

Attitude of Parents and Teachers towards Inclusive Education

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Abstract

The current study concerned to know the feelings and reactions of the parents and teachers towards implementation of inclusive education in Punjab, Pakistan. The major intention of this study was to evaluate the attitude of parents with and without special needs and teachers of special needs schools and formal schools. One hundred (100) parents having children with disabilities and having normal children and 100 teachers (50 from special need and 50 formal schools) were selected randomly for data collection. Two Questionnaires: one for parents and one for teachers were used to collect the responses and feedback from participants. The data were collected by researcher. Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used for analysis and interpretation of collected information. It was concluded from the interpretation of participants responses of both parents and teachers were with encouraging. The findings of this study also show that the responses of Pakistani parents and teachers are significant for the flourishing accomplishment of inclusive education.

Key words: Attitude, Inclusive Education, Parents

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Introduction

Academics have a very important part in all the civilized societies of the world. (Shrivastava, 2005). Pakistan is among one of those countries who promised for provision of free and compulsory education to its community according to Education for All (EFA) in the Jomtien Declaration (1990). We cannot isolate Pakistani special needs children for getting quality education. It is our responsibility to arrange such a flexible and conducive learning environment where all children with special needs can participate and get education. This system fulfills their needs and prepares them to meet the challenge of the modern world. This situation will ensure social justice in the society (Deppeler, 2006).

As explained by Cohen and Hill (2000) inclusion provide opportunity to all student and staff to participate in school activities. The role of teachers in meeting the special needs of children with disabilities vary from one disability to other. However there are certain common roles. Such as screening of special needs children and detail assessment through experts so that proper interventions and treatments can be introduced to these children (Griffiths & Weatherilt, 2006).

According to census report, 1998, there are 2.54 % of persons with disabilities in Pakistan (Bureau of Statistics, 1998). According to World Health Organization (WHO), in developing it is estimated that 10 per cent of the population had some sort of disability. Of these, only two per cent had access to institutional facilities (Shahzadi, 2000).

In 1972, the country witnessed a revolutionary change in the education system when the government nationalized all private institutions including private special schools. The Education Policy 1972 allocated funds for providing special education services for the first time in Pakistan.

Inclusive education is burning issue of the present world. Keeping in-view this issue the role of parents and teachers is very important in enhancing inclusive education. The research study was aimed at measuring the attitude of the parents and teachers towards inclusive education. Attitudes of the parents and teachers may well act to facilitate in the implementation of inclusive education in Pakistan, as perceived by parents with special education need children, parents without special education need children, mainstream education school teachers and special education school teachers.

The main objectives of the study were to measure the attitude of parents, with special education need children and without special education need children, towards inclusive education, measuring the attitude of mainstream school education teachers and special education school teachers towards inclusive education, and compare the attitude of mainstream schools teachers and special education schools teachers on different (psychological, social, academic, and general) aspects of inclusive education.

Review of Related Literature

Teachers are very important for positive implementation of inclusive education as compared to children. Teacher's cooperation, support and willingness play a vital role in successful implementation of inclusive education program. We should focus on teachers and train them how to handle special needs children in inclusive education. (Loreman et al, 2005)

Good & Brophy, (2007) concluded that teachers are the key agent in implementation of inclusive education and who showed positive attitude towards have positive effect in implementation of inclusive education programs.

The participation of special needs children with in inclusive setting has been increase 60% during 1988 to 1995 (Cook et al, 2000). It is necessary teachers should be best equipped to handle these students.

A study was conducted in Malaysia by Ali et al, (2006) with primary and secondary school teachers with the purpose to evaluate the feelings and perceived knowledge of mainstream and special needs teachers towards inclusive education. The major outcome of this study is that the majority of teachers willing to be the positive members in implementation of inclusive education.

The findings of the research conducted by Nayak (2008) identified the feelings of parents and teachers towards inclusive education. The findings of this research indicate that teachers are ready to teach the students with disability in an inclusive environment and same time they are willing to face the challenges during their learning.

Batool and Mehmood (2000) found that children with visual disability expressed similar views. In a study on problems faced by children with physical disabilities in ordinary educational institutions. Noor and Khokhar (2002) concluded that these children were satisfied with the positive attitude of administrators, the efforts of their teachers to solve their problems, and their level of participation in classroom discussion. However, they faced difficulties in commuting to school, and moving with ease in school buildings.

Inclusive education setting provide chance of interaction with normal children and same time normal children communicate with special needs, this situation help in social development of special need children and same time interaction help to understand each other and decrease unconstructive stereotypes on special needs students (Ali et al 2006).

A study was conducted by (Wahid & Ishfaq, 2000) with the purpose to know the perceptions of university teachers regarding academic capacities of children facing hearing difficulties. The study concludes that children hearing difficulties can improve their academic skills with help of training.

According to Deppeler & Harvey (2004) Inclusion is a right, not a special privilege for a select few. However, inclusion was not an educational practice that could easily, and always successfully work.

Meyhodology

Participants

1- One hundred parents with equal distribution of having with and with children with disabilities. The age range was 24 years to 53 years old.

2- One hundred and eighty teachers (ninety teachers from mainstream schools(sixty were from public schools and thirty were from private schools) and ninety teachers, (sixty were from public special education schools and thirty were from private special education schools (rural, urban, male, female).

A purposive sampling technique was used to select samples of all types

Research Instruments

The required data were collected by using the following instruments:

Questionnaire for parents: One questionnaire for parents with and without special needs children was designed to know attitude of parents regarding inclusive education. The original questionnaire was developed by Moshin and Ghaffar (2011) and modified form was used. It was containing twenty statements.

Questionnaire for teachers: One questionnaire for teachers from special education schools and for teachers from mainstream school was designed to know attitude of teachers regarding inclusive education, containing twenty statements. There were of the three sections of questionnaire: Psychological domain, social aspects, and academic aspects.

Validation of research instruments

Ten experts in the field of special education were involved. The developed instruments were sent to them for review and improvements. The age range of experts were from 32 to 62 years and experience range was 16 to 35 years. All the experts reviewed and examines the questionnaires and provided feedback. The questionnaires for parents and teachers were finalized in the light of feedback received from experts.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of Teachers Responses

There were 180 teachers in the study, where 50% were from mainstream schools and 50% were from special education schools. Out of 180 teachers, male to female ratio was 33% and 67%. There were four age groups i.e., 21-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years and above 51 years old with percentages 38.3%, 40.6%, 17.8% and 3.3%, respectively.

Overall comparison between mainstream schools and special education schools regarding teacher's view about different aspects i.e., psychological domain, social, academic and general is given in Table 1

Table 1

Comparison of responses of mainstream and special education schools teachers on different (psychological, social, academic, and general) aspects

Aspects	School	N	Mean	SD	t	Prob.
Psychological	MSS	90	2.36	0.37	-1.72 ^{NS}	0.087
	SES	90	2.46	0.45		
Social	MSS	90	2.01	0.35	-1.83 ^{NS}	0.069
	SES	90	2.11	0.42		
Academic	MSS	90	2.41	0.38	0.17 ^{NS}	0.869
	SES	90	2.40	0.46		
General	MSS	90	2.05	0.29	1.83 ^{NS}	0.069
	SES	90	1.96	0.36		

MSS = Mainstream schools, SES = Special education schools NS = Non-significant ($P > 0.05$);

* = Significant ($P < 0.05$) ** = Highly significant ($P < 0.01$) N = Number of observations (respondents); SD = Standard deviation

It is clear from Table 1 that all the aspects (psychological domain, social, academic and general) had non-significant ($P > 0.05$) difference between mainstream and special education schools in teacher's views. For psychological domain, mean value for mainstream schools was 2.36 with standard deviation 0.37 and for special education schools was 2.46 with standard deviation 0.45 with respect to teacher's view. The mean values of 2.01 and 2.11 with standard deviations of 0.35 and 0.42 were found for mainstream schools and special education schools, respectively, for social aspects regarding teacher's views. For academic aspects, mean value of 2.41 and 2.40 were found for mainstream and special education schools, respectively. General aspects had the mean values of 2.05 and 1.96 for mainstream and special education schools, respectively. The maximum value was shown in psychological aspects and minimum was indicated in general aspects.

Table 2 indicates the different calculations for overall private schools of different aspects of teacher's view with respect to psychosocial domain, social, academic, and general aspects. The comparison between mainstream schools and special education schools in teacher's view is also given in Table 2.

Table 2

Comparison of private mainstream and private special education schools teachers on different aspects of inclusive education

Aspects	School	N	Mean	SD	t	Prob.
Psychological	MSS	30	2.45	0.32	-0.03 ^{NS}	0.973
	SES	30	2.46	0.42		
Social	MSS	30	2.11	0.41	0.35 ^{NS}	0.728
	SES	30	2.07	0.58		
Academic	MSS	30	2.51	0.38	-0.56 ^{NS}	0.577
	SES	30	2.57	0.47		
General	MSS	30	2.08	0.26	0.88 ^{NS}	0.385
	SES	30	2.00	0.46		

The comparison indicates the non-significant ($P>0.05$) results for all four aspects i.e. psychological domain, social aspects, academic aspects and general aspects. Non-significant results means there is no difference between teacher's opinion with respect to special education schools and mainstream schools. The mean values were ranged from 2.00 to 2.57 for all the aspects. The mean values of teacher's view for private sector were 2.45 and 2.46 for mainstream schools and special education schools, respectively, with regard to psychological domain (Table 24). In social aspects the mean values were 2.11 and 2.07 for mainstream schools and special education schools, respectively, of private sector teacher's views. Similarly, mean values of 2.51 and 2.57 for academic aspects and 2.08 and 2.00 for general aspects of mainstream schools and special education schools, respectively, were found regarding private sector teacher's views.

The results for public schools are given in Table 25. The mean comparison between mainstream schools and special education schools according to teacher's view indicates that psychological domain has significant ($P<0.05$) mean difference. The mean value of teachers view for mainstream schools was 2.31 with standard deviation 0.38 and mean value for special education schools were found to be 2.46 with 0.47 of standard deviation.

Table 3

Comparison of public mainstream and public special education schools teachers on different aspects of inclusive education

Aspects	School	N	Mean	SD	t	Prob.
Psychological	MSS	60	2.31	0.38	-2.01*	0.047
	SES	60	2.46	0.47		
Social	MSS	60	1.96	0.30	-3.19**	0.002
	SES	60	2.14	0.32		
Academic	MSS	60	2.37	0.38	0.63 ^{NS}	0.532
	SES	60	2.32	0.44		
General	MSS	60	2.03	0.30	1.66 ^{NS}	0.099
	SES	60	1.94	0.30		

The comparison between mainstream schools and special education schools in teachers view regarding social aspects showed highly significant ($P < 0.01$) results which indicated that there is different between opinion of teachers regarding social aspects for special education schools and mainstream schools. The means value of teacher's view regarding special education schools was 2.14 and less value (1.96) was obtained for mainstream schools for social aspects.

For academic and general aspects, a non-significant ($P > 0.05$) value was obtained. The mean value of 2.37 and 2.32 with standard deviation of 0.38 and 0.44, were obtained for teacher's view with respect to mainstream schools and special education schools, respectively, regarding academic aspects. Similarly, the mean values of 2.03 and 1.94 were got for mainstream schools and special education schools, respectively in teacher's view regarding general aspects. The maximum mean value was obtained in psychological domain of special education schools and minimum value also indicated in special education schools for general aspects of teacher's views.

The comparison between mainstream schools and special education schools regarding different aspects (psychological domain, social, academic and general) in teacher's views are given in Table 4

Table 4

Comparison of mainstream schools male and special education schools male teachers on different aspects of inclusive education

Aspects	Teacher	N	Mean	SD	t	Prob.
Psychological	MSS	46	2.34	0.39	-0.18 ^{NS}	0.859
	SES	21	2.35	0.44		
Social	MSS	46	1.95	0.34	-2.74**	0.008
	SES	21	2.21	0.39		
Academic	MSS	46	2.24	0.37	-1.51 ^{NS}	0.135
	SES	21	2.39	0.43		
General	MSS	46	2.04	0.24	1.65 ^{NS}	0.104
	SES	21	1.92	0.29		

There is non-significant ($P > 0.05$) mean difference between mainstream schools and special education schools according to teacher's view. The mean value for mainstream schools was 2.34 and a bit greater mean value of 2.35 was found for special education schools regarding teacher's opinion.

There is highly significant ($P < 0.01$) difference was found in the means of mainstream schools and special education schools regarding social aspects in teacher's views. The mean value of 1.95 with standard deviation 0.34 for mainstream schools and mean value of 2.21 with standard deviation 0.39 were found in teacher's view regarding social aspects. The mean value of 2.04 for mainstream schools and 1.92 for special education schools were found in teacher's view for general aspects.

The comparison between means of mainstream schools and special education schools for teacher's views regarding females is given in Table 5.

Table 5

Comparison of the attitude of mainstream schools female teachers and special education schools female teachers on different aspects of inclusive education.

Aspects	School	N	Mean	SD	t	Prob.
Psychological	MSS	44	2.38	0.35	-1.46 ^{NS}	0.148
	SES	69	2.49	0.45		
Social	MSS	44	2.07	0.35	-0.21 ^{NS}	0.831
	SES	69	2.09	0.43		
Academic	MSS	44	2.60	0.31	2.36*	0.020
	SES	69	2.41	0.47		
General	MSS	44	2.06	0.33	1.31 ^{NS}	0.192
	SES	69	1.97	0.38		

It is cleared from above table that the female teacher's view about academic aspects significantly different for mainstream schools and special education schools. The difference between mean values of mainstream schools and special education schools was found non-significant ($P > 0.05$) for psychological domain, social aspects and general aspects regarding female teacher's views (Table 5). The mean values for female teacher's views were 2.38 and 2.49 for mainstream schools and special education schools, respectively, regarding psychological domain. For social and general aspects, mean values for female teachers view were ranged from 1.97 to 2.09 in both mainstream schools and special education schools. The maximum mean (2.60 with SD of 0.31) value was found in mainstream schools of academic aspects with regard to female teacher's views. The minim value was found in general aspects of special education schools regarding female teacher's views.

The comparison between mainstream schools and special education schools regarding teacher's view about different aspects (psychological domain, social, academic and general) in urban areas, were given in Table 6.

Table 6

Comparison of the attitude of urban mainstream schools teachers and urban special education schools teachers on different aspects of inclusive education

Aspects	School	N	Mean	SD	t	Prob.
Psychological	MSS	46	2.39	0.36	-0.01 ^{NS}	0.992
	SES	41	2.39	0.47		
Social	MSS	46	1.99	0.36	-1.68 ^{NS}	0.097
	SES	41	2.14	0.46		
Academic	MSS	46	2.46	0.39	0.59 ^{NS}	0.553
	SES	41	2.40	0.47		
General	MSS	46	2.05	0.26	1.96 ^{NS}	0.053
	SES	41	1.93	0.33		

The above table indicate that there is differences found in mean values for mainstream schools and special education schools regarding urban area teacher's about all aspects i.e., psychological domain, social, academic and general aspects. Almost same mean value (2.39) for urban area teacher's view were found with different standard deviation values of 0.36 and 0.47 for mainstream schools and special education schools, respectively regarding psychological domain. For social aspects, mean values of urban teacher's views were 1.99 and 2.14. The Mean values of teacher's views for mainstream schools and special education schools were 2.46 and 2.40, respectively regarding academic aspects. Means of urban teacher's views

were 2.05 and 1.93 in mainstream schools and special education schools, respectively, regarding general aspects.

The comparison between mean values of rural teacher's views in mainstream schools and special education schools is given in Table 7.

Table 7

Comparison of rural mainstream and rural special education schools teachers on different aspects of inclusive education

Aspects	School	N	Mean	SD	t	Prob.
Psychological	MSS	44	2.32	0.38	-2.35*	0.021
	SES	49	2.52	0.44		
Social	MSS	44	2.03	0.33	-0.87 ^{NS}	0.385
	SES	49	2.09	0.40		
Academic	MSS	44	2.37	0.38	-0.41 ^{NS}	0.686
	SES	49	2.40	0.46		
General	MSS	44	2.05	0.31	0.80 ^{NS}	0.426
	SES	49	1.99	0.38		

There was significant difference between means of rural teacher's view found regarding mainstream schools and special education schools in psychological domain. In mainstream schools, the mean value of rural teacher's view was 2.32 with standard deviation 0.38 and significantly greater mean value (2.52 with standard deviation of 0.44) of rural teacher's view was found for special education schools in psychological domain (Table 29).

In social, academic and general aspects, the rural area teacher's view were observed non-significantly different regarding mainstream schools and special education schools. The mean values of rural teachers were 2.03 and 2.09. The maximum mean value of 2.52 with standard deviation 0.44 was found in teacher's view regarding special education schools for psychological domain. Minimum mean of 1.99 with standard deviation of 0.38 was observed in teachers' view with respect to special education schools for psychological domain

Analysis of Parents Questionnaire

There were 100 parents in this study. Out of these, 50.0% of children were studies in mainstream schools and 50.0% were in special education schools.

Table 8

Comparison among parents with normal child and parents with special child mainstream schools and special education schools regarding the parents' attitude about inclusive education

Aspects of child's education	Child	N	Mean	SD	t	Prob.
1. Teachers undertake appropriate actions in classroom	Normal	50	2.52	1.23	-1.20 ^{NS}	0.23
	Special	50	2.80	1.36		
2. Child's needs are best served through separate classes	Normal	50	2.07	0.92	-0.96 ^{NS}	0.34
	Special	50	2.23	0.98		
3. Attitude of the principle must be exemplary for the successful inclusion	Normal	50	1.93	0.92	-1.19 ^{NS}	0.24
	Special	50	2.15	1.07		
4. Participation in the regular classroom will promote academic growth	Normal	50	2.48	1.19	-1.17 ^{NS}	0.24
	Special	50	2.73	1.15		
5. Inclusion offers mixed group interaction which will foster understanding and acceptance of differences	Normal	50	2.17	1.06	-2.70*	0.01
	Special	50	2.73	1.23		
6. Regular education teachers have a deal of expertise	Normal	50	1.85	0.84	0.67 ^{NS}	0.50
	Special	50	1.75	0.79		
7. Inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on social/emotional development	Normal	50	2.27	1.26	-1.76 ^{NS}	0.08
	Special	50	2.67	1.23		
8. More rapid development of academic skills in special versus regular class	Normal	50	1.75	0.70	-0.97 ^{NS}	0.33
	Special	50	1.90	0.97		
9. Inclusion will require significant changes in regular classroom procedures	Normal	50	1.80	0.71	-1.25 ^{NS}	0.22
	Special	50	1.98	0.89		
10. Most children with special needs are well behaved	Normal	50	1.97	0.94	-1.13 ^{NS}	0.26
	Special	50	2.17	0.99		
11. Good attitude is required for SEN children	Normal	50	1.73	0.88	0.39 ^{NS}	0.69
	Special	50	1.67	0.97		
12. Attitude of teaching and supporting staff must be exemplary for the successful inclusion	Normal	50	1.78	0.64	-2.78*	0.01
	Special	50	2.18	0.91		
13. Assistance of the parents with special SEN child improve their academic performance	Normal	50	1.95	0.85	0.00 ^{NS}	1.00
	Special	50	1.95	0.83		
14. Including child with special needs promotes his/her independence	Normal	50	2.02	0.91	-3.50 ^{NS}	0.00
	Special	50	2.73	1.30		
15. It is likely child with special needs will show behavior problems in the regular class	Normal	50	1.82	0.83	-2.82*	0.01
	Special	50	2.35	1.20		

NS = Non-significant ($P > 0.05$); * = Significant ($P < 0.05$) ** = Highly significant ($P < 0.01$)

N = Number of observations (respondents) SD = Standard deviation

The statistical comparison (difference) among parents with normal child (PWNC) and parents with special child (PWSC) There were 15 different aspects of child's education. Table 8 shows that there was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$) difference found among (PWNC) parents with normal child and (PWSC) parents with special child mainstream schools and special education schools regarding parents' views of parents with special child, in 12 aspects. The minimum value of 1.53 was found in 9th and 11th aspects of child's education for mainstream schools and special education schools, respectively, with regard to parent's views.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Inclusive education can be used as under: a preparatory stage for teaching practice; an integral part of teaching practice; a supplementary or remedial program for weak teachers; a resource for use of different subject department; an optional course for student teachers and in-service course for improving teaching skills. The students with special education need and students without special education need to resolve their learning difficulties related to their abilities & Disabilities in inclusive education learning environment approach. Educationists to adopt inclusive education learning environment approach to resolve learning difficulties of the students with special education need and students without special education need, Education planners to enhance the quality assurance in inclusive learning teaching methodology. Future researchers to expand research in the domain related to inclusive learning environment approach and learning difficulties.

Based on the findings following conclusions were drawn. All participants were in favour that students with mild disabilities can be educated under the same roof because children with disabilities can easily adjust with normal children. This situation also provide competitive environment for both types of children and parents also feel it comfortable. The mainstream and special education schools teachers were also in favor of inclusive education. It was also concluded that private mainstream schools teachers and private special education schools teachers have same attitude on psychological, social, academic, and general aspects of inclusive education.

The public mainstream schools teachers and public special education schools teachers have same attitude on academic and general aspect of inclusive education but they have different attitude on psychological and social aspects of inclusive education. The findings of this study also support with the findings of Nayak (2008). He concluded that there is significant difference in the opinions of teachers of normal school as compared to special need schools. The mainstream schools teachers and

rural special education schools teachers have different views on psychological aspects of inclusive education but they have same attitude on academic, social and general aspects of inclusive education.

The cooperation of teachers help to implement inclusive education program more successful way (Loreman et al, 2005) Mainstream schools male teachers and special education schools male teachers have different attitude on social aspect of special education and have same attitude on psychological, academic and general aspects of inclusive education.

Mainstream schools female teachers and special education schools female teachers have different attitude on academic aspect of special education and have same attitude on psychological, social and general aspects of inclusive education. The researcher suggested following recommendations on the basis of findings: 1) Special training should be arranged for teachers and parents who identify the positive impact of inclusions, 2) There is need to conduct future research on the same topic with depth Information and present detail comparison of teachers' qualification, training and inclusive education, 3) The futures research studies should also present successful case studies of inclusive settings so that teachers and parents can get better understandings on inclusive education and, 4) The role different organization need to be highlight who are working for creating awareness on inclusive education in Punjab.

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