

Procrastination in the Execution of Inclusive Practices: Existing Scenarios and Preparedness of Education System at Various levels in Punjab

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Abstract



The present study was designed to explore the causes of the procrastination in the execution of inclusive education practices in Punjab; it further aims to dig out the preparedness of the Education System for inclusive education at various levels. The major objectives of the study were to investigate the existing situation of inclusive education across Punjab and to determine the present preparedness of the school education Department for the accommodation of children with disabilities in their institutions by focusing on admission policy, physical infrastructure, teacher training, curriculum, collaboration with related professionals and community awareness. The population of the study was comprised of various stakeholders working in the school education Department, Special Education Department, Academia, Quaid-e-Azam Institute of Education Development (QAED), Project Management and Execution Unit (PMIU), and Punjab Examination Commission (PEC). Data were collected through in-depth qualitative interviews with stakeholders due to the nature of the study. Findings revealed that procrastination, lack of commitment on the part of stakeholders, and lack of inter-sectoral collaboration were among the main reasons for procrastination. In addition to this due to the rapid transfer posting of higher authorities' the task of the execution of inclusive education remains not implemented therefore, political will, seriousness on the part of stakeholders, and inter-sectoral collaborations are urgently required to decide the role and responsibilities of various stakeholders in promoting inclusive education with specific timelines without to avoid further delay. Serious efforts are required for inclusive teacher training, inclusive curriculum development, and inclusive assessment on an equitable basis for the smooth execution of inclusive education in the mainstream school system.

Keywords: Procrastination, Inclusive Practices: Existing Scenarios and Preparedness of Education System.

Introduction

The predominant theme of the 2022 International Day for persons with disabilities was “Transformative Solutions for Inclusive Development: The Role of Innovation in Fueling an Accessible and Equitable World” which led to the realization of the significant role of various stakeholders in the education system. Principally inclusive education is considered to be fundamental for every nation; it helps people with disabilities to have the same right of entry to educational and physical resources of the mainstream education system without any prejudice. For that reason; governments around the world have made cognizant work to achieve the goal of inclusive education, still, the execution of inclusive education with full zeal is complicated, in many countries, particularly in the context of developing countries (Qaisar, Akhter, Masood, & Rashid, 2017).

Being a developing country situation of inclusive education is still not very encouraging in Pakistan despite the formulation of a strategy for inclusive education by the school education department of Punjab in 2019, it still needs approvals from the competent forum for execution. Stakeholders are decision makers/policymakers; mere sensitization of their role can change the destiny of children belonging to marginalized groups of society. Intuitions working under the school education department have the potential to accommodate all children irrespective of their cognitive and physical strengths and weaknesses. Vigilant planning is required for the execution of inclusive education in regular school systems working under school education departments and privately managed schools. Proper planning in this regard will lead to compliance with international

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commitments and the dream of 100% enrollment can also come true. Inclusive education is based on certain facts that every child has the right to go and share normal experiences with family, neighbors, and peers in addition to this each child has a right to get quality education in a school adjacent to his or her residence (Lin, 2018).

Inclusion is a practice; through it special learners consume their time with ordinary learners (without disabilities). Inclusion has been defined as a method of catering to the varied needs of all students by decreasing barricades for all within the context of regular educational settings. Inclusive education also entitles inclusion which means a type of education that incorporates everybody in the regular education system. The point of view for inclusive education is documented well and based on ideas of human rights and equality. Beyond policy obligations, inclusion is brought into being upon an ethical position that values each person and welcomes differences as a gorgeous source of education (CSIE, 2018).

Inclusion is a unique way through which impediments can be eliminated and facilitation provided to all learners, who were formerly left out from mainstream settings. Inclusive education means, “To do something to ensure that all learners despite their differences obtain the chance of being part of the same classroom as other learners of their age, and in the process get the opportunity of being exposed to the curriculum to their best possible potential”. Every special learner is unique and requires love and acceptance due to their special need from their associates. Because most of them are born with some sort of confinement, with proper planning and preparation of inclusion they may be able to vigorously take part as equivalent citizens of society. Special Students refer to all who need adjustment to the normal process of education due to problems of hearing, vision, physical, learning, and intellect. In other words, these learners have some kind of impairment for which generally term disability is commonly used. Disability refers to any limitations experienced by the disabled in comparison to able persons of similar age groups (Hallahan, & Kauffman, 2000).

Literature Review

In the context of special students convention for the right of disabled person ensure their access to free quality inclusive education at primary and secondary education on an equivalent basis with others children of the communities” (UNCRPD, 2006, article 24). As a result of inclusive education mainstream schools can become stimulating and accommodating for assorted groups of learners in generating a society that persuades and rejoices in learners’ diversity (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson 2006; UNESCO, 2005). At the social and political level, a change was through from a single-dimensional view of disability to a three-dimensional view of disability i.e., embracing community, social equality, and respect (Thomas, 2013). Booth proposed a standpoint of inclusion as a method of escalating the involvement of children with disabilities and sinking their segregation from the school curriculum, cultures, and society. However, such changes reverberate more on the social and political echelon than put into the daily practice in schools. As far as the execution of inclusive education has been concerned across the globe remarkable differentiation has been noticed particularly among developing and developed countries. In developed countries, inclusive education is on track by including children with disabilities in the mainstream classroom; however, the case is not the same in developing countries. According to estimates around 57 million school-going-age children are out of school, focus should be given more on inclusion to handle this situation. It is relay challenging to get them to schools, where, there are low literacy rates and extensive exclusionary pressures. This is true that inclusive education has different implications across developing countries keeping in view the developmental stage of a country (Armstrong, Armstrong, & Spandagou, 2011).

Since inclusive education drive has been recognized as one of the most “vital developments in contemporary special education”. In the Western world inclusive education is implemented and protected by legal policies. In countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, inclusive education is a part of the global discourse on education even visible in international policy documents (Liao, Shaw, & Liu, 2023).

In 2005, all provincial and federal governments signed the Islamabad Declaration on Inclusive Education, which called for an operational definition of inclusion education as being intended to: ensure that all children regardless of gender, abilities, disabilities, and socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds: are treated with dignity and respect; have equal access to education, health services, work and all other aspects of life; are enabled to develop their full academic, physical,

emotional and social potential; have access to learning material in appropriate media and technical devices; and develop confidence in their abilities, skills and prospects.’

Pakistan ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2011. In parallel, the 2002 National Policy for Persons with Disabilities affirms that ‘ensuring greater access of children with mild and moderate disabilities to mainstream and local education is central to achieve determined goals’. The policy was followed up with a 2006 action plan., all four provinces have a law on disability. The 2018 Sindh Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Act and the 2017 Balochistan Persons with Disabilities Act mention non-discrimination in education as a major goal and specify policy guidelines to achieve it. As of 2019, a provincial Inclusive Education Strategy was being developed by the School Education Department of the Government of Punjab. The provincial government has also implemented the Punjab Inclusive Education Program in two districts of the province to ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools. In 2012, the Punjab government approved a policy framework for an inclusive education system for students with mild and moderate disabilities. It set out that special needs students would be admitted to primary and middle school classes and teachers of these schools would be trained by master trainers of the Department of Special Education (Bibi, Shabir, Kausar, & Akram, 2022).

In the Pakistani context pursuits of inclusive education are still at the infancy level due to the lack of dedication of main stakeholders. In the National Education Policy 2017 inclusive education is defined as a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities and reducing exclusion from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures, and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. The purists of inclusive education still a great challenge for children with disabilities and special needs, as schools working under school education, literacy, and non-formal education primarily do not grant admission to children with disabilities instead of granting admission they are creating obstacles due to erroneous assumption about the special children physical, social, communicative, intellectual and literacy skills (Wasim, Adeeb, & Mateen, 2021).

In the field of inclusive education, the government of Pakistan (Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education), INGOs, NGOs, and development partners have made efforts to develop national capacity of policy-making, system management, network, and support for the development of inclusive education. These initiatives, in general, have been taken in the form of small, pilot projects. The findings of the survey identified that a substantial number of students can be enrolled in mainstream schools with some support and guidance. Several meetings & sessions of key stakeholders including parents, teachers, students, blind persons, and the officials of the Directorate of Special Education and mainstream educational institutes were held to sensitize them about inclusion. An evaluation of the project was commissioned to document the learning, progress made, strategies that worked, challenges that could be addressed, and insights that might help in moving forward.

In Punjab School Education Department has also instigated the process of articulation of the first inclusive education strategy supported by GPE is currently under the process of finalization. Under recent education policy inclusive education has been reflected along with certain provisions. It has been aspired that inclusive education be into the education oratory, dogma, and practice. Since all children under the law are entitled to go and be authorized for quality education.

Under National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2002 children with disabilities are to be provided for in separate schools called Special Education Schools. Since education has become a provincial subject post-18th constitutional amendment, education acts for all four provinces mention children with disabilities/special needs and lay down the mechanism for educating special children in a detached education system based on the doctrines of National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2002. However, this does not provide any definition of disability and spaced out special children no separate education systems for other weak groups of children which otherwise reflects that everybody is entitled to go to the mainstream schools by law, excluding special children. SDG 4 unswervingly emphasizes inclusive education as it discusses the provision of inclusive and rightful quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all.

According to Pill and Meijer (1997) three main factors that are important for the implementation of inclusive education: Among them, one is now as external factors which contain

people's attitudes and legislation/policy, regulations, and financial endowment, available to accommodate persons with disabilities. The second factor is related to the school constitution for providing various kinds of services for students with disabilities in a school setting; it also contains responsibilities of special education about support and collaboration between special schools and mainstream schools. The third factor is related to teachers' attitude, and time available for learning instructions. It also contains teachers' knowledge skills and awareness of various teaching methodologies used to teach learners with disabilities.

While looking at inclusive education of its speed, various aspects, and stakeholders, it is imperative to keep in mind that the account of inclusive education in developing countries is not more than a decade long. Even though new development inputs at the level of policy seem significant, inclusive education goes down to changing education at the school and classroom levels (Ainscow, & Miles, 2008). In emergent parts of the globe, although exertions have been made by international organizations to overpass the gap among practices policy underneath the flagship of UN agencies and many projects have been embarked on to make education inclusive, the success rates of these projects are still not known. Interestingly research in this field is restricted to its prevalence (Singal, 2010).

Despite all the above the ordinary schools in Pakistan are still not open to accepting the enrolment of children with disability. Major resistance comes from the teachers of such schools, who do not have the requisite skills to properly and adequately attend to such students. In addition, the necessary materials and resources for persons with disability (like assistive technologies) are not available in these schools. In this context, there is a need for inclusive education should be mandatory and all facilities for learners with special needs must be made available at mainstream schools (Ahmad, Zeb, & Muhammad, 2019).

Practicing inclusion is not a simple task for this it is mandatory to produce readiness among stakeholders because without their readiness and action-oriented approach, inclusive education remains a sweet dream of international organizations and policy makers. Therefore, before the execution of inclusive education in mainstream schools, careful spadework is required for preparation. Hence, the present study plans to reconnoiter the main causes that are hindering the mainstream education system from imparting inclusive education, so a workable plan can be proposed that may be enabled to determine the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the execution of inclusive practices for children with special needs and disabilities.

Problem

The problem of the present study was to discover the causes of procrastination in the execution of inclusive education in Punjab; it further aims to dig out the preparedness of the mainstream education system for inclusive education practices at various levels.

Delimitations

Due to limited time and financial resources available to the researcher present study was delimited to the stakeholders of the School education Department, Academia, Quaid-e-Azam Institute of Education Development (QAED), Project Management and Execution Unit (PMIU), Punjab Examination Commission (PEC) and Special education only.

Objectives

1. To investigate the existing situation of inclusive education across Punjab.
2. To determine the present preparedness of mainstream school education Departments for the accommodation of children with disabilities in their institutions by focusing on admission policy, physical infrastructure, teacher training, curriculum, collaboration with related professionals, and community awareness.

Methodology

Since research was conducted through interviews which was an extensively used method of qualitative research due to inherent flexibility it allows research to focus more while getting data from a comparatively small sample. Since the nature of this study was detective, therefore, therefore qualitative approach was used to get data and for the exploration of the phenomena under question. The interview method was used to comply with the research objectives after careful preparation because although the interview technique is a popular method still it requires a lot of expertise on the part of the researcher.

Major questions about the execution of inclusive education were planned diligently, formal interviews were designed. Separate questions were devised for different stakeholders such as the

school education department, QAED, PEC, PMIU, Academia, and special education education. Before conducting actual interview piloting was conducted to refine interview questions based on it some repetitive questions were deleted from the interview question. After that questions were presented to two experts in the field for the ethical review. Keeping in view the nature of the study it was decided to contact with top level hierarchy only. The venue was the workplaces of concerned stakeholders, after getting informed consent they were required to spare 45 minutes for formal interviews (separately for each stakeholder of the department). Responses were noted down by the researcher for content analysis of the responses of various stakeholders.

Population

The population of this research was comprised of various stakeholders (professionals working in top management positions like, special sectary Secretaries, Director Generals, and head of the department) of the school education department, QAED, PEC, PMIU, Academia, and special education education.

Research Tools

Data was collected through in-depth qualitative interviews with stakeholders of the above-mentioned department of Punjab. Department-wise in-depth interview guides were prepared to dig out the phenomena under investigation.

Data analysis

Content analysis was carried out on the responses of various stakeholders to reach the main causes of procrastination in the execution of inclusive education practices in the mainstream education system of Punjab.

Stakeholders from the school education department, QAED, PEC, PMIU, Academia, and special education education.

The detail of the Interviews is as follows:

School Education Department

Stakeholders of the school education department have an awareness of the concept of inclusive education; they defined it as a concept that deals with the education of all children from various ethnic or cultural backgrounds. According to their definition, it is a form of education that can provide the opportunity of education to all well aware of the concept that it deals with the education of all children from various ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Sometimes genius students also face hardship in the system; it includes the education of genius as well. According to them, only children with mild disabilities can be catered under this system, and for rest of the learners' special education department should take a leading role.

As far as the policy of inclusive education is concerned, the Policy is under process and not yet, approved even passing four years from competent authority. For its execution present system is not fully capable because at present inclusion is only at the intention level, there is a need to provide massive awareness to head teachers, teachers, and administrators. Since at present no policy guidelines are disseminated, cannot fix responsibilities to anyone for procrastination. In this direction to learn from the experiences of developed nations, for training two officers of the school education department will go to KOREA and learn about inclusive culture, through this, they will get information about inclusive curricula, inclusive assessment, and inclusive infrastructure.

For the successful execution of inclusive education vibrant changes are required in the present school system like empowerment concerning physical resources, building structure, furniture & and fixtures, assistive devices, etc. In addition to this perception of (mentality) of human resources, acceptance of disability, attitude change of teachers, peers, and community level still needs to be changed in favor of inclusive education. Along with this work needs to be done on mending of Physical infrastructure as well.

At present system is not ready no well-trained teachers are available who can to cater the individualized learning needs of students with disabilities. Coordination with the special education department for expert guidance is also weak. No distinctive teaching strategies are known to our teachers for inclusive education execution. Although enough financial resources can be there through the Government, international donor agencies, like the World Bank, NGOs from Asia Pacific UNICIFE, G.P.E, etc. A holistic approach is required to move forward in this venture.

QAED Academy for Educational Development Punjab

Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development Punjab is the leading training institute for teachers in the Punjab province. It is commanded to care for around .3 million teachers' concerns related to teachers' professional development, courses on various aspects of teaching, and training linked with the promotion of the teachers are some of the many main errands of QAED. 43 QAED Academies are working all over Punjab. In the combat of the execution of inclusive education role of QAED is significant, therefore, DG QAED interviewed about their initiatives for Teacher Training and preparedness of inclusive Education in mainstream education Institutions. A formal interview was conducted at her workplace after getting consent from her.

The detail of the interview is as under:

Stakeholders have a clear idea of inclusive education and its main focus of inclusive education is to include all in the venture of education with a specific focus on the education of children with mild or moderate disabilities. As far as the policy of teachers training for the successful execution of inclusive education in the school education department is concerned they have no specific policy on inclusive education because they are following the policies of the school education department. Inclusion is only at the intention phase; they are planning to add the topic of inclusive education in their promotion-linked training. We are also planning to devise teacher training under the Taleem program which is funded by UNICEF, under the Taleem program a pilot testing of inclusion in mainstream schools would be carried out among two districts of Punjab, Multan and Jhelum.

At present we do not have exclusive teacher training on inclusive education, the topic of inclusive education was part of our promotion like training and a School leadership program under which 15000 head teachers were trained. But QAED can train all teachers on the concept of inclusive education I one-year time. At present, we do not have any plan for inclusive teacher training for all teachers who are working in the school education department. But if it is desired, it may require one year to accomplish this task.

For teacher's training regarding inclusive education in institutions working school education department recently we have arranged a consultative meeting in QAED. The agenda of the meeting was to categorize the course content for developing the manual for teacher training in inclusive education. This inclusive training will be published soon for the teachers training of the schools of Jhelum and Multan Districts. As far as possible hinders in imparting teachers training in inclusive education are concerned I think that inclusive education is the least priority of higher authority who are engaged to address day-to-day urgent matters of the school education system. This system is very large at the Punjab level.

For inclusive education, QEAD is following the model of the British Council in our training, with no indigenous model to follow yet. We are having difficulties in the preparation of training modules on Inclusive education because this is a unique and hard task that requires inputs from various sides, in this regards we have arranged a consultative session in which members of various departments and organizations are invited (No one invited from special education department). Hopefully manual will be ready next week, based on the experience of QAED, for the successful execution of inclusive education, positive changes are required in the attitude change of the Head teacher, teachers, peers, parents' community, and special children. Change in infrastructure is needed, and experimentation of various teaching strategies in an inclusive setup is also required. Therefore, for the successful execution of inclusive education perception of teachers and staff needs to be changed through awareness training, change in mindset, sharing of the success stories of persons with disabilities, and international exposure to inclusive settings.

In our consultative session we have invited special persons; members from academia, who are experts in the field, in the future intend to take the special education department on board in this task. At present no specific teaching strategies can be recommended, it is the task of universities who are offering degrees in teachers' education to focus on the aspect of curriculum development, assessment, and pedagogy. As far as the component of teacher training is concerned resources are with QAED, but for the execution of inclusive education in the true spirit, a budget is required for infrastructure, assistive devices, and assessment kits which cannot be provided by QAED. As far as the resource allocation for teachers' training in inclusive education is concerned Government, NGOs UNICEF, and SLDP are our constant partners.

As far as delays and causes underlying delay in the execution of Inclusive education across Punjab are concerned it requires policy-level decision from higher authority. Due to the rapid transfer

posting of higher-ups, the focus is only on urgent issues. Higher authorities do not incline the execution of inclusive education due to increased assignments and less staffing. Lack of commitment on the part of higher authority is also one of the factors.

In the curriculum of pre-service teachers, no sufficient content is available on inclusive education concerning individual differences and pedagogy; it is in the preparatory phase at the moment. A few years ago a book on inclusive education was published under the directorate of staff development, for teachers training through sight savers. The main theme of this book was to provide awareness about the concept of inclusive education under international commitment. The book contains very little information about the technical aspects of inclusive education concerning the mainstream school environment.

Punjab Examination Commission

Detail of Interview

Stakeholders from PEC have an awareness of inclusive education, but indeed, we cannot cater to the assessment needs of children with communication disorders and intellectual disabilities. The focus of PEC is only on cognitive assessment; the behavioral, psychomotor, or affective domain is not related to PEC. The policy of separate assessment for children with disabilities and special needs in inclusive education setup is not yet approved, but it is in our rules of business to include the special education department on board. The department is responsible for developing item pools for primary and middle standard examinations. We do not have well trained test developer to cater to the individualized learning needs of students with disabilities. Hiring such test developing is time consuming venture, which needs to be done only through stakeholders' initiatives. Educational evaluation of children with Mild, Moderate Severe, and Profound disabilities is the domain of special education. The preparation of an inclusive assessment format is difficult for children with intellectual disabilities. Preparation of inclusive assessment is not our assigned duty the process is hindered due to a lack of commitment, and rapid transfer postings of higher authority. Neither teachers are not trained for the teaching of diverse learners nor are they prepared to devise or implement inclusive assessment. Based on the experience of PEC, for the successful learning outcomes for children with disabilities and special needs in inclusive settings a holistic approach is required. Technically this domain pertains to the special education department.

For the successful execution of inclusive assessment exhaustive preparation is required for the capacity building of teachers and another human resources. Teachers' capacity building and inclusive education training should be designed as mandatory. Universities can come forward and add this course to their teacher education program. Moreover, QEAD should also add this topic in intensive exclusive training in their promotion-linked training modules. Tool development and assessment preparation is not the domain of PEC. Qualitative assessment, which contains behavioral aspects, seems appropriate for such children. Formative assessment is appropriate for special learners, instead of summative assessment.

The main causes of delay in the execution of Inclusive education across Punjab include, turnover of leadership, flaws at the policy level, and focus of leadership on day-to-day urgent issues are the main causes of delay. In the context of inclusive education, things are still in the discussion phase. A serious collaborative effort needs to accelerate this important but not urgent task.

We aspire that a separate curriculum for the assessment of various special needs and disabilities needs inputs from the special education department and keeping in individual differences in pedagogy, assessment needs experimentation investigation so types of suitable assessment in inclusive settings can be devised. Anyhow as per the PEC expertise objective type, multiple choices formative assessment seems good for diverse learners

PREMIUM

PMIU was established to supervise and accomplish the application of education sector transformations in Punjab. At present PMIU is executing the 3rd Punjab Education Sector Project (PESP-III) in association with the World Bank. It also works as the Monitoring & Evaluation (M & E) wing of the School Education Department. Apart from monthly monitoring, PMIU also collects annual School Census reports 36 DMOs have school monitoring staff comprising more than 1000 Monitoring and evaluation Assistants.

The detail of the interview is as under:

Stakeholders from PMIU define inclusive education as the creation of a conducive environment for all learners in mainstream schools regardless of disabilities, race, and socioeconomic status. Mild to moderate Physical handicaps, Communication disorders, and visual impairment can be catered to, students with Intellectual disabilities (Mild, Moderate, and severe), Learning disabilities (Mild, Moderate, and severe), Autism (Mild, Moderate and severe) Hearing impairment cannot have accommodated in the mainstream system. Policy for the execution of inclusive education in the institutions is in the approval phase at present no policy or guidelines exist on Inclusion, waiting for approval from the school education department. It requires holistic inputs from various stakeholders from the public and private sectors. At present no steps have been taken for the operationalization of inclusive education in institutions Yes, a huge gap exists to achieve this venture. British Council's inclusive education model could be used in our setting, but first, for the successful execution of inclusive education, some radical changes are required in the present school system in the form of simple awareness, financial resources, training of teachers, attitude change, acceptance, conducive environment. At present, in the present system of school education departments, hardly well-trained teachers exist who can handle the individualized learning needs of students with disabilities.

This organization has no vibrant coordination with the special education department for expert guidance because it is not on our priority list. As far as the teaching strategies in inclusive education are concerned this is the domain of QEAD or academia. Universities should add this course to their scheme of studies for B.ED. of Master of Education. Financial resources are enough for the day-to-day business of our organization but this organization does not have enough financial resources for the initiation of inclusive education in full bloom because it requires major changes in the physical infrastructure of schools. Before the approval of the inclusive education strategy, no big breakthrough was possible in the successful execution of inclusive education in institutions running under the private and public sectors of Punjab.

Academia

Academia possesses a vital role in the preparation of professionals in various fields, in the context of inclusive education role of academia is not very encouraging, it has to be directed in the right direction per the existing demand of the situation.

The detail of the interview is as under:

Heads of the departments of six public sector universities were shortlisted for interview; overall their responses were analyzed, and found that inclusive education is one of the important topics that require intensive deliberation of stakeholders belonging to various departments of Punjab, although special education is already working to teach children with disabilities since four decades. Under the special education system, children with disabilities and special needs are getting education and training in segregated settings. This model of education is segregated and based medical model of disabilities, which is leading children with disabilities to systematic exclusion from mainstream society. A policy needs to be developed between various stakeholders of education-providing agencies for the enlargement of school enrollment. They have strongly deliberation that despite opening new schools for marginalized groups, there is a need to empower existing mainstream schools to cater to the needs of all learners.

As far as the concept of inclusive education is concerned it deals with the education of all, despite individual differences of the special children, all students should be given the opportunity of enrollment in mainstream regular school. In essence, it means, no child is left behind to get an education in the mainstream setting. It is the responsibility of institutions and teachers to devise education plans for severe to profound children. Unfortunately, the current status of inclusive education in Punjab is not very encouraging despite this the concept of inclusive education is not new in our country. If we go back and take a tour of the past two decades it would lead us to the reality that 2000-2010 was known as the era of advocacy, 2010 to 2015 was the era of acceptance, and policy dialogue between stakeholders, and 2015 was a phase of piloting the project and in the education policy of 2017 chapter of inclusive education was included. In 2019 strategy for inclusive education was devised by stakeholders of PESP II. Unluckily, this strategy is still not approved by the competent forum due to unknown reasons. As far as my estimation is concerned next ten years will initial experimentation of PMIU, PEC, and PTBB. In the context of inclusive education efforts of the private sector are more proactive, like Amin Maktab, and Raising Sun Algazli Trust are imparting inclusive education for children with disabilities and special needs.

To answer the role of academia in teachers' training, it was also discovered that the quest for inclusive education is anguish at the moment due to the reason that processes and procedures of inclusion are never included in the preserves or in-service teachers' education program. At present teacher education program is very freak to handle the challenges of inclusive education. Though the given scheme of studies includes 3 credit hours course on inclusive education even leading universities of Pakistan are not teaching this course in teachers' education at the bachelor's level. Only a few universities are offering this course in teachers' education programs but the outline seems insufficient to train teachers for the implementation of inclusive education tasks in a practical sense. Teachers working in the mainstream system are not ready for this task due to which they hold negative attitudes towards inclusive education. Therefore, there is a dire need to revamp teacher education by keeping in view inclusive education. Therefore, for the execution of inclusive education policy seriousness of political stakeholders is desired. Resources should be provided to schools on an equitable basis. For the execution in a real sense we have to accept diversity first, and then keep in view the need for diverse learners to get resources on an equitable basis, and then include learners in the mainstream system of education. Interestingly a lot of research has been produced each year in universities but the execution of recommendations is not the responsibility of universities, it is the responsibility of the concerned sector /department to benefit from the findings of the research.

Special Education

Stakeholders of the special education department were contacted to learn about their views of inclusive education, department history and breath were discussed as the special education department was established to cater to the special learning needs of children with disabilities, under this department at present more than 300 institutions are working, among them 114, primary schools, 104, middle schools and 65 high schools 7 higher secondary schools and 7-degree colleges are functioning. More than 38000 special students are getting an education at any cost, in addition to this this department is providing various incentives in the form of an 800-per-month scholarship, a free pick-and-drop facility, free boarding and lodging facility for enrolled students.

Detail of interview

Since the disability varies geographically and the Special education department alone cannot accommodate all special children due to its limited access and range of schools/ centers, in addition to this inclusive education is not the domain of special education. This includes the rules of the business of the school education department. In the special education policy of 2020, noting is mentioned about the role of the special education department in inclusive education execution. However, the school education department can take assistance from the special education department in handling the practical challenges of inclusive education.

Discussion

The Dakar Conference (2000) in Senegal brought together the international community to put education at the top of its schema for enlargement of education, based on the visualization that education is a basic human right irrespective of any discrimination. It led to the formulation of a global agenda "Education for All". Inclusive education challenges the existing system about physical structure, human resources, teaching methodologies, curriculum, attitudes, and communication technologies. It also invites the attention of policymakers, planners, administrators, and administrators to work for the development of a workable model. Keeping in view the responses of various stakeholders the main causes of the procrastination of the execution of inclusive education include dedication, by focusing more all potential barriers could be removed gradually. Since the execution of inclusive education is a human rights issue, it is education for all in a school by togetherness and breaking barriers, by familiarity, tolerance, and reduction of prejudice against children with disabilities. At the same time, this ought to be in mind that inclusive education is not just shifting special children from special schools to ordinary classrooms, as if the general education system is not ready to include special children. If the general school system is not ready for reforms then it will create troubles for the system. For proper implantation, proper preparation is required to make the system inclusive by making desired changes in school curricula, and teachers' training, and developing a support system for staff to handle the challenges of inclusive education equitably.

The findings of the present survey revealed that the main causes of the procrastination were a lack of commitment on the part of stakeholders and a lack of inter-sectoral collaboration in various departments. Another reported reason was the rapid transfer posting of higher authorities' task of

inclusive education execution remains not executed therefore, political will, seriousness on the part of stakeholders, and inter-sectoral collaborations are required to decide the role and responsibilities of various stakeholders in promoting inclusive education with specific timelines without to avoid further delay. Serious efforts are required for inclusive teacher training, inclusive curriculum development, and inclusive assessment on an equitable basis. For the execution of inclusive education expert guidance can be taken from special education departments and academia as well.

Conclusion

Investigations revealed the freak condition of inclusive education across Punjab, due to a weak determination and coordination of various stakeholders. When examining the existing preparedness of the mainstream school education Department for the accommodation of children with disabilities in their institutions by focusing on admission policy, physical infrastructure, teacher training, curriculum, collaboration with related professionals, and community awareness findings seem obscured.

Although all stakeholders were acquainted with the concept of inclusive education, they know that inclusive education means imparting education to all who are at present excluded from the system consciously or unconsciously, such children are disadvantaged in one way or another way. Since such children belong to poor segments of society, therefore, they are not on the priority list of any department. UK Aid (PESP II) developed an inclusive education strategy on 17 October 2019, which has not yet been approved by the competent forum after passing 4 years. Children with special needs and disabilities are still deprived of their legitimate right to education. Although the special education department is functioning at the Punjab level, this department cannot establish new schools on the pattern of the school education department. This is also alarming that special schools do not accept students with severe and profound disabilities due to their access to schools. All such children are out of school, if the education system intends to extend its facilities to all then a workable action plan ought to be devised after detailed deliberation of all stakeholders, their valuable inputs are important for uplifting the existing condition of persons with disabilities across Punjab (out of school).

Although at the concept level stakeholders of various departments have awareness of inclusive education and its goals as far as the execution level is concerned serious gaps exist, number of factors are hindering the execution of inclusive education in present schools at a massive level. This includes a lack of commitment on the part of top management of the school education department, access to school, the non-disabled friendly infrastructure of the school buildings, an unresponsive school curriculum to inclusive needs, untrained teachers for this task, and not welcoming attitude of teachers and head teachers. Based on the study objectives, the main reasons for the procrastination were identified so it could be claimed that at present preparedness of the school education Department for the accommodation of children with disabilities in their institutions is not satisfactory. An inclusive assessment system for assessment is under consideration therefore, it is necessary of the time that all stakeholders sit together and devise guidelines under which the system is revamped. Prompt need was identified for trained teachers so they may willingly accept this task in collaboration with related professionals. Schools should also create awareness among the masses at the community level about inclusive pursuits.

Recommendations

For the execution of inclusive education, there is a need to develop an inclusive education working group comprising stakeholders from various departments. Their right engagement in this venture regularly is recommended so working modalities for each stakeholder can be devised in the context of accessible schools, teachers' training, attitudinal changes towards acceptance of diverse learners in the mainstream system of education, etc.

The findings of the research show that all stakeholders are looking toward the approval of the strategy because approval can open new avenues of inclusion for special children. Therefore, strong deliberations are required to determine the way forward at the practice level for inclusive education. The school education department may devise a workable framework for the execution of inclusive education by engaging allied organizations like QAED, PMIU PEC, and PTB. Inter-sectoral collaborative efforts are required to determine the role and responsibilities in promoting inclusive education with specific timelines. Stakeholders can give inputs for teachers' training and curriculum development. For the execution of inclusive education expert guidance can be taken from special education departments and academia as well.

The education system of Punjab works like an axis around which the whole system revolves, therefore, stakeholders of the school education department may come forward and collectively devise some vibrant effective strategies for the execution of inclusive education by removing all sorts of barriers including, institutional barriers, school level barriers attitudinal barrier and economic barriers for smooth execution of inclusive education without procrastination.

Applied Significance

The purists of inclusive education are a great challenge for the present mainstream education system because despite policy provisions children with special needs and disabilities are still facing hardships in getting admission to mainstream schools working under school education. Generally instead of granting admission school administration is creating obstacles due to erroneous assumptions about special children's physical, social, communicative, intellectual, and literacy skills. The findings of the present research invite collaboration on the part of the main stakeholders of education to devise a comprehensive way forward for the execution of inclusive education in institutions working under the school education department. The findings of the present research will motivate stakeholders to devise a workable action plan for the execution of inclusion in its true spirit not only in Punjab, but it can pave ways for inclusion across Pakistan without further procrastination.

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