

Readiness of Urban Primary Schools for Inclusive Education in Pakistan

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This survey based, cross-sectional descriptive study, conducted on 300 teachers of 75 public & private primary schools within the city limits of Lahore (Pakistan), is aimed to explore the educators' readiness for inclusive education and inclusion practices in mainstream primary schools. The study reveals that mainstream primary schools in Pakistan are not ready yet for inclusive education and facing enormous challenges, including lack of commitment towards inclusive education in schools' mission statement, lack of professional development opportunities for teachers and administration, lack of inclusion supportive admission policy, lack of school administration's knowledge about current researches, lack of collaborative planning practices, lack of encouraging family-schools & community partnerships, unfriendly school infrastructure for disabled pupils, non-availability of written information about teachers' roles, responsibilities and required skills to teach and support all students including disabled pupils. However, the study also reveals some encouraging indicators of teachers' readiness towards inclusive education: teachers' positive approach towards meeting a variety of learners needs through adopting appropriate pedagogy; appreciation to diversity, openness, trust, collaboration and positive relationship among teachers; stakeholders' awareness of disability and related special needs; teachers' positive attitude towards technology integration; teachers' knowledge about global activities of inclusive education in general classrooms. Some evidences of inclusive education in private schools have also been observed, but cannot be considered a common practice. However, it is a positive trend and must be encouraged. It can create a long term impact on the national education system. It is believed that teachers have the potential to implement inclusive education if opportunity is provided. The study recommends for serious efforts for the promotion of inclusive education in mainstream schools.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Inclusion, Education for All, Inclusion in Mainstream Schools

Pakistan is among those 164 signatory countries who have committed to provide quality basic education for all children by 2015 or earlier (UNESCO, 2000). Achieving this goal seems very challenging; particularly inclusion of disabled children in mainstream primary schools (Miles & Farhad, 1999; UNICEF, 2003a; Haider, 2008). Although efforts are in progress (USAID, 2010), for the successful implementation of inclusive education in Pakistan, the concerns raised in recent literature (Alur & Timmons, 2009; UNICEF, 2011) have to be explored in the local context. This study is a practical attempt in this direction.

Literature review- Inclusive education

Inclusive education has undergone enormous changes since 1990s (Mackney, 2003). Yet, global efforts can be traced back to 1948 when education was recognized as a human right. Since then the

education of disabled children has always been a serious concern of the global community (Barton, 2009; Bach, 2009; Leslie & Skidmore, 2010). Due to the efforts of the global community and advocacy of the disabled people, a series of conventions and declarations materialized including the Convention on "The Rights of the Child" (UNICEF, 1989), "World Declaration on Education for All" (UNESCO, 1990), "UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities" (1993), UNESCO's (1994) earlier Salamanca declaration and "Education for All initiative", "The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion" (UNESCO, 1995). The goals set in these declarations were reaffirmed at the "2000 World Education Forum in Dakar (Senegal)" and in "A World Fit for Children", and the outcome document from the 2002 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children. In the same year, the G8 countries made

their commitment to inclusive approaches to education and development, and the World Bank launched its Fast Track Initiative for education which provided scope for investment in inclusive education (UNICEF, 2010).

Later, in its 2006 Global Monitoring Report on Education for All, UNESCO (2006) for the first time identifies inclusion of children with disabilities in universal primary quality education as a global priority for education development (Bach, 2009). These efforts strengthen the viewpoint that education of the disabled in mainstream schools is an entitlement, and that denial of inclusion is a denial of equal opportunities (UNESCO, 2003; UNESCO, 2005). These developments have positioned schools as facilitators for exercise of this Right to Education, rather than as agencies that may dictate the lives of growing children and youth (Mukhopadhyay, 2009).

Consequently, in developed countries like the UK, the USA, and Canada various initiatives have been taken towards inclusive education (Blake, 1999; Parilla, 1999; Thomas and Davies, 1999). These countries have legal frameworks, which recognize 'comprehensive schooling for all' and lay down the standards for inclusion. Now, inclusive education has become a global agenda and countries like Pakistan are also striving to achieve this goal.

'Inclusion': Views of Global Community

Inclusive education is commonly associated with the education of children with disabilities and/or 'special educational needs' in main stream schools (Cummings, Dyson & Millward, 2003). According to Booth & Ainscow (1995), inclusion aims to maximize the participation of children with disabilities and/or 'special educational needs' in mainstream schools. It is a complex process and requires radical changes in schools (Barton, 1997), education policies (Salter and Tapper, 2000; Vidovitch and Slee, 2001), teaching practices (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004) and insights into some of the complexities and contradictory contexts and exclusionary pressures within institutions (Ballard, 2003; Polat, 2011).

The views of Carol Witherell (1991) about 'teaching' may help us to understand the underlying philosophy of inclusion. According to her

'teaching', in addition to curricular activities, takes care of ethical issues concerning the "nature of the self, the relation to self to other and to culture, and conceptions of knowing, meaning, and purpose" (p. 84). According to Witherell (1991) teaching is just a technology for assessment and instruction that does not consider how our "self develops and finds meaning in the context of relationship" (p. 90). She also declares relationship as fundamental to human experience and requires an 'empathic understanding' of ourselves and others' actions, intentions and meanings (p. 90). She further explain that the development of "self" depends on experiences which are based upon the child's physical, social and emotional state as he/she responds to or engage with an event or activity (Witherell,1991). The notion of "trust" here is very important. Codd (1999) considers "trust" as the "social cement" by which people are connected and is central to social capital theory. According to him "trust" involves an attitude/disposition which strengthen the ideas of "fairness and respect ... and virtues such as honesty ... friendliness and care" (p. 49).

Advocating a democratic approach Strømstad (2003) argues "Inclusion is not about bringing somebody who has been formerly excluded into an environment that has not adapted to normal diversity. Inclusion is about diversity living and working together" (p. 34). He further explains that "being together is not necessarily sufficient; rather every one, students, as well as staff, must realize that their words and actions are important to others because they have impact on others' lives, feelings, and self-image" (Strømstad, 2003). This demands "a climate of tolerance and respect, encouraging the development of democratic culture" (UNESCO 2001, p. 20). Such a climate is essential in an inclusive school (Strømstad, 2003).

However, many authors (Clark, Dyson, & Millward, 1998; Strømstad, 2003; Cummings, Dyson & Millward, 2003) point out that much of the inclusive education literature focuses on the organizational characteristics than discussing issues like pedagogy, curriculum, educational outcomes, the relationship between schooling and society, etc.

The views of few scholars have been discussed in above paragraphs. Yet, a countless number of

definitions and interpretations of term 'inclusion' are presented by different researchers, educators; policy makers and communities (both within and amongst nations) and are available in literature. For example, Singh (2009) refers inclusion to a 'different policy approach' vis-à-vis segregation and integration, which proposes that children with disabilities and/or 'special educational needs' should be considered authentic members of the main stream classroom instead of special schools. Christensen (1992) insists that rather than few students being seen to have 'special' needs, inclusion must regard all students' need as thread of the fabric of human experiences; expanding the mandate of inclusion from merely addressing exclusion of children with special needs from general education to challenging all exclusionary policies and practices in the education system. Inclusion thus is positioned as relevant for all excluded groups of learners affected by issues such as poverty, war, neglect or social stratification (Christensen, 1992).

Still other theorists, like Booth (1996), refer to inclusion as a process of increasing participation and reducing exclusion within schools. Booth et al, (2000) maintain that the main task of inclusive education is overcoming barriers to learning and participation for all. They further suggest that we must stop categorizing children into 'special' and 'general' categories so that we could emphasize existing variations amongst all children without creating divisions amongst groups of children (p 22–23). This approach is in line with Article 3 of UNESCO (1994) which state "Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other conditions". (Article 3, UNESCO 1994)

Kisanji (1998) suggests that a school for all will not be possible if it is not based on principles of inclusion in education. Lipsky & Gartner (1999) believe that inclusive education is integral to a democratic society. Falvey and Givner (2005) gone to the extent that "inclusion is a belief system, not just a set of strategies". They argue that "all restructuring efforts in schools require, at the minimum, a belief that: each student can and will learn and succeed. Diversity enriches us all, and students at risk can overcome the risk for failure through involvement in a thoughtful and caring community of learners. Each student has unique

contributions to offer to other learners. Each student has strengths and needs. Services and supports should not be relegated to one setting (e.g., special classes or schools). An Effective learning results from the collaborative efforts of everyone working to ensure each student's success" (p. 8).

Barton (1997) comment, "[inclusion] is not merely about placing disabled pupils in classrooms with their non-disabled peers ... Rather, it is about how, where and why, and with what consequences, we educate all pupils" (p. 234). Mukhopadhyay (2009) says that "the fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences, they may have". Lipsky and Alur & Rioux, (2009) state that the term inclusive education does not only refer to the education of children with disabilities and/or 'special educational needs' in mainstream, but refers to all children facing barriers to learning, regardless of gender, class, caste, religion and disability. Lipsky and Gartner (1999) state, "Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use & partnership with their communities" (p21).

It is evident from the above discussion that the concept of inclusion is not only complex, but multi-dimensional as well. It encompasses a multiplicity of conflicting ideologies and practices. Yet, an obvious aspect is that inclusion is not only a matter of 'rights'. It also takes into account aspects like 'who', 'how', 'when' and 'where' are being educated. In addition, critically important policies, strategies, and system requirements have to be in place in order to effectively support teachers & other staff to promote inclusive culture and practices.

Operationalization of 'Inclusion'

As discussed above, inclusion means different to different people. For this study, it was important to operationalize the concept of 'inclusion'. In this regard, including other literature on inclusion (e.g. Ballard, 1995; Allan, 1999; Ainscow, 1999; Booth et al, 2000; Mukherjee, Lightfoot & Sloper, 2000; Strømstad, 2003; Mukhopadhyay, 2009; Blatchford,

et. al., 2010; Nimante & Tubele, 2010; Leslie & Skidmore, 2010; O’Gorman & Drudy, 2010; O’Gorman, 2011) L97¹ (1999) help us to operationalize the concept of ‘inclusion’. L97 clearly relates inclusion to students with special needs: “In order to meet pupils’ different background and abilities, the school for all must be an inclusive community with room for everyone. The diversity of backgrounds, interests and abilities must be met with a diversity of challenges and respect different views of cultures, faith and value” (L97, p. 63). It is further stated: “Pupils with special needs must be given the opportunity to play an equally important part in the social, academic and cultural community” (op.cit., p. 64).

Methodology

This survey based, cross-sectional descriptive study aimed to address two research questions: i) what is the implementation status of inclusive practices in schools? ii) Are mainstream primary schools’ educators ready for inclusive education? For the purpose of empirical investigation, with some modification, alteration and addition, a set of questions - adopted from NJCIE (2010) - was developed considering that to date inclusion indicators identified have not been used in Pakistan. Through the developed questionnaire, using survey technique, participants’ responses were collected.

The survey questionnaire, adopted from “Quality Indicators for Effective Inclusive Education Guidebook” (NJCIE, 2010), focuses on eleven quality indicators for effective inclusive education. It consisted of 37-item, divided in eleven parts: (i) “Leadership - 6 items”, (ii) “School Climate” - 4 items, (iii) “Scheduling and Participation” - 3 items, (iv) “Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment” - 5 items, (v) “Program Planning and IEPs Development” - 2 items, (vi) “Program Implementation and Assessment” - 2 items, (vii)

“Individual Student Supports” - 4 items, (viii) “Family-School Partnerships” - 3 items, (ix) “Collaborative Planning and Teaching” - 3 items, (x) “Professional Development” - 3 items, (xi) “Planning for Continued Best Practice Improvement” - 2 items. In addition, a descriptive question “what does mean inclusive education?” was added to get the participants’ vision about inclusive education.

The most widely used approach, Likert-scale (Likert, 1932), for scaling responses in survey research has been used. The data was grouped, tabled, processed, analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of percentages based on four-point Likert-type scale-adopted form (NJCIE,2010): “**Fully** - there is much evidence that the statement is true; it would be difficult to find ways to improve; **Substantially** - there is much evidence that the statement is true, but there are a few practices that could be strengthened; **Partially** - some evidence can be given that the statement is true, but there are a number of practices needing improvement or opportunities for strengthening; **Not yet** - there is very little or no evidence that the practice presently exists”.

Population and Sampling

The population of research consists of seventy five (75) public & private primary schools within the city limits of Lahore (Pakistan). Three hundred teachers - 231 Female (77%) and 69 men (23%) - from these schools participated in this study. None of the participant was holding the status of ‘special education teacher’ in their respective schools. Out of 300 teachers who agreed initially to participate in the study, 282 teachers returned the completed questionnaires (response rate of 94%).

Findings and Discussions

Tables 1 to 11 show the frequency of the participants’ responses to the statements formulated to assess the readiness of mainstream primary schools -within the city limits of Lahore (Pakistan) - for inclusive education through eleven quality indicators for Effective Inclusive Education adopted from NJCIE (2010).

1 The curriculum reform of compulsory education in Norway of 1997 (L97) contains three elements of relevance to the school for all, namely community education, acknowledging cultural diversity and inclusion.

Table 1: The Participants Responses about the Best Practices' Indicator 'Leadership'

Best practice Indicators	Status of Implementation in Percentage				Readiness Ratio	Mean
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Not Yet		
1. LEADERSHIP						
1.1 Inclusion philosophy is part of the school's mission statement	3	11	28	58	0.59	
1.2 The knowledge of the headteacher about inclusive education is up-to-date	0	4	11	85	0.19	
1.3 The headteacher takes proactive approach and provides resources to implement inclusion.	1	4	18	77	0.29	
1.4 The headteacher uses teachers' feedback and students' achievement to identify training workshops for teachers.	1	3	13	83	0.22	0.24
1.5 The headteacher takes appropriate measures and encourages teachers to promote full inclusion in school.	1	0	4	95	0.07	
1.6 The headteacher offers special incentives to teachers who show a positive attitude towards inclusive practices.	1	0	4	95	0.07	

Table 1 shows the participants' responses about the best practices related to the indicator 'Leadership'. Through statement 1.1, 58% of the participants have confirmed that presently the philosophy of inclusive education does not reflect in their schools' mission statement. Statements 1.2 to 1.6 are related to headteachers' attitude towards inclusion. The frequency of participants' responses of statements 1.2 to 1.6 varies: 'Fully' from 0% to 3%, 'Substantially' from 0% to 11%, 'Partially' from 4% to 28% and 'Not Yet' from 58% to 95%. The Mean value (0.24) for the factor 'Leadership' also indicates that teachers perceive leadership 'not ready

yet' for the inclusion. Although the high frequency of 'Not Yet' indicates unpreparedness of headteachers' for inclusive education, but it does not allow concluding the headteachers have a negative attitude towards inclusion. Their attitude may be due to their lack of knowledge about the current researches that supports the benefits of inclusive education and the concept that ALL students should be included; or it may be due to the absence of 'inclusive education' from their school's mission statement. This aspect needs further investigation; opening another avenue for our future research.

Table 2: The Participants' Responses about the Indicator 'School Climate'

2. SCHOOL CLIMATE	Status of Implementation in Percentage				Readiness Ratio	Mean
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Not Yet		
2.1 The school environment, administrative staff, and teachers appreciate diversity in classrooms	14	51	35	0	1.79	1.49

2.2	The school environment, administrative staff, and teachers demonstrate positive approach towards developing effective relationships among all students both academic and nonacademic settings.	50	41	9	0	2.41
2.3	The school administrative staff, teachers and parents are aware of different disabilities and related special needs	2	35	63	0	1.39
2.4	Teachers have appropriate knowledge and skills to implement inclusive education.	3	0	28	69	0.37

The frequency of responses to statement 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 in the above table are very encouraging. For example, the frequency of responses (14% (fully) , 51% (substantially), 35% (partially), and 0% ('not yet')) to statement 2.1 indicates that the educational environment of the sample schools appreciates diversity. Similarly, the frequency of responses (50% (fully) , 41% (substantially), 9% (partially), and 0% ('not yet')) to statement 2.2 indicates a positive relationship among all students. Both of these practices are very supportive for inclusive education. Two important aspects are noticeable from the response to statement 2.3. (2% (fully), 35% (substantially), 63% (partially), and 0% ('not yet')).

Although the level of awareness about disability varies, but it is a very healthy sign that all stakeholders have an understanding of disabilities and special needs. However, 69% ('not yet') responses to statement 2.4 may be due to lack of training opportunities for teachers. The mean score (1.49) for this factor in above table is indicator of 'partial readiness' but not 'substantially' ready for inclusive education. This may be one of the reasons for such a high response (63% (partially)) to statement 2.3. In service teacher training are highly recommended in literature for the promotion of inclusive education.

Table 3: The Participants' Responses about the Indicator 'Scheduling and Participation'

	3. SCHEDULING AND PARTICIPATION	Status of Implementation in Percentage				Readiness Ratio	Mean
		Fully	Substantially	Partially	Not Yet		
3.1	The majority of Students with disabilities spend most or all of their time among normal schoolfellows.	3	3	21	73	0.26	
3.2	Students with disabilities have the same opportunities in nonacademic times as their normal class fellows.	3	3	21	73	0.26	0.36
3.3	Students with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in both academic and socialization activities	3	3	21	73	0.26	

Mean score (0.36) for this factor in above table indicator demonstrates lack of readiness for inclusive education. However, it is important to notice that there may be many reasons for a high response rate (76% ('not yet')) to statements 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 in the above table. One of the obvious reasons noticed during the study is that the majority of the target schools do not admit children with disabilities. Only two schools offer inclusive education. Both of these schools are private and charge a very high tuition fee compared to other schools included in this sample.

Mean score (0.74) for this factor in table 4 indicates 'not ready yet'. 0% ('not yet') response rate to statement 4.1 in the above table clearly shows that the teachers are well aware of a variety of learners need and, in their common practice, adopt appropriate pedagogy to enhance their students' learning. In order to provide all children with a sense of equality, 'adaptation of pedagogy according to the individual's need' is viewed as an integral part

of developing inclusive practices in mainstream schools (Lewis and Norwich, 2001). However, the high response rate 97% ('not yet) to statement 4.2, 78% ('not yet) to statement 4.3, and 70% ('not yet) to statement 4.4 is due to the nonexistence of disabled children in the respondents' classes which is due to their schools' policy of 'not admitting disabled children'. The response rate (12% (fully), 18% (substantially), 49% (partially)) demonstrates a very encouraging attitude of teacher towards technology integration. The use of technology in classrooms is very supportive and much needed aspects of inclusive classrooms. It means, if opportunity is provided, the teachers have pedagogical and technology skills to meet the instructional needs of disabled students. However, the 21% ('not yet') response might have been due to the non availability of technology for classrooms. Pattern of technology usage in classrooms and the availability of technology in schools are two important areas which needs further exploration and are our future research concerns.

Table 4: The Participants' Responses about the Indicator 'Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment'

4. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT		Status of Implementation in Percentage				Readiness Ratio	Mean
		Fully	Substantially	Partially	Not Yet		
4.1	Teachers use differentiated instructional materials and activities to meet a variety of learners' needs.	11	41	48	0	1.63	
4.2	Teachers use a differentiated curriculum and related materials for assignments, homework and tests to meet the needs of the disabled students.	3	0	0	97	0.09	
4.3	Teachers encourage participation and involvement of students with disabilities in academic and non academic activities.	4	6	12	78	0.36	0.74
4.4	Teachers use formative assessments to measure student understanding.	3	6	21	70	0.42	
4.5	Teachers integrate class-wide technology seamlessly to enhance the achievement of all students.	12	18	49	21	1.21	

Table 5: The Participants’ Responses about the Indicator ‘Program Planning and IEPs Development’

5. PROGRAM PLANNING AND IEP DEVELOPMENT	Status of Implementation in Percentage				Readiness Ratio	Mean
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Not Yet		
5.1 The school develops Individual Educational Plans(IEPs) for students with disabilities	3	0	0	97	0.09	0.09
5.2 The IEPs including behavioral support strategies, behavior intervention plan are prepared on the bases of input from parents, staff, and teachers working with the child.	3	0	0	97	0.09	

Mean score (0.09) for this factor in above table is indicator of ‘no readiness’. However, two conclusions could be drawn from the response rate of 97% (‘not yet’) to statements 5.1 and 5.2 in above table: i) non-availability of disabled children in their classrooms which may be due to the schools’ admission policies; ii) as shown in Table 1, inclusive

education is not the part of the school’s mission statement so the teachers feel less responsible for preparing IEPs for pupils who are with special needs. 3% (‘fully’) responses to both statements suppose to be from the teachers from two private schools where inclusive education is being offered.

Table 6: The Participants’ Responses about the Indicator ‘Program Implementation and Assessment’

6. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT	Status of Implementation in Percentage				Readiness Ratio	Mean
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Not Yet		
6.1 Different assessment strategies are used to assess students’ progress in the curriculum.	3	0	0	97	0.09	0.09
6.2 IEPs are implemented and updated according to the student’s progress.	3	0	0	97	0.09	

Mean score (0.09) for this factor in above table, once again, depict the same picture explained above.

Table 7: The Participants’ Responses about the Indicator ‘Individual Student Supports’

7. INDIVIDUAL STUDENT SUPPORTS	Status of Implementation in Percentage				Readiness Ratio	Mean
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Not Yet		
7.1 The teachers modify class activity if a student’s goal cannot be effectively addressed.	3	0	3	94	0.12	0.25
7.2 To meet the educational needs of disabled children, teachers provide one-to-one support to all students.	3	0	0	97	0.09	
7.3 Teachers are equipped with the latest research recommendations and global activities about	3	11	37	49	0.68	

inclusive education in general classrooms						
7.4	School buildings and classrooms are constructed to meet the needs of disabled children	3	0	3	94	0.12

Mean score (0.25) for this factor in above table indicates there is no “Individual students support” available. The responses (3% (fully), 0% (substantially), 3% (partially), and 94% (‘not yet’)) to statement 7.1 & 7.2 in the above table is once again may be due to the reasons explained above. Although the response rate about statement 7.3 (3% (fully) , 11% (substantially), 37% (partially), and 49% (‘not yet’)) is different from the response rate of statement 2.3 (2% (fully), 35% (substantially), 63% (partially), and 0% (‘not yet’)), but it still encouraging as almost 51% (3%+11%+37%) teachers are knowledgeable about global activities of inclusive education in general classrooms which indirectly shows teachers’ personal attitude and readiness towards inclusive education. This

knowledge can help them to meet the challenges of inclusive education, if opportunity is provided. However, 94% (‘not yet’) response to statement 7.5 is alarming as it relates to the premises and school buildings. The modification of school buildings and classrooms to accommodate disabled children involves finances which may be challenging, particularly in case of public schools.

Mean score 0.07 for this indicator in table 8 reveal lack of Family-School partnerships. Participants’ responses to statements 8.1 (84 % (‘not yet’), 8.2 (84 % (‘not yet’) and 8.3 (84 % (‘not yet’)) in above table could not be said encouraging. However, the practice might be due to schools’ policies as explained above.

Table 8: The Participants’ Responses about the Indicator ‘Family-School Partnerships’

8. FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS	Status of Implementation in Percentage				Readiness Ratio	Mean
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Not Yet		
8.1 Parents are actively involved in school planning and inclusion initiatives.	3	0	13	84	0.22	0.07
8.2 School staff, teachers and family members jointly attend workshops on inclusive education.	0	0	0	100	0	
8.3 School facilitates parents with research-based educational practices which can help them to support their child’s learning at home and school.	0	0	0	100	0	

Table 9: The Participants’ Responses about the Indicator ‘Collaborative Planning and Teaching’

9. COLLABORATIVE PLANNING AND TEACHING	Status of Implementation in Percentage				Readiness Ratio	Mean
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Not Yet		
9.1 The roles, responsibilities, and associated skill level of all teachers and related services personnel are well defined and documented.	0	0	37	63	0.37	
9.2 The school adopts a collaborative approach to plane inclusion. General educators, special educators, paraprofessionals, and related service providers are involved in this activity.	0	0	0	100	0	0.37
9.3 Teachers adopt a knowledge sharing approach in sharing lesson plans, experiences, and obtain input from their colleagues.	4	11	40	45	0.74	

Mean score (0.37) of this indicator in above table indicates the participants are not practicing collaborative planning and teaching. The frequency of responses (0% (fully), 0% (substantially), 37% (partially), and 67% (‘not yet’)) to the statement 9.1 in above table clearly indicate that a majority of schools do not follow the practice of providing information about teachers’ roles, responsibilities and required skills to teach and support all students including disabled children in written form. 100% (‘not yet’) response to statement 9.2 indicates lack of

collaborative planning practices, which is very essential for inclusive education. However, the participants’ responses to statement 9.3 (4% (fully), 11% (substantially), 40% (partially), and 46% (‘not yet’)) are very encouraging. This could be considered an evidence of openness, trust and collaboration among teachers. In recent literature openness, trust and collaboration (Nevin et al. 1994; Singh, 2004) are being considered important for inclusive culture. It means a majority of the teachers have the tendency towards inclusive education.

Table 10: The Participants’ Responses about the Indicator ‘Professional Development’

10. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Status of Implementation in Percentage				Readiness Ratio	Mean
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Not Yet		
10.1 The school runs advocacy campaign to promote awareness, knowledge and adoption of the best practices in inclusive classrooms	2	11	35	52	0.63	
10.2 Teachers are provided in-service teacher training to learn about inclusive education	3	2	1	94	0.14	0.26
10.3 In-service teacher training are tailored to meet the differing	0	0	0	100	0	

needs of the teachers.

Lack of training opportunities is very evident from the participants' responses to statements 10.1, 10.2, and 10.3 in above table. It is also evident from mean score (0.26) of this indicator. In-service training is an import pillar of professional development. For the promotion of an effective inclusive education, teacher and other stakeholders must be trained appropriately. Therefore, mainstream teachers training must be provided with training opportunities.

For this factor overall mean score (0.06) in table

11 reveals the absence of 'Planning for Continued Best Practice Improvement'. The participants' responses to the statements 11.1 (97% ('not yet')) and 11.2 (97% ('not yet')) clearly indicate a dire need of strategic planning for inclusive education in mainstream schools.

Respondent's conflicting interpretations of the term 'inclusive education' were very obvious and can be categorized as below:

Table 11: The Participants' Responses about the Indicator 'Planning for Continued Best Practice Improvement'

11. PLANNING FOR CONTINUED BEST PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT	Status of Implementation				Readiness Ratio	Mean
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Not Yet		
11.1 A school has developed a strategic plan to implement the best practice based services for inclusive education and reviewed it annually.	3	0	0	97	0.09	0.06
11.2 Progress of the school's strategic plan is shared with school staff, teacher, parents and other stakeholder.	0	0	3	97	0.03	

Table 12: Respondent's interpretations of the term 'inclusive education'

S. No.	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Inclusive education is a basic right of disabled children;	19	7%
2	Inclusion relates to processes, strategies and practices;	22	8%
3	Inclusion relates to school's capacity to respond to students' diversity,	19	7%
4	Inclusion ensure participation of all students;	36	13%
5	Inclusion relates to teachers' specialist skills and knowledge to cater the needs of all children in their classroom;	40	14%
6	It is the level of provision available in mainstream schools to meet the needs of disabled children;	20	7%

7	Harmonious working relationship between families, staff teachers and students	17	6%
8	Teaching disabled children in mainstream schools.	57	20%
9	Integration of disabled pupils in mainstream education.	27	10%
10	An opportunity for children with special needs to develop their social, educational and emotional skills;	15	5%
11	Just a slogan to increase students' enrolment;	10	4%
Total		282	100%

This is obviously very natural to have diverse views about inclusive education in schools throughout the world. Multitude of different, and often contradictory, notions of what constitutes 'inclusion', have already been reported in literature review section; resulting in confusion and uncertainty about how to interpret inclusive values in terms of our everyday practices.² Yet, the response 'just a slogan' needs attention – as other aspects have already been exhaustively discussed in literature. Although the frequency of the response of 'just a slogan' is very low (4%), but it should not be ignored as it could be considered supportive to statements like 'real inclusion cannot happen in main stream schools' (Mason et al., 2003) and may consider advocating for the continuation of segregated education for disabled children in special schools; or it may highlight the 'fundamental misconception' of some of the respondents about 'inclusive education' and may be due to their lack of awareness about the benefits of inclusive education. Therefore, it needs in-depth investigation.

Conclusion

Mainstream schools in Pakistan are currently facing enormous challenges regarding the successful implementation of inclusive education. Findings of the study reveal that mainstream primary schools are not ready yet to meet the challenges of inclusive education. More efforts are needed to make mainstream schools ready for inclusive education. Some of the indicators, also observed in literature, show their unpreparedness include lack of commitment for inclusive education in schools' mission statement (Villa & Thousand, 2005), lack of professional development opportunities for teachers

and administration (NBACL, 2007; Bourke, 2009), lack of inclusion supportive admission policy (Jha, 2002), lack of school administration's knowledge about the current researches that supports the benefits of inclusive education (Pijl, 2010), lack of collaborative planning practices, lack of encouraging family-schools & community partnerships (Epstein, 1994; Sailor, 2002), unfriendly school infrastructure for disabled pupils (UNICEF, 2003a; 2003b), non-availability of written information about teachers' roles, responsibilities and required skills to teach and support all students, including disabled pupils (Katsafanas, 2006). These findings clearly show the unpreparedness of primary schools and demands for a change in strategic planning from all stakeholders to promote inclusive education in mainstream schools (Porter & Smith, 2011).

However, the study also reveals some encouraging indicators which indicate teachers' readiness towards inclusive education. In literature these indicators are reported as key ingredients of inclusive education in mainstream schools. The observed indicators include: teachers' positive approach towards meeting a variety of learners needs through adopting an appropriate pedagogy to enhance their learning; appreciation to diversity, openness, trust, collaboration and positive relationship among teachers; stakeholders' awareness of disability and related special needs; teachers' positive attitude towards technology integration; teachers' knowledge about global activities of inclusive education in general classrooms. These indicators clearly demonstrate teachers' positive attitude (Subban & Sharma, 2005) and their readiness towards inclusive education. It is believed that teachers have the potential to implement inclusive education if opportunity is

² From confusion to collaboration

provided.

The study also finds some evidences of inclusive education in private schools. These evidences cannot be considered a common practice. However, it is a positive trend and must be encouraged. Such practices will create a long term impact on the national education system.

Recommendations

Based on the prevailing situation and the findings of the study, a set of recommendations have been made to promote inclusive education in mainstream primary schools:

- Existing educational policies and practices need to be reformed in order to facilitate inclusion of children with disabilities. These include reformation of national policies, school management, facilities and support services, curriculum, pedagogical pattern, admission policies, infrastructural accessibility features, evaluation and assessment procedures, etc.etc.
- Inclusive education in-services training should be arranged for teachers, staff and school administration
- Promotion of favorable attitude of all stakeholders, including normal children, schools' administration, staff, families towards the inclusion of children with disabilities.
- Specific incentives should be offered to the administration and teachers for showing positive attitude towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in main stream schools.
- An advocacy and awareness campaign needed to be launched to create a positive attitude of the community towards inclusive education

Future Research

The study has also pointed out some concern areas which need further exploration like administration's concerns about inclusive education, policy hindrances and the level of government support, patterns of technology usage in classrooms, professional development, and the availability of technology in primary schools. Also, the same type of study should be conducted on a larger scale; including elementary and secondary schools in the sample. These areas are our research concerns and

avenues of our future research.

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