

ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL
Available Online: https://assajournal.com
Vol. 5 No. 01 Jan-Mar 2026. Page#. 9129-9139
Print ISSN: 3006-2497 Online ISSN: 3006-2500
Platform & Workflow by: Open Journal System
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24456219

Teachers' Perspective son Inclusive Education for Students with Learning Disabilities in Public Schools of Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract
Inclusive education promotes equal learning opportunities for all students regardless of their abilities and disabilities. The present study investigated teachers' perspectives on inclusive education for students with learning disabilities in public schools of Punjab, Pakistan. Specifically, the study explored teachers' perceptions of parental attitudes, challenges faced by students with learning disabilities, availability of educational resources and support systems, and suggestions for improving inclusivity. A descriptive survey research design was employed. Data were collected from 120 teachers through a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that teachers generally perceived parents as supportive of their children with learning disabilities. However, students faced substantial academic, social, emotional, and environmental challenges. Limited educational resources, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate support services were identified as major barriers to effective inclusion. Teachers recommended increased government support, improved infrastructure, professional development opportunities, and stronger parental involvement to enhance inclusive education practices. The study concludes that successful implementation of inclusive education requires collaborative efforts among policymakers, educators, parents, and communities.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Learning Disabilities, Teachers' Perceptions, Public Schools, Educational Challenges, Support Systemms, Pakistan.*

Introduction

Children with learning disabilities (LD) face significant challenges in acquiring and applying academic skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics. These disabilities are neurological in nature and often affect how the brain processes, stores, and retrieves information. Unlike general intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities are specific to particular areas of learning and do not reflect overall cognitive ability (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2019).

Effective strategies for helping these children include individualized instruction, assistive technologies, and multi-sensory teaching approaches. Teachers play a vital role by creating inclusive classrooms, fostering a supportive learning environment, and working closely with parents to address the specific needs of these children (Smith et al., 2018).

Addressing learning disabilities requires collaboration between educators, parents, and specialized professionals to ensure that children with LD can achieve their full potential and actively participate in society.

Inclusive education has emerged as a vital component of equitable educational systems, ensuring that all students, including those with learning disabilities, have access to quality education within mainstream school environments. Inclusive education fosters equal opportunities for students by addressing their diverse needs through targeted support and interventions. In Pakistan, the implementation of inclusive education remains a complex challenge, especially in rural districts like Chiniot, where resources and teacher training are often limited (UNICEF,2019; UNESCO, 2020). In diverse sociological, policy and infrastructural reasons they are still being locked out of their right to education in rural regions of developing countries (World Bank,2018). These difficulties are acuter in areas such as District Chiniot whicha culminate in large gaps in achievement of childhoodeducation for children with learning disabilities.

The difficulties which are faced by students with learning disabilities in getting better education are illustrated by District Chiniot, which is a rural area in Punjab, Pakistan. Unfortunately, for children with learning disabilities, issues of non-availability of functional classrooms with ramps in these schools physically put barriers to them (Government of Punjab, 2021). Also, there are virtually no specialized teaching aids, for example, books and other teaching materials for children with learning disabilities (Shah, 2020).

Three major concerns pertain to inclusive education teacher preparation, namely the unavailable or limited facilitated professional development for teachers in IETP, as well as teachers in general. Teachers serving in rural schools mostly lack the talent and professionalknowledge that might enable them to adapt their teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of disabled students (UNICEF, 2019). In a survey, most teachers complained about compounding the teacher's job description for children in these categories which often leads to isolation of such students or lack of adequate attention given to enhance their learning (Shah, 2020). The problem exists because there are hardly any professional development programs that focus on inclusive education let alone those in rural areas such as District Chiniot.

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The study discovers that the experiences of children with learning disabilities in rural areas like District Chiniot, Punjab, Pakistan is affected by the attitudes towards disability. Parents and members of the community always observe learning disability as a source of stigma which often results in students being isolated or discouraged from attending school (Shah, 2020). Fragile children with learning disabilities are even excluded from social life which impinges on their chances of interacting fully with fellow students or receiving quality education. Moreover, efforts made to help all learners feel welcome and valued irrespective of their abilities are also hampered by the lack of community support for inclusion policy at the nation's schools (World Bank, 2018).

Even though in the recent past, the Pakistani government has put efforts of implementing policy measures providing integrated education for children with learning disabilities, the progress made in practice implementation of these principles especially in rural regions of Pakistan has been minimal. To democratize the classrooms for students with learning disabilities, the Punjab government has instituted several measures: ininclusive education classrooms and teacher training through means of funding (Government of Punjab, 2021). Nonetheless these efforts are still often insufficient due to insufficient funding, leadership procrastination and lack of harmony between school leaders and regional and national offices of education (UNESCO, 2020).

Review of Literature

Awan and Memon (2020) overviewed of the Pakistani inclusive education system along with the prospects and issues regarding kids with disabilities. In highlighting their ideas, the authors make a point of pointing to crucial barriers that hinder the achievement of the desired goal of the usage of inclusive approaches, including resource constraint, shame, and teacher training shortcomings. The study shows how important it is to design a learning environment which would have a positive attitude toward the various needs of each learner. The authors also endorse public enlightenment campaigns as a way of demystifying the issues of disability. Khokhar and Arshad (2020) provided a detailed analysis of the educational challenges faced by children with disabilities in Pakistan districts wise. The authors point out some large gaps in the distribution of resources, teachers' preparation as well as school infrastructure including rural

schools. To counteract the systematic prejudice that features the system, the authors call for a concentrated supply of the requirements for school and other educational establishments. This will ensure that every kid have equal chance of going to school as much as possible.

Mehmood and Khan (2020) explored ways through which peer assistance can be employed to promote share education in the context of a primary school. The authors argue that constructive peer relationships may enhance education and integration of the child with disability. The study underscores that the climate supportive for integrating constructionist instructional environments needs to be inclusive and cooperative learning oriented. Rehman and Ashraf (2020) thinked about the experience of parents and attempt to generalize the view of the concept of the inclusive education - we are going to encounter mainly the positive and negative perception. They point at the problems touching upon the quality of the education provided in the context of inclusion and concentrate primarily on two claims: The two are the scarcity of resources and the lack of preparation of teachers. Hypothesis 4 also finds support from the results in that the parental attitudes resulting from the education of children with disabilities are mainly contained by cultural beliefs in the education of such children together with societal culture. Farooq and Nasir (2020) examined the attitude of teachers to inclusive education and notes that although most of them appreciate the need to integrate learners with disabilities into normal classroom, they are unsure of how to implement the concept. For achieving highly confident and proficient instructors the writers stress the need for professional development and training. Bukhari and Khan (2020) discussed the effects that several structural features of the school environment have on children with learning disabilities. The authors also provide several crucial factors that must be met so that students with disabilities could learn in the context of inclusive education, snamely, attitudes of the instructors, the dynamics of interactions, and spatial arrangements of classrooms for disabled students. From the findings of their studies, the authors have suggested that an improved learning environment for children with disabilities will lead to better learning results.

Khawaja and Gul (2020) studied the gender differentiation in the access of children with impairments to education and find out that girls suffer more compared to boys. From the standpoint of the authors who penned the under mentioned papers, gender biases and societal norms are the factors that deny girls with disabilities an opportunity to education by influencing such gaps. To promote gender equity in learning environment, the report proposes targeted interventions of change. Iqbal and Rashid (2021) reviewed the existing and potential activities and the challenges, to implement inclusive learning programs in Pakistan, especially focus on the importance of policy effectiveness and coordination. It is in light of this that the authors argue that CO while recording small improvement had massive holes especially in rural areas such as Tehsil Bhawana. To ensure that policies are responsive to the needs of disabled children, the work underlines the steady policy check as an imperative process. By pointing out the challenges to policy integration and implementation, the authors are encouraging the formation of more cooperation between the government leadership and institutions in as far as facilitating inclusiveness is concerned.

Shah and Malik (2021) discussed to what extent the utilization of assistive technology can lead to improvement of children's academic performance in case of impairments. Both the writers express the importance of how technology should be integrated into lessons to improve access and the level of participation among students. In this systematic review, the authors focus on possible types of software and assistive technology for learning inclusive education. Rehman and Shaheen (2021) reviewed to what extent social stigma has effects on school attendance of Pakistani children with impairments. From the authors' perspective, values in civil society are more than capable of restricting learning achievements and participation, andtherefore parity of exclusion. As pointed out, the research results point out the significance of campaigning, education, and eradicating prejudice against people with disability and gender. Aslam and Raza (2021) stated only one of the messages about impaired children is that early initiation helps to increase the chances of development. This is evident in proof that the writers have put forward that support early education intervention to the young child in terms of their mental, social and emotional growth. These outcomes imply that it is appropriate to finance early intervention programs as a result of favorable effect on disabled children in future. Khan and Iqbal (2021) highlighted the differences in educational opportunities between urban and rural areas, particularly in regions like Tehsil Bhawana. The article suggests that interventions targeting these disparities-such as improving school facilities and providing parental support could significantly enhance learning outcomes for children with disabilities in rural contexts. A complex interplay of factors affects the academic performance of children with disabilities in rural Punjab, as revealed by the authors' investigation. The authors argue that socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and school infrastructure are critical determinants of educational attainment.

Zafar and Hussain (2021) reviewed the ways in which teacher preparation programs have nurtured teachers for heading diverse classrooms. The authors ascertain that although many teachers indicate that they would volunteer to take part in implementing inclusion, they often are ill-equipped to perform these tasks and lack understanding about the subject. This research insists on the need to deliver comprehensive lesson plans that capture all the aspects of learning in children with impairment. Malik and Ali (2021) explored how increased community participation may enhance the option for learning of children with such conditions. The writers identify well-functioning neighborhood-based programs which have acted as barriers to key resources for support and education. The implications of the findings are that good community relations enhance education performance. Ali and Malik (2022) explored the many challenges faced by children with disability in Pakistan in an attempt to access education as provided by data collected from formal interviews carried out on parents, teachers, and local people. Instea, the writers provide practical ideas for introducing the kind of dynamic and versatile curriculum that can be tailored for each learner's needs. Qureshi and Niazi (2022) analyzed this aspect two research questions have been formulated: The first one seeks to explore in what ways NGOs have contributed to the health of inclusive education in Pakistan. When claiming about the changes required, the authors emphasize that the most active force, which brings legislative changes and carbonate; resources; and raises public awareness to the needs of children with

disability, is non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The study also highlights the extent to which cooperation between NGOs, governmental organizations, and academic institutions is necessary.

Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was used to explore teachers' perspectives regarding inclusive education for students with learning disabilities.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of teachers working in public schools of Punjab that enrolled students with learning disabilities. A sample of 120 teachers was selected using a convenient sampling technique.

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed based on the objectives of the study. The instrument included items related to parental attitudes, educational challenges, available resources, support systems, and recommendations for improving inclusive education.

Data Collection

Data were collected through personal visits to selected schools. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and confidentiality was ensured.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated to describe teachers' responses.

Results

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents(N=120)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	58	48.3
	Female	62	51.7
Qualification	Bachelor's	28	23.3
	Master's	74	61.7
	MPhil and above	18	15.0

As shown in Table 1, most respondents possessed a Master's degree and represented both genders almost equally.

Table 2

Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Parents' Attitudes

Statement	Mean	SD
Parents encourage participation in extracurricular activities	4.12	0.78
Parents believe in children's future success	4.05	0.81
Parents support learning activities at home	3.89	0.92
Parents attend school meetings regularly	3.71	1.03

Table 2 indicates that teachers generally perceived parents as supportive and encouraging toward their children with learning disabilities.

Table 3

Educational Challenges Faced by Students with Learning Disabilities

Challenge	Mean	SD
Difficulty completing examinations on time	4.34	0.74
Difficulty understanding complex concepts	4.21	0.82
Curriculum not adapted to learning needs	4.09	0.87
Limited access to educational materials	3.95	0.91

Table 3 demonstrates that academic challenges remain a significant concern for students with learning disabilities.

Table 4

Social and Emotional Challenges

Challenge	Mean	SD
Low self-esteem	4.31	0.76
Peer insensitivity	4.27	0.79
Social isolation	4.13	0.85
Anxiety during assessments	4.05	0.89

The findings suggest that social and emotional difficulties considerably affect students'educational experiences.

Table 5

Availability of Resources and Support Systems

Resource/Support Need	Mean	SD
Reduced teacher-student ratio	4.45	0.71
Increased government funding	4.39	0.75
Professional development opportunities	4.30	0.82
Specialized learning materials	3.51	1.06

The results indicate a strong need for additional educational resources and institutional support.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that teachers generally hold positive perceptions regarding parental attitudes toward students with learning disabilities. Parents were viewed as supportive and optimistic regarding their children's future. However, active participation in educational planning and advocacy remains limited.

The study further revealed that students with learning disabilities face substantial academic challenges, particularly in completing assessments and understanding complex concepts. These findings support previous research indicating that traditional instructiona1 approaches often fail to accommodate diverse learning needs.

Social and emotional challenges were also prevalent. Teachers reported low self-esteem, peer insensitivity, and social isolation among students with learning disabilities. Such challenges can negatively influence academic engagement and overall well-being.

Furthermore, the findings highlighted deficiencies in educational resources and support systems. Participants emphasized the need for smaller class sizes, improved infrastructure, specialized teaching materials, and continuous professional development opportunities. These findings suggest that successful implementation of inclusive education requires both policy-level commitment and practical support within schools.

Conclusion

The study explored teachers' perspectives on inclusive education for students with learning disabilities in public schools of Punjab. The findings revealed that although parents generally demonstrate supportive attitudes, students continue to experience significant academic, social, emotional, and environmental barriers. Limited resources and inadequate support systems further hinder effective inclusion.

Improving inclusive education requires collaborative efforts among educational authorities, school administrators, teachers, parents, and community organizations. Enhanced teacher training, increased funding, improved infrastructure, and stronger support services are essential for ensuring equitable educational opportunities for students with learning disabilities.

Recommendations

1. Regular professional development programs should be conducted to enhance teachers'competencies in inclusive education practices.

2. Public schools should be provided with adequate resources and assistive learning materials to support students with learning disabilities.

3. Strong collaboration between schools and parents should be promoted to improve students' academic and social development.

4. Government authorities should allocate sufficient funding to strengthen inclusive education services and infrastructure.

5. Counseling and support services should be established in schools to address the emotional and psychological needs of students with learning disabilities.

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