

Communication barriers on the social performance of students with hearing impairment in inclusive schools of Delhi

Mr. Deepak Kumar

Research Scholar, Ph.D. (Spl.Ed.)

Shri Khushal Das University

Email: deepaksre1986@gmail.com

Dr. Pramod Kumar Kulhade

Principal

Renu Vidya Mandir, Bahalgarh, Sonipat (Haryana)

Email: pkkulhade@gmail.com

Abstract

Effective communication is essential for hearing-impaired students to ensure academic achievement, foster peer relationships, and prevent social isolation. It facilitates access to curriculum, develops complex linguistic skills, and supports emotional well-being by allowing them to engage confidently with teachers and peers. This study examines the impact of communication barriers on the social performance of students with hearing impairment in inclusive schools of Delhi. Social performance in this context includes participation in classroom activities, interaction with peers, confidence, and sense of belonging. The study uses a descriptive research approach and collects data through questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations involving students and teachers.

The findings reveal that communication barriers such as lack of sign language support, limited use of visual teaching methods, insufficient teacher training, and low peer awareness significantly affect student's ability to interact and participate. Many students experience difficulty in making friends, hesitate to engage in group activities, and show low confidence levels. However, the study also finds that the use of visual aids, assistive technologies and supportive peer environments can improve communication and social participation.

The study concludes that effective communication is essential for true inclusion. It recommends providing trained teachers, sign language interpreters, and inclusive teaching strategies to reduce communication barriers. The research is useful for educators, policymakers and school administrators working to improve inclusive education practices.

Keywords: Hearing Impairment, Communication Barriers, Social Performance, Inclusive Education, Peer Interaction.

Introduction

Education is a basic right of every child, and inclusive education aims to provide equal opportunities for all learners, including those with disabilities. In recent years, inclusive education has become an important part of the Indian education system, especially in urban areas like *Delhi*, where many schools are admitting students, with diverse needs into regular classrooms. This approach helps promote equality, respect, and social development among students. Among students with disabilities, children with hearing impairment face specific challenges that are mainly related to communication. Hearing impairment affects a student's ability to listen, understand spoken language, and respond during classroom interactions. Since most teaching in schools is based on verbal communication, students with hearing impairment often struggle to follow lessons, understand instructions, and participate actively in class.

Communication plays a very important role in a student's overall development.

It is not only necessary for academic learning but also for social interaction, emotional expression, and building relationships. In a classroom setting, students learn by listening to teachers, asking questions, and interacting with their peers. When communication is limited, students may feel disconnected from both learning and social activities.

In inclusive schools, communication barriers arise when there is a mismatch between the communication needs of hearing-impaired students and the teaching methods used in the classroom. These barriers may include:

- Lack of sign language interpreters
- Limited use of visual aids and teaching materials
- Inadequate teacher training in inclusive communication
- Low awareness among peers about how to communicate effectively

Such barriers can significantly affect the social performance of students with hearing impairment. Social performance refers to a student's ability to interact with others, participate in group activities, develop friendships, and feel confident in social situations. When students are unable to communicate properly, they may avoid participation, feel isolated, and experience low self-esteem.

In the context of Delhi, although inclusive policies are being implemented, many schools still lack the necessary resources and support systems required for effective communication. Teachers may not be fully trained to address the needs of hearing-impaired students, and

assistive technologies such as captioning or hearing devices may not be widely available. As a result, communication barriers continue to exist in inclusive classrooms.

These challenges not only affect academic performance but also influence the social and emotional well-being of students. Students who face communication difficulties often find it hard to make friends, participate in discussions, and express their ideas confidently. Over time, this can lead to social withdrawal and reduced engagement in school activities.

Therefore, it is important to study how communication barriers impact the social performance of students with hearing impairment in inclusive schools. Understanding these challenges can help educators, school administrators, policymakers develop effective strategies to improve communication and promote true inclusion.

This study focuses on identifying the communication barriers faced by students with hearing impairment in inclusive schools of Delhi and examining how these barriers affect their social performance. It also aims to suggest practical solutions to reduce these barriers and create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Need of the study

The study is important because students with hearing impairment in inclusive schools often face communication barriers that affect their social interaction and participation. These difficulties can lead to isolation, low confidence, and poor social performance.

There is a need to understand these challenges, especially in the context of inclusive schools in Delhi, where such issues are not adequately explored. The study will help identify communication gaps and suggest effective strategies to improve social interaction, inclusion, and overall development of hearing-impaired students.

Objectives

1. To identify the major communication barriers faced by students with hearing impairment in inclusive classrooms.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of the teacher's inclusive practices in reducing communication barriers and improving social performance of Students with Hearing Impairment.

Research Questions

1. What are the major communication barriers encountered by students with hearing impairment in inclusive classrooms?

2. How do teacher's inclusive teaching practices help to minimize communication barriers and enhance the social performance of Students with Hearing Impairment?

Literature Review

Ghazalah Ishrat (October, 2021) conducted a study on perceptions of students with Hearing Impairment about Inclusive Education at Higher Education. The objective of this study is to examine the perception of students with hearing impairment regarding the curriculum and teaching practices in inclusive classrooms, as well as their views on the attitudes of peers, teachers, and sign language interpreters within the inclusive learning environment. This study used a descriptive and quantitative research design to explore the perceptions of hearing-impaired students regarding inclusive education at the university level. It focused on their views about curriculum, teachers, sign language interpreters, and interactions with peers. Data were collected from 50 deaf or hard-of-hearing students (both current and former) at a university in Lahore using convenient sampling. The findings also reveal that supportive teacher attitudes and peer cooperation positively influence their learning experiences. However, gaps in teaching strategies and institutional support continue to affect the overall effectiveness of inclusive education for hearing-impaired students.

An article by **Mr. Sanchez (2021)** explores how primary school teachers can better support students with hearing impairments by combining practical technology with thoughtful classroom habits. It highlights that because hearing loss varies for every child, educators must address challenges like communication barriers and social isolation through a "visual-first" approach, using tools like radio microphones (FM systems), captions, and plenty of images. Beyond technology, the author emphasizes the importance of simple human adjustments, such as speaking clearly while facing the student and educating the entire class to foster a culture of empathy. Ultimately, the review concludes that inclusive education succeeds when teachers are willing to adapt their environment and teaching style to ensure every child, regardless of their hearing ability, feels connected and capable of learning.

Lokesh Kumar Dubey (2024) conducted a study on the challenges of Hearing Impaired students in inclusive classroom special reference to Margherita Block, Tinsukia District of Assam. The objective of the study was to find out the challenges of hearing impaired students in an inclusive classroom. A descriptive study method was used for the study with an online questionnaire to collect data from 60 students. The findings of the study showed that inclusive classrooms pose multifaceted challenges for hearing-impaired students, primarily stemming from communication barriers.

Dr. Ratan Sarkar and Abhishek Ghosh (2024) conducted a study on Challenges faced by students with hearing impairment in higher education: A comprehensive analysis. The study found that communication barriers are the major issue, as students struggle to understand lectures and participate in discussions due to limited support like interpreters and captioning. It also highlights the lack of accessible learning resources and inclusive teaching methods, which affect academic performance. Additionally, students face social isolation and psychological problems such as stress and low self-esteem. The study concludes that a holistic approach, including better support services, teacher training, and inclusive policies, is necessary to improve their educational experience.

Endang Pudjiastuti Sartinah et al. (2025) investigated how gamified learning can serve as a modern tool to boost social skills—such as empathy, cooperation, and interaction—among deaf students, directly supporting the UN’s Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) for inclusive education. By analyzing 647 publications from 2016 to 2025 using the PRISMA method, the study identifies a growing trend in using visual-heavy, experience-based technology to bridge learning gaps. The findings reveal that gamification significantly increases emotional engagement and motivation by transforming complex social lessons into enjoyable, interactive experiences. However, the research also highlights the need for specialized teacher training and better collaboration between tech developers and the disability community. Ultimately, the study concludes that well-designed gamification is a highly effective alternative for creating equitable classrooms, providing a practical roadmap for schools to modernize their curriculum for students with disabilities.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive survey research design to examine communication barriers and their impact on social performance of students with hearing impairment. This design is appropriate as it helps in describing existing conditions and analyzing relationships between variables in real classroom settings.

The study was conducted in selected inclusive schools of Delhi, where students with hearing impairment are enrolled in mainstream classrooms along with other students.

Sample & Sampling Techniques

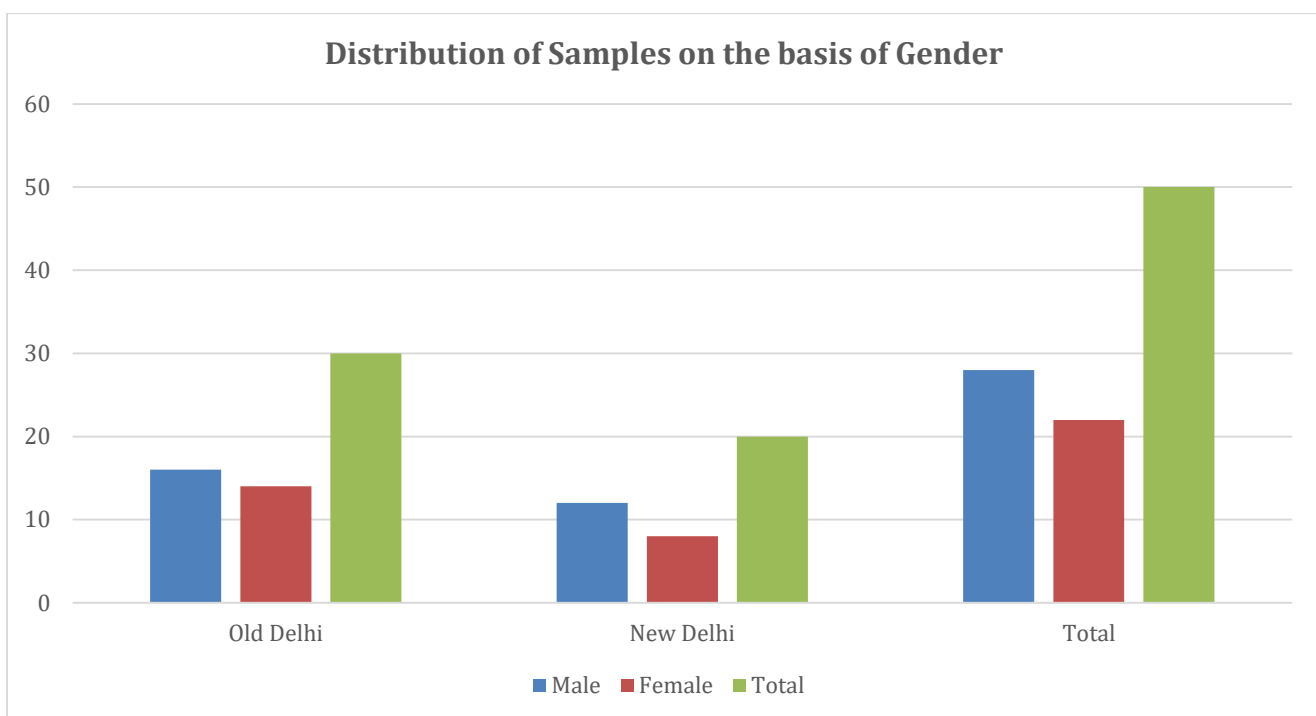
A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who could provide relevant information.

1. **50** students with hearing impairment
2. **20** teachers from inclusive schools

The sample was drawn from different schools to ensure diversity in teaching practices and student experiences.

Distribution of Samples on the basis of Gender

	Old Delhi	New Delhi	Total
Male	16	12	28
Female	14	08	22
Total	30	20	50



Note: pls. elaborate the table & figure

Tools for Data Collection

a) Questionnaire: Structured questionnaires were prepared separately for students and teachers. These included both closed-ended and open-ended questions focusing on communication difficulties and social interaction.

b) Interview Schedule: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants to gain deeper insights into their experiences.

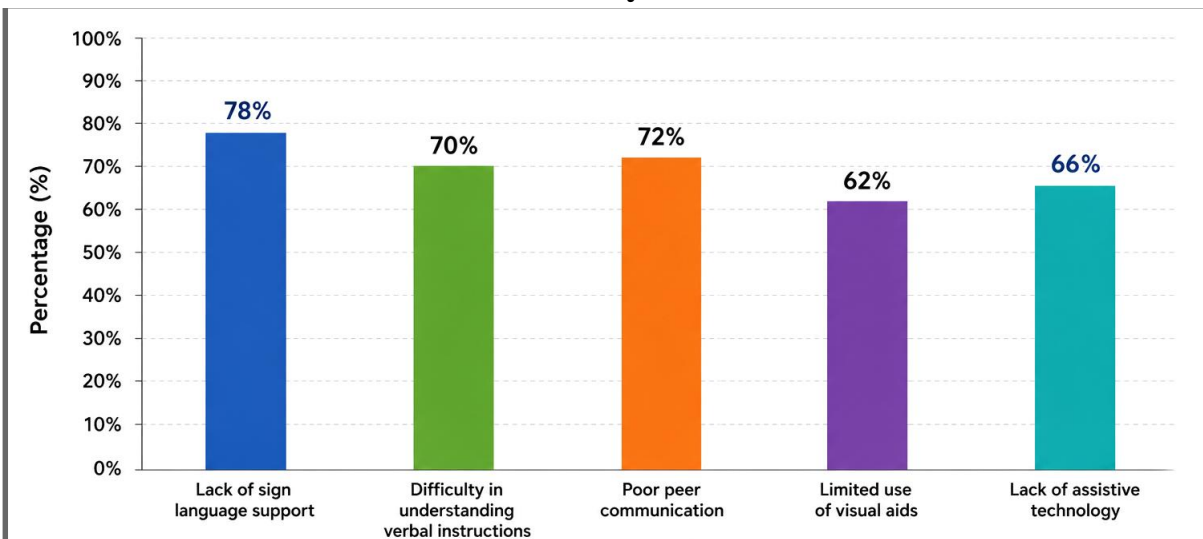
c) Observation Checklist:

Classroom observations were carried out to study real-time communication patterns, participation levels, and peer interaction.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency distribution and percentage analysis. The analysis aimed to identify the major communication barriers experienced by students with hearing impairment and their impact on social performance in inclusive schools. The results are presented in tables and interpreted to understand the relationship between communication barriers and social performance.

Table 1: Communication Barriers faced by Students



Communication Barrier	Frequency(N=50)	Percentage(%)
Lack of sign language support	39	78%
Difficulty in understanding verbal instructions	35	70%
Poor peer communication	36	72%
Limited use of visual aids	31	62%
Lack of assistive technology	33	66%

Interpretation

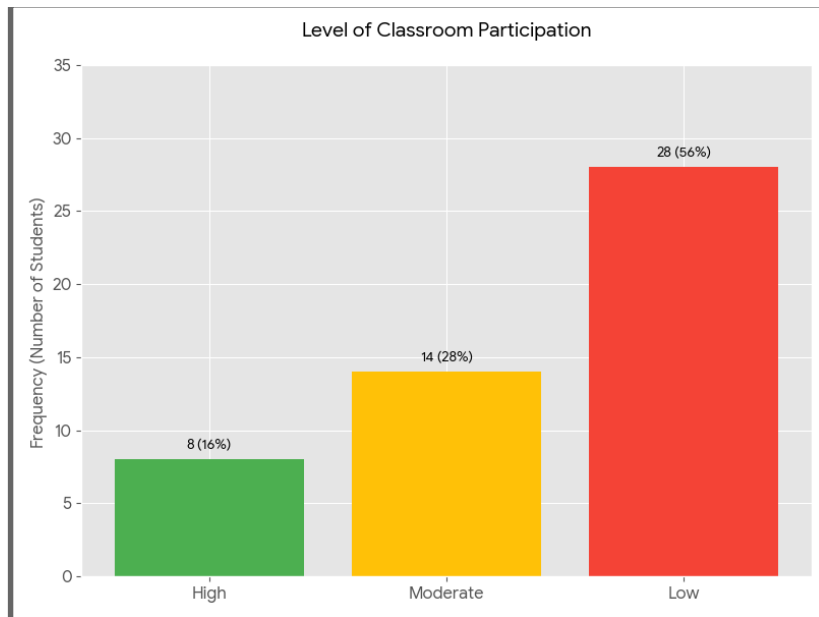
The above table reveals that communication barriers are highly prevalent among students with hearing impairment in inclusive schools. Out of 50 respondents, 39 students (**78%**) reported lack of sign language support as the most significant challenge. This indicates that many schools do not provide adequate interpretation services, making classroom communication difficult for hearing-impaired students.

Poor peer communication was reported by 36 students (**72%**), showing that students face difficulties in interacting and building social relationships with classmates. Similarly, 35 students (**70%**) experienced difficulty in understanding verbal instructions given by teachers, which negatively affects classroom participation and academic achievement.

Further, 33 students (**66%**) stated that lack of assistive technology such as hearing aids, captioning devices, or audio support creates obstacles in effective learning. In addition, 31 students (**62%**) reported limited use of visual aids in teaching-learning processes, reducing their understanding of concepts taught in class.

Overall, the findings suggest that communication barriers significantly influence both the academic and social performance of students with hearing impairment. The lack of communication practices limits classroom engagement, peer interaction, confidence, and participation in school activities. Therefore, there is a strong need for inclusive teaching strategies, use of visual and technological support, and improved awareness among teachers and peers to create a supportive educational environment.

Table 2: Level of Classroom Participation



Participation Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	8	16 %
Moderate	14	28 %
Low	28	56 %

Interpretation

The above table presents the level of classroom participation among students with hearing impairment in inclusive schools. The findings reveal that a majority of students face difficulties inactively participating in classroom activities due to communication related challenges.

Out of 50 students, only 8 students (**16%**) demonstrated a high level of participation in classroom discussions, group activities, and teacher-student interaction. These students may have received better support services such as hearing aids, visual learning materials, or supportive classroom environments.

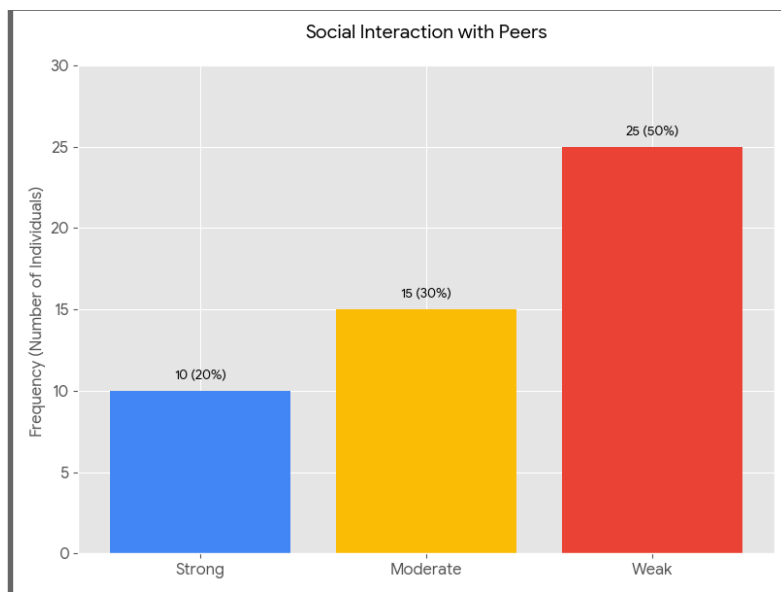
A total of 14 students (**28%**) showed a moderate level of participation. These students participate occasionally in classroom activities but still experience certain communication difficulties that restrict full engagement. Factors such as unclear verbal instructions, limited peer interaction, and insufficient teaching adaptations may affect their confidence and involvement.

The group consisting of 28 students (**56%**), reported low classroom participation. This indicated that more than half of the students struggle to engage actively in academic activities. Communication barriers such as lack of sign language support, difficulty understanding spoken language, absence of assistive technology, and limited use of visual aids reduce their ability to interact effectively with teachers and classmates.

Low participation may also lead to reduced self-confidence, social withdrawal, poor academic performance, and limited opportunities for collaborative learning. Students who are unable to communicate comfortably often hesitate to ask questions, share opinions, or participate in group discussions.

Overall, the findings suggest that communication barriers have a negative impact on classroom participation among students with hearing impairment. Therefore, inclusive teaching practices, use of visual and technological aids, teacher training, and supportive peer interaction are essential to improve student engagement and participation in classroom learning activities.

Table 3: Social Interaction with Peers



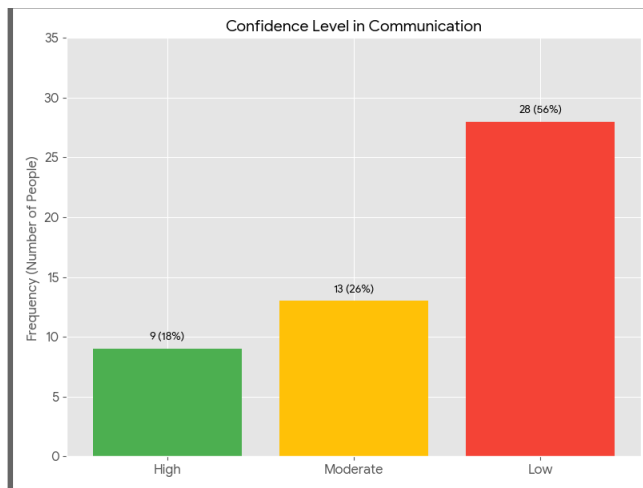
Interaction Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strong	10	20 %
Moderate	15	30 %
Weak	25	50 %

Interpretation

The above table shows that **50%** of the students have weak interaction with peers, indicating that communication barriers greatly affect friendship, group participation, and social bonding. Around **30%** of the students demonstrate moderate interaction, while only **20%** show strong peer interaction and active social involvement.

These findings suggest that students with hearing impairment often experience difficulty in communicating effectively with classmates, which may lead to feelings of isolation, low confidence and reduced participation in social activities. Lack of sign language support, limited peer understanding, and communication gaps are major factors affecting their social relationships in inclusive schools.

Table 4: Confidence Level in Communication



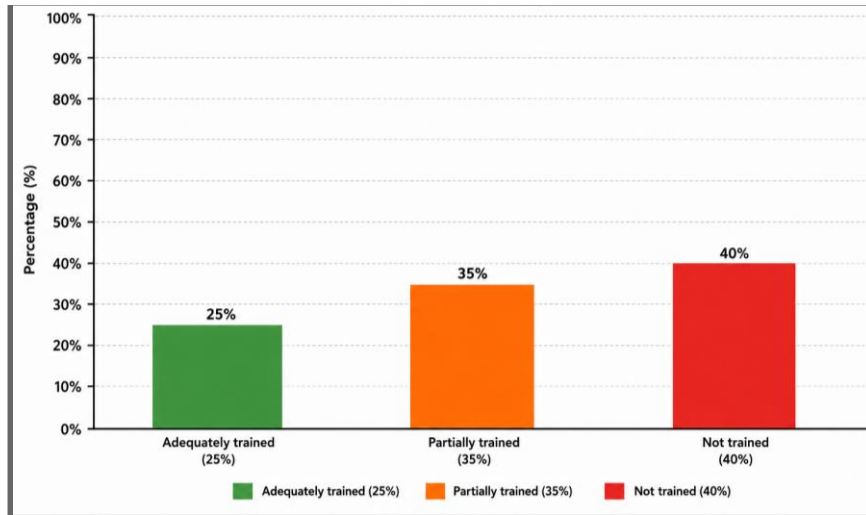
Confidence Level	Frequency	Percentage(%)
High	9	18 %
Moderate	13	26 %
Low	28	56 %

Interpretation

The above table shows that **56%** of the students have low confidence in communication, indicating that communication barriers negatively affect their ability to interact with teachers and peers. About **26%** of students show moderate confidence, while only **18%** have high confidence in communication.

These findings suggest that lack of communication support and difficulty in understanding verbal interaction reduce student’s confidence, participation, and social involvement in inclusive classrooms.

Table 5: Teacher Training in Inclusive Communication



Training Level	Frequency (N=20)	Percentage (%)
Adequately Trained	5	25%
Partially Trained	7	35%
Not Trained	8	40%

Interpretation

The table shows that **40%** of teachers are not trained in inclusive communication, while **35%** are only partially trained. Only **25%** of teachers are adequately trained to support students with hearing impairment.

These findings indicate that many teachers lack proper knowledge and skills in inclusive teaching practices, sign language support, and communication strategies. As a result, students with hearing impairment may face difficulties in understanding lessons, participating in classroom activities, and interacting effectively in inclusive classrooms.

Overall Analysis

The analysis clearly shows that:

- Communication barriers are highly prevalent in inclusive classrooms
- Students face difficulties in understanding, interaction, and participation
- Social performance is negatively affected in terms of confidence and relationships
- Teacher training and communication support systems are insufficient

A strong relationship exists between communication barriers and poor social performance.

Conclusion from Data Analysis

The findings confirm that communication barriers significantly influence the social performance of students with hearing impairment in inclusive schools of Delhi. Without Proper communication support, students are unable to fully participate, interact, and develop socially. Therefore, improving communication strategies is essential for achieving effective inclusion.

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