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**PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPALS REGARDING
CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES FOR SPECIAL
CHILDREN EDUCATION OF KHYBER
PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN**

Dr. Rukhshanda Mushtaq¹, Dr. Abdul Haseeb², Dr. Muhammad
Sohail³

ABSTRACT

The study was designed to investigate the perceptions of principals regarding capacity building initiatives for special children education of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan special children education contains own methodology and instruction of education. The objectives of the study were to identify the perceptions of principals regarding capacity building initiatives undertaken by different special education institutions for the special children education and formulate workable suggestions for the improvement of special children education. A Survey questionnaire was used for the collection of quantitative data from 10 sample principal out of 45 schools and were analyzed by using the Mean and Chi-Square. It was found out that various services and facilities are provided free to special children in their schools but unfortunately they are limited. Furthermore, the present curriculum and special children education polices required modification

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and needed to be implemented properly, bring more emphasis on teacher training, established a teachers training institutes, fill up all vacant posts of the teachers and supporting staff in the schools, initiate an awareness campaign on a regular basis in order to develop awareness in people and remove the negative attitude of people towards special children.

Key words: Special education, special children, special schools, capacity building initiatives

Introduction

ALMIGHTY ALLAH created mankind and made them superior from all other living things in respect of their physical and mental abilities and also gave them the gift of knowledge which can be acquired through their abilities and capabilities.

In Pakistan Population Census (1998), the word “disable” used for special person which applies to a person who, on account of injury, diseases or deformity, is handicapped for undertaking any gainful profession or employment in order to earn his livelihood and includes a person who is blind, deaf, physically handicapped or mentally retarded.

Therefore, these children require special attention in addition to it, other services including treatment and facilities, according to their disabilities and are supposed to be enrolled in schools meant for such children only and where they can be educated in a special manner (Heward, 2003). A sub-system and a discipline of general education, Especially designed and planned for the special children to fulfill their educational needs and requirements are

called Special education (Awan, 1998; Awan, 2002). For this purpose, specially designed classroom instructions, physical educational setting, institution, home and hospital for special children in such a way that no financial burden is put on parents and guardian to meet their special educational needs (Suleman et.al, 2013). Special children education requires convince and accessibility guidelines along with different, unique and special methods of treatment, because special children are unable to acquire a proper physical environment and motivation in regular classrooms (Roger & George, 2007).

Regrettably, Special children education sector is considered to be one of the most neglected sector in most of the developing countries. Same as the case in Pakistan as most of the stakeholders, professionals consider it as charity-based and do not have any interest in designing or launching of special initiatives for these children. Another major issue is that the number of institutions is quite smaller in comparison to the number of special children. Furthermore, the accessibility of these schools is also a question mark and considered to be one of the major reasons in imparting quality education to special children (Mustafa, 2012). Teachers lacking ability of teaching and training, non-sufficient resources, lack of sufficient learning materials and instruments in schools, inappropriate medium of instruction used by the teachers, rigid and inflexible curriculum,

improper infrastructure, not shortage of the very basic facilities including physiotherapy, inadequate transport facility, up to date libraries and other operational and functional equipments. As observed widely in Pakistan, most of the parents of special children do not pay attention towards their educational requirements, compared to their normal children, even the well-off and quite educated families do not pay due attention to their special children (UNICEF, 2003; Awan, 2012). Unfortunately, in our country the facilities of providing education for special children and adults are lacking and not up to the mark. The main barrier in the provision of special children education faced due to the special children are not registered with the concerned department. According to the data revealed the registered special children and adults in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were not even one third of the original special people population in the province and similarly in the other parts of the country

The facilities including infrastructure, building capacity, rooms, furniture, library, hostel facility, first aid facility and transport facility etc of these institutes were not sufficient. The experience and qualification of staff of these institutes were up to the mark. The provision of free textbooks, uniform to these institutes was also unsatisfactory (Martin & Sudrajat; 2007). According to Rafiq (2013) the level of education offered by these institutes was mainly up to primary level and hence negligible or not at all

opportunities for these children to pursue higher education along with the curriculum being taught were not appropriated (Farooq, 1994).

The study of Iqbal (2005), concluded that appropriate curriculum is also crucial for quality education as well as these institutes were shortage of A.V aids. Proper utilization of A.V aids was also a problem in these institutes. The study of Khatoon (2003), also showed that A.V aids are not properly utilized in special schools of Pakistan. Nevertheless, the use of A.V aids makes the teaching learning process more effective.

In special children institutes vocational training were provided to children, keeping in view their future needs. The study of Khatoon (2004), also revealed that the vocational training program in most of special educational institutes is prevocational in nature. In developed countries vocational training opportunities are provided to special children in various fields like telephone, computer, wood works, leather crafts etc (Brolin, 1982). Special children institutes were having a lack of machinery and equipment in vocational training. While for effective vocational training as well equipped training centers are necessary (Khatoon, 2003). The vocational teachers of special children schools were also facing lack of proper in-service training opportunities or in other words, no provision of systematic training (Shah & Bano, 2002). Brolin (1982) revealed that training of special children

teachers is also a tragedy in developed countries. Shah & Bano (2002), found out that special education institutes are hardly serving 19 % of the school aging special children. Furthermore, Martin & Sudrajat (2007) and Attaullah (2010) revealed that the financial position of these special children educational institutions is not up to the mark and concerned NGOs/ Donor agencies do not support these institutes financially.

According to Article 25A “Education For All”. In this regard Government of Pakistan has taken keen action to provide education as free and compulsory education to all. But unfortunately, in education sector the special children education is the most neglected area as a results the special children and adults faced alot of problems education which leads hurdles in every field of their life. The study is highly significant as it will offer alternatives to policy makers to develop and elaborate their plan and policies concerning education for special children. This study will provide a base for other researchers who in future will conduct such type of studies. Apart from it the study will provide prospects for heads and teachers of these institutes to cope with challenges and avail opportunities while working with special children. Besides this the study enabled all those having direct contact with the special children education to meet the challenges and grasp all opportunities while functioning in the sector of special children education.

Objectives Of The Study

The objectives of the study were:

- i. To know the perceptions of principals regarding capacity building initiatives undertaken by different special education institutions for the special children education.
 - ii. To formulate workable suggestions for further improving special children education
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Method and procedure

It was a descriptive quantitative method Research. Quantitative data were collected through field survey and self structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part I deals with the basic information data, part II contain a check list about the present services and facilities in the school while which part III contained 44 items grouped under 04 broad categories in which participants response in 5 point Likert's scale.

Population and sample size

The sample size was allocated through stratified random sampling technique. There are 44 schools for Special Children Education working under the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, out of which it is assumed that 10 sampled schools was fairly represented the whole population. A list of special school principals was prepared to serve as a sample frame. The sample was further classified on the basis of gender and type of school such as 4 hearing impaired, 3 visual impaired and 3 physical impaired principals were sampled.

Data analysis and interpretation

After the collection of data, it was analyzed by using Chi Square and Mean through SPSS.

Findings

Information from the collected data about the capacity building initiatives in special children education in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa led to the following findings:

- i. The results of the principals showed that the level of education offered in schools was at primary level that is 100.0%. However, 60% of schools were registration with Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education and Only 30% of school registration with technical board of education.
 - ii. The results of the respondent principals indicated that building capacity of special school were sufficient 60.0%. These schools contain offices which were sufficient 80.0% and Rooms inside the school, supporting staff working, staff room for male staff and resource room/ AV aids room were only sufficient 30.0%. Besides this boundary wall surrounding the schools were sufficient 70.0%. The general electricity facilities were sufficient 100.0% in all special children schools. The results showed that in the school staffroom for female staff, library facility and facility during load shedding were not sufficient that is 100.0%. Other facilities such as furniture in school were not sufficient 60.0%. The hostel facility, dispensary, first aids and free medicine were sufficient 50.0% The facility of free transportation to all special students and playground space in the schools was sufficient 90.0 %. While the provision of other facilitates, such as free uniform, free text
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books, note books, stationary provided to students were not sufficient 80.0%.

- iii. The majority of respondent principals agreed 100.0% that Scholarships, other facilities were provided such as free books etc to the special children in their special schools, relevant academic & professional experience of teachers is considered for the job, satisfactory pay scale awarded to teaching staff, no up-gradation of special children schools, classrooms setting are arranged according to the need of special children, Friendly and conducive environment is provided to students and teachers, existing special children education policy and need modification, a need to establish new schools for special children education, that Special education needs as a separate ministry at provincial / national level, Special Students faced problems in day to day activities, traveling, communication, learning etc and shortages of teaching staff in their school.
 - iv. As far as, Coordination and cooperation among school staffs, students and departments were effective in special children schools is concerned respondent were 90% agreed.
 - v. Above all respondents principals were agreed 80%, Teachers teaching style is not motivating for special children and Teachers do not prepare Lesson plan & relevant materials arrangement such as AV Aids for the lesson.
 - vi. Nearly, 70% of respondent agreed on the existing special children education schools and facilities in the province are sufficient, satisfied from their promotion criteria, Head of institute contain the administrative, financial skills and powers, daily domestic skills & training are given to students e.g. dressing, grooming, etc to students, Opportunities are provided to students to participate in recreational activities and Trainings were provided to teachers on various aspects by government/ other
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- departments, Curriculum taught in institute is not up-to-date, improvement and modification required in present taught curriculum, free transportation facilities were provided to special children in schools, neither School building nor design properly i.e. door, stairs etc and Students face problem in communication with teacher.
- vii. According to the respondent teachers the financial condition of their institution is good enough; they were agreed 50.0%, Special children have Inferiority complex due to family /society negative attitude.
- viii. It was opposed that Available services provided in school to special children were sufficient though responded teacher were Agreed 30% as well as the availability of Assistive/ helping tools in the school e.g. white cane, wheel chair etc. Furthermore, Only 20% the respondent agreed on availability of services and facilities, machinery, equipments, furniture etc.
- ix. It was found out from the results that the respondent teacher were 100% disagreed, that organized different functions/ festivals to raise school funds, Attitude of teachers is not friendly towards special children in school.
- x. The principals and capacity building initiatives in different special education institutions results obtained through Chi-square. The results indicated that significance value 0.018 which is less than the p value 0.5. Hence, rejected the Null hypothesis.

Suggestion And Recommendation

- i. Capacity building Initiatives in special children education & School Intervention is very necessary that to redirect operations of special schools initiatives in special education. Links must be built between special schools and the practices of special education. It is necessary to review and redirect operation of special education initiatives so that they serve the purpose of special education. For this

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- purpose all existing special education practices must be rethought in order to support special education practices.
- ii. Identify and deal with individual difference in the suitable way to teach special children are learner's centered approach, because in this approach individual student are instructed according to ability and interest along with supporting flexibility in learning pattern, curricula, methods and materials of teaching, assessment and examination system, along with easily manageable classroom.
 - iii. It is very imperative to form a link between classroom work and experience in school with daily life activities.
 - iv. For the special children growth and personality development Sports & recreational activities are the key vital factor. Therefore, opportunities provided to them.
 - v. Endow assistive and helping devices to special children schools on urgent basis like crutches, wheelchairs, white cane etc.
 - vi. In schools clarify and reconsider policy evaluation, classification, and placement of students so that they take into consideration interactional nature of the disability, not stigmatize children and benefit from special people.
 - vii. Curriculum, which is the heart of the special children education process, is often prescribed for the national level. There is a need for ways to ensure that the program is flexible and responsive to the school or individual teacher may make changes in the local context and meet the needs of the individual student.
 - viii. Different Vocational training and skills development training needed to initiate as a part of all educational projects for special children. Which help in the development of capacities that will enable them to find work and gradually improve their living conditions, become self-sufficiency and independence as possible.
 - ix. Teachers and supporting staff responsibilities in school are given orientation, make known and guiding
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- continuously about the location of the school, school infrastructure, surrounding pathways, building, playground, classrooms, corridors, toilets etc to the special children.
- x. Capacity building of teachers and staff of the school through initiating various training programs and Adopt strategies to promote teacher training and aware them towards their responsibilities to all special children through building and improving their skills by providing them pre-service and in-service training. Provide various professional training to teaching staff by appropriate use of teaching-Learning method, educational materials, use of AV aids, teaching-learning materials, Adapting the curriculum, teaching and assessment process.
- xi. Institutional capacity building of special children schools/ institutions can be developed through school management work hard to make the school environment are safe and special children friendly. The classrooms are on the ground floor, with Ramps and support bars are provided. Also keeping in view the gender sensitive environment, compassion and reign in the school.
- xii. Parent-teacher meetings need to be held from time to time.
- xiii. Provision of various facilities and services in school for special children , Increasing investment in school infrastructure and staff so that special children who are identified as having special educational needs achieve the necessary support, and continue to receive such support during their training. Use of IT, assistive technologies, outreach programs for special children.
- xiv. Planning and Implementation of Special Children Education Policies and Legislations, Formulate clear policies and improve data and information. Making relevant and reliable plan by the government which consists of making the school building
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feasible, accessible and goal oriented curriculum development, teaching methods and fulfill the needs of materials for special students, in addition to designing obstacle free building, parks and public places. Institutional capacity building, arrangements and mechanism. Along with improvement in the role of Federal, Provincial & District level Governments.

- xv. Initiate Special Education as a Discipline in colleges and Universities
 - xvi. Establish monitoring and evaluation committee who will keep a regular check on for special children education schools and intuitions.
 - xvii. Creation of liaison among stake holders, professionals and community to Develop links between educational services and community-based rehabilitation and other rehabilitation services, where they exist. In this way, scarce resources can be used more efficiently, and education, health care and social services can properly integrate.
 - xviii. More emphasis needed to give to the area of research and development in Academic & applied at all levels i.e. medicines, psychology, vocational and social work field besides special children.
 - xix. In those areas of the country where special children schools don't exist apart from it the slight impaired children get admitted in inclusive education.
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