A STUDY ON THE STATUS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GUJARAT WITH REFERENCE TO SCHOOL POLICIES, ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to know the status of InclusiveEducation in Gujarat. The sample of the study comprised of randomlyselected 100 teachers and coordinators from different schools withInclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage in Gujaratnamely covered under IEDSS scheme. The sample was divided into twogroups. Only those Teachers who are working for one year or more werepurposively selected for the study. Toachieve this aim, questionnaire wasadopted from UNESCO Bangkok's Toolkit and translated in Gujarati as apart of research. The questionnaire was developed for the specialeducators to know their knowledge with reference to the status ofInclusive Education in Gujarat, and it was filled by interviewing thespecial educators personally. The responses obtained for thequestionnaire were in a two-point scale i.e., `Yes' or `No', which thenconverted into raw scores. The obtained results were discussed in view ofobjectives and research questions of the study. It was found that theoverall of Inclusive education in Gujarat found positive with reference to School policies and administrative support -76.91% andSchool Environment83.62%.However irony of these findings was that Government data shows verypoor status of education of the special population. The study wasconcluded with guidelines for Parents/Guardians of children with SpecialNeeds.

Introduction

"A dominant problem in the disability field is the lack of access to education for both children and adults with disabilities. As education is a fundamental right for all, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and protected through various international conventions, this is a very serious problem. In a majority of countries, there is a dramatic difference in the educational opportunities provided for disabled children and those provided for non-disabled children. It will simply not be possible to realize the goal of Education for All if we do not achieve a complete change in the situation."– BengtLindqvist, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Disability.

According to UNICEF's Report on the Status of Disability in India 2000, there were around 30 million children suffering from some form of disability. The Sixth All-India Educational Survey (NCERT, 1998) reports that of India's 200 million school-aged children (6–14 years), 20 million require special needs education. While the national average of gross enrolment in school is over 90 per cent, less than five per cent of children with disabilities are in school. The majority of these children remain outside mainstream education. The low turnout can be attributed to causes such as difficulty in coping with general education demands and social reasons.

Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage

The Scheme of Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) has been launched from the year 2009-10. This Scheme replaces the earlier scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) and provides assistance for the inclusive education of the disabled children in classes IX-XII. This scheme now subsumed under RashtriyaMadhyamikShikshaAbhiyan (RMSA) from 2013. The States/UTs are also in the process of subsuming under RMSA as RMSA subsumed Scheme.

Literature Review

There are as many as 1 in 10 children with special needs in education in the world (DFID, 2001; Watkins, 2000). However, it is worth noting that children with special educational needs (e.g. dyslexia) will outnumber those with visible impairments (Jonsson&Wiman, 2001), again raising the issue of multiple understandings and definitions of what exactly disability is. Despite the accuracy issues surrounding the sporadic and varied collection of data on disability, the fact that estimated enrolment rates of children with disabilities vary between less than 1% to 3% (Jonsson&Wiman, 2001) is hard to ignore. Deon Filmer (2005), while questioning the validity of sample sizes and survey methods used in his survey of 11 countries, found that although disability may not always be directly linked to poverty, "…disability among youth is … systematically and significantly related to lower school participation" (Filmer, 2005: 1).

STUDIES CONDUCTED IN INDIA

AlurMithu (2001) in his detailed analysis of the cultural and moral implications of inclusive education in India revealed that although India addressed diversity in many ways it tends to exclude people with disability from national programmes. The study also shows that moral and ethical considerations demand that people engaged with inclusion need to work towards inclusion of all children wherever necessary and that each individual first of all needs to internalize the change within them.

Madan, J.M. (2002) in his article 'Barriers to access and success: Is inclusive education an answer?' discussed that barriers to access and success can be viewed in physical as well as structural sense. It is the curriculum, the pedagogy, the examination and the school's approach, which create more barriers. Unless these unseen barriers are taken care of, access to all children and an assurance of success to all would remain a far cry.

Operational Definitions of the Terms

For the purpose of this study the following definitions are provided to promote uniformity of understanding.

- Inclusive Education – Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their neighbourhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn,contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school. Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all students learn and participate together.
- Status - the situation at a particular time during a process in Gujarat.
- Gujarat – Children with Special Needs covered under Inclusive Education of the Disabled (IEDSS) at the Secondary Stage at different district of Gujarat

Objectives

- To examine the status of Inclusive Education in Gujarat State.
- To assess the knowledge and applicability of teachers and professionals with reference to school policies, school environment, teacher's knowledge and attitude, student assessment and community.

Research questions

- What percentage of Inclusive Education is satisfactory with reference to School Policies and administrative Support according to the teachers?
- What percentage of Inclusive Education is satisfactory with reference to School Environment according to the teachers?

Limitations of the Study

- Due to time constraint, the study was restricted to those special teachers who are working under IEDSS in Gujarat state.
- Only those respondents are included who replied voluntarily to the email.

- The obtained results of the study are not truly representing the status of the knowledge and applicability of teachers and professionals with reference to school policies, school environment, teacher's knowledge and attitude, student assessment and community across the schools in Gujarat.
- The sample of teachers were not homogenous with reference to their qualifications i.e. teachers with B.Ed (HI) and DSE (HI) were included in the study.
- Limitation of the questionnaire and achievement test of student will be limitation of the study.

Research Methodology

I.   The research design was carried out in the following pattern:

1. Selection of the Sample:

a) Schools: All the schools with Inclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage in Gujarat namely covered under IEDSS scheme   were selected to collect the sample for the present study. All the Inclusive Schools selected are located in different districts of Gujarat.

b) Medium of Instruction: Gujarati medium schools with IEDSS schemes were selected for the study.

c) Criteria for the selection of Sample :

- A request letter with instructions were send to all the district Coordinators of Gujarat.
- A sample of 100 Special teachers and Coordinator working under IEDSS schemes who respond were selected for the study.
- One teacher or Coordinator is counted as one data.
- Only those Teachers who are working for one year or more were randomly selected for the study.

2. Preparation of Tool for the Study

     a. Preparation of Questionnaire: In order to study the status of the Inclusive Education in Gujarat, an opinion questionnaire was adopted from UNESCO Bangkok's Toolkit.

Section	Content of Questionnaire	No.ofQuestions
1	School Policies and administrative Support	12
2	School Environment	8

Criteria for Selection of Judges: The questionnaire was originally prepared in English and most of the teachers were not that much familiar to English so the Researcher translated it to Gujarati. It was important to know whether the questionnaire translated was valid/ appropriate for the purpose of the study. For this purpose, 10 judges with more than 5 years of experience in the field of Education/ Rehabilitation of the population with Special needs/Psychology/Social work/ Teaching of Gujarati language were selected.

c.   Instruction to Judges: For the validity check of tool for the study,   following materials were given to all the judges.

- A request letter with instructions.
- Introduction of the present researcher
- Topic of the research
- Objectives of the present study
- Explanation of role of judges in validation of questionnaire
- Operational definitions of various terms used in the study.
- Key for judging the questions as "Appropriate" and "Inappropriate"

d.   Criteria for Final Selection of Tool: The final questionnaire was prepared based on the responses given by the judges. The questions which were judged as appropriate for 80% or more were selected for the final questionnaire. The others were changed as per the instructions of the judges.

e.   Preparation of scale for the test item: In order to get the appropriate answer towards the selected questions, the following scale was used:

A two point scale was adopted i.e. Yes/No.

3.   Data Collection

In order to collect data, researcher emailed and also personally talked to District coordinator of each district through mobile under study with the following information:

■ Introduction of the researcher with the title of the study.

■ Objectives of the study.

■ Thanks in advance to the IEDSS authority for their co-operation.

The data was collected through Survey method.

4.   Data Analysis

The collected data was statistically analyzed and the results obtained were discussed as per the objectives and research questions of the study.

Result and Discussion

The scores obtained on each of the parameter were analyzed and presented in the following manner:

1. The status of Inclusive Education in Gujarat was studied with all its parameters and was calculated in terms of percentage.

Overall status of *Inclusive Education in Gujarat*

For studying the overall status of Inclusive Education in Gujarat, the following parameters were assessed through research questions

1. **School Policies and Administrative Support**

For assessing the status of **School Policies and Administrative Support**, the research question formulated was, "What percentage of Inclusive Education is satisfactory with reference to School Policies and administrative Support? "The answer to this question was found by calculating the percentile of the responses given by the teachers and is shown in Table and fig.:

Showing the overall result and analysis of Teacher's responses regarding:

School Policies and administrative Support

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Yes	100	53	83	60	77	84	65	67	75	80	87	92
No	0	47	12	38	22	15	34	30	22	19	13	8
Nil	0	0	5	2	1	1	1	3	3	1	0	0
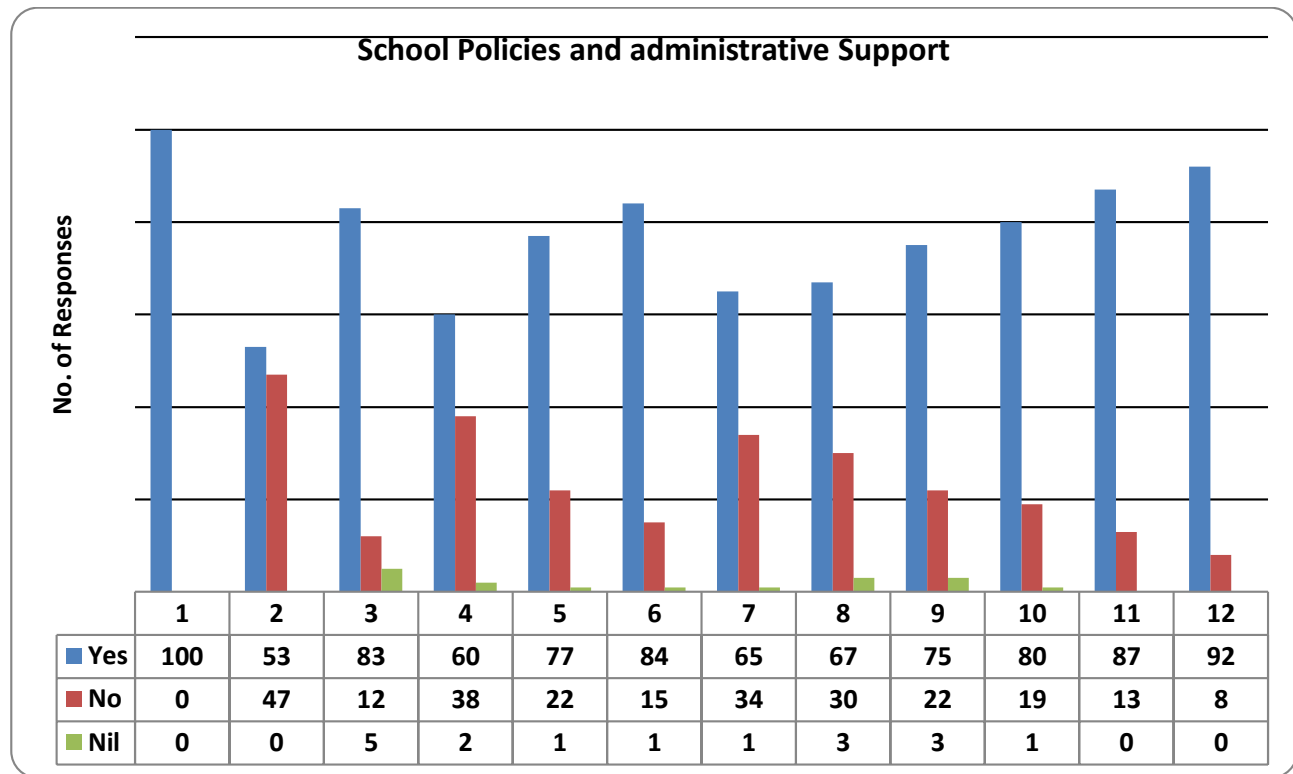
Your school:

1.1 has a mission and/or vision statement and policies about inclusive, learning-friendly education, including a policy against discrimination;
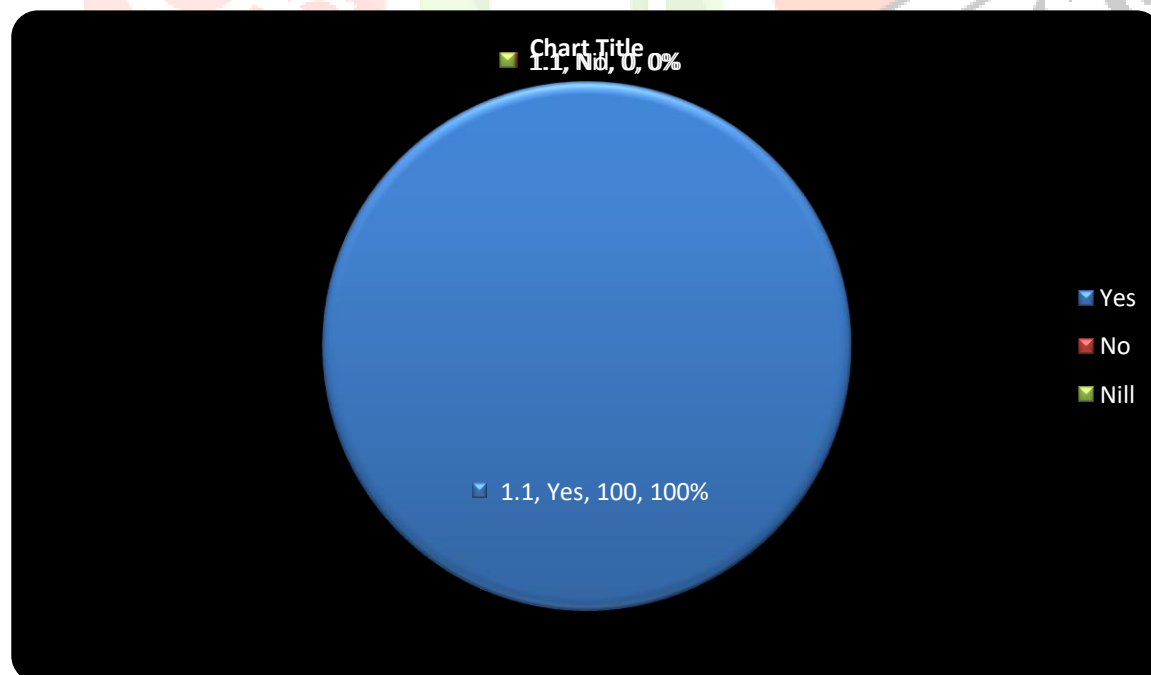
In reply to this question, it was found that among 100　　　teachers, all the teachers i.e. 100% believed that has a mission and/or vision statement and policies about inclusive, learning-friendly education, including a policy against discrimination.

1.2 has a master list of all children in the community, whether enrolled or not, and has individual records of why children have not enrolled;
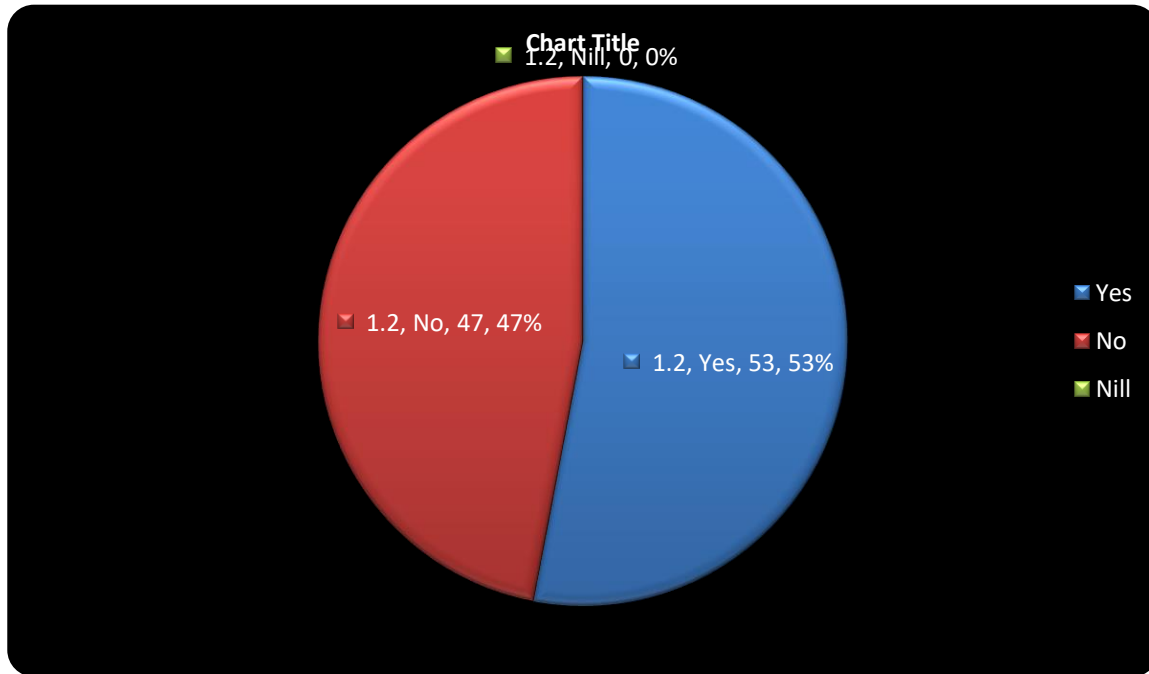

In response, it was found that 53 teachers i.e.53%   believed that their school has a master list of all children in the community, whether enrolled or not, and has individual records of why children have not enrolled whereas 47 teacher i.e. 47% believed that their school do not have it.

1.2 conducts regular campaigns to encourage parents to enroll their children, ones that emphasize that ALL children should be enrolled and are welcome
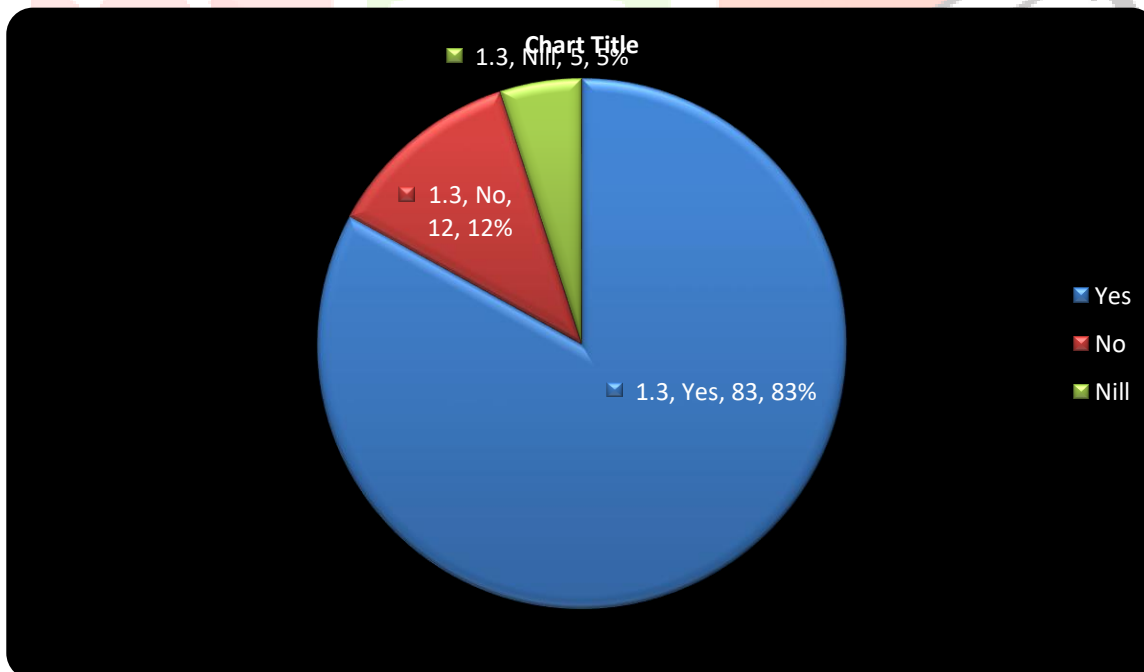
In reply to this question, it was found that among 100 teachers, 83 teachers i.e. 83% believed that their school conducts regular campaigns to encourage parents to enroll their children. But surprisingly 12 teachers i.e. 12% believed that their school do not conducts any campaigns to encourage parents to enroll their children in schools, whereas 5 teachers i.e. 5% did not give any   response to this question.

1.3 has copies of documents or resources at national or regional levels that address inclusive education for children with diverse backgrounds and abilities;
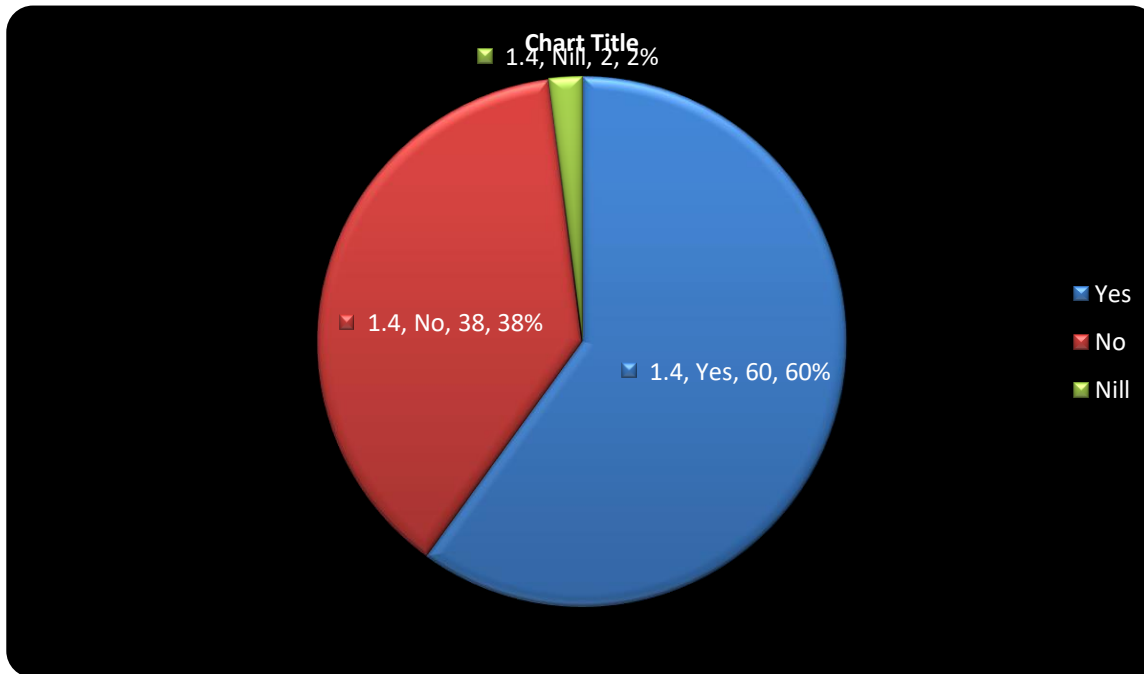
In reply to this question, it was found that among 100   teachers, 60 teachers i.e. 60% believed that their school has copies of documents or resources at national or regional levels that address inclusive education for children with diverse backgrounds and abilities while 38 teachers i.e. 38% believed that their school do not has any documents or resources, whereas 2 teachers i.e. 2% did not give any response to this question.

1.5 knows which professional organizations, advocacy groups, and community organizations offer resources for   inclusive   education;
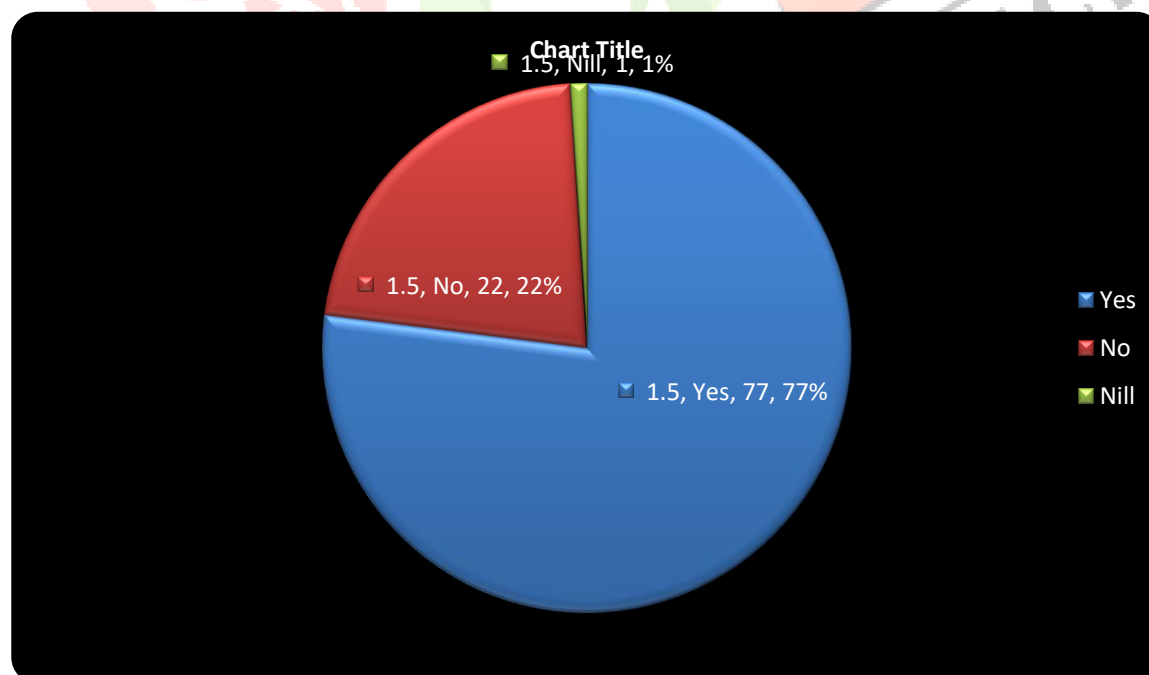
In response, 77 teachers i.e.77% gave positive reply that their school knows which professional organizations, advocacy groups, and community organizations offer resources for inclusive education,

whereas 22 teacher i.e. 22% believed that their school does not know it, while 1 teacher i.e. 1% did not give any response to this question.

1.6 shows in specific ways that school administrators and teachers understand the nature and importance of inclusive education;
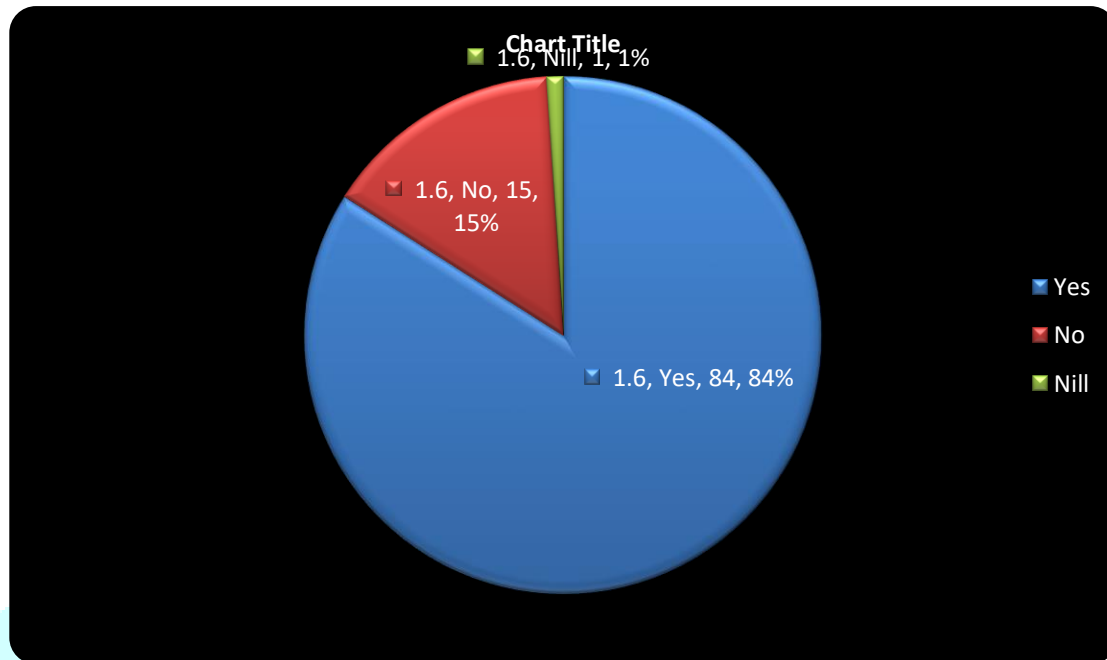
In response, 84 teachers i.e.84% gave positive reply that their school administrators and teachers understand the nature and importance of inclusive education, whereas 15 teacher i.e. 15% believed that their school administrators and teachers do not understand the nature and importance of inclusive education know it, while 1 teacher i.e. 1% did not give any response to this question.

1.7 has prepared a list of barriers that prevent the school from fully developing an ILFE and a list of ways to overcome these barriers;
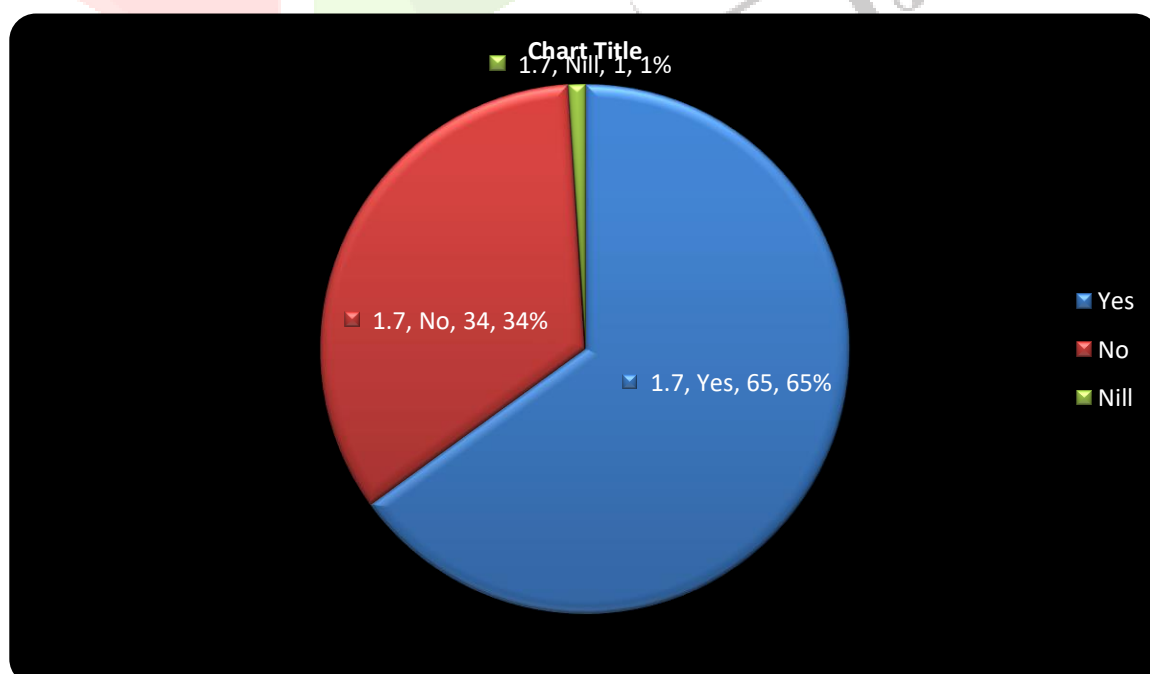
In reply to this question, it was found that among 100 teachers, 65 teachers i.e. 65% believed that their school has prepared a list of barriers that prevent the school from fully developing an ILFE and a list of ways

to overcome these barriers while 34 teachers i.e. 34% believed that their school do not has any list for the same, whereas 1 teacher i.e. 1% did not give any response to this question.

1.8 is aware of and is changing school policies and practices—such as costs and daily schedules—that prevent some girls and boys from receiving a quality education;

Chart Title

1.8, Nill, 3, 3%

1.8, No, 30, 30%

1.8, Yes, 67, 67%

- Yes
- No
- Nill
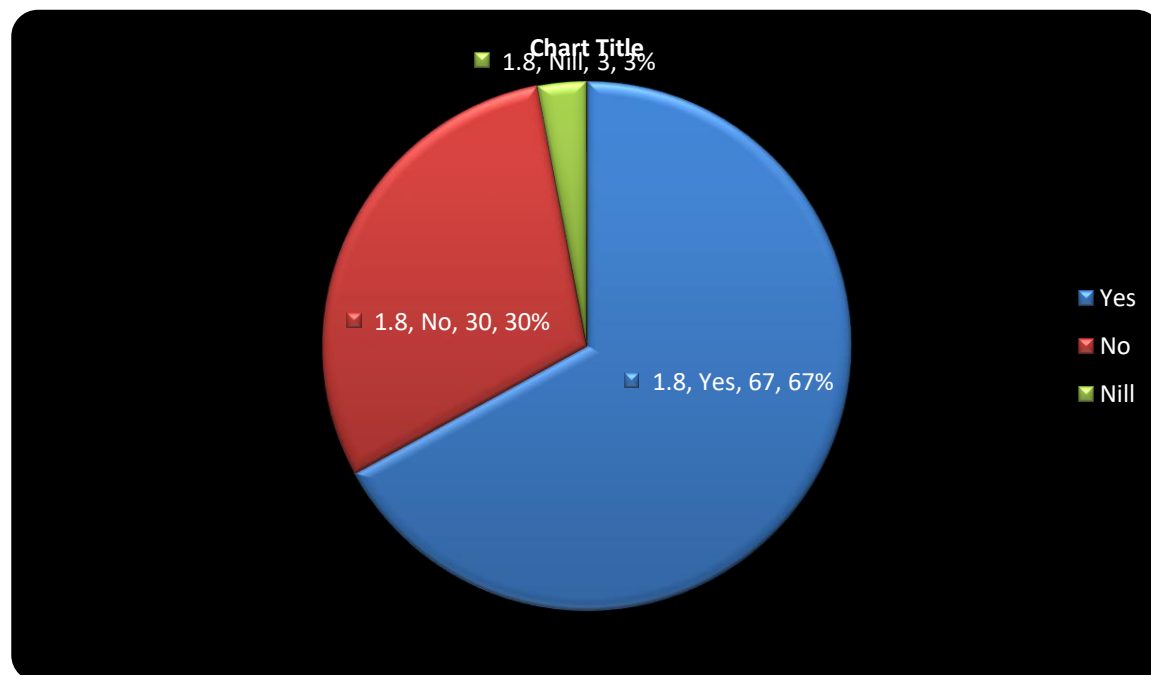
In reply to this question, it was found that among 100 teachers, 67 teachers i.e. 67% believed that their school has is aware of and is changing school policies and practices—such as costs and daily schedules—that prevent some girls and boys from receiving a quality education whereas 30 teachers i.e. 30% believed that their school do not do this kind of practice, while 3 teacher i.e. 3% did not give any response to this question.

1.9 provides flexibility to teachers to pursue innovative teaching methods for helping all children to learn;

Chart Title

1.9, Nill, 3, 3%

1.9, No, 22, 22%

1.9, Yes, 75, 75%

- Yes
- No
- Nill
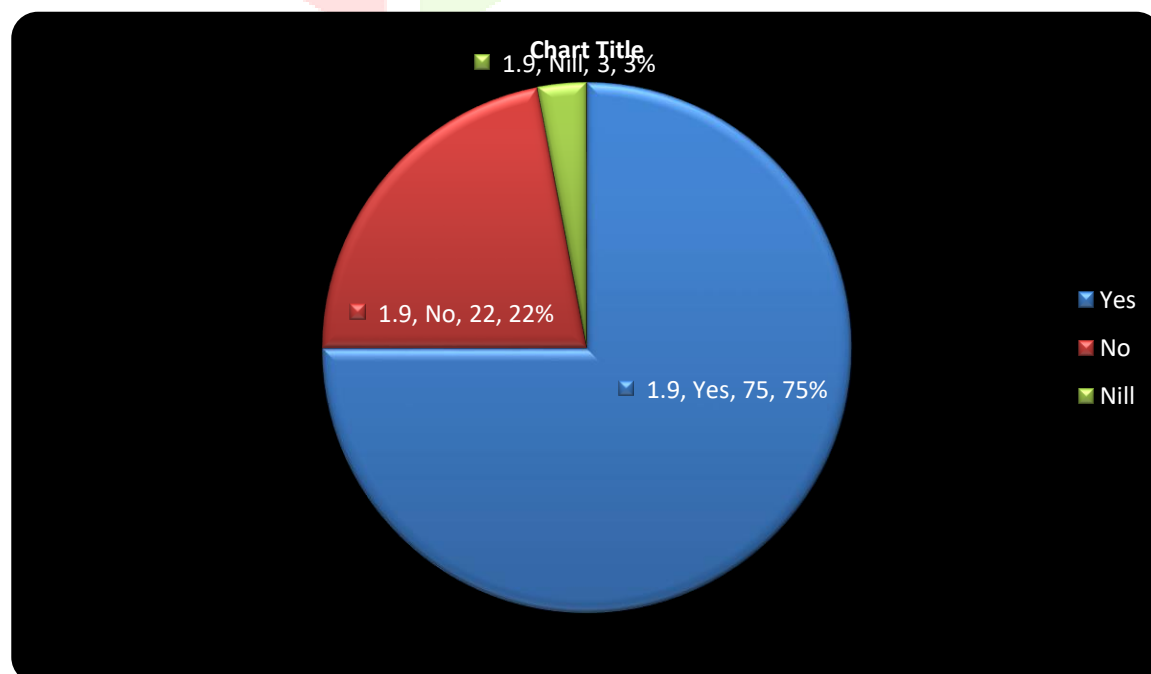
In reply to this question, it was found that 75 teachers i.e. 75% believed that their school provides flexibility to teachers to pursue innovative teaching methods for helping all children to learn whereas 22 teachers i.e. 22% believed that their school do not do this kind of practice, while 3 teacher i.e. 3% did not give any response to this question.

1.10 has links with the community, is responsive to the needs of the community, and provides opportunities for exchanging ideas with the community to bring about positive changes in inclusive practices;
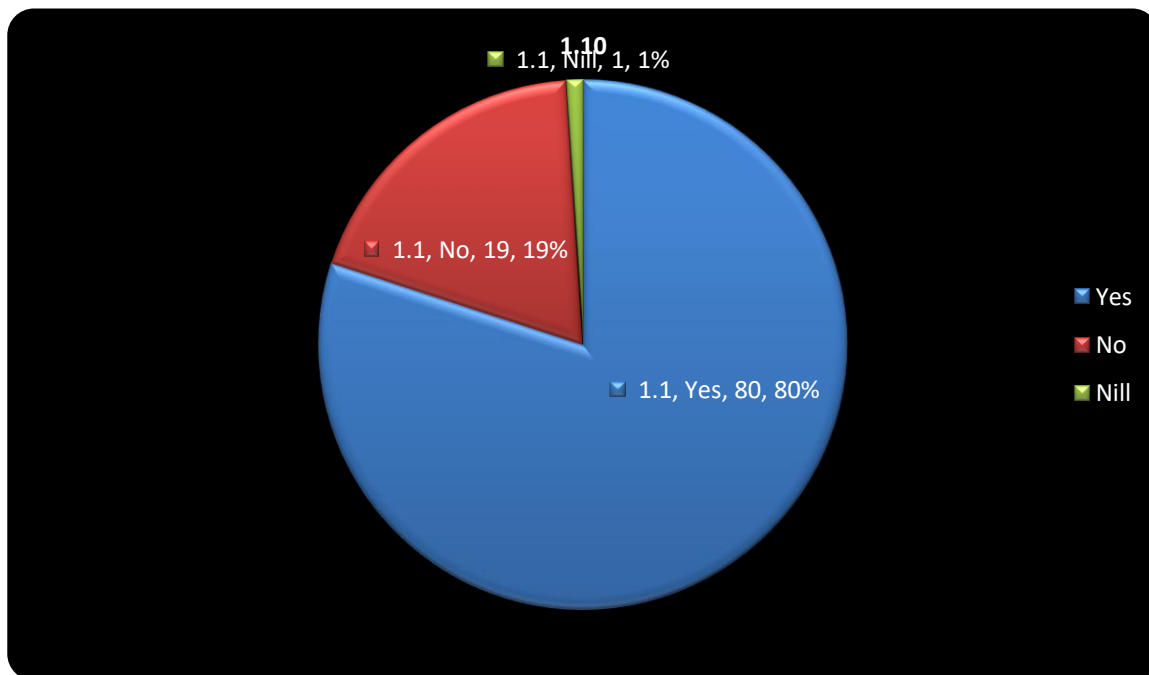

In response, 80 teachers i.e.80% gave positive reply that their school has links with the community, is responsive to the needs of the community, and provides opportunities for exchanging ideas with the community to bring about positive changes in inclusive practices, whereas 19 teacher i.e. 19% believed that their school administrators and teachers do not do such practice, while 1 teacher i.e. 1% did not give any response to this question.

1.11 responds to needs of the staff and is not exploitative;
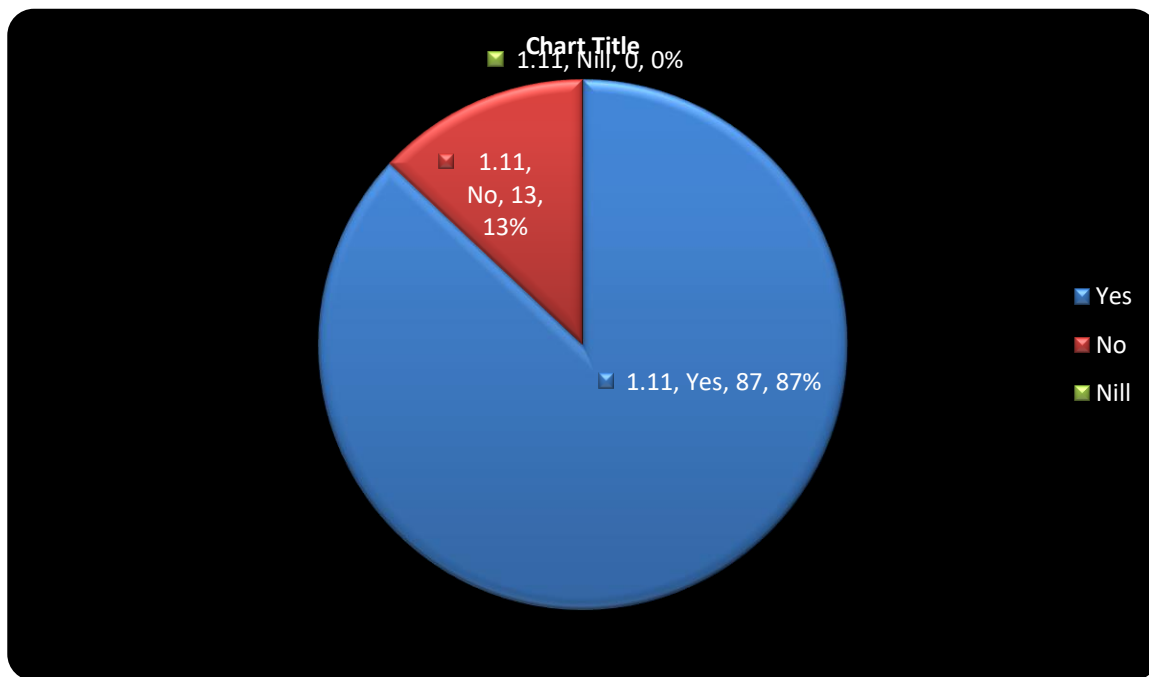
In reply to this question, it was found that among 100 teachers, 87 teachers i.e. 87% believed that their school responds to needs of the staff and is not exploitative, whereas 13 teachers i.e. 13% believed that their school do not responds to needs of the staff.

1.12 has effective support, supervision, and monitoring mechanisms in which everyone participates in learning about and documenting changes inclusive practices, as well as in making future decisions.
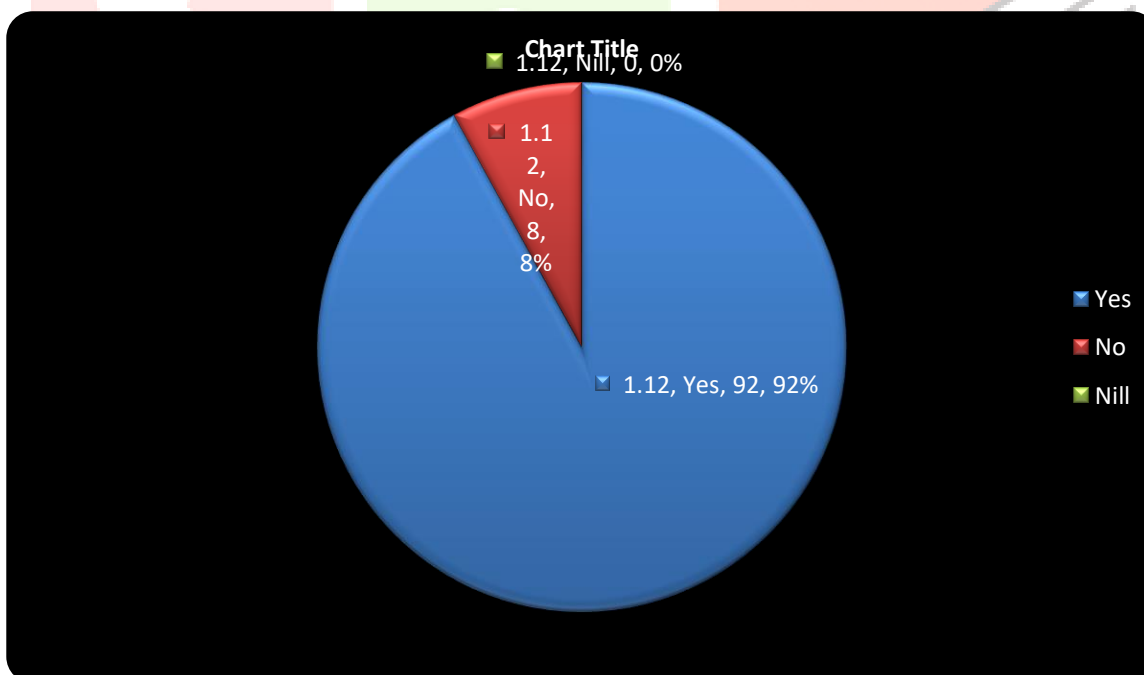
In reply to this question, it was found that among 100 teachers, 92 teachers i.e. 92% believed that their school has effective support, supervision, and monitoring mechanisms in which everyone participates in learning about and documenting changes in inclusive practices, as well as in making future decisions, whereas 8 teachers i.e. 8% believed that their school do not do such kind of practice.

Among 100 teachers, 76.91% teachers' responses were found positive which is "above average" with reference to the School policies and administrative support.

School Environment

For assessing the status of **School Environment**, the research question formulated was, "What percentage of Inclusive Education is satisfactory with reference to School Environment?"

The answer to this question was found by calculating the percentile of the responses given by the teachers and is shown in Table 1 and fig.7:

Showing the overall result and analysis of Teacher's responses regarding:

School Environment

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
■ Yes	76	97	79	79	72	93	89	84
■ No	24	3	9	20	26	7	11	16
■ Nil	0	0	12	1	2	0	0	0
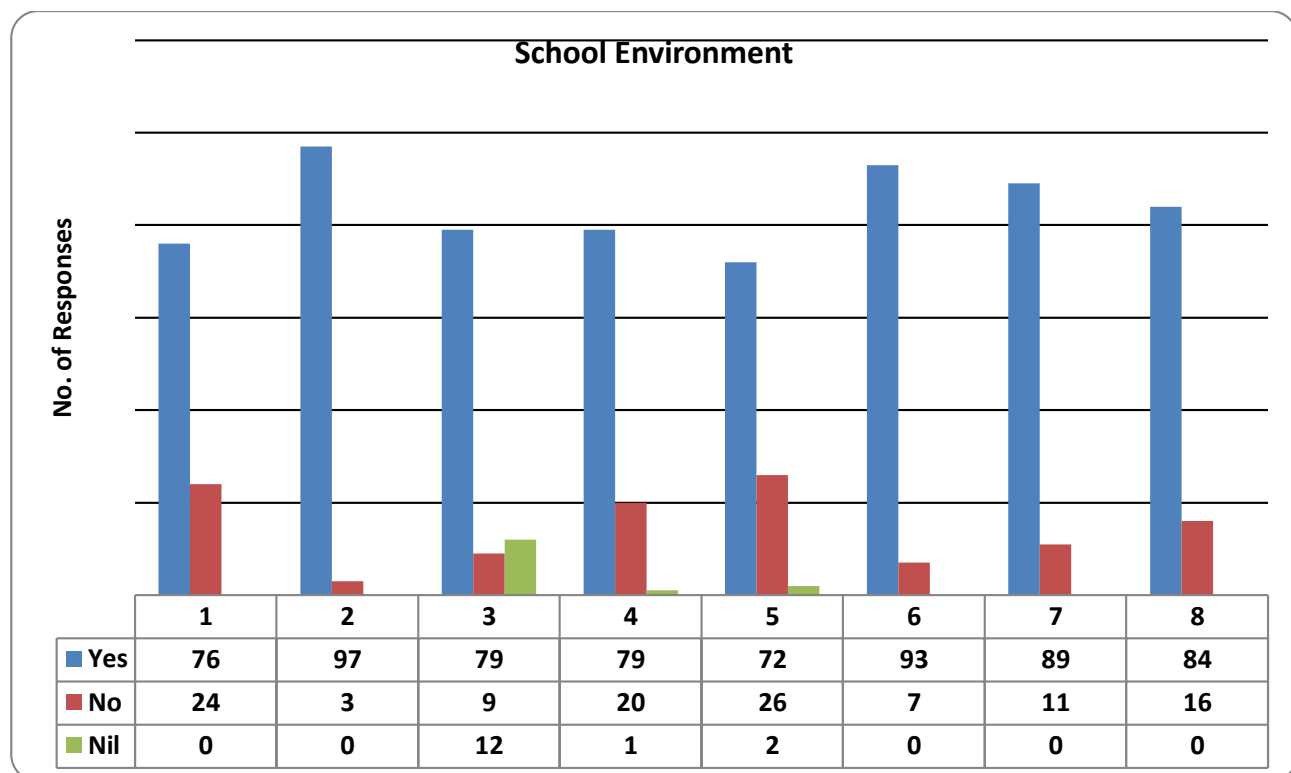
Your school:

2.1has facilities that meet the needs of all students, such as separate toilets for girls and ramps (not stairs) for students with physical disabilities;

Chart Title
2.1, Nill, 0, 0%
2.1, No, 24, 24%
2.1, Yes, 76, 76%

- Yes
- No
- Nill
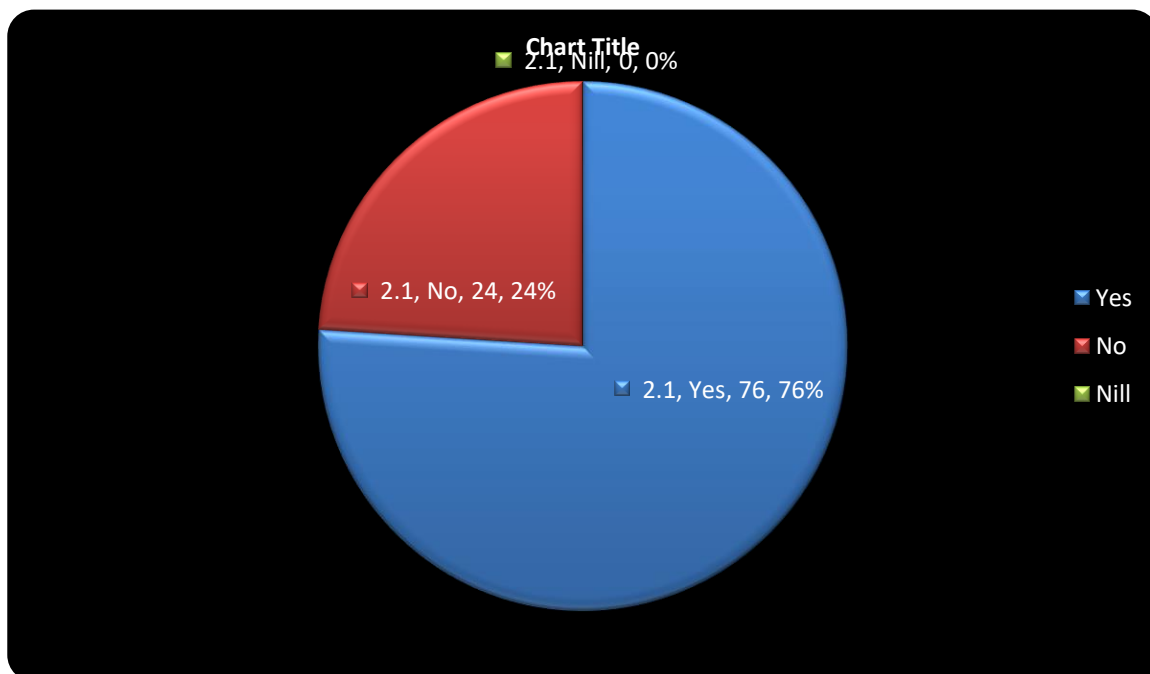
In response, it was found that 76 teachers i.e.76% believed that their school has facilities that meet the needs of all students, such as separate toilets for girls and ramps (not stairs) for students with physical disabilities whereas 24 teacher i.e. 24% believed that their school do not have it.

2.2 has a welcoming, healthy, and clean environment;

Chart Title
2.2, No, 3, 0%
2.2, Yes, 97, 97%

- Yes
- No
- Nill
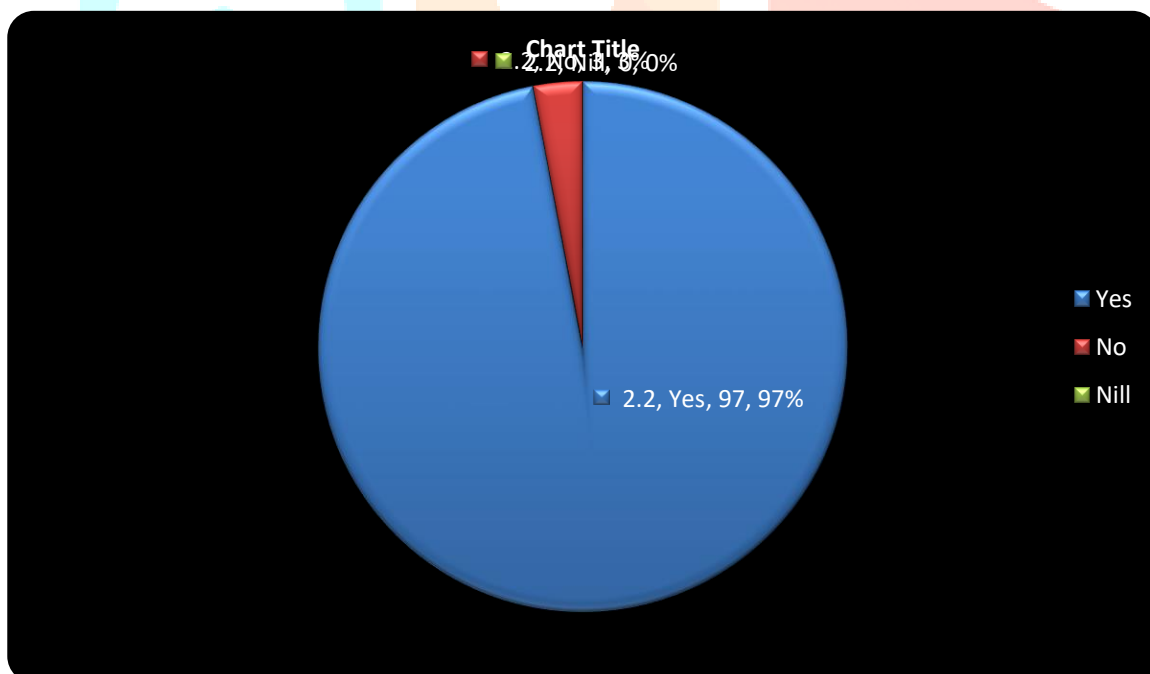
In response, it was found that 97teachers i.e.97%believed that their school has a welcoming, healthy, and clean environment whereas 3 teachers i.e. 3% believed that their school do not has it.

2.3 has a steady supply of clean, safe drinking water and serves or sells healthy, nutritious food;
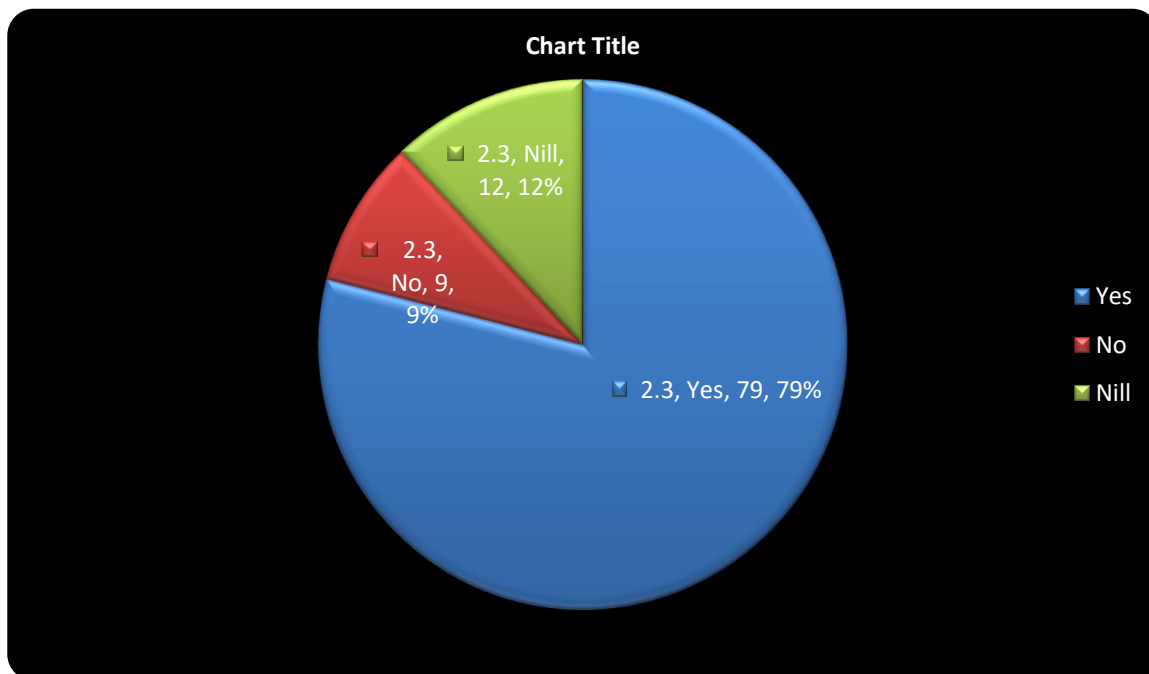
In reply to this question, it was found that among 100 teachers, 79 teachers i.e. 79% believed that their school has a steady supply of clean, safe drinking water and serves or sells healthy, nutritious food. But surprisingly 12 teachers i.e. 12% do not think that children are getting a steady supply of clean, safe drinking water and serves or sells healthy, nutritious food, whereas 5 teachers i.e. 5% did not give any response to this question.

2.4 has (or has a plan to develop) a diverse school staff (women and men with different backgrounds in race, ethnicity, physical ability, religion, language, socioeconomic status, etc.);
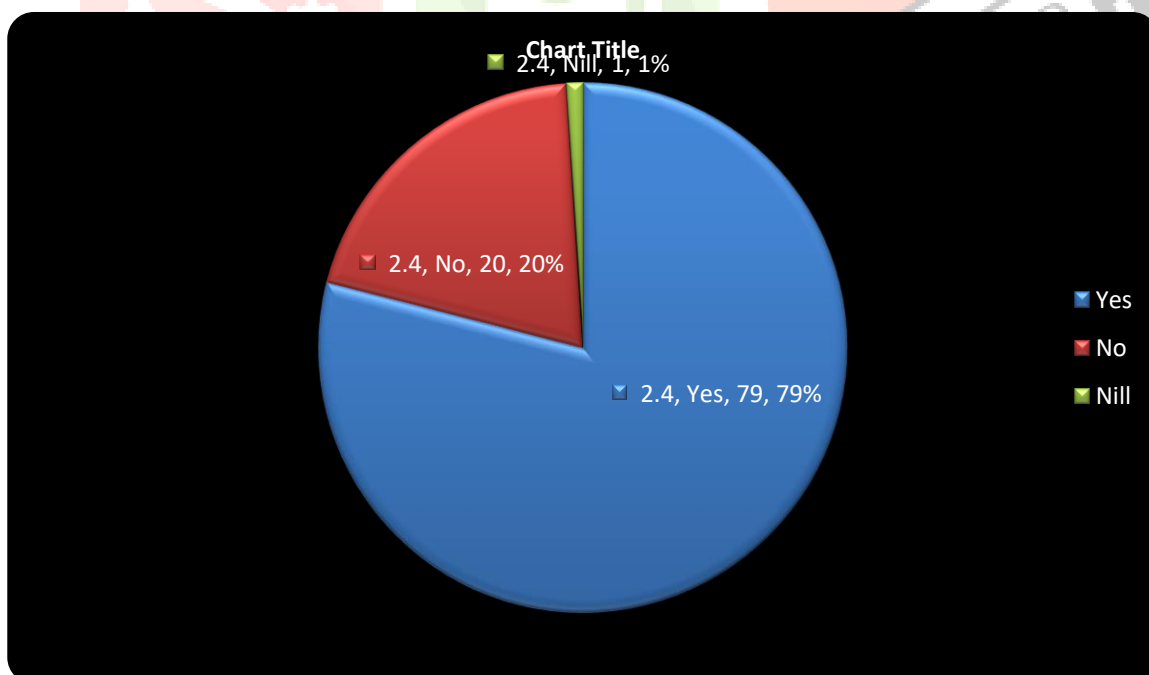
In reply to this question, it was found that among 100 teachers, 79 teachers i.e. 79% believed that their school has (or has a plan to develop) a diverse school staff (women and men with different backgrounds in race, ethnicity, physical ability, religion, language, socioeconomic status, etc.) while 20 teachers i.e. 20%

believed that their school do not has any plan, whereas 2 teachers i.e. 2% did not give any response to this question.

2.5 has staff, such as counselors and bilingual teachers, who can identify and help with the students' individual learning needs;
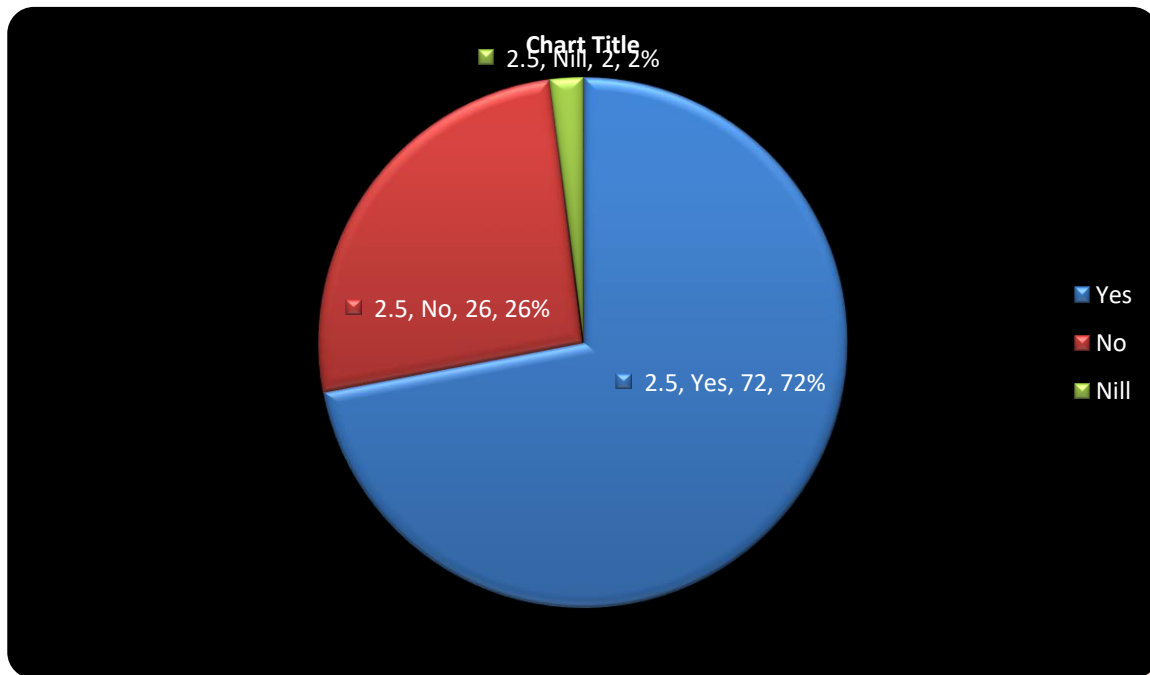

In response, 72 teachers i.e.72% gave positive reply that their school has staff, such as counselors and bilingual teachers, who can identify and help with the students' individual learning needs, whereas 22 teacher i.e. 22% believed that their school does not has it, while 2 teacher i.e. 2% did not give any response to this question.

2.6has processes and procedures in place that help all teachers and teaching staff, parents and children to work together to identify and assist with students' special learning needs;
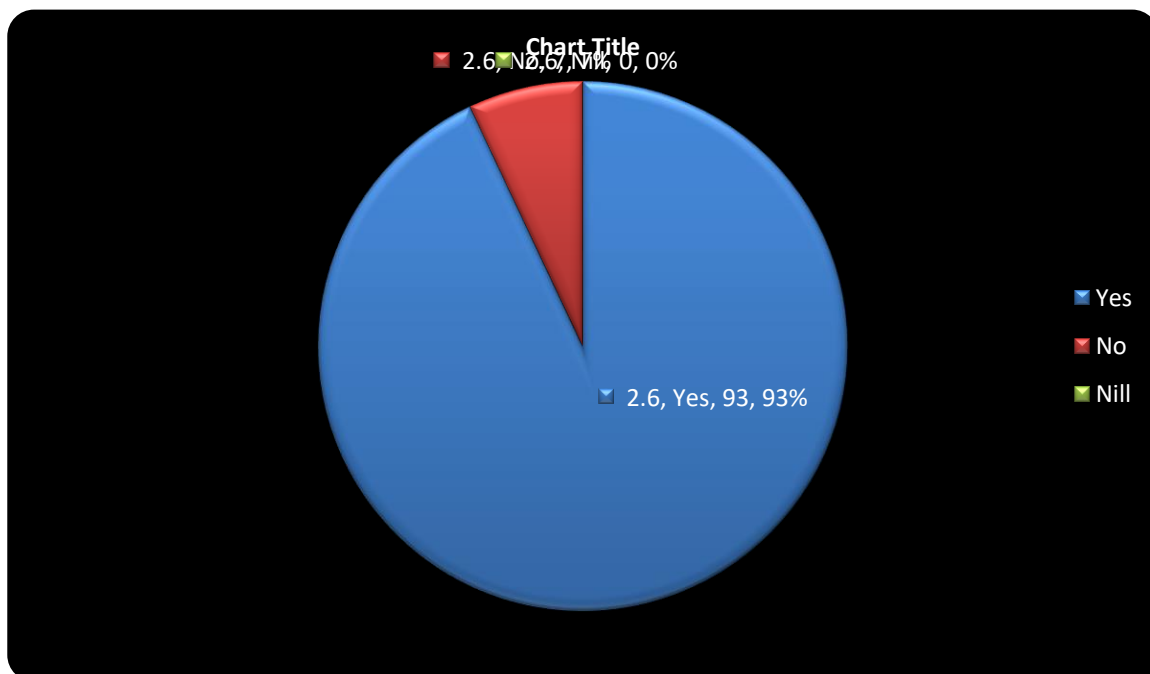
In reply to this question, it was found that among 100   teachers, 93 teachers i.e. 93% believed that their school has processes and procedures in place that help all teachers and teaching staff, parents and children to work together to identify and assist with students' special learning needs while 7 teachers i.e. 7% believed that their school do not has any process and procedure for the same.

2.7 focuses on teamwork among teachers and students;
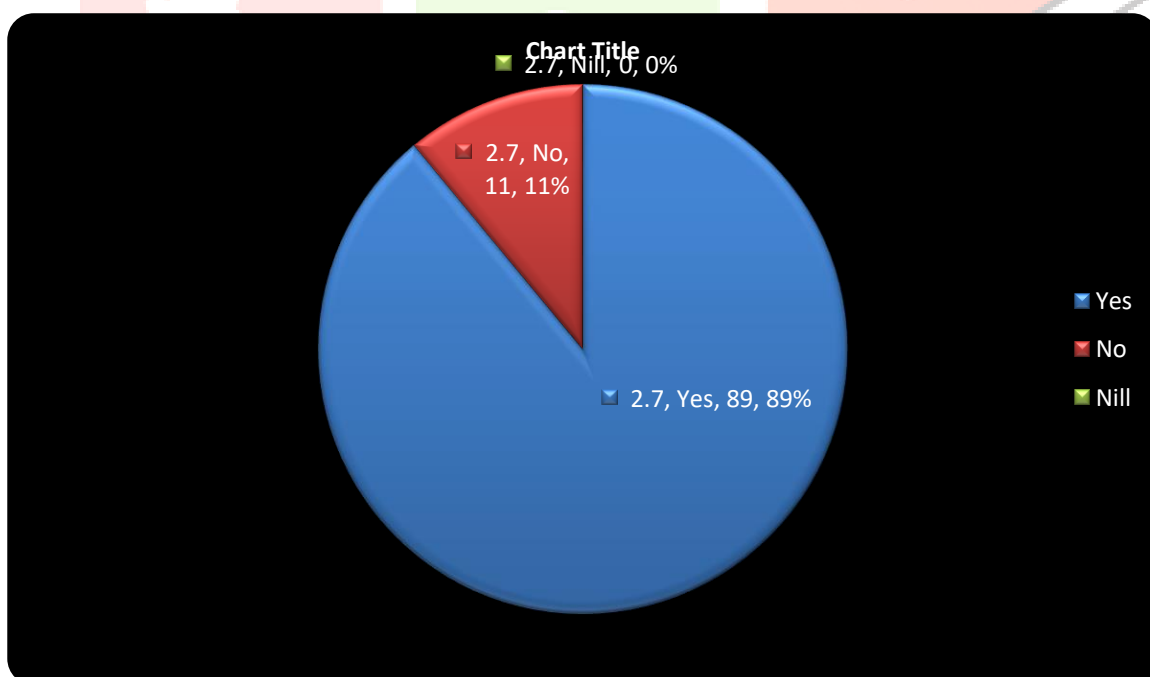
In reply to this question, it was found that 89 teachers i.e. 89% believed that their school focuses on teamwork among teachers and students whereas 11 teachers i.e. 11% believed that their school do not do this kind of practice.

2.8 has links with existing health authorities who provide periodic health examinations for children.
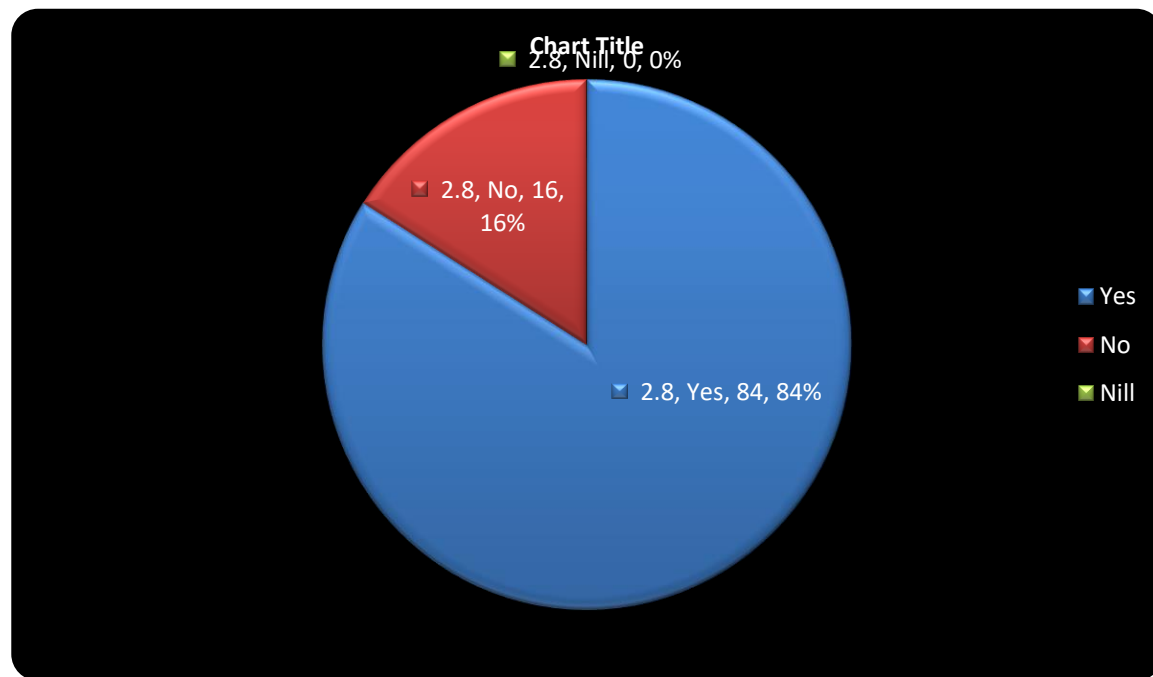
In response, 84 teachers i.e.84% gave positive reply that their school has links with existing health authorities who provide periodic health examinations for children; whereas 16 teachers i.e. 16% believed that their school does not do such practice.

Among 100 teachers, 83.62% teachers' responses were found positive which is "above average" with reference to the School Environment.

Conclusion

Policy in India has always leaned towards inclusion. From the constitution to the Kothari Commission in the early days of the republic, to the 2005 Action Plan for Children and Youth with Disabilities and the 2006 National Policy for People with Disabilities recently, the Indian government tends to write inclusive policies on education. However, these policies often are not perfectly inclusive. Many of them tend to discriminate against people with "severe" disabilities, or people with intellectual disabilities.

Though the findings of this research shows the positive status of inclusion in Gujarat the government data talks about altogether different stories , NCERT has released the 8th All India School Education Survey (AISES) and results concerning schooling facilities for children with disabilities are shocking to say the least. Out of total 58, 76,273 teachers, only 1.32% (80,942) teachers have received any kind of training in inclusive education.

As per Census 2011, in India, out of the 121 Cr population, about 2.68 Cr persons are 'disabled' which is 2.21% of the total population. In an era where 'inclusive development' is being emphasised as the right path towards sustainable development, focused initiatives for the welfare of disabled persons are essential.

The Census 2011 showed that, at all India level,

- Among the total disabled persons, 45% are illiterates. 13% of the disabled population has matric/ secondary education but are not graduates and 5% are graduates and above. Nearly 8.5% among the disabled literates are graduates.

- Among the male disabled persons, 38% are illiterates. 16% of the disabled male population has matric / secondary education but are not graduates and 6% are graduates and above. About 9% among the male disabled literates are graduates.
- Among the female disabled persons, 55% are illiterates. 9% of the disabled female population has matric/ secondary education but are not graduates and 3% are graduates and above. About 7.7% among the female disabled literates are graduates.
- Even when the researcher tried to contact the district coordinators, he found out that there are only 13 appointed district coordinators (total districts are 33) working in all over Gujarat and the state coordinator's post is still vacant.

In general we can state that what we need is a change of views in the schools. It is needed from the management of the school, the teachers, the parents and helpers. More help is required from the central education direction to prepare the teachers professionally for this new educational-political situation. It is difficult to forget the old habits and common traditions but we have to fight to give children with disabilities equal opportunities and to be accepted in the society as every other children and men. If a society will grow up with acceptance towards disability and they know and support the idea of inclusion that we are already one step closer to a better society.

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