

## **Analyzing the Education Policies and Parents' Satisfaction In The Case Of Physically Disabled Children in Quetta District of Balochistan, Pakistan**

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### ***Abstract***

*This study analyzed the educational policies in line with the parents' satisfaction in the case of physically disabled children, in Quetta, Balochistan. The required data and information were gathered from 100 households where the physically disabled children lived. The primary data was collected through a household questionnaire survey, group discussions, semi structured personal interviews and observation. Secondary data included books, journal articles and websites. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). To analyze the data, descriptive statistics was applied such as, frequency distribution and percentages. The findings of this study revealed that the old-age centralized policies seemed to have significantly affected the enrollment and quality education in the case of physically disabled children in the study area. For instance, there are only a few schools functional in entire Balochistan. The other 31 districts lack this facility. Dropout after class eighth is almost 100%, as there are no high schools available for physically/disabled children, in Balochistan. The study*

*exposed that the overwhelming majority of parents were dissatisfied with the services provided to the physically disabled children in the schools. The study also identified the challenging factors that significantly influenced the PDC's education, included the centralized policy which overlooked the needs of children; chronic poverty, over-population, dependency and poor awareness. There is a great need to provide required facilities to the schools including sufficient budget; and, streamline the academic planning, effective monitoring and evaluation system.*

**Key words:** Policy; Physically Disabled Children; Education; Satisfaction; Balochistan.

## 1. Introduction

Policy is formulated by governments and institutions to pursue the set- goals in order to achieve those timely (Hadded, 1995; Young, 2013). National and global policies and legislation recognized education for children with disabilities as their fundamental right and cradles to pay tribute to their social status in order to produce good citizens (Crowther, 2011; Tardi, 2012; McCulloch and Crook, 2013; Schuelka and Johnstone, 2015; World report, 2011; Young, 2013). For instance, the article 23<sup>rd</sup> of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children 1989 highlighted the ‘special care’ and education for disabled children (Miles et al., 2002). Likewise, the Education for All (EFA) from 2000 to 2015 emphasized early childhood-care and education, particularly, for the most disadvantaged and disabled children (GMR, 2015). On the other hand, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), recognized by the United Nations in 2000, undeniably seemed to have overlooked the physically disabled children. The reviewed literature illustrated that a proportion of world’s disabled children have not been taken in to account in the MDGs which appear to be one of the greatest loopholes. However, MDGs addressed the poverty. In some contexts, poverty and disability are connected to each other. Where there is disability there is invisibility, social discrimination and lack of access to education. Similarly, lack of education fallouts lack of information, economic imbalance and deficiency of nutrition which results diseases and disability. Thus, in this way MDGs indirectly connected to the rights of disables as other people (UN, 2011). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006) specially reflects the basic rights of disabled persons and all the social, economic, cultural and educational deficiencies which hinder them to participate in society on equal basis with others. Such as, its article 24 specifies the free and compulsory education for disabled persons and emphasizes all the state parties to adopt and ensure such legislation and policies which take appropriate initiatives to stipulate their all needs (Beco 2014; <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>). It is actually a brilliant step against the issues of disabled persons.

Pakistan is among those countries which ratified the global legislations to fulfill the promises to ensure access to education, for all including the children with disabilities in primary school (Singal, 2015; ISJ, 2014; Waqar, 2014). However, according to Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA, 2002), in Pakistan disabled persons are generally unseen, unread and uncounted.

Despite the amendments and promises, according to the UNESCO Education For Global Monitoring Report 2014 Pakistan is among those 14 countries in which more than one million children are out of school and amongst these countries Pakistan comes second highest out of school population (World Report, 2011; HRCP, 2014; Singal, 2015; GMR, 2014). The DFID report (2011) articulated that the ignored, vague and discriminatory policies segregated disabled children and avert them to have success in education. As Pakistan's National Commission on Education 1959 endorsed the facility of education for person with disabilities. Due to poor governance this proposal never took root (Ahmed and Yousaf, 2011). Similarly, according to the 25a (Right to education) of constitution of Pakistan, -the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children at the age of five to sixteen years, in such manners as may be determined by law. However, the act does not have any exact alignment to the children with disabilities (Singal, 2014). For example, studies indicated that estimated 1.4 million (28.9%) are those disabled children in Pakistan who do not have access to school (HHRD, 2012; Waqar, 2014; <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2014/05/07/city/islamabad/forum-stresses-equal-rights-for-disabled/>). It seems there is great gap between policy and practice/ground realities.

According to the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2002, it is the responsibility of the state of Pakistan to promote a normal system of education to the disabled children at all levels. And, the federal, provincial and all district governments of Pakistan will extend help and collaboration to enhance all opportunities of education, for disabled children (GoP, 2002). Nevertheless, in Pakistan these policies and agendas seemed to have not been followed properly, most probably due to the weak administration (Ahmed, et al., 2011). In Pakistan still there is no sufficient authentic data available on disabled children. This is due to inappropriate policies, objectives and practices which could be the baseline to show the

real picture and statistics of children with disabilities to take effective actions (Sayed, 2012). Both the administrative data and household surveys are essential to take initiatives for improving the enrolment of disabled children in schools, with other facilities (HHRD, 2012; UNICEF, 2013).

The aim of this study is to analyze the education policies, practices in line with parents' satisfaction in the case of physically disabled children, in Quetta district of Balochistan. This study can contribute and enhance the knowledge of policy makers, development planners, practitioners, academics, general readers and other stakeholders. Balochistan in focus is the least developed province of Pakistan, in terms of education, in particular (<http://www.dawn.com/news/694085/worst-statistics-for-education>). Balochistan is facing genuine challenges to ensure the access and quality education; which can be removed by implementation of the global policy instruments (Razaq, 2011; Badini, 2011). In Balochistan the standard of education portrays a challenging picture due to insufficient budgetary allocation and deficiency of facilities in the schools, established for physically disabled children. Statistics unfolds the situation 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 ([sparcpk.org/sopc2014/Education\\_Chapter\\_2014](http://sparcpk.org/sopc2014/Education_Chapter_2014)). There seemed to have been a distinction between policy and practice. A specific allocation of budgetary, for disabled person must be the essential part of the national policies and plans (Beco, 2014). Because despite being aware of the importance of education some parents could not afford to send their children to school due to poverty. It requires political actions, lobbying, and dialogue with government and cooperate sector to make these policies appropriate and applicable to ensure possibilities for education of physically disabled children (Ahmed, et al., 2011). It is the responsibility

of all state governments to provide financial support to parents and schools to make possible the enrolment of every child in school (Zakar, 2013).

## **2. Study Area**

Quetta District, the capital of Balochistan, was selected as the study area for this research. The justification to choose Quetta District was that- almost all of the schools for physically disabled children have been established in the district; the Ministry, Social Welfare Directorate, Social Welfare Departments, including policy makers and the authorities. Additionally, I/NGOs that aim to support the education for the physically disabled children are also based in the district. Quetta, demonstrates the situation of almost all other districts of Balochistan. In addition, it 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. Hence, this analyzed the educational policies, parents' satisfaction with the provided facilities in schools, entailed challenges and problems in the schools established for the physically disabled children in Quetta, Balochistan.

## **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 (for instance in Mastung, Khuzdar and Turbat)”*. However, a reconnaissance survey was conducted in June 2016

to understand both the schools namely, Chiltan Special Education for Physically Handicapped Children sariab road Quetta, and Education Complex for Special Children Brewery road. In the meantime, the secondary data was collected such as, bi/annual reports, net enrollment, and dropout rate, number of teachers and schools' facilities.

Out of 200 households where physically disabled children lived, 100 were randomly selected from the schools' record. Initially, 10 questionnaires were pretested and modifications were made appropriately. These questions 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 quantitative required data was collected through household questionnaire survey from households. For instance, age and education of household head's annual income of the household, number of disabled children, nature of disability, number of children enrolled and dropout cases, parents' satisfaction with school services provided; hindrances encountered and suggestions. Additional information was also gathered through key informants such as, Director General of Social Welfare Department, Principals and teachers of both the schools and a few elder students. The key informants provided information on various aspects; for instance, education policies including available services and challenges faced by the schools, students and parents. In addition, four focus group discussions were also held; two with teachers, and two with parents. Each focus group discussion comprised on 6-8 persons. Parents provided information on the 'satisfaction' of services provided to the children in the schools. 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 descriptive analysis such as, frequency distribution and percentages.

#### **4. Results**

The crux of the results depicted that there is a great distinction between policy and practice in the schools, established for the physically disabled children. This is why the highest majority of parents including students were not satisfied with the schooling system and services provided.

##### **4.1 Socioeconomic Conditions of the Respondents**

The findings of the study revealed that 12% of respondents were with the primary education, 11% metric, 14% intermediate and 15% had completed their graduation (14 years of education). However, an overwhelming proportion (48%) of household heads was illiterate (Table 1). The average age of guardians of Physically Disabled Children was 53 years. The highest majority (93%) of respondents was married, 4% were single and 3% of them were widow. Findings showed that 84% of physically Disabled Children lived in joint family while only 16% were from nuclear system. The results regarding occupation illustrated that 43% of household heads were engaged with daily wages, 28% were government servants (class four jobs), and 11% worked for private companies and 18% of the respondents had established their own business, at small-scale such as, community shop and cottage industry, at household level (Table 1).

**Table: 1 Respondents' profile**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Household heads' education status</b>		
Illiterate	48	48.0
Primary	12	12.0



Metric	11	11.0
Intermediate	14	14.0
Above	15	15.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	4	4.0
Married	93	93.0
Widow	3	3.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Household head's main occupation</b>		
Daily wages	43	43.0
Self-business	18	18.0
Government job	28	28.0
Private job	11	11.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Type of family</b>		
Nuclear	16	16.0
Joint	84	84.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Major ethnic groups enrolled in schools</b>		
Baloch	59	59.0
Pashtoon	21	21.0
Sindhi	5	5.0
Hazara	4	4.0
Panjabi	11	11.0
Total	100	100.0

Field survey, 2016

Results reflected that 41% of household heads visited the school annually, and biannually (28%). Only 6% of family heads visit the school on

monthly basis. On the other hand, 25% of parents never visited the school. Such visits mostly meant to attend the so-called –parents‘ meetings.¶

**Table 2. Household heads’ visit to school**

<b>Frequency of visits</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Monthly	6	6.0
Bi-annually	28	28.0
Annually	41	41.0
Never	25	25.0
Total	100	100.0

Field survey, 2016

#### **4.2 Parents’ Satisfaction with the facilities and Schooling System**

The results showed that majority of parents were satisfied with the school buildings (71%), boundary walls (77%) and electricity including drinking water facility (64%) and transportation facility. However, almost all parents were not satisfied with the poor and insufficient stationary for instance, note books, pen, pencil, sharpeners, color pencils, raisers and uniform, with a few exception (Table 4). More than half of parents were not satisfied with the furniture used, washrooms and toilets (59%) which were not convenient for the physically disabled children (Table 4). Moreover, it was observed that the toilets were totally unhygienic and not updated according to the needs of physically disabled children. Some (20%) of the poorest parents seemed satisfied with the facility of scholarship amount (yearly 3,000 PKRs) provided to the physically disabled children. However, the highest majority of parents and children were dissatisfied with this service (table 4). Results demonstrated that an overwhelming proportion of parents including children were dissatisfied

with the food served, assistive devices such as, wheel chairs, crutches, artificial legs, sticks; extra curriculum activities, playground and so-called skills provided such as, making handicrafts and decoration pieces (Table 3).

**Table 3. Parents' satisfaction with the services provided by the schools to PDC**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>School building</b>		
Satisfied	71	71.0
Not satisfied	29	29.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Boundary wall</b>		
Satisfied	77	77.0
Not satisfied	23	23.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Play ground</b>		
Satisfied	29	29.0
Not satisfied	71	71.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Electricity facility</b>		
Satisfied	93	93.0
Not satisfied	7	7.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Drinking water</b>		
Satisfied	64	64.0
Not satisfied	36	36.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Toilets or washrooms</b>		
Satisfied	41	41.0
Not satisfied	59	59.0
Total	100	100.0

<b>Uniform</b>		
Satisfied	9	9.0
Not satisfied	91	91.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Furniture</b>		
Satisfied	46	46.0
Not satisfied	54	54.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Transportation</b>		
Satisfied	79	79.0
Not satisfied	21	21.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Extra curriculum activities</b>		
Satisfied	25	25.0
Not satisfied	75	75.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Provision of skills</b>		
Satisfied	15	15.0
Not satisfied	85	85.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Provision of scholarships</b>		
Satisfied	20	20.0
Not satisfied	80	80.0
Total	100	100.0

**Field survey, 2016**

## **5. Discussions**

Pakistan is among those countries which ratified the global legislations to provide quality education to the children with disabilities (Khan et al., 2009; Singal, 2014; ISJ, 2014; Waqar, 2014). Likewise, the latest National Policy of Pakistan, for Persons with Disabilities 2002, articulates that it is the responsibility of the state to promote a normal system of education for

the disabled children, at all levels in the country. And, the federal, provincial and all district governments of Pakistan will extend help and collaboration to enhance all opportunities of education, for disabled children (GoP, 2002). This study explored that a number of children particularly disabled girls were uneducated due to parents' illiteracy and poor awareness, lack of schools and special classes and long distance, lack of trained teachers and supporting staff. Lack of data on disability, unclear policies and ineffective managerial approaches entailed poor facilities and services provided in the schools, seemed to have been the major challenging factors to improve the education system, for the physically disabled children in Balochistan.

In accordance with the National Policy of Pakistan for Persons with Disabilities 2002, the government of Pakistan at all of provincial and district levels has the responsibility to ensure collaboration and assistance to promote the opportunities of education for disabled children. It states to empower disabled people irrespective of cast, creed, gender, religion or other deliberation. It denies gender discrimination and inequality, and also calls to promote awareness among parents regarding empowerment of children with disabilities. Additionally, empowerment of children with disabilities irrespective of gender discrimination is one of the main goals of the policy (GoP, 2002). It guides for non-discrimination and gender equity at all levels. Family based guidance and systematic trainings of parents to meet the special needs of their disabled children are specially focused and given a specific area in the policy. Furthermore, it proclaims for utilization of national level workshops and use of electronic media to promote awareness regarding welfare of disabled persons. However, we found that the disabled girls were less likely to be enrolled in schools as compare to boys. Furthermore, if they are enrolled in schools, they have

great challenges to complete middle education. Some parents and teachers narrated that “*elder girls due to co-education system and male staff are forced to drop out*”. Some parents appeared to be completely against of their physically disabled daughters’ education owing to co-education. Study exposed that parents’ illiteracy, unawareness, co-education system, untrained teachers entailed with negative attitude and the poor facilities doomed to have been affecting the enrollment of the physically disabled children, girls in focus.

The findings of this study revealed that there is a great distinction between the policy and practice in the case of physically disabled children in Quetta, Balochistan. For example, in entire province (Balochistan) there are only two schools for disabled children, established in Quetta city. In the other 31 districts, an estimated population of 300,000 people of each district there are no schools for the disabled children. Consequently, such children seemed to have been out of schools. Decreasing enrollment rates, the highest probability of dropout within primary education and unavailability of high schools seem to be the major loopholes in the policy and practice.

The policy document comprises a vision to give special attention on teaching modern assistive technologies in special educational centers to the disables at federal and provincial levels to equip them with modern technologies of new era (GoP, 2002). Nonetheless, the findings showed almost all parents were totally disappointed with the availability of ICT (Information and Communication Technology). The schools did not have websites, internet facility, computerized system, computer labs, and multimedia; therefore, disconnected from other schools, concerned departments and world. Most of the teachers were untrained and unaware of the modern technologies to harmonize children accordingly. Not only

this, the majority of are to be physically disabled children were surviving with their miserable condition of crutches, wheel chairs and cycles. In “*Education Complex for Special Children*” Brewery road, there is a health care center and doctors available but parents were completely dissatisfied and disappointed with the available facility. Physiotherapists were available in both schools but machineries for physiotherapy were in miserable conditions. Undeniably, the other medication facilities and doctors were unavailable in “*Chiltan Special Education for Physically Handicapped Children*” sariab road Quetta. When we enquired about the annual budget of schools, the authorities avoided to inform and said, “*We do not know about it*”. Provision of budget for sports and other recreational activities is also mentioned in the policy document. Nonetheless, majority of parents and students were absolutely dissatisfied with the recreational activities such as, debates, educational campaigns, and provision of skills and availability of sports facility in schools. This is why we argue that the unclear policies did not describe specifically the ultimate goals and objectives in the case of physically disabled children. For instance, to what extent improve the education system? How many teachers will be recruited and trained? Through what means the schools will increase the enrollment rate; and decrease/overcome the dropout cases? And what facilities and services will be provided to schools and students, within the time frame? There was still a traditional mode of teaching in schools. For example, black board and chalk and teachers are still seen controlling classes which lacks the participatory approach of teaching. Such pedagogy affected the learning environment eventually. Both the schools lack the basic facilities and requirements such as, safe drinking water, well-equipped library; and attractive classrooms and

buildings including appropriate washrooms and furniture for physically disabled children.

Literacy definition in Pakistan according to 1998 census, –the ability of a person who can read a newspaper and write a simple letter in any language. According to Pakistan Literacy Project (PLP) 2010, some descriptions of literacy in Pakistan have comprised on those who have only the ability to write their own names. Illiteracy can affect the enrollment and other factors such as, parents visit to school, providing sanguine recommendations and deciding for the future of the children. The findings of the study illustrated that almost half of guardians of PDC/households heads were illiterate and majority of them had primary education. Almost, all these parents could not read the questionnaires developed for research survey even majority of them were unable to answer the simple questions in their own National language (Urdu). Most of the parents were seemed fully unaware of the educational needs of their children. Their demands were just for financial support and free funding, nothing for their education and future at all.

Due to poverty the highest majority of parents could not afford to pay for their children’s educational needs; such as, uniform, stationary materials, assistive devices for their physical support even inability to afford food facility to their children during school timing. According to the article 25a (Right to education) of constitution of Pakistan, –the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children at the age of five to sixteen years, in such manners as may be determined by law. Despite such policy guidelines instruments enacted by federal and provincial governments, there seems to be a great gap between policy and practice particularly for physically disabled children. Still, physically disabled children are not equally benefited from schooling facilities to complete their education.



The goal to achieve education for disabled children in Balochistan still seems challenging due to several hurdles and shortcomings. The study revealed that parents' illiteracy, lack of awareness, lacking ability to buy uniform and stationary materials, food and the assistive devices due to extreme poverty and lack of loans/scholarships are the gaps between education and disabled children. Majority of students were seen without school uniform with ragged clothes. Parents and children showed their dissatisfaction on the food served in schools, provision of scholarships, assistive devices provided to children and lack of scholarships. In addition, schools' unfriendly environment, lack of other facilities such as, ramps, lifts, wider doors for easier mobility, leveled play grounds, heating system, clean and fresh drinking water, hygienic and suitable washrooms/toilets according to their needs; and availability, medical treatment, provision of physical exercise and vocational skills to secure their future. Additionally, long distance from homes to schools, transportation facility entailed with poor security measures by schools and concerned departments.

## **6. Conclusion**

Pakistan is among those countries which ratified the global legislations to provide quality education to the disabled children, at all levels in the country. The National Policy of Pakistan, for Persons with Disabilities 2002, states to promote a normal system of education for the disabled children. In addition, the article 25a (Right to education) of constitution of Pakistan's 18<sup>th</sup> amendment argues responsibility to provide free and compulsory education to all 5 to 16 years children. In accordance with these national policies all the provinces of Pakistan are responsible to ensure quality education for disabled children. However, the reviewed literature illustrated that there is no such specific education policy for the

physically disabled children in Pakistan in general, Balochistan particularly. This is one of the major reasons that the ultimate goals and objectives in the case of physically disabled children's education could not be achieved yet. Similarly, the findings of this study exposed that there is a great dissimilarity between the policies and practice in the case of physically disabled children in Quetta, Balochistan. In entire province, there are only few public schools for physically disabled children; established in Quetta city. There are about 4 schools established for disabled children in other districts (Mastung, Khuzdar, Turbat) but they are non-functional. In other all districts (more than 30) of Balochistan, each district comprises on approximately 300,000 people, there are no schools for physically/disabled children. This seemed to have been a great challenge that consequently affected the enrollment; and caused dropout as after class eight there are no special schools available for disabled children in entire Balochistan, be that the public or private sector. The so-called decentralized system where policies are still developed without taking care of the needs of disabled people and ground realities have further augmented to affect the enrollment and become obvious cause of dropout. No evident success in education of physically disabled children is seen up till now. In addition, poverty at household level, over-population, dependency, schooling expenditures, lack of parental awareness and the long distance from population/households to schools reported to be additional challenges that hindered physically disabled children's access to education. All these issues and parental dissatisfaction are directly connected to policy gap. The findings of this study revealed that the overwhelming majority of parents were dissatisfied with the schooling system. It happened due to inadequate services and poor facilities provided in schools; for instance to

mention a few, untrained teachers, inappropriate teaching pedagogy, unavailability of sufficient rooms in the school building, unfriendly environment, weak school management, lack of computer labs and sophisticated library including internet facility and playground, lack of safe drinking water, hygienic food, health care facilities and regular electricity facility, unavailability of uniform facility, assistive devices and stationary, provision of skills and scholarships. Our findings depicted that the aforementioned factors significantly affected the enrollment rate and caused dropout even at primary level of education.

## **7. Recommendations**

We recommend the concerned organizations and authorities to develop and enact specific policies to significantly improve the education system for disabled children in general, physically disabled children in particular. Likewise, there is a need to allocate sufficient budget and ensure its proper utilization. Poor growth in enrollment and high dropout rates of physically disabled children in Balochistan are critical factors which need investment, assessment and capacity building to achieve the objectives. To improve the enrollment and decrease the dropout cases there a great need to provide scholarships and required facilities to physically disabled children. Awareness through print and electronic media and educational campaigns, seminars and workshops seemed to have been essential instruments to encourage gender equity and address the educational challenges and needs thereof. There is an urgent need to monitor and evaluate the system in order to promote protective, healthy and cohesive environment in schools. There is gap to be filled to construct sufficient rooms, renovate schools' buildings and the furniture. The government and concerned organizations needs to provide trained staff for physiotherapy

and the medication; and healthy food in schools. Coordination among the synergies (for instance, national and provincial educational ministries, policy makers, social welfare departments and I/NGOs and the private sector) can play an important role to intervene in the schools to provide the educational facilities and upgrade the schools; and establish more schools in other districts. . Last but not least, in-depth researches are needed to be carried out to investigate the ground realities for instance, the factors influencing the enrollment, dropout in the case of physically disabled children in Balochistan.

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