

## AN ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDE OF NORMAL CHILDREN'S PARENTS TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Inclusive education implies the existence of only one unified educational system from the beginning for all. To consider this philosophy in mind, the present study was conducted to investigate “Developing awareness of inclusive education among parents of normal child”. Number of concerns perceived by parents about inclusive education is addressed in the study through seven research questions. The population of the study consists of twenty five parents of normal children from city of Karachi. The instrument used in the study was structured questionnaire. Subjects whose profile indicates higher scores are considered to have a more positive attitude than those whose profile shows lower scores. The methods of data collection for this study consisted of the distribution and administration of the questionnaire to obtain relevant quantitative information. Percentage method was utilized in order to interpret and analyze the data collected. Most parents of normal child don't have aware about inclusive education. Parents of normal children also don't want their child to get education with disabled child and they think that its create negative effect on their child behavior to get education with disabled child. The study will provide recommendations, knowledge concerning restructuring and implementing it in general education.*

**Keywords:** *Awareness, Inclusive education, Inclusive schools, Integration, Special education.*

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1.1 The Philosophy of Inclusion

The philosophy of inclusion is based on attitudes and values that accommodate and celebrate diversity. Inclusive education implies the existence of only one unified educational system from the beginning for all. The system encompasses all members equitably without regards for variation in their status. All degrees of variations of student needs and performance are accommodated. Schools that have cultural ethical racial diversity, genders, all socio economic status students, all disabilities and at risk children are living and learning together (Woldron, 1996).

#### 1.1.2 The Difference between Inclusive and General Education

Inclusive education is different from special education and general education. In general education the traditional method of teaching is a uniform type of teaching for same chronological age and homogeneous group of students. Children are more or less of same ability with no learning or behavior problems, Teaching methodology is same for all, evaluation of students on one standard one curriculum is followed in one class without any modification or addition. Unlike inclusive education schools general schools have no provision for children with disabilities, different low-income groups, and ethical background, gifted, at-risk.

In special school system traditionally students with disabilities are taught in special classrooms or special separate schools by special education teachers. In these schools the unique educational needs of exceptional children are met in a segregated setting.

In developed countries, inclusive education system has been implemented with success (Loxley, 2001). The inclusion of young children with special needs in setting with normal children regular classroom is supported by social, educational and legislative imperatives. Inclusion has been advocated as a value driven and empirically based recommended practice for over twenty years by organizations for young children and individual with disabilities in developed countries (Coutinho, 1999).

#### 1.1.3 Advantages of Inclusive Education

The United Nations and other international organizations are encouraging the development of an inclusive education system for a number of reasons. The most important reason is the human right for all children to receive education.

Many efficacy studies that invested segregation programs (Dunn, 1973) came to the conclusion that students with mild mental retardation, as a group, do well academically in general education classrooms as they do in special classrooms. Another advantage of inclusive education is opportunities for interaction between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

Including students with disabilities in general education classrooms will enhance the academic performance of these students.

#### 1.1.4 The flaws concern Inclusive Education

The training of teachers; teacher-student relationship; teaching techniques and the use of readily available teaching and assistive technology; realistic curricula; multidisciplinary assessment facility, lack of existence of a network of special school with general education school staff and inadequate school management and environmental facilities in some cases. The induction of inclusive education system in Pakistan would involve numerous problems, and basic system changes covering: Enhanced awareness among schools and society, training of teachers, collaboration between special and general school staff, reform curriculum, evolving assessment mechanism, and streamlining school management. These measures are likely to help in achieving the vision of "Life-Long Learning and all-round development". One may not demand an ideal situation, but at least some standards are needed for the fruitful implementation of inclusive education.

### 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Study was conducted to investigate "Developing awareness of inclusive education among parents of normal child".

### 1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- The present study will highlight awareness of inclusive education among the parents of normal children
- The study will help parents of normal children to know about their children's adjustment level with disabled children.
- The study will provide recommendations, knowledge concerning restructuring and implementing it in general education.
- This study will help parents, teachers, private and govt. organizations, private and govt. schools to understand the significance, challenges, potential, opportunities, and importance of inclusive education.
- The study will provide the guidelines to the school heads, teachers and parents.
- The study will change the societal, especially parent's attitude.

### 1.4 ASSUMPTIONS

- Parents of normal children don't have any awareness about Inclusive education.
- Parents of normal children don't want their children study with disabled children.
- Parents think that studying with special children effect the behavior and study pattern of their normal children.

### DEMOGRAPHIC RESULTS

**Table 1**  
**Particulars of Participants**

Age of Participants	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	07	28
31-40	05	20
41-50	10	40
50and above	03	12
Total	25	100
Qualification of Participants	Frequency	Percentages
Less than Matriculation	03	12
Matriculation	02	08
Intermediate	04	16
Graduate	08	32
Post Graduate	08	32
Total	25	100

Majority of the participant parents were rated to age group 41-50 years, followed by 21-30 years. Least number of parents was above fifty years (12%).

Sixty four percent parents had higher education degree including either 'graduation' or 'post graduation' (32% in both cases). On the other side, twelve percent were rated to less than ten years of schooling.

**Table 2**

**Research question 1: sought to determine what percent of parents have knowledge about and their attitude towards special education and inclusive education.**

S #	Questions	Responses			Percentage %		
		Yes	No	To some extent	Yes	No	To some extent
1.1	Knowledge about special education	12	5	8	48	20	32
1.2	Knowledge about inclusive education	5	20	0	20	80	0

1.3	Inclusive education is benefitting both for normal and disabled children	4	19	2	16	76	8
1.4	Is our child's have an special child in classroom	0	25	-	0	100	-
1.5	Adjustment of normal children with special child in school	3	9	13	12	36	52

According to the knowledge about special education, the result suggested that majority of respondents have knowledge about special education and the knowledge about inclusive education results indicates that mostly parents don't have knowledge about inclusive education.

Table 3

Research Question 2: sought to determine what percent of parents agree that students with disabilities should be educated in inclusive education classroom settings.

S #	Questions	Responses			Percentage %		
		Agree	Dis-agree	Not sure	Agree	Dis-agree	Not sure
2.1	Believe that student with special needs should be included in regular classroom	6	16	3	24	64	12
2.2	Believe that all children can learn in most environment	7	14	4	28	56	16
2.3	Believe that children with special needs should be placed in special classes	16	8	1	64	32	4
2.4	Believe that special needs students better learn social skills in inclusive classes	3	13	9	12	52	36
2.5	Believe that it is difficult for children with special needs to make progress in regular education classroom	12	6	7	48	24	28

According to this study results indicates that some parents think that inclusive education are effective for special children but some of respondents think that inclusive education is only beneficial for normal children.

Table 3

Research Question 3 sought to determine what disabilities should be favored by parents to include in inclusive education classroom settings.

S #	Questions	Responses			Percentage %		
		Agree	Dis agree	Not sure	Agree	Dis agree	Not sure
3.1	Inclusive education includes all type of children with disability	3	17	5	12	68	20
3.2	Type of disabilities supported by parents agree to include in general education classroom	H.I 72%	V.I 52%	O.I 56%	M.R 5%	L.D 88%	B.P 24%

(H.I= Hearing Impairment, V.I= Visual Impairment, O.I= Orthopedic Impairments, M.R= Mental Retardation, L.D= Learning Disability, B.P= Behavior problems.)

Only 12% parents of normal children accepting to include all type of disabilities in inclusive schools while majority of them (68%) was not agree this statement. From the above data(Q= 3.2) it can be concluded that parents were overwhelmingly in favor of including students in general education classroom who have either mild behavior problem or those who have Learning disability. The moderate acceptance received by hearing impairment and orthopedic impairment and visual impairment. The least acceptance (5%) was rated for children with mantel retardation.

Table 4

Research Question 4 sought to determine what percent of parents perceives the effect of inclusive education on both normal and disabled children.

S #	Questions	Responses in percent		
		Pleasant	Un pleasant	Other
4.1	Effect of inclusive education on normal child behavior	24%	76%	
4.2	Effect of inclusive education on special child behavior	52%	28%	20%
4.3	Believe that academic progress of disabled children is possible in inclusive schools	Yes 44%	No 20%	To some extent 32%
4.4	Believe that special needs students better learn social skills in inclusive classes	Agree 20%	Disagree 56%	Not sure 24%
4.5	Believe that self esteem of children with special need is increased when include in the regular education classroom	Agree 28%	Disagree 52%	Not sure 20%
4.6	Parents worry for their children's academic performance in inclusive system	Yes 76%	No 00%	To some extent 24%

According to this study the results indicate that 76% parents think that the effect of inclusive education on normal child unpleasant 52% participants think that positive changes occur in special child. Almost all participants were showed their concern for including their children in inclusive school may be effect on academic progress.

Table 5

Research Question 5 sought to determine what percent of parents believe certain educational strategies, if, used in regular schools, to be effective in inclusive classroom settings.

S #	Questions	Responses in percent		
		Supportive instructions	Use of paraprofessionals	Curricular adaptations
5.1	Believe that educational strategies to be effective in inclusive classroom settings	80%	92%	80%
5.2	Believe that specialized training should be required for all regular education teachers	agree 80%	Disagree 8%	Not sure 12%
5.3	Education for all requires special support facilities	Yes 56%	No 44%	To some extent 0%

From the above data it can be concluded that, highest (92%) acceptance receive that if certain educational strategies, specialized training for regular school teachers and special support facilities were provided in regular schools, to be effective in inclusive classroom settings.

Table 6

Research Question Number 6 sought to determine what percent of parents believe that inclusive education can be implemented, if, there is proper legislation for it.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	16	64
No	06	24
To some extent	03	12
Total	25	100

According to this study I can be concluded that, 64% parents strongly believed that proper legislation should be made for implementing inclusive education, followed by "disagree" (24%) and "to some extent" (12%).

Table 7

**Research Question 7 sought to determine what percent of parents believe that inclusive education creates willingness in special child for future achievements.**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	11	44
No	13	52
Total	25	100

The results of Table 35 indicate that 52% of respondents think that through inclusive education have not create willingness in special child for future achievements and 44% believed that it will create willingness in special child for future achievements.

### CONCLUSION

There have been efforts internationally to include children with disabilities in the educational mainstream. Disability has been proved to be the greater disadvantage in education than gender, household economic status or rural/urban divide (Filmer 2005). With around 40 million children with disabilities (World Bank 2003), who remain out of school worldwide, the millennium development goal of achieving 'universal primary education' appears an enormous challenge. Nonetheless, the initiatives in the international arena have brought about significant positive developments in the member countries. Inclusive education is a part of this developmental agenda. It entails 'increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools' (Booth and Ainscow, 1998). Globally it is estimated that 70% of children with disabilities, including those with mild mental retardation, can attend regular schools provided the environment is designed to be accessible and the institution has the facility to accommodate them (UNICEF 2003).

Inclusive education is complex and there are several interrelated factors which affect the process. The development of a child with a disability is influenced by the nested contexts of family, school, community and society at large. In relation to child development, Lerner (1993) proposed the "goodness of fit" which indicated that there has to be a match between developmental needs of the child and the resources and capacities of the environment.

Inclusion requires restructuring of cultures, policies and practices in schools in order to respond to the diversity in learners. If certain prevalent understandings of inclusive education are examined, it could be deduced that most definitions mention inclusive school as one which provides education to 'all' learners.

There are some ground values of inclusion in schools. Firstly, the child with disability does not have to always try to achieve normal standards. There also has to be no minimum criteria of ability for seeking admission to an inclusive school. An inclusive school accepts all learners and provides equal opportunities to all students. Secondly, it also celebrates diversity in a pluralistic society. The nondisabled children have much to learn from children with disabilities and vice versa. Thirdly, all actors in inclusive education must collaborate to give best results of inclusion. In addition, 'inclusion' values each individual and respects his/her uniqueness. Inclusion in schools, places the teaching/ learning responsibility on the school rather than on the child with disability.

For this research, the wider understanding of inclusive education is borrowed from Loreman, Deppler & Harvey (2006). They define inclusion of children with different abilities in all aspects of schooling that other children are able to access and enjoy. For achieving this goal, the regular schools have to adapt themselves to the needs and demands of all children and must prepare to celebrate diversity. They further note that their definition of inclusion does not imply that children with diverse abilities would not receive specialized assistance or teaching outside of the classroom when required, but rather that this is just one of many options that are available to, and in fact required of all children.

Inclusive schools command an educational change. In order to make conventional schools inclusive, Hegarty (1993) suggested following changes to be brought in regular schools-Curriculum. What is taught, with particular reference to establishing a balance between offerings a mainstream curriculum framework and taking account of individual needs.

**Pedagogy:** How it is taught, again with reference to providing specialist support without isolating people from peers.

**Academic organization:** How the school organizes itself to deliver curriculum effectively to the widest possible range of pupils by means of appropriate pupil grouping, arrangements for supplementary teaching and timetable construction.

**Staffing:** Teachers, classroom assistants and support staff, all to be deployed flexibly, but with a shared dynamic focus on achieving 'school for all'.

**Professional Development:** Essential underpinning of any school reform, to encompass attitude change, increased understanding and skill development.

**Parental Involvement:** Collaboration to include sharing of information, involvement in curriculum delivery, parent support and liaison with professional agencies.

**External Support:** Special schools and support agencies to provide essential input-training, assessment, curriculum planning, therapy- but without usurping the school's principal responsibility.

Here the common features of inclusive school (Inos and Quigley 1995) shall be discussed in order to bring some uniformity to the concept. The schools may have some of these features, as the concept of inclusive schools is developing these features are not universal.

**A Sense of Community:** All children are respected irrespective of their abilities and a feeling of belongingness in inculcated in the children.

**Common Vision:** All stakeholders share a common vision of fostering inclusive culture and enhancing outcomes for all children which produces strong sense of community.

**Problem Solving Teams:** Multidisciplinary teams comprising professionals and parents for making decisions on important areas concerning children's needs. The team members give specific perspective to needs of the child.

**Parent Partnerships:** Parents must be included as full members of the inclusive team. It is vital to recognize the parents' perspectives, address their needs and concerns regarding the child.

**Teacher Partnerships:** Partnering of regular and special education teachers to achieve educational outcomes is an important characteristic of inclusive education. In such situations, teachers learn from each other, gaining inspiration and finding solutions to problems they had difficulty solving alone.

**Paraprofessionals as Partners:** Insightful perspective in planning and consistent service delivery is two of the vital parts paraprofessionals play on the problem-solving team.

The international revolutionary decade in the field of disability (1983-92) generated increased awareness about disabilities in Pakistan. The first step towards inclusive education was the National Policy for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (1986). It resulted in preparation children with disabilities for integration in regular schools situated in the vicinity of special schools (UNICEF 2003). The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2002 recognized the need for affording the education facilities to a maximum number of children with disabilities, their integration shall be ensured by adopting the following measures:

- Appointment of special education teachers in schools and colleges.
- Alignment of policies between the Federal government, the provincial governments and the district governments at the level of relevant ministries and departments,
- Changes in curriculum in collaboration with relevant departments, agencies.
- Provision of specialized aids and equipment.

In addition, the new National Curriculum has made efforts to include principles of human rights, upholding diversity and difference along with universal rights (National Report of Pakistan 2008). However, UNICEF (2003) report that the philosophy of inclusive education is not articulated. It is because the Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education do not play any role in the policy formulation of regular schools. Neither does it have any administrative control to implement an inclusive education policy. As far as the role of the Ministry of Education is concerned, the National Education Policy for 2002 does not include any mention of special or inclusive education. Any government-level initiative for inclusive education must start with a special education section in the Ministry of Education. This will shift the responsibility for providing appropriate education as a right to all children, including children with disabilities, to the Ministry of Education; this would be the most appropriate place for design and implementation of a policy on inclusive education. Special schools run by the Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education can continue providing support to children with severe disability for the time being.

### Acknowledgements

I am thankful to Almighty ALLAH who bestowed upon me with courage and power to complete my research project, I would like to show my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Nasir Salman, My teacher Dr, Abdul Aziz, and my family for being supportive and encouraging me at difficult movements.

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