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### INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN: PERSPECTIVES OF STAKEHOLDERS

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#### ABSTRACT

Teachers in both general education and special education were asked about their perspectives on inclusive education as part of the research. The primary goal of this study was to gain insight into the views of Pakistani teachers on inclusive education. Self-developed instruments were used to gather the data. There were 39 questions on the survey. Pilot testing and expert opinion were used to confirm the instrument's validity and reliability. A reliability coefficient known as Cronbach alpha was calculated using SPSS. As a whole, the correlation coefficient was 0.80. The data was analyzed using mean values and a t-test. According to meticulous data analysis, all teachers' perceptions of the practice of Inclusive education are true and all instructors support it. It was also revealed that there is no substantial difference between the views of general and special-needs educators towards inclusive education. The study presented suggestions for policy makers to improve the current scene of inclusive education for further betterment of inclusive education.

#### INTRODUCTION

When it comes to inclusion, it's not only about disabilities and schools. Social fairness is at the heart of inclusion. What kind of inclusion requests would we wish to make from the rest of the world? Which skills and responsibilities are required to thrive in different societies? We can create a better society for all of

us if we hang on to Inclusion as a model of social equity (Sapon-Shevin, 2003). A school's commitment to inclusion should not be viewed as an add-on. The school's mission, reasoning, principles, routines, and exercises demand that this be taken for granted. Instead of a member who is included in an ordinary school, full inclusion must be deeply ingrained in the school's founding, missions, convictions, and day-to-day activities (Segal, 2007). This refers to how we plan and implement our schools, programmes and activities so that all students can learn and participate together without any form of prejudice. When it comes to education, Sandkull defines Inclusive Education as, "The process of tending and responding to the diverse requirements of all learners and to enhance training" (Sandkull, 2007).

Ballard (2003) characterized inclusive education as "non-prejudicial regarding handicap, society and sexual orientation. It includes all special needs students in a group, with no exemptions and regardless of their educated person, physical, tangible or other contrast, having equivalent rights to get to the socially esteemed educational program of their general public as full-timed esteemed parts of age-fitting standard classes. Inclusive accentuates differences over osmosis striving to keep away from the colonization of minority experience by predominant modes of inclusions and activity".

The essential standard of the inclusive educationist that all youngsters ought to learn together, wherever conceivable, paying little respect to any troubles, or other contrasts they may have. Inclusive education must perceive and react to the assorted needs of their special needs students, pleasing both distinctive styles and rates of learning and guaranteeing quality instruction to all through proper curricula, hierarchical plans, showing methodologies, asset utilization and associations with their groups. There ought to be a continuum of help and administrations to match the continuum of exceptional needs experienced in every school (Wang, 2009).

The vicinity of special needs students with inclusion gives an impetus to learning open doors and encounters that may not generally be a piece of the educational program, particularly identifying with social equity, preference, value, et cetera (Jorgensen, 2007). Based on the encounters reported by the members, fruitful inclusion brought about expanded understanding of contrast and differences by the ordinarily creating special needs students in the classroom (Finke, Mcnaughton, & Drager, 2009).

According to early researchers (Wehmeyer & Agran, 2006), the general training classroom is the best location for students to acquire the general education instructional module. Students with scholarly and other formative disabilities who are taught in all instruction classrooms show better performance in reading and math (McGhie et.al., 2013) and higher gains in flexible conduct when compared to students with sense and other formative inclusion who are taught in specific settings. After doing research on students' academic conclusions, it was discovered that students with severe disabilities have more scholarly reactions and lower levels of competing behaviours when they are in all instruction classrooms compared to the bespoke curriculum setting (Mortweet, Utey, Walker, Dawson, Delquadri, Reddy, Greenwood, Hamilton, & Ledford,

1999). Classrooms in general instruction provided more guidance, more whole-class direction, and tended to focus on academic content more than specialized curriculum classrooms. Non-disabled associates were used more frequently while grown-ups were utilized less (Helmstetter et.al., 1998). Students' social and interpersonal skills improve when they are taught in inclusive classrooms (Fisher & Meyer, 2002).

The standard educational system in Pakistan works freely for general educational systems. Such isolation is additionally apparent in private sector. The showing-learning paradigm fails to take into account the unique learning needs of children. The population of Pakistan with a disability was 3286630 in 1998, accounting for 2.54 percent of the total population, according to the national census. 2.85 percent of people with disabilities are men, while 2.21 percent are women. In 1998, (Statistics). The figure is wildly exaggerated, as it is likely that moderate and mild special needs pupils were not included in the definition of incapacity. According to the most logical explanation, the registration staff was ill-prepared to recognize and classify children with disabilities. In 2002, Pakistan's government approved a national policy for people with disabilities on the recommendations of the Ministry of Women Development, Social Work, and Special Education. In addition to mainstreaming, this strategy included sections on inclusive education and training, and it also laid out the standards for its implementation (Ishfaq & Rana,2015).

The act of Inclusive Education is becoming step by step in Pakistan. Training arrangements are likewise concentrating on the idea of Inclusive Education in Pakistan. In the field of examination in Education, the specialists and researchers are advancing their proposals for Inclusive Education, as it unquestionably give chances to the uncommon special needs students to exceed expectations in their field of scholastics alongside typical special needs students at standard. However, still the idea of Inclusive Education needs to be elucidated. The impression of inclusive instruction stakeholders is not yet clear. There is an unusual assorted qualities in the thoughts and observation about Inclusive Education. Such a gap in reasonable understanding of Inclusive Education has incited the inclusion of the specialist to lead a study in this field of learning and comprehension. The primary proposition of the researchers is to get understanding and perceptions of teachers in general education and special education about Inclusive Education.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY**

1. To explore the perceptions of General Education Teachers about the inclusive education in Pakistan.
2. To know the perceptions of Special Education Teachers about the inclusive education in Pakistan.
3. To find out the difference between the perceptions of General education teachers and Special Education Teachers about inclusive education in Pakistan.

## **HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of General education teachers and Special Education Teachers about inclusive education in Pakistan.

### ***Significance Of the Study***

The lack of access to education for both children and adults with disabilities is a major issue in the disability area, and it affects both children and adults. This is a very significant issue because education is a fundamental right for all people, as entrenched in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and protected by a number of international conventions. Across the vast majority of countries, there is a significant disparity between the educational possibilities available to impaired children and those available to non-disabled children. It will simply not be able to attain the aim of Education for All until we bring about a thorough transformation of the current environment (Lindqvist, 1999). The practice of Inclusive Education is growing day by day in Pakistan. Education policies are also focusing on the concept of Inclusive Education in Pakistan. In the field of research in Education, the researchers and scholars are putting forward their recommendations in favor of Inclusive Education, as it surely provide opportunities to the special students to excel in their field of academics along with normal students at mainstream. But, still the concept of Inclusive Education needs to be clarified. The perception of inclusive education stakeholders is not yet clear. There is a strange diversity in the ideas and perception about Inclusive Education. Such a gap in conceptual understanding of Inclusive Education has provoked the attention of the researcher to conduct a study in this field of knowledge and understanding. The main intention of the researcher is to get insight into the perceptions of inclusive education stakeholders about the concept of Inclusive Education.

The study will surely play a significant role in the field of knowledge and understanding about inclusive education and adds into the literature related to inclusive education. Moreover, the findings of the study will be helpful to the policy makers to modify their policies according to the mind set of stakeholders of inclusive education.

### ***Methodology and Procedure***

The study was descriptive in nature, further it was survey research. A sample of 50 General Education Teachers and 50 Special Education teachers was taken by using convenient sampling technique. A self- developed Questionnaire was designed to obtain perceptions of various stakeholders. The questionnaire covered the following areas of Inclusive Education.

- Aims, goals and objectives of Inclusive Education
- Vision and mission of Inclusive Education
- Learning experiences in inclusive education
- Learning environment of inclusive education
- Family and community role in inclusive education

- Leadership and human resource management practices for inclusive education
- Quality assurance in inclusive education
- Teachers’ professional development for inclusive education
- Instructional material and instructional strategies in inclusive education
- Classroom management in inclusive education
- Social cohesion in inclusive education
- Assessment, measurement and evaluation procedures in inclusive education
- Role of inclusive education for social development of students
- Problems and issues in inclusive education

Internal consistency reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, which was determined by examining how all items in a test relate to other test times and to the whole scale. This indicates that the items on the questionnaire are internally consistent and reliable, as indicated by the value of Cronbach's Alpha of the questionnaire for understanding of inclusion, which was 0.80. The data acquired through a questionnaire of stakeholders was analysed in order to determine the percentage of respondents who had varied perceptions of the situation. It was calculated by determining how all items in a test relate to each other as well as to the total test scores that the Cronbach's Alpha could be used to evaluate internal consistency reliability. The questionnaire's reliability statistics were calculated in order to confirm the high quality of the instruments used. On the mean score of the respondents, one sample t-test was performed, with 75 percent of the maximum score serving as a cut score or test value, in order to assess the following questions of the study,

1. What is the perception of teachers (General & Special Education Teachers) about the inclusive education?  
Independent sample t-test was applied on the mean score of the subjects to analyze the following questions of the study i.e.:
2. What is the difference of Perception between General and Special Education teachers about Inclusive Education?

***One Sample T Test Between Cut Score and Mean Score of The Responses of Stakeholders of Inclusive Education***

One sample t-test was applied on the mean score of the respondents by considering 75% of the maximum score as a cut score or test value to analyze.

**Table 1:** One sample t test between cut score and mean score of the responses of general teachers about perceptions of inclusive education.

One Sample t-test

Test Value =117						
N	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Mean	SD

50	-2.186	49	.034	-2.980	114.02	9.637
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The mean score of 50 respondents was 114.02. One Sample t-test was used by applying test value = 117 (75% or cut score = 117), the t value was -2.186 and the p value i.e. level of significant (two tailed) is .034 which is less than 0.05. The mean value is 114.02 which is less than the test value. It revealed that there is a significant difference between the mean value and test value. It indicates that perceptions of general educators are significantly less than the test value i.e. 75% of total score.

**Table 2:** One sample t test between cut score and mean score of the responses of Special Education teacher’s perceptions about inclusive education.

One Sample t-Test

Test Value =117						
N	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Mean	SD
50	.961	49	.342	-1.440	118.44	10.601

The mean score of 50 respondent was 118.44 One Sample t-test was used by applying test value = 117 (75% or cut score = 117), the t value was and .961 the p value i.e. level of significant (two tailed) is .342 which is greater than 0.05. It revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean value and test value. It indicates that perceptions of special education teachers are accurate and about 75% of total score.

**Table 3:** Independent sample t-test between the General and Special Education teacher’s perceptions about Inclusive Education.

Group Statistics				
	Designation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total	Gen Teachers	50	114.02	9.637
	Spl.Edu Teacher	50	118.44	10.601

Independent Samples Test							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Total	Equal variances assumed	.024	.877	2.182	98	.032	4.420

Since the mean scores of General education teachers is 114.02 and special education teacher is 118.44 and the p value i.e. level of significant (two tailed) is .032 which is less than 0.05. It indicated that there is a significant difference between general and special education teacher perceptions about inclusive

education. As the mean score of special education teachers are more than the general education teachers, therefore the perception of special education teachers is more positive than general education teachers.

## **FINDINGS**

1. There is a significant difference between the mean value and test value. It indicates that perceptions of general educators are significantly less than the test value i.e. 75% of total score.
2. There is a significant difference between the mean value and test value. It indicates that perceptions of special education teachers are accurate and about 75% of total score.
3. There is a significant difference between general and special education teacher respondents about the perceptions of inclusive education. Perceptions of special education teachers are more accurate than the general education teachers.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research highlights the perceptions of teachers about inclusive education. After analyzing the results of the study, the researcher had concluded that perceptions of special educators are accurate. It indicates that perceptions of general education teachers are very precise. Generally, the findings indicate that the teachers have a positive attitude toward inclusion of children with disabilities.

## **DISCUSSION**

All children should have equal access to education, but those who are most vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion should be given special attention. It is the goal of inclusive education to remove the barriers that keep people from participating in the educational process. Rather than focusing just on the individual kid, an inclusive education system promotes and encourages flexibility in the system, the curricula and the techniques, so that all children's learning needs can be satisfied (Burns, 2003). To be effective, it is necessary to adapt the process to the specifics of the scenario at hand. It is a methodical strategy meant to ensure that all children have equal access to educational opportunities. Education for all is a shared goal of this initiative, which is aimed at reducing and overcoming all exclusion from the human right to education at least at the primary level (Marzano, 2007). In the words of Ashraf et.al., 2017, stated in their the study, it was revealed that all teachers supported the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom, and there was no significant difference in the attitudes of stakeholders in both the general and special education sectors. Special needs students must be accommodated in the general education classroom. According to the findings of this study, the majority of teachers are in favour of implementing an inclusive classroom environment. This problem cannot be handled by the special education system. The majority of those who took the survey agreed that having an inclusive setup is critical. It is necessary to provide special equipment for out-of-school children with impairments in their nearby school. Every district and tehsil have a special school for children with special needs, however many people live far from these facilities, making it difficult for them to attend. The only way to help these

students is to hide them in EFA, which helps all children regardless of their background.

Clearly, the concept of inclusion is not only complicated, but also multi-dimensional. Multifaceted and contradictory beliefs and practices form its core. However, it is important to remember that inclusion is not just an issue of 'legal rights'. Considerations such as "who" are also included, as well as 'how, when, and where' students are being educated. Also necessary is the implementation of vitally important guidelines, tactics, and systems to assist educators and other members of the workforce in fostering an inclusive climate and way of working.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It's been determined that the following steps should be taken to help mainstream schools better accommodate students with disabilities:

- As mandated by Article 25A of the Pakistani Constitution, all students, regardless of their special needs, must be enrolled in ordinary schools.
- General teachers, school administrators, and teachers should receive more in-service training to enhance their attitudes regarding the inclusion of kids with disabilities in their classrooms.
- For pupils with impairments, current educational policies and procedures must be modified. Schools, management, facilities, and support services; curriculum; pedagogical pattern; admission policies; infrastructural accessibility; evaluation and assessment methods; etc.
- General Teachers and school heads who enroll at least 10 students with disabilities should get some kind of recognition, such as a certificate of gratitude or a financial prize.
- It is imperative that the education sector receives additional funding and that special attention is paid to creating a child-friendly and inclusive environment.
- Students with disabilities need better education, and an inclusive educational strategy is one step in that direction.
- School administrators and teachers need adequate resources and training in inclusion education.
- Seminars and workshops should be held at the district and provincial levels in order to raise knowledge of inclusive education and foster a more positive attitude among school leaders.
- Teachers and principals of Special Schools should be tasked with relocating pupils with mild or moderate disabilities to nearby institutions.
- For parents of Pwds, a special counselling and guidance programme should be established.
- The general B.Ed./M.Ed. curriculum should include a course on inclusive education.
- Schools should stock their libraries with the most up-to-date literature and works on inclusive education.

It is possible to perform long-term studies on the integration of children with impairments in conventional schools to address other related issues.



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