

Perceptions of Stakeholders about Inclusive Education of Children with Visual Impairment

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Introduction: Inclusion means in the words of the processes of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools. (Booth, & Ainscow, 2000)

The Salamanca Statement

Any discussion about the definition of inclusive education needs to use the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994) as a reference point. The Statement re-affirms the right to education of every individual, as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and renews the pledge made by the world community at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All to ensure that right for all, regardless of individual differences. The Statement also mentions the 1993 UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities which states that the education of disabled children should be an integral part of the education system. There is, however, no reference to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning,
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs,
- Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs,

- Those who have special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting these needs,
- Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system as reported by S. Miles, 2000.

Students with visual impairments have the right to an appropriate education that is guided by knowledgeable specialists who work collaboratively with parents, the student and other education team members. Students with visual impairments need an educational system that meets the individual needs of ALL students, fosters independence, and is measured by the success of each individual in the school and community. Vision is fundamental to the learning process and is the primary basis upon which most traditional education strategies are based. Students who are visually impaired are most likely to succeed in educational systems where appropriate instruction and services provided in a full array of program options by qualified staff to address each student's unique educational needs, as required by Public Law 101-476, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Special instructional guidelines for the visually impaired in regular setting must follow the following:

- Same curricular goals but be prepared to modify methods of instruction and materials. Hand on learning where the students learn by doing, use the concrete materials and allow the students to explore and experience many of the concepts that are explained verbally.
- Use peer teaching or tutoring, particularly in helping visually impaired students to comprehend information that is visually presented.
- Allow students extra time to complete assignments, and modify tests used to ascertain student achievement and knowledge attainment(e.g, design oral test using tape recorder)
- Become familiar with special equipment that can be used by visually impaired students and encourage them to use instructional and assistive aids where necessary.
- Work closely with parents so that commitment, direction and interventions are consistent and unified.

Students with visual impairments have the right to an appropriate education that is guided by knowledgeable specialists who work collaboratively with parents, the student and other education team members. (A.F.B., 2000.)

Inclusive Education in Pakistan: A review:

The regular school system in Pakistan functions independently of special school systems. Such segregation is also evident in private sector. The teaching learning process does not address the individual learning of children. According to the national census 1998, the population of Pakistan with disability is 32,86,630 constituting 2.54 percent of the total population. Among the persons with disability 2.85 percent are male and 2.21 percent female. (Census, 1998).The figure is highly under-estimated, as the definition of disabilities probably did not include moderate and mild disability. The more plausible assumption for this understatement is that the census staff was not trained to identify and classify the categories of disability. The government of Pakistan, on the recommendations of Ministry of Women Development, Social Work and Special Education approved the National policy for Persons with disabilities in 2002. The policy has a chapter on mainstreaming inclusive education without clearly giving the guidelines for its implementation. (Hameed, 2002).

The education of the children with visual impairment from primary to secondary education is established in segregated setup whereas no separate setup is found for these children at graduate or post graduate level in Pakistan.. Most of them who have the access complete their studies in the regular system. It clearly reflects that inclusive education can be a good setup for them if appropriate adaptation is made in instruction with assistive and educational devices and special arrangements are made in the evaluation process by the teachers at primary or secondary level. This research is conducted to know the perceptions of stake holders (children with visual impairment studying at different levels of education, their teachers, and parents) about inclusive education. (Hameed, 2002).

Objectives:

The major objectives of the study were to i) Identify the perceptions of children with visual impairment about inclusive education studying at different level, ii) Identify the perceptions of parents of visually impaired children about inclusion and iii) know the perceptions of teachers towards inclusive education of children with visual impairment.

Methodology

For this research the population was the visually impaired children studying in inclusive education, their parents and their teachers. The sample included 30 visually impaired students studying at different levels in inclusive set up, 30 parents of the same children and their 30 teachers. Three questionnaires were developed with similar questions with slight difference of language to collect data. The perceptions of the stakeholders were

identified on the following major descriptors of inclusive education i) Admission policies, ii) Special education services, iii) Attitudes in inclusion iv) Curriculum and v) Evaluation. Convenient sampling was applied to collect the data as strength of students was less due to less inclusive practices in country.

Results:

The cross tabulation and independent sample t-test are being used for data analysis. Value of total in data analysis shows the score in perception of respondents about inclusive education on different above mentioned descriptors.

Perceptions of students with Visual impairment:

Reliability of 20 items from questionnaire of children with visual impairment was (.70). The responses of students on these items were converted in to scores to run the analysis.

Table 1: Group statistics on the basis of gender and total scores of the children with visual impairment.

Group Statistics

Total score	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	male	21	78.62	5.94	1.30
	female	9	75.89	5.86	1.95

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Total score	Equal variances assumed	.010	.923	1.158	28	.256	2.73	2.36	-2.10	7.56
	Equal variances not assumed			1.165	15.390	.262	2.73	2.34	-2.26	7.72

Table 1.1 shows that the results of Levene's test of equality of variances indicates, that variances of two groups are significantly different ($F=.010$, $Sig=.923$). The results of independent sample T-test for equality of means indicates that there is no significant difference between two means ($t=1.158$, $X=2.73$, $Sig=.256$).

So the above results show that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female children with visual impairment about inclusive education. On given descriptors of inclusive education.

Table 1.2 Group statistics on the basis of age and total scores of the children with visual impairment.

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Age of students	30	250.80	41.85	7.64
Total score	30	77.80	5.95	1.09

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Age of students	32.825	29	.000	250.80	235.17	266.43
Total score	71.614	29	.000	77.80	75.58	80.02

Table 4.3 shows that the results of Levene's test of equality of variances indicates, that variances of two groups are significantly different ($F=$, $Sig=.$). The results of independent sample T-test for equality of means indicates that there is no significant difference between two means ($t=32.825$, $X=250.80$, $Sig=.000$).

So the above result shows that the age difference does not change the perceptions of students with visual impairment towards inclusion on the basis of their total score.

Perceptions of parents of students with Visual impairment

Item reliability

Reliability of 20 items from questionnaire of parents of visually impaired children is (.6229).

Table 2.1: Group statistics on the basis of gender and total scores of the parents of children with visual impairment.

Group Statistics

	male/female	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total score	male	27	79.63	6.81	1.31
	female	3	79.33	4.62	2.67

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	Sig.	t-test for Equality of Means	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	Upper
Total score	Equal variances assumed	.155	.697	.073	.28	28	.942	.30	4.06	-8.02	7.62	
	Equal variances not assumed			.100	.306	8	.927	.30	2.97	-9.04	9.63	

Table 2.1 shows that the results of Levene's test of equality of variances indicates, that variances of two groups are significantly different ($F=.155$, $Sig=.697$). The results of independent sample T-test for equality of means indicates that there is no significant difference between two means ($t=.073$, $X=.30$, $Sig=.942$). So the above results show that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of parents on gender bases and total score about inclusive education. Their perceptions are same.

Table 2.2: Group statistics on the basis of educational qualification and total scores of the parents of children with visual impairment.

Group Statistics

	education of parents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total score	1	17	78.76	6.12	1.48
	1	13	80.69	7.19	1.99

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Total score	Equal variances assumed	.000	.990	-.793	28	.435	-1.93	2.43	-6.91	3.05
	Equal variances not assumed			-.775	23.549	.446	-1.93	2.49	-7.06	3.21

Table 2.2 shows that the results of Levene's test of equality of variances indicates, that variances of two groups are significantly different ($F=.000$, $Sig=.990$). The results of independent sample T-test for equality of means indicates that there is no significant difference between two means ($t=-.793$, $X=-1.93$, $Sig=.435$).

So the above results show that the difference of educational qualification among parents does not impact on the perceptions of parents about inclusive education of their children with visual impairment.

Table 2.3: Group statistics on the basis of occupation and total scores of the parents of children with visual impairment.

Group Statistics

	occupation of parents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total score	13	19	78.58	5.96	1.37
	1	11	81.36	7.45	2.25

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F							Lower	Upper
Total score	Equal variances assumed	.260	.614	-1.126	28	.270	-2.78	2.47	-7.85	2.28
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.059	17.450	.304	-2.78	2.63	-8.32	2.75

Table 2.3 shows that the results of Levene's test of equality of variances indicates, that variances of two groups are significantly different ($F=.260$, $Sig=.614$). The results of independent sample T-test for equality of means indicates that there is no significant difference between two means ($t=-1.126$, $X=-2.78$, $Sig=.270$).

So the above results show that different occupations do not effect the perceptions of the parents of children with visual impairment.

Cross tab Analysis of Teacher's Questionnaire

Item reliability: Reliability of 20 items from questionnaire of teachers of visually impaired children is (.4500). Due to low reliability the analysis for the teachers responses

cross tab analysis was run on each item and only those items are reported which showed the significant association.

Statement 1: To what extent do you think that the medical examination of children is done each month from the institution?

Table 3.1: Cross tab

Count

		To what extent do you think that the medical examination of children is done each month from the institution?			Total
		strongly disagreed	to some extent	agreed	
class	Primary		1		1
	6th			1	1
	FA.	7			7
	B.A.	7			7
	M.A.	10	2		12
	M.Phil	2			2
Total		26	3	1	30

Chi-square=41.410, Sig=.000

There is significant association (Chi-square=41.410, Sig=.000) between the classes of teachers and the response that the medical examination of children is done each month from the institution after the admission.

Statement 2: To what extent do you think that the transportation facilities are provided to the children from the institution?

Table 3.2 Cross tab

		To what extent do you think that the transportation facilities are provided to the children from the institution?				Total
		strongly disagreed	to some extent	agreed	strongly agreed	
class	Primary				1	1
	6th		1			1
	FA.	6	1			7
	B.A.	7				7
	M.A.	5	2	3	2	12
	M.Phil	2				2
Total		20	4	3	3	30
Chi-square=26.244,Sig=.036						

There is significant association (Chi-square=26.244,Sig=.036)between the classes of teachers and the response that the transportation facilities are provided to the children from the institution.

Statement 3: To what extent do you think that the ethics of blind children improved by getting education with normal children?

Table 3.3: Cross tab

Count

		To what extent do you think that the ethics of blind children improved by getting education with normal children?			Total
		to some extent	agreed	strongly agreed	
class	Primary	1			1
	6th			1	1
	FA.		2	5	7
	B.A.		1	6	7
	M.A.		5	7	12
	M.Phil		1	1	2
Total		1	9	20	30
Chi-square=32.438,Sig=.000					

There is significant association (Chi-square=32.438,Sig=.000)between the classes of teachers and the response that the ethics of the blind children improved by getting education with normal children.

Statement 4; To what extent do you think that the children start to integrate the normal children?

Table3.4: Cross tab
Count

		To what extent do you think that the children start to integrate the normal children?			Total
		Disagreed	to some extent	agreed	strongly agreed
class	Primary	1			1
	6th				1
	FA.			3	4
	B.A.			3	4
	M.A.		2	4	6
	M.Phil				2
Total		1	2	10	17

Chi-square=35.370, Sig=.002

There is significant association (Chi-square=35.370,Sig=.002)between the classes of teachers and the response that the children start to integrate with normal children.

Cross tab between ages of teachers and questions

Statement 5: To what extent you are satisfied with the admission policy of the institution?

Table 3.5: Cross tab

Count

		To what extent you are satisfied with the admission policy of the institution?			Total	
		disagreed	to some extent	agreed	strongly agreed	
age of teacher	1	3	2	6	4	15
	2			2	13	15
Total		3	2	8	17	30
Chi-square=11.765,Sig=.008						

There is significant association (Chi-square=11.765,Sig=.008)between the ages of teachers and the response that they are satisfied with the admission policy of the institution.

Findings and Conclusion:

The conclusion of the study is that the visually impaired children strongly agreed that there is a raise in their social activities and general knowledge while studying in inclusive education. Majority of the visually impaired children strongly agreed that they are enabled to develop friendly behavior with normal children. Most of the visually impaired children believe that there is a change in their attitude by getting education with normal children. Most of the visually impaired children strongly agreed that their teacher consider their examination as their normal companions in inclusive setting.

Majority of parents of visually impaired children strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the admission policy of the institution and they agreed that their children are admitted in the institution according to their educational qualification. Most of the parents of visually impaired children believe that there is a change in the attitude of their children by getting education with normal children and it is positive. Most of the parents of visually impaired children agreed that the attitude of the teachers of the institution and the servants working in the institution is satisfied with their child.

Most of the teachers of visually impaired children strongly agreed that the children are admitted in the institution according to their educational qualification. Most of the teachers of visually impaired children strongly agreed that the ethics of the visually impaired children are improved while getting education with normal children. The

teachers of visually impaired children also agreed that there is a raise in the group activities of the visually impaired children and there is a raise in the group activities of the visually impaired children.

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