such as Himachal Pradesh.

9.1 Recommendations

1. Region-Specific Implementation Frameworks Create district-level task forces, specifically charged with monitoring the implementation of inclusive education policy, with special attention to the specific requirements of non-local students.
2. Professional Development and Teacher Training Mandate in-service training on inclusive teaching approaches, special education procedures, and gender sensitivity. Institute teacher exchange programs to foster the sharing of best inclusive practices.
3. Infrastructure and Accessibility Enhance educational facilities to address accessibility needs as envisaged in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), such as the availability of assistive devices and accessible mobility.
4. Instructional Design and Curriculum Reform Implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as the guiding precepts in curriculum teaching. Use inclusive education as a compulsory facet of teacher instructional courses.
5. Community and Parental Involvement Employ awareness campaigns and community outreach programs to reduce stigma and promote school-family collaborations in inclusive education.
6. Student Support Mechanisms Implement peer support systems, such as buddy and mentoring systems. Provide school-based mental health services to promote student well-being.
7. Policy Revision and Ongoing Research Promote adaptive policy models that respond to regional variation. Undertake further research, including longitudinal and qualitative studies, to identify underlying barriers and optimize intervention strategies.

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