

## **Factors Effecting the Enrollment rate of physically disabled children in Quetta, Balochistan**

*Social Sciences and Humanities*

**Amina Aziz Mengal<sup>1</sup> & Dr. Mumtaz A. Baloch<sup>2</sup>**

### **Abstract**

*This paper elaborates the institutional and socioeconomic factors that effected the enrollment rate of physically disabled children in Quetta, district of Balochistan. The first section explains the general scenario of the policy instrument and major problems faced in improving the quality of education for the physically disabled children. The second part highlights the institutional and socioeconomic factors that influenced the enrollment rate of PDC in the study area. The required data and information were randomly gathered from 100 households where the physically disabled children lived. The primary data was collected through household questionnaire survey, group discussions, semi structured personal interviews and observation. On the other hand, secondary data included books, journal articles and websites. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The linear regression model was applied to analyze the factors effecting the "enrollment rate of physically disabled children" at primary level. The findings of this study revealed that the centralized policies and a number of socio-economic and institutional factors seemed to have significantly affected the enrollment and quality education in the case of physically disabled children, in the study area. For instance, there were only few schools functional in entire Balochistan. The other almost 30 districts of Balochistan lack the facility to educate the PDC. The crux of the findings reflected that as the number of PDC (boys and girls) increased at household level, the enrollment rate eventually increased. On the other hand, the enrollment rate decreased in join family system as well as where both the school teachers and family members treated physically disabled children with harsh behavior. We argue that only awareness and motivation could not help in improving the enrollment rate in the case of physically disabled children. We recommend the concerned organizations and authorities to develop and ratify specific*

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<sup>1</sup> M.Phil. scholar, Balochistan Study Center, University of Balochistan, Quetta.

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Balochistan, Quetta, Pakistan.

*policies and provide the required facilities to schools, including sufficient budget; and streamline the academic planning, effective monitoring and evaluation system. There is an urgent need to provide assistive devices and the immediate needs to rehabilitate all the enrolled and dropped out children in study area.*

**Key words:** *Education; Physically disabled children; Enrollment; Quetta, Balochistan*

## **1. Introduction**

Disabled children equally deserve all the rights of the society, education in particular (SOWC, 2013). Investing on disabled children's nourishment, health and education with justice broadens the capacities of growth and development of nations and yields long-lasting returns for the entire society (UNICEF, 2012). According to the article 37-B constitution of Pakistan, 1973, "*the state shall remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory primary and secondary education within minimum possible period*" (GoP, 2003). Likewise, in 2010 the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment introduced its article 25<sup>a</sup> with the same promise to free and compulsory education to all of the age of five to sixteen, but still despite strong economic growth in Pakistan, Balochistan in focus could not get satisfactory progress due to declined budget allocation in education sector. Pakistan could not complete this promise entirely and failed to spend on its amenities to guaranty primary education and decrease dropout occurrences mostly due to economic constraints and mismanagement (GMR, 2007). Subsequently, the school enrolment rates are slow (Mukhtar, 2013; Zakar et al., 2013). Several institutional factors have affected the schooling of physically disabled children, such as, and poor management of school, inadequate infrastructure; rigid pedagogy and curriculum, untrained teachers, negative attitudes of teachers (World Bank, 2011). Studies showed that children with disabilities have been ignored at all levels, mostly in developing countries (Save the children, 2002; Hyford, 2012; SOWC, 2013; OOSC, 2014). Children with disabilities perceived to be causing psychological challenges for their parents and society in developing countries (Matt, 2014). In such families, disabled children have been neglected they taken as burden. Parents prefer to keep disabled children at home all the time (World Bank, 2011). They think schooling of these children is just wastage of time and money. Often, parents' low confidence regarding their children with disabilities averted them to be enrolled in schools (Korevaar, 2007; UNISEF, 2014). Studies showed that Physically Disabled Children (PDC) from poor households less likely to be enrolled in schools (Hillasted, 2014).

Consequently, disabled children have remained out of schools (World Bank, 2011; Hyford, 2012; OOSC Report, 2014). Poverty and unawareness at household level articulated to be the major reasons affecting enrolment rate of physically disabled children in developing countries including Pakistan (Hillman and Jenker, 2004; UNICEF, 2012). In addition, parents are trapped in severe poverty and unable to feed their children effectively, provide them with basic requirements (UNICEF, 2012).

This study aims to analyze the institutional and socio-economic factors that effected the enrollment rate of physically disabled children in Balochistan, Quetta District particularly. Balochistan, in particular with its lowest educational institutions and lots of challenges showing a grim picture to make possible the access to education for the physically disabled children (ESP, 2012; BESP, 2013). Analytically, the low and slow enrollment rates of children with disabilities entailed in Pakistan with numerous barricades such as, social inequality, unawareness and cost barriers, and lots of institutional obstacles like schools long distance, lack of physical facilities, negative attitudes in schools ([http://www.unicef.org/rosa/inclusive\\_consolidated.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/rosa/inclusive_consolidated.pdf); Khan, 2011; Hameed and Fazil, 2011; UNICEF, 214). In Balochistan there are four separate government schools for disabled and only two of them are functional. This is not enough for the marginalized group of the whole province (BESP, 2013). This situation undoubtedly effects on enrollment rate of PDC in Balochistan (<http://www.sparcpk.org/SOPC-2013/Education.pdf>; PPAF, 2012). The Commission on National Education and National Policy for Person with Disabilities 2002, seem somewhat disconsolate when they examined with respect to insignificant rates of enrollment and overwhelming dropout cases in Pakistan (Ahmed and Yousuf, 2011; UNICEF, 2014; Single, 2015). Children with disabilities ostensibly have fewer chances to attend school (World Bank, 2011). Inappropriate policies, social discrimination, and cost barriers create hurdles in educating disabled children and also affected the enrolled rate and resulted dropout (World Bank, 2011).

## **2. Study Area**

Quetta District, the capital of Balochistan was selected as the study area for this research. Excepting both the sampled schools for physically disabled children in Quetta city, almost all other were surviving or non-functional in Balochistan for instance, in Mastung, Khuzdar and Turbat. Moreover, the Ministry, Social Welfare Directorate, Social Welfare Departments, including policy makers and the authorities are established in Quetta city. Government organizations and I/NGOs that aim to support the education for the physically disabled children are also based in the district. Quetta is adequately populated

with different ethnic groups (Baloch, Pashtoon, Sindhi; Panjabi and Hazara) of Pakistan therefore it portrays the potential and challenges of all ethnic groups without taking care of race, cast and language, in the case of education for the physically disabled children.

### **3. Methods of Data Collection and Analysis**

According to the Social Welfare Department (Director General Office), in entire Balochistan there are almost 6 government schools, established for disabled children. *“Excepting both the sampled schools in Quetta city for physically disabled children, almost all other are just surviving or nonfunctional in Balochistan.* However, a reconnaissance survey was conducted in June 2016 to understand the situation of both the schools in Quetta namely, Chiltan Special Education for Physically Handicapped Children Sariab road, and Education Complex for Special Children Brewery road. During the reconnaissance survey required secondary data was collected such as, enrollment and dropout rate of PDC, number of teachers and schools’ facilities.

Out of 200 households where physically disabled children lived, 100 were randomly selected from both the schools’ record. Initially, 10 questionnaires were pretested and modifications were made appropriately. Pretested questionnaires have not been included in the sampled population. Almost half of parents were invited consecutively in schools where questionnaires were filled out. On the other hand, 50 households were approached by the support of school staff and questionnaires were filled. Almost all required quantitative data was collected through household questionnaire survey. For instance, annual income of household, type of family, number of disabled children, number of children enrolled and dropout cases, number of physically disabled boys at household not enrollment in school, number of physically disabled girls not enrolled in school and attitudinal differences, hindrances encountered and suggestions. Additional information was gathered through key informants such as, Director General of Social Welfare Department, principals, and teachers of both the schools and a few elder students. Four focus group discussions were also held, two with teachers and two with parents. Each focus group discussion comprised on 6 to 8 persons. We collected the important information through observation that included the attendance of teachers and students in schools, teachers’ behavior with students facilities provided. The quantitative data was analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) using the linear regression model (“Enter Method”) to analyze the factors effecting the “enrollment rate of physically disabled children” at primary level.

#### 4. Results

Our findings reflected that as the number of PDC (boys and girls) increased at household level, the enrollment rate eventually increased. In households where dropout occurred, parents surprisingly played an important role to prevent more dropout experiences. On the other hand, the enrollment rate decreased in join family system as well as where both school teachers and family members treated physically disabled children with harsh behavior. Similarly, poverty has significantly affected the enrollment rate of physically disabled children. It happened because almost half of household heads relied on daily wages and could not earn a reasonable amount to bear their children’s education expenses.

##### 4.1 Factors influenced the enrollment rate of PDC

The linear regression model (“Enter Method”) was found ‘best fit’ to analyze the factors effecting the “*enrollment rate of physically disabled children*” at primary level, in Quetta, Balochistan. Therefore, 15 assumed and hypothesized independent variables were included in the model. The model detected six (6) variables that significantly influenced the enrollment rate of physically disabled children (Table 1).

##### Model Specification

The model is specified as follows:

$$Y = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + \dots + b_nX_n + u_i$$

Y = Enrollment rate of Physically Disabled Children (at household level)

b<sub>0</sub>= Constant

b<sub>1</sub>-b<sub>n</sub>= Coefficient of the independent variables

*u<sub>i</sub>* random term

##### 4.2 Results

According to the model, these variables were responsible for significantly influencing enrollment of physically disabled children. The model revealed that 84% of the variation.

##### Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
.932 <sup>a</sup>	.869	.845		.24691

#### 4.2.1 Positively associated factors influenced the enrollment rate of PDC

Four variables were positively associated namely, (X)<sub>8</sub>, *total number of PDC in household*, (X)<sub>11</sub>, *number of physically disabled boys at household not enrollment in school*, (X)<sub>12</sub>, *number of physically disabled girls not enrolled in school* and (X)<sub>13</sub>, *total dropout cases in household*. “*Total number of PDC in household*” proved to be one of the influential factors in increasing enrolment rates in the study area. Moreover, “*number of physically disabled boys at household not enrolled in school*”, “*number of physically disabled girls not enrolled in school*” and “*dropout cases in household*” had become challenging examples for parents and households which influenced parents to enroll their children in schools, in Quetta Balochistan. Findings depicted that on an average there was 1% of physically disabled child enrolled in schools; while there were 2% of disabled children in the sampled population (100 households). Analytically, it means 50% PDC were not enrolled in schools. Gender wise, there were 54% of boys and 46% girls.

#### 4.2.2 Negatively associated factors affecting the enrollment rate of PDC

Two factors namely, (X)<sub>5</sub>, *type of family* and (X)<sub>14</sub>, *attitudinal differences* were found to be negatively associated with the enrollment of physically disabled children in the study area (Table 1).

Findings of the study showed that 84% of families lived in joint family system while only 16% in nuclear. The annual income of joint family was very limited as on average there was only one person earning while 7 persons were dependents. In other words, poverty and lack of resources affected the enrollment rate of physically disabled children. In addition, 79% of household heads including elder children enrolled in schools informed that teachers seemed to have been failed to behave well with students enrolled in schools. Results illustrated that 14% of physically disabled children enrolled schools were trapped with attitudinal challenges/stigma and discrimination. Consequently, the diffusion of such information at household and community level caused low enrollment.

**Table 1 Regression coefficients of variables influencing the enrolment of PDC**

Variables	Description	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)		-2.053	.402		-5.101	.000
X <sub>1</sub> . Household head's age	Number	.001	.003	.014	.309	.758
X <sub>2</sub> . Education	1 if literate; 0 if illiterate.	.062	.058	.050	1.077	.285
X <sub>3</sub> . Occupation	1 if has a job or business; 0 if daily wages	-.019	.063	-.015	-.310	.757
X <sub>4</sub> . Annual income	Number	-4.304E-8	.000	-.015	-.314	.754

X5. Type of family	1 if single 0 if joint.	-.162	.073	-.095	-2.216	.029
X6. Distance from home to school	Number	-.006	.006	-.053	-1.044	.299
X7. Scholarship	1 if availed; 0 if not.	-.036	.054	-.028	-.660	.511
X8. Total number of PDC in household	Scaled data	.829	.039	1.053	21.177	.000
X9. Number of physically disabled girls	Number	-.011	.011	-.067	-.971	.334
X10. Number of physically disabled boys	Number	-.008	.011	-.046	-.694	.489
X11. Number of physically disabled boys not enrollment in school	Number	.071	.034	.090	2.060	.043
X12. Number of physically disabled girls not enrolled in school	Number	.136	.019	.342	7.075	.000
X13. Total dropout cases in household	Number	.057	.013	.203	4.459	.000
X14. Attitudinal differences	1 if friendly; 0 if not.	-.173	.067	-.113	-2.587	.011
X15. Time from home to school	Number of km	.002	.002	.055	1.095	.277

Field survey, 2016

## 5. Discussion

Being the signatory country of Millennium Development Goals Pakistan is committed to achieve 100% primary enrollment rate. However, the study revealed that almost 50% of PDC were not enrolled in the study area. It happened mostly due to extreme poverty, long distance of schools, lack of transportation, discriminatory attitude of society and lack of basic facilities in school. In Balochistan the standard of education seemed to be very challenging due to poor monitoring system, low budgetary allocation and deficiency of facilities in schools established for physically disabled children (ESP, 2012; BEBP, 2013). Statistics discloses that in whole province there are 1.77 million children out of 2.6 million children of the age of 5-16, still not enrolled in school. In spite of all the national policies the enrolment level of PDC in school could not rise in different areas of the country, which is one of a biggest debatable and critical issues (Ahmed, et al., 2011; Ahmed and Yousuf, 2011; Singal, 2015). There were many factors hypothesized to be influencing the enrollment rate of the physically disabled children; for instance, socioeconomic conditions (education status of parents, household annual income, attitude of family members and teachers). Likewise, many institutional factors effected the enrollment rate; such as, teachers' behavior, school facilities, transportation facility and the major needs such as, wheel chair, uniform, physiotherapy facility and the overall rehabilitation requirements for the physically disabled children.

## **5.1 Institutional factors influencing the enrollment rate of PDC**

In fact, several institutional factors influenced the enrollment rate of physically disabled children in primary level, in Quetta Balochistan. In the case of physically disabled children only the awareness and motivation cannot work well to improve the enrollment but it requires to ensure provision of the needs of the PDC for instance, wheel chairs and other assistive devices, convenient transportation, uniform, refreshment facility during school and all medication facilities including physiotherapy. The key informants in Social Welfare Directorate informed that in entire Balochistan “there are only two schools for PDC functional in Quetta city. About 4 other schools established in other districts for instance, in Mastung, Khuzdar and Turbat. Moreover, there were no as such scholarship opportunities, mobilization and motivation campaigns which could eventually stimulate parents to enroll their physically disabled children.

National Policy of Pakistan, for Persons with Disabilities 2002 orates to expand public awareness and family based guidance regarding rehabilitation and education of disabled children. However, number children are deprived to be enrolled in school due to parents’ illiteracy and poor awareness (Mengal et al, 2016). The study revealed that even a few parents felt hesitant to send their physically disabled children to school with the view that “*education for these children is just the wastage of time and money. Because they with their disability will not be able to get jobs and earn a livelihood in future. To what level we can educate our disabled children? Even the able people cannot have access to job opportunities, and equal rights in our country. Moreover, there are no such schools available to educate them even till master level.*

### **Attitudinal effects on enrollment**

The harsh ‘*attitude*’ both at school and household level equally influenced the enrollment rate of PDC and caused dropout. For instance, family members, illiterate parents in particular and school teachers including staff somehow discriminated and stigmatized physically disabled children. It is the equal right of disabled children to go to school like children without disabilities. “UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” states to all of its signatory countries to prohibit discrimination and biases of disabled children. In fact, physically disabled children were never reluctant to be enrolled in schools, in the study area. During the field survey it was observed that educated parents enthusiastically enrolled their PDC compared to illiterate household heads. The findings of the study agree with Khatoon 2003 and Singal, 2015 that the attention on all the basic needs of disabled children in institutions, despite different policy recommendations, deficient and

unsuitable. Nevertheless, enrollment rate could have been significantly improved subject to the provision of required facilities to the physically disabled children. For instance, children were using very miserable condition of wheelchairs and even some were totally deprived of this facility. When asked, one of them narrated *“I live in hostel and daily use to cross a long distance to approach my classes with the help of my crutches. It is too hard to walk for a long distance and cross lots of ups and downs of the way daily. Sometimes I get injuries on my hands and armpit by using the crutches. But, what can I do? I do not have a wheelchair to reach to school easily”*.

## **5.2 Socio-economic factors effected the enrollment of PDC**

The extreme poverty, dependency, over-population; and schooling expenses appeared to be major factors that affected the enrollment rate of physically disabled children, in the study area. The findings of this research agree with many studies (Global Monitoring 2007, Mukhtar, 2013 and Zakar et al., 2013).

### **Population of PDC at household level**

Inclusively, the findings of this study illustrated that enrollment rate arithmetically went up where the number of physically disabled children increased at household level. Likewise, it stimulated parents to enroll both the boys and girls in schools (Table 1). The results of the analysis showed that there were average 2 disabled children in each household. On the other hand, only one child was admitted in school.

### **Type of family**

The findings revealed that the *“joint family system”* appeared to be one of the major challenges that negatively affected the enrollment rate. The crux of the scenario showed that almost all families were poor living in joint family setup. In addition, dependency level at household level (7 persons) taboos and past experiences where physically disabled children had become mostly dependent appeared to be additional challenges which influenced the enrollment rate of PDC.

### **Dropout cases**

The reviewed literature indicated that the ‘enrollment’ and ‘dropout’ seem to be antagonistic in nature. However, the results of this study showed that the *“total dropout cases in household”* surprisingly witnessed to be improving the enrollment rate in the study area (Table 1). It happened as parents who experienced dropped out children in family and they had become dependent family members and gone beggars. A few parents explained during the focus

group discussion that “*we have enrolled our physically disabled children to skip the challenges that already been experienced*”. The findings showed that 7% of physically disabled children had dropped out from in the study.

## **6. Conclusion**

The crux of the results depicted that there was a great difference between policy and practice. There were only few schools functional for physically disabled children in entire Balochistan. In other almost 30 districts of Balochistan there were no schools to educate the PDC. Nevertheless, the study found that the enrollment rate increased where the number of physically disabled children increased at household level, in Quetta Balochistan. Families who ‘experienced dropped out incidents and lived in premises of schools appeared to re/enroll their children in schools. However, it was observed that PDC living far away schools’ premises seemed to have not availed the opportunity to be enrolled in the very limited number of schools. Teachers and school staff in particular and family member stigmatized and discriminated the physically disabled children for instance, some teachers and household heads narrated “*most of disabled girls forced to drop out by school teachers and parents due to growing age and co-education*. Such traditional practices eventually played a significant role in reducing the enrollment of PDC. The joint family system entailed with chronic poverty and increasing level of dependency. In miserable conditions, parents could not bear the schooling expenditures. Consequently, they did not enroll their children. Thus, we argue that the awareness and motivation could not help in improving the enrollment rate in the case of physically disabled children but it required to ensure provision of the immediate needs of the PDC and schools.

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