

CHALLENGES OF USING ICT FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN NORTH EAST INDIA

Gitali Das

Student, Tezpur University, Assam

E-Mail: gitalidas30@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education refers inclusion of all the students irrespective of their sex, race, colour, poverty, disability and they have given equal opportunity in education and to be considered as being an integral part of the learning community. Education is the fundamental right of a child and it is very important for the individual development as well as the national development. We are the generation of 21st century which is known as the era of technology. Now a days education is linked with the information and communication technology (ICT). But India is still a developing country and the computer literacy rate of India is 6.5%. Therefore, it is very challenging to provide education through ICT in an inclusive set up. In North East India, lack of technology, internet access, and qualified trainers etc. are as the biggest challenges in providing ICT-based educational services to the masses, especially to the marginalized group of people. Most important thing is that most of the time it is very difficult to provide education for the students with special need with the help of ICT in a common classroom along with the normal children. In this context, this paper will try to focus the challenges to provide education through ICT in an inclusive classroom. For this study, the researcher has used to collect data from 80 samples and sample is collected with the help of simple random sampling and the result of the paper shows that there are lots of barriers of using ICT for inclusive classroom in North East India.

Keywords: Disability, ICT, Inclusive education, Learning Community

Introduction

Inclusive education refers inclusion of all the students irrespective of their sex, race, colour, poverty, disability and they have given equal opportunity in education and to be considered as being an integral part of the learning community. Education is the fundamental right of a child and it is very important for the individual development as well as the national development. For the development of a region, education is the most important part of the society. Without the education one state or a community can't develop. Whereas nowadays education focuses on the inclusion of all classes and all the groups of the society. We have to focus the marginalized group of the people than only we are able to go towards the develop nation. When we are talking about the inclusive education we mainly focused on the economically weaker section of the society, person with special needs, SC, ST, OBC and women.

There are 8 states in the North East India. The states of North Eastern Region are officially recognized under the North Eastern Council (NEC) constituted in 1971 as the acting agency for the development of the North Eastern states. Long after induction of NEC, Sikkim formed part of the North Eastern Region as the eighth state in 2002. Most of the area in the North East India is tribal area and it is also a hilly area and geographically isolated from the main land of the India. North Eastern region of India is very famous for their cultural and historical background. In North East India lack of technology, internet access, and qualified trainers etc. as the biggest challenges in providing ICT-based educational services to the masses, especially to the marginalized group of the people. Most important thing is that most of the time it is very difficult to provide education for the students with special need with the help of ICT in a common classroom along with the normal children. Therefore it is very difficult to provide education through ICT in an inclusive classroom in North East India.

Concept of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by the schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the schools irrespective of their sex, colour, poverty, disability etc. It is new approach of teaching in where all the students are welcome to the mainstream society. In an inclusive classroom, children with special need students are given chance to pursue their education along with the normal children. In India NCERT joined hands with UNICEF and launched project for Integrated Education for disabled child in the year 1987 to integrated the disabled learner in the normal classroom. NCF 2005 is also given importance on inclusive education to experience dignity and provide confidence to learn. According to UNESCO: 'a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning.' The term 'children with special needs' is refers the children whose needs fall outside the established 'normal' range. The needs may be global or in a particular area or domain, that is, physical, behavioural, cognitive, social/emotional etc. Plan of Action, 1992 said, "Child with a disability who can be educated in the general school should not be in the special school". It means it given emphasis of inclusion of special school with the normal

school. The Rehabilitation Council of India Act and the People with Disabilities Act, 1992 also said that Children with disabilities have the right to access education in a “free and appropriate environment” until they are 18 years of age, promoting integration into normal schools. In the most recent days The RTE Act, 2009 tries to safeguard the rights of the children belonging to the disadvantaged groups and the weaker sections, protect them from any kind of discrimination and ensure their completion of elementary education. It is clear that the every educational policy, different act, different educational committee focus on the disadvantaged group and the children with special needs and it becomes the primary objectives of every educational policy.

Inclusive education occupies an important role in the whole education system. Because without the one group of the society we can't progress. In order to take all the students to the mainstream society we have to think inclusion of all the children in one classroom. Because most of the time the disadvantaged group of the society isolated and they also hesitate to mix up with the normal child. In that case when all the students are learning together that time they develop the friendship, social skills, comfort level etc. Therefore, inclusive education is one of the most important needs for the present society.

Meaning of ICT

Now a days Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is broadly used in the teaching learning process. Due to the scientific advancement technology is used in everywhere, in the field of education it is used in a larger way. ICT is one of the part of technology and Information and communication technology is an extensional term of communication technology that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals) and computers, as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage, and audiovisual systems, that enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information. ICT means gathering of information with the help of technology. Without the use of technology we can't even think our education system. Because now a days google classroom, e-learning etc. are the very common term which is used in the educational field.

Relation between Education and ICT

Inclusive education plays an important role to provide education to the disadvantaged group of the society. Now a days ICT is largely used in education. With the help of ICT we are able to improve the teaching effectiveness. ICT also helps in providing material, delivering content and assessment and evaluation in education. In an inclusive classroom it is very effective to provide education with the help of ICT. Because ICT makes teaching learning process more realistic one. With the help of using audio-visual aids in teaching, it makes learning permanent. As example in a classroom there is a slow learner or learning disable students, it is also helpful for them. Introducing ICT in schools, students found learning in a technology enhanced environment more stimulating and engaging than in a traditional classroom environment. Now a days ICT in education is globally accepted and appreciated. Without the use of Information and communication technology, it is very difficult to provide education. Therefore, it is very important to link education with ICT.

Significance of the Study

Education is the backbone of a country to preserve our culture and transmit it to the upcoming generation. The socio-economic, political, cultural etc. all the development of a country is possible only through the quality education. To provide the quality education link education with ICT is very important. Because it is the demand of the present education system. Like Any other developing country, India also have many problems in their education system, especially in the North Eastern region of India has lots of problems in the education system. To overcome those problems, it is very important to have some innovations in the education system, who are most reliable and effective for the education system. Education system requires psychological, philosophical, technological advancement. For the development of a country it is very important to educate all the people, therefore now a days the concept of inclusive education is very much popular. But it is very difficult to provide education through ICT for all the students in a common classroom. Therefore, it is very important to conduct such study related to the challenges of using ICT for inclusive education in North East India. But there are a very few study has done related to this topic in North East India. Therefore, this study is carried out by the researcher to improve the quality education through ICT including all the students in a common classroom.

Review of Related Literature

Chanana (2014) conducted a study on Inclusive Secondary Education in India: Challenges and Future Directions and focus of this article is on secondary education in India as the transition phase from school to higher education, as an instrument of promoting education as a right and as the pathway to higher education and through that to social mobility and equality. The dimensions selected for detailed analysis are: participation of

the SCs and STs, the gap between the education of boys and girls and the regional variations with a focus on the northeast. The result of the study shows that there are several areas for research which have been earmarked. These are: composite schools from I- XII classes, integration of skill based education with general education, the expanding private sector in education, and the comparison of outcomes for students with similar scores from government and private schools etc.

Singh (2015) conducted a study on Problems and prospects of inclusive education in India. In this paper tries to focus into the issues of exploring possibilities and challenges ahead in realizing 100% inclusive education in India. The result of the study shows that though many initiative has been introduced at all levels to implement inclusive education in India but the road ahead is still quite long.

Kaushik & Sankar (2017) conducted a study titled as The Challenges and Opportunities to Implement Inclusive Education in West Bengal. The present paper try to focus the present paper for individual initiative on part of schools to implement programmes of inclusive education for children with mild to moderate disabilities in their elementary school classrooms. The paper provides guidelines in a generalized mode that schools can follow to initiate such programmes. The guidelines were derived from an empirical study which entailed examining prevalent practices and introducing inclusion in a regular school setting. It is suggested that schools can implement inclusive education programmes if they are adequately prepared, are able to garner support of all stakeholders involved in the process and have basic resources to run the programmes. The guidelines also suggest ways in which curriculum adaptations, teaching methodology and evaluation procedures can be adapted to suit needs of children with special needs.

Method Used for the Study

As the present study aims to study the challenges of using ICT for inclusive education in North East India. So the researcher was used descriptive survey research method. It was used for investigation and collection of the data to study the relationship between ICT and the inclusive education in North East India.

Sample and Sampling Technique

In the present study a sample of 80 students from the higher educational institute with the help of simple random sampling technique is used for the selection of sample.

Tools Used

In the present study a self-made questionnaire has used for collecting data along with the interview method and secondary sources like books, magazine, journal, official documents etc. were used to gather the necessary information.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

1. Now a days education is linked with the information and communication technology (ICT).

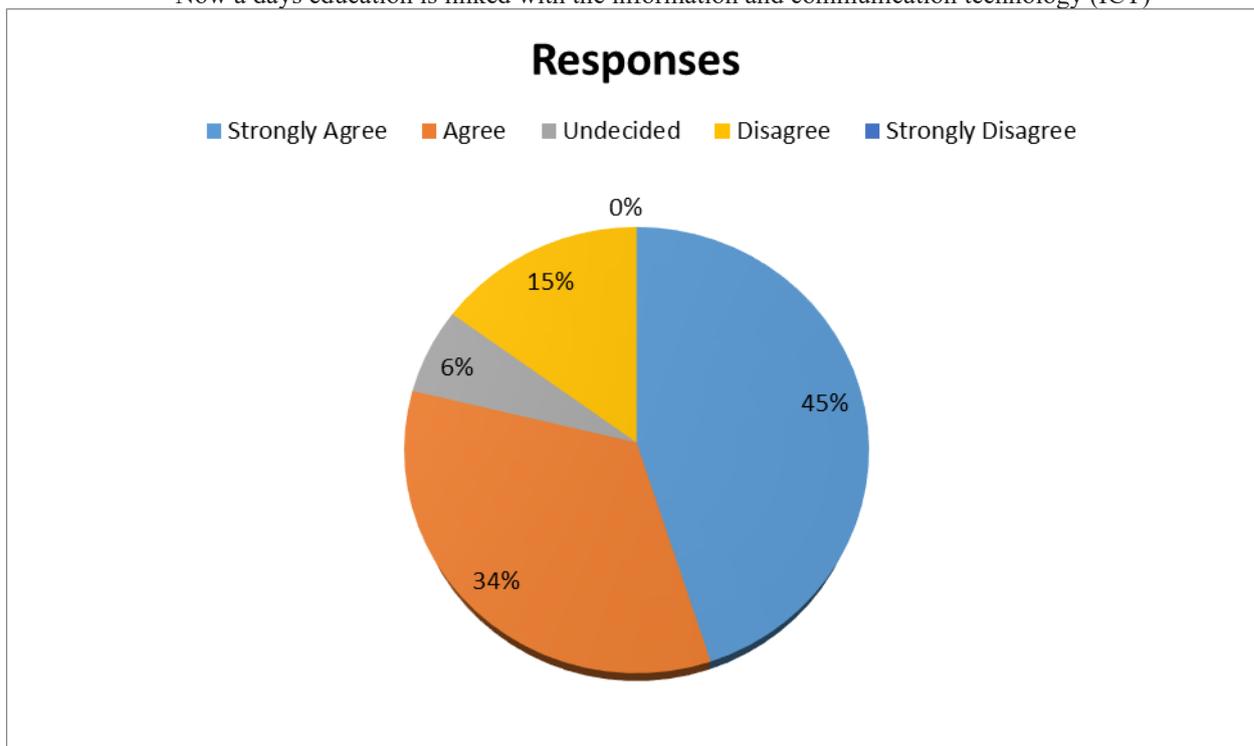
Table No. 1.1

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Now a days education is linked with the information and communication technology (ICT).	45%	34%	6%	15%	0

Table No. 1.1 shows the responses of the statement ‘Now a days education is linked with the information and communication technology (ICT)’. It has been seen that the students responses are 45%, 34%, 6%. 15% and 0% accordingly it means strongly agree, agree, undecided, strongly disagree and disagree for the above mentioned statement. So it can be concluded that maximum students are strongly agree with the statement that now a days education is linked with the ICT.

Figure No. 1.1

Now a days education is linked with the information and communication technology (ICT)



2. ICT makes the teaching learning process more effective.

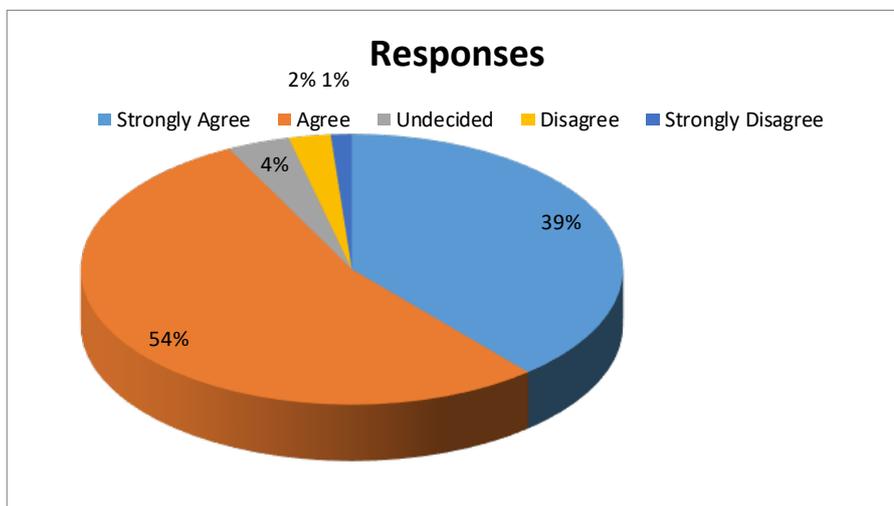
Table No. 1.2

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
ICT makes the teaching learning process more effective.	39%	54%	4%	2%	1%

Table No. 1.2 shows the responses of the statement ‘ICT makes the teaching learning process more effective’. In this statement 39% students are strongly agree with this statement, 54% students are agree, 4%, 2% and 1% students are responses undecided, strongly disagree and disagree accordingly. So, we can conclude that ICT makes teaching learning process is more effective.

Figure No. 1.2

ICT makes the teaching learning process more effective



3. It is very important to include all the students in one classroom for the development of the country.

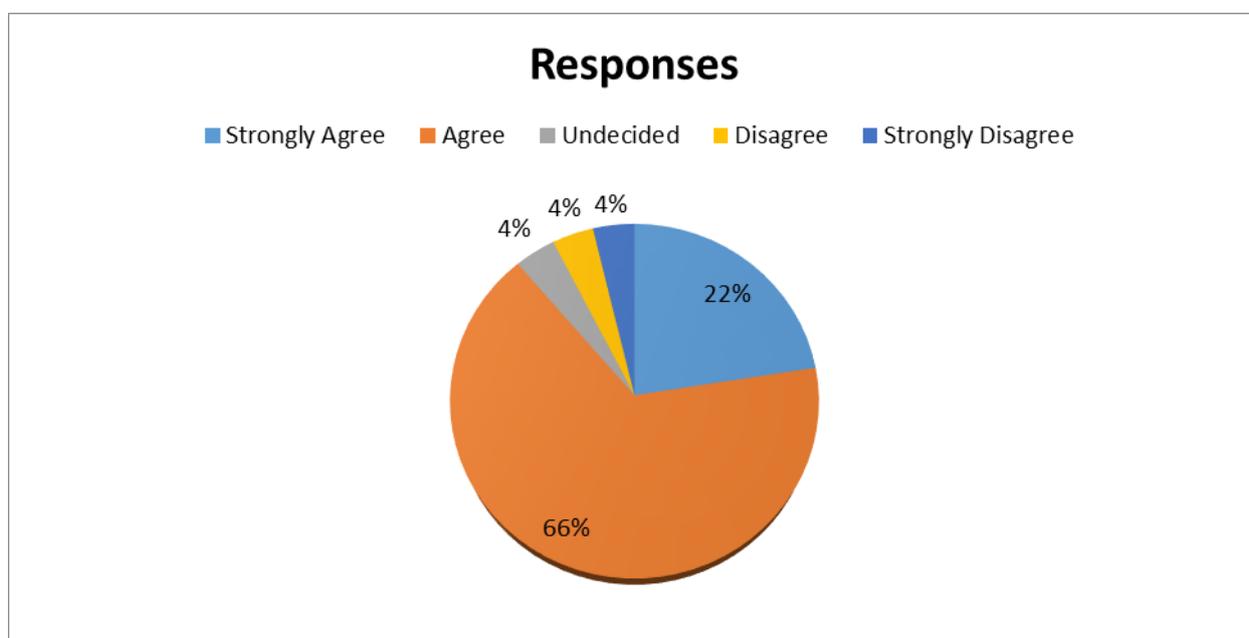
Table No. 1.3

statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It is very important to include all the students in one classroom for the development of the country.	22%	66%	4%	4%	4%

Table No. 1.3 shows the responses of the statement ‘It is very important to include all the students in one classroom for the development of the country’. In this statement 22% students are strongly agree with this statement, 66% students are agree, 4% students are undecided, strongly disagree and disagree. From the responses we can conclude that inclusive classroom is very important for the development of the country.

Figure No. 1.3

It is very important to include all the students in one classroom for the development of the country.



4. It is very difficult to provide education for the students with special need with the help of ICT in a common classroom along with the normal children

Table No. 1.4

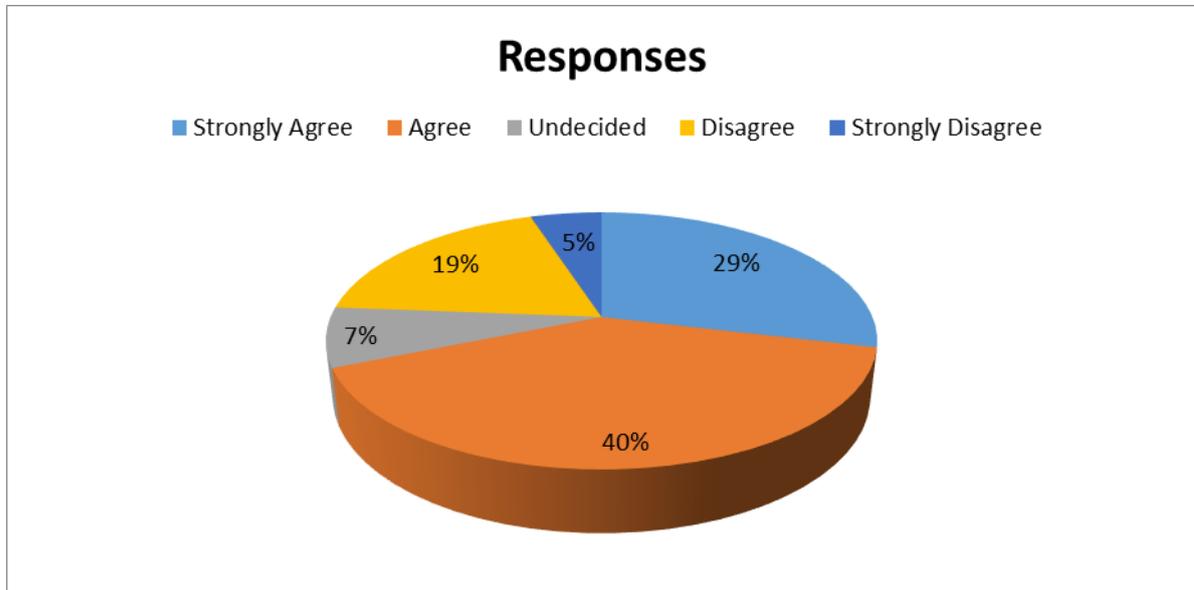
Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It is very difficult to provide education for the students with special need with the help of ICT in a common classroom along with the normal children.	29%	40%	7%	19%	5%

Table No. 1.4 shows the response of the statement ‘It is very difficult to provide education for the students with special need with the help of ICT in a common classroom along with the normal children’. In this statement 29% students are strongly agree with this statement, 40% students are agree, 7% students are undecided, 19% are strongly disagree and 5% are disagree. So we can conclude from the diagram that it is very

difficult to provide education for the students with special need with the help of ICT in a common classroom along with the normal children.

Figure No. 1.4

It is very difficult to provide education for the students with special need with the help of ICT in a common classroom along with the normal children



- In North East India lack of technology, internet access, and qualified trainers etc. are the biggest challenges in providing ICT-based educational services to the masses.

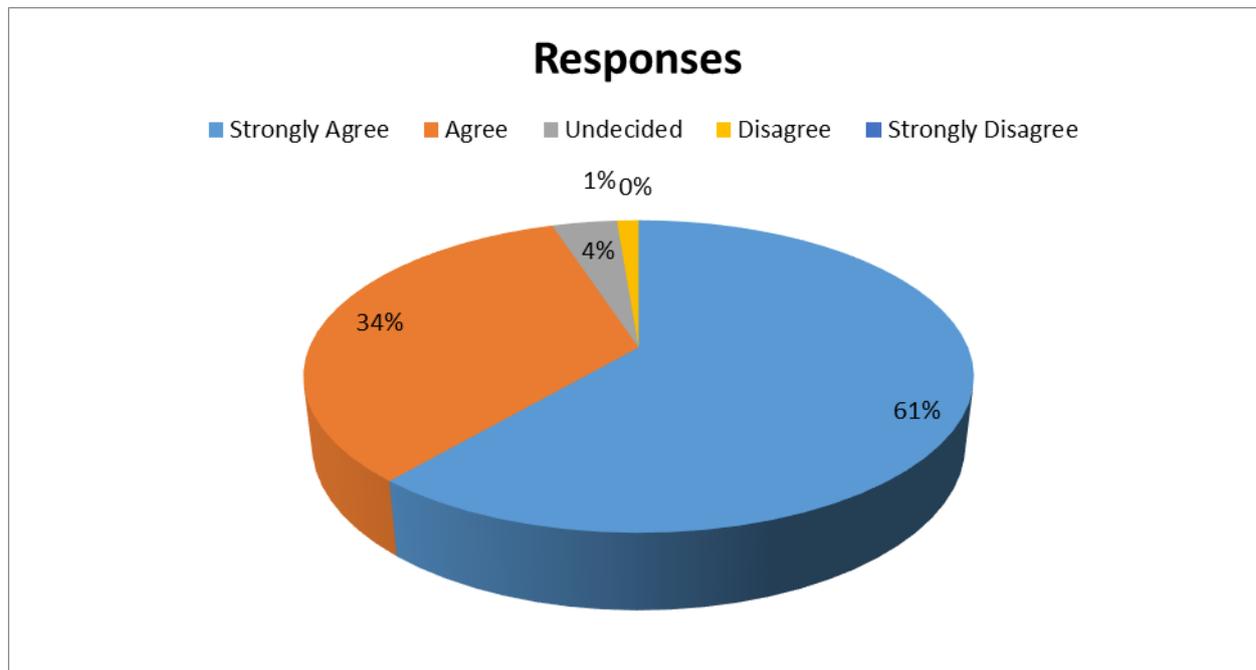
Table No. 1.5

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In North East India lack of technology, internet access, and qualified trainers etc. are the biggest challenges in providing ICT-based educational services to the masses.	61%	34%	4%	1%	0

Table No. 1.5 shows the responses of the statement 'In north-east India lack of technology, internet access, and qualified trainers etc. are the biggest challenges in providing ICT-based educational services to the masses'. In this statement 61% students are strongly agree with this statement, 34% students are agree, 4% students are undecided, 1% are strongly disagree and no one is disagree with the statement. So we can conclude that In north-east India lack of technology, internet access, and qualified trainers etc. are the biggest challenges in providing ICT-based educational services to the masses.

Figure No. 1.5

In North East India lack of technology, internet access, and qualified trainers etc. are the biggest challenges in providing ICT-based educational services to the masses



6. In North East India all the institution has provided education Trough ICT in an inclusive set up.

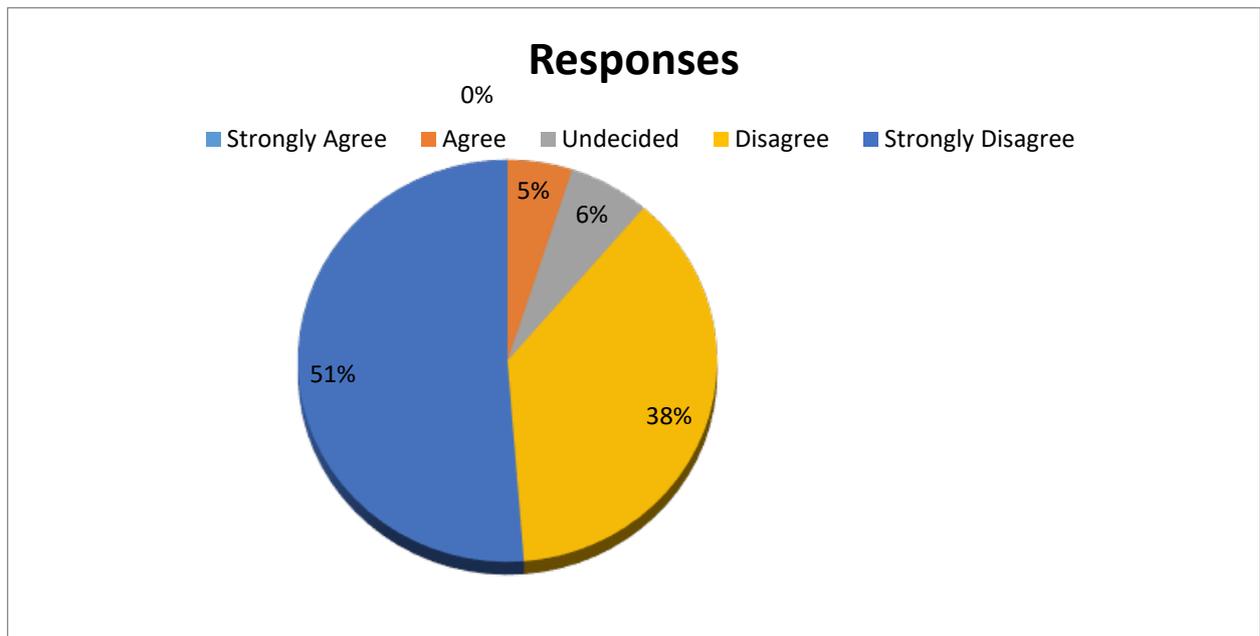
Table No. 1.6

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In north east India all the institution has provided education Trough ICT in an inclusive set up.	0	5%	6%	38%	51%

Table No. 1.6 shows the responses of the statement 'In north east India all the institution has provided education Trough ICT in an inclusive set up'. In this statement no students are strongly agree with this statement, 5% students are agree, 6% students are undecided, 38% are strongly disagree and 51%disagree with the statement. Therefore we can conclude that in north-east India educational institution are not establish in an inclusive set up along with the ICT.

Figure No. 1.6

In north east India all the institution has provided education Trough ICT in an inclusive set up



Findings of the Study

The researcher has used self-made questionnaire along with taken interview from some students who are pursuing their higher education. After the analysis of data and interview the major findings of the study are as follows-

1. It is very important to include all the students in one classroom for the development of the country.
2. It is very difficult to provide education for the students with special need with the help of ICT in a common classroom along with the normal children. Therefore, the school should build up with the necessary physical infrastructure for special children in respect of their special need.
3. In North East India lack of technology, internet access, and qualified trainers etc. are the biggest challenges in providing ICT-based educational services to the masses.
4. In the North Eastern states there are many poor families are living. Students who belong from poor family may not have their personal computer at home and with no access to the internet facilities.
5. In the North East India, there are multilingual students in a class. So teacher faces various challenges in dealing with students while using ICT.
6. One of the primary challenge in the use of ICT in education is the lack of knowledge and skills among teachers.
7. Developing countries like India the proficiency of English language is not too high expect the urban areas and major world class educational software produced in English language. So there is a barrier to maximize to profit of ICT among the students of rural area.

Suggestions

After the investigation the investigator has emerged out the following suggestions-

- 1) Train and skill teacher should appoint in all the educational institutions. Because without the proper training no teacher is efficient to effectively use ICT in the teaching learning situation.
- 2) Proper awareness should develop among all the members of the society irrespective of their caste, creed, colour, weaker section or any other disabilities.
- 3) Government should provide sufficient infrastructure such as computer, projector and internet facilities to all the educational institutions.
- 4) Attitude of teacher, parents, policy maker and peers towards special needs children should change. All of the members of the society should ensure that the special needs children can't feel inferior in the educational institutions.

- 5) Proper curriculum should be implemented in school that all the students can learn together irrespective of any barriers. Curriculum should focus the aim of universalization of education system.
- 6) School should develop all the facilities for the special needs children along with the proper resource room in school and school infrastructure should develop according to the needs of special needs children.

Conclusion

ICT and education are closely related with each other. ICT makes the whole teaching-learning process is an effective one. From the above discussion we can conclude that North-East India has lots of challenges of using ICT for inclusive education. The problem is raised due to different reason, such as lack of technology, internet access, and qualified trainers, multilingual and multicultural classroom, gap between policies and implementation etc. But for the development of educational sector for a country, Using ICT in classroom and inclusion of all the students both are the demand of the time. Therefore all the stake holder of education such as teachers, parents, policy maker, administration should work collaboratively to remove the barriers of inclusive classroom. So, on the side of policy maker they should adopt some long-term policy to remove such kind of barriers.

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