

Education for Students with Disabilities in Balochistan; Steps Towards the Inclusive Education and its Benefits.

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Abstract

Persons with disabilities are the significant part of our population. Indeed they have been deprived from their certain rights, including the right of education according to their needs. They can play very significant role provided that they are given appropriate education, which meet their needs according to nature of their disabilities. Education for students with disabilities in Balochistan has also remained neglected. In fact we concentrated for the education of special children and students with disabilities and adopted the establishment of separate educational institutes for students with special needs at that time when Europe, America, Australia and other developed countries diverted towards Inclusive Education and leaving behind the outdated concept of Special Education only for those suffering from severe and multiple disabilities. Although several Special Education and Model Inclusive Education Institutes are established in the province, but these are not enough to cope with the real needs of pupils with special needs in Balochistan. The Article is important in a sense as it elaborate the actual status of educational institutes for students with disabilities in the province. Secondly this article enumerates the steps taken towards the educational needs of students with disabilities. Lastly this article also enumerates the benefits of Inclusive Education for both the students with and without disabilities.

Keywords: *Students with Disabilities, Special Children, Special Education, Inclusive Education, Mentally Retarded, Visually Handicapped, Multiple Disability.*

Introduction:

Persons with Disabilities are the deprived and marginalized segment of our society. The major responsibility of their miserable condition incur on government and the major cause of their deprivation is their lack of education. Developed countries utilize the services of each and every segment of society, even persons with disabilities are serving and participating very actively on various respectable professions. There are many children who are out of schools in Pakistan and the situation is comparatively worse in Balochistan. It get more worst when we talk about the Special Children, who are not considered out of school, rather their status of remaining out of school is linked directly to their disability. Several Conventions and laws are framed to ensure the educational rights of those with disabilities, Including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) duly signed and verified by Government of Pakistan, which require the state parties to ensure the implementation of Inclusive Education and preserve the right to education of persons with disabilities without discrimination (UNCRPD 2006).

Historical Perspective:

The efforts for the rights of Persons with Disabilities started in the year 1981 by preserving their rights under “Disabled Persons (Employment and Rehabilitation) Ordinance 1981” in which the right of persons with

disabilities are well preserved, including the provision of employment for the disabled and initiating necessary steps for their rehabilitation. According to the Ordinance the Federal Government will ensure the establishment of the National Council at federal level and the Provincial Council at Provincial level. Both the councils will ensure the formulation of policy at federal and provincial level, access the policy time to time and implement the objectives of the ordinance. The council will conduct surveys in their respective jurisdictional spheres and maintain the statistical information of persons with disabilities who are in need of help and care. The council will arrange necessary arrangements for those who are in need for medical care and attention. Additionally for making them economically self-sufficient the council will also provide trade related and vocational training to the persons with disabilities, so that they become the active members of society and do not depend on others (Disabled Persons Employment & Rehabilitation Ordinance 1981).

Another step towards the educational uplift of the persons with disabilities took place by the revision of “National Policy for Rehabilitation of Disabled” and framing “National Policy for Education and Rehabilitation of the Disabled 1988” which was a revolutionary steps towards the educational achievement for the disabled, as it include the word “Education” for the first time. The policy assert the establishment of Special Education Institutes for students with special needs, so that they could be educated with specialized instructions and specialized methodology designed for the students with special needs. Following the policy many specialized educational institutes were established in federal and provincial level especially in big cities of the country (Examples of Inclusive Education Pakistan UNICEF 2003).

“National Policy for Persons with Disabilities” was framed in 2002 in which special education was recognized and emphasized as an integral part of the education, moreover for the first time the integration and inclusion of the students with disables in mainstream general education was also recognized (Examples of Inclusive Education Pakistan UNICEF 2003).

Education for Students with Disabilities in Balochistan:

Government of Balochistan has established various educational institutes for Students with Special Needs all over the province, which also

include the institutes established by the Federal Government which are devolved under 18th Constitutional Amendment and are now working under the Provincial Government.

The initial steps for the education for students with special needs initiated when Government of Balochistan established a School for Visually Handicapped Children in 1981 at Quetta. Two years later in 1983 two more Schools for Hearing Impaired Children and for Physically Handicapped Children were established collectively in the name of Kiran Complex Quetta; In later years the Kiran Complex was renamed as Balochistan Disabled Persons Complex for Special Education Quetta comprising Four schools i.e; School for Physically Handicapped Children, School for Visually Handicapped, School for Mentally Retarded/Challenged Children and School for Dumb and Deaf Children in 1983 for students with disabilities, where they are education separately with their disabled fellows and only those with disabilities are admitted and education in special environment.

Apart this many other institutes are presently functioning and providing education as well as vocational training for the disabled which include; Vocational Training Center for Disabled Quetta, Institute for Physically Handicapped Children Quetta, Bolan Special Education Complex for Mentally Retarded Children Sibi, National Special Education Complex Khuzdar, Vocational Training Center for Disabled Khuzdar, Model Center for Inclusive Education Turbat, Special Education Complex Khaliqabad at Kalat and Special Education Complex Mastung. Among these institutes the last two institutes are recently established. Similarly Government of Balochistan has recently established Inter College for Special Education Quetta which will provide education for students with disabilities to intermediate level. (Govt; of Balochistan Directorate General of Social Welfare, Special Education and Human Rights).

Benefits/Advantages of Inclusive Education:

The idea and concept of Special Education was introduced as the initial step for educating students with special needs, but the subsequent years resulted the production of alienated and excluded educated class in the society comprising persons with disabilities, who were facing hurdles to fit them with other normal persons in their practical life. Thus the idea of Special Education was abandoned and was left for only those students

suffering from either severe disabilities or multiple disabilities and introduced the new concept of Inclusive Education. The research studies have identified several benefits of the Inclusive Education for students with special needs when they are education with other normal students in inclusive setting (Special Education Inclusion 2001).

Advantages for Students with Disabilities:

Inclusive Education provide a stimulating environment for students with special needs in the presence of other normal and able students. The company of normal students encourage those with disabilities to cope and maintain the pace with other fellows (Rationale for and Benefits of Inclusion 2004).

The normal students of regular education also facilitate those with disabilities in term of communication and developing social linkages and normative behaviors. Continuous communication and interaction in integrated setup naturally develop the sociability and expected attitude within the class. (Rationale for and Benefits of Inclusion 2004).

The frequent and expended communication of those with disabilities in incisive education also expands the circle opportunity to develop friendship with other able fellows in the community and society at large, where persons with disabilities feel confident to make friendship in neighborhood and community easily, unlike special education where students with disabilities live a segregated and alienated life (Wood 1993). Inclusive Education also develop and enhance the concept of self and improve self-esteem by interaction with other regular students. The overall environment of inclusive setting give him the sense of confidence which ultimately develop his personality (Benefits of Inclusive Classroom for All 1999). Inclusion develop feeling of self-respect and dignity among students with disabilities. Continuous and frequent interaction, relationship and friendship with other peers minimize their feeling of dependency and disability. This feeling of proud and dignity further help them in their professional life as adult members of society (Zionts 2005).

Research studies has also documented that Inclusive Education improve and enhance the learning skills, including reading, writing and overall academic achievements with improved test scores of pupils with

special needs due to close learning interactions with other regular students who help them according to their needs (Salend 2004).

Another benefit of inclusive education is the increased employment of the disabled who studied in inclusive education comparing those who studied in special education setup. Moreover the segregated special education is more costly in term of separate arrangements for students with disabilities, which remain very costly comparing inclusive education where arrangements are more cost conscious to accommodate both the students with and without disabilities in single institutional sitting (Special Education Inclusion 2001).

Research study has reported the peer tutoring in inclusive education is a very fruitful as best learning support method. Peer mediated learning help students both with and without disabilities to teach and support each other, while improving their reading and learning as well as comprehending the topics and lessons (Zionts 2005).

Advantages for Students without Disabilities:

Inclusive Education is beneficial not only for pupils with special needs, but also for regular and normal students. Interaction and inclusive environment provide opportunity to understand the individual differences and accept it.

Inclusion also provide a specimen of a small unit of society, where diversity is experience in a small scale level where both students with and without disabilities experience it in the inclusive classroom.

It also help regular students to feel the needs, desires and sentiments of the disabled and thereby develop the respect of sentiments feeling of empathy and acceptability, while studying and interacting with them (Rationale for and Benefits of Inclusion 2004).

It also give an opportunity to the regular students to help their disabled peers, which ultimately improve their self-confidence and generate the leadership qualities among the regular normal students (Benefits of Inclusive Classrooms for All 1999).

Inclusion of students without disabilities increase feeling of empathy for students with disabilities and feel their pain, difficulties as their own problems (Downing & Peckman-Harding 2007). According to another research study students with disabilities have very unique cognitive approach

and thinking, which help their peers to expand their knowledge and information while studying in inclusive classroom (Copeland et al 2002).

Conclusion:

The destination of all human knowledge is to bring equality, social justice, balancing the diversity, fulfilling and securing the human needs with dignity and developing the mutual understanding among the humanity. Mainstreaming and educating the students with disabilities through inclusive education is one of the destination of developed and prosperous societies. Various Policy and legal steps has been initiated by the world nations including; The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child 1989, World Conference on Education for All 1990, Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 1993, The Salamanca Statement 1994 and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 for securing the right to proper education for pupils with special needs. Indeed persons with disabilities are the useful and fruitful part and parcel of our society provided that they are included and socialized with other able members. Separation and exclusion resultantly give them a segregated, downtrodden and intellectually dependent life. Government of Balochistan is also destined to take pragmatic steps for achieving the desired objectives. For the purpose only two inclusive education institutes are established as model inclusive education centers, which are indeed insufficient and there is indeed a lot more to be done on the subject of inclusive education.

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