

# **Capacity Building Initiatives for Hearing– Impaired Children’s Education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan**

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## **Abstract**

*The current study was designed to investigate the capacity building initiatives for hearing–impaired children education of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The objectives of the study were to identify the perceptions of teachers and hearing–impaired students, regarding their capacity building initiatives taken by different hearing–impaired schools, the problems they faced in their education, presented suggestions and recommendation for the improvement of their education. The descriptive research design was adopted to conduct the study. A close ended questionnaire with five point Likert scale was used for data collection from 52 hearing–impaired students’ (36 male and 16 female) and 12 teachers (6 male and female each), and was analyzed using SPSS. The results reveal that various services and facilities are provided free in hearing–impaired schools, but are not up to the mark, outdated curriculum, missing assistive aids, no teachers training trend, lack of teachers and supporting staff in all schools. In the light of the results, it was recommended that modification in the curriculum is the need of the day, launch teachers training modules after equal intervals of time, fill up all vacant posts of the teachers and supporting staff in the schools, initiate an awareness campaign on to create awareness in people about hearing impaired children education.*

**Keywords:** Hearing–impaired, Capacity building, Hearing–impaired teachers, Hearing–impaired students

## **Rationale of the study**

Education is the neglected sector in the government policies of Pakistan. Likewise, the education of special children is the most neglected one. According to Pakistan Census Report 1998 special children are classified into three main categories which are

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physically impaired, visually impaired, and mentally retarded. In order to meet the problems and challenges of the hearing impaired child's education regionally and internationally, the following study was carried out.

### **Historical Background**

History shows that Islam has laid lots of stress on the privileges of special people and gives teaching to maintain, divested and abandoned people of society to be caring, supportive and nice to all. Quran relates to embrace a moderate analysis regarding impairments. A noteworthy number of special people, who were blind, deaf or physically impaired, served important roles as philologists, lawmakers, teachers, poets and social commentators during high centuries of Islamic civilization. Exceptional among which AbulAla al-Maarri Othman Abu Amr bin Bahr (Al-Jahiz), Ata bin AbiRabah, BashsharibnBurd, Ibn Syringe, Katadaibn as-Sadusi Dima, Muwaffak Muzaffar ad-Din, and Thalab. After that, in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Ottoman court deaf/hearing-impaired officials were appointed, where for communication the courtiers and sultans learn their sign language from them. However, at that period the West doubt about whether the hearing-impaired individuals are capable of any learning and normal beings.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the care and support of persons deprived of services, beyond the provision of educational services and facilities for special children are laid between the state in the light of Islamic principles and teaching.<sup>2</sup>

Capacity building initiatives for hearing-impaired children's education in Pakistan was taken before the creation of Pakistan. In this regard, the first school in 1920 for the hearing-impaired established in Karachi, later on in the year of 1923 another school named Ida Rio foundation stone laid down.<sup>3</sup> For the educational and vocational training of hearing-impaired student's institution was laid down by Fatima Jinnah in 1952 named as Deaf and Dumb Society Foundation "Gung Mahal" meaning "Palace for the Deaf".<sup>4</sup> Not only students' institutions, but first training college for teachers of hearing-impaired established at Lahore in the year 1961.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, it was found out that until the year of 1980 there were 24 hearing-impaired schools and institution in the country, which was considered as the flourish era in the sector of hearing-impaired students' education in the country. Presently there are 13 schools for hearing-impaired students in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.<sup>6</sup>

### **Introduction**

Hearing-impaired deals with those people who are having a degree of hearing loss, from mild to profound, the deaf and people with hearing problems also come under it. This term is losing acceptance of deaf people because of the involvement of the word “impaired”. Hearing impairment is the inability to hear certain sounds, speak clearly and the sense of hearing either with or without hearing aid is insufficient for interpreting speech. Whereas, a person with hearing loss of 80 dB (the unit of measurement of the sound volume is decibels (dB)). The higher the dB, the louder the sound, & above is deaf by law. They are further classified according to their ability to hear as hard to hear, deaf, dumb and mute.<sup>7</sup>

The children whom are incapable of hearing or cannot hear properly and not able to acquire education in general schools have the needs of assistive devices and training for their education are known as children with hearing impairments. A deaf stands for impairments in hearing to such a level that slows down in understanding the speech through the ear alone with or without the use of the helping hearing device.<sup>8</sup> While, a hard of hearing children are those whose hearing is disabled to a degree that causes problems, but not prevents the understanding of speech through the ear alone, with or without the use of hearing device. A similar study found that the higher the loss, the higher will be the degree of difficulty of communication or interaction and parents and teachers are of the view that deaf children have the low ability of learning.<sup>9</sup> Due to this reason of impairment in hearing these children having isolated behavior because of facing problems in communicating emotions to their family, sibling and peers, that’s why hearing-impaired children, are having a lack of maturity in social interaction. Other than that, it causes of anxiety and depression, it can be perceived in their behavior.<sup>10</sup> However, hearing-impaired children can do better in all academic and are competent to do their duties and activities better than most of their age normal children.<sup>11</sup>

The main medium of educating hearing-impaired students through Oral method, Manual method, and total sign language communication because all of these focus on the development of speech and sign language. Hearing-impaired children education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are done through the different means which includes providing education to hearing-impaired through hearing aids, audio system voice therapy, speech therapy training, sign language, finger spelling, lip reading and total communication with

the help of hearing aids or manual alphabets often used in combination with other modes of transmission align with the vocational training such as canning, basketry, munj etc., medical treatment and care, rehabilitation and employing, religious education, facility of transport, hostel, sports and recreation activity.<sup>12</sup>

Akram and Bashir, stated in their study that special education services were provided to hearing children in educational settings. It was further stated that the schools of hearing-impaired children were lacking resources, the chief component in the curriculum was the auditory and speech development, which were lacking in schools, besides this, medical and assistive technologies such as hearing aids were not sufficient. It was perceived by the parents and teachers that hearing children were having low learning ability. The study suggested that curriculum needs to be revised on priority basis, the Government needs to initiate awareness campaign at national level to divert the attitude of people towards education, ensure capacity building and rehabilitation of hearing special children and adults through training and workshops.<sup>13</sup>

Classrooms are poorly organized and arranged sometimes overcrowded, the thing which strengthens the problems for the special child in learning is that teachers are not qualified and trained enough. For instance, most commonly it is observed that the teachers of students with hearing impairment are not having command of sign language, which acts as a potential barrier in teaching-learning process.<sup>14</sup> Another potential barrier in hearing-impaired educational institutes is the lacking and shortage of teaching staff. Besides all, children are the alone duty of the teachers, and unfortunately the teachers are often on leave, and parents are told to keep the child at home.<sup>15</sup> However, special children are facing commuting problems while moving to their schools not enough toiletry facilities, problems of stairs, contracted doorways, improper seating arrangement in classrooms.<sup>16</sup>

Parents feel insecure, especially about their female offspring on the injury, violence and abuse as compared to male in educational institutions.<sup>17</sup> It was concluded that in violent acts like physical threats, abuse and social isolation, these students are the main targets.<sup>18</sup> Students' often dwell with fear regarding bullying by their peers and teaching staff. In most cases, the hearing-impaired students are confronted with bullying, which acts as potential hampers in suppressing their capabilities.<sup>19</sup> Controlling the behavior of parents' causes anxiety, lack of confidence and

social immaturity in the hearing-impaired students.<sup>20</sup> The teenager hearing-impaired students faced more emotional problems and poor understanding.<sup>21</sup> Due to the parental dominating approach, the students are kept reserved regarding their educational choices, social interaction, which ultimately confined the decision power of these students. It was concluded that there is no proper training and workshops for emotionally disturbed and hearing-impaired students at school.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, for the uplift of hearing impaired children in education different capacity building initiatives are required to be taken by their schools. Capacity building of all the stakeholders, including educational staff, both academic and administrative along with other stakeholders is being emphasized by the government and is paying special attention to it. The capacity building is a continuous process which includes identifying, mobilizing, creating and enhancing the abilities of individuals and the institution as a whole.<sup>23</sup>

#### *Significance of the study*

The current study was conducted to identify the problems and future prospects faced in the hearing-impaired children education. The study is supported to stakeholders, professionals, master trainers of hearing-impaired curriculum and all those who, by any means relate or belong to education of hearing-impaired students'. Besides all, the study will serve as a guideline for the design special children education as whole at regional, national and international level.

#### *Objectives of the study*

The objectives of the study were

- i). To identify the perceptions of teachers and hearing-impaired students', regarding their capacity building initiatives taken by different hearing-impaired schools.
- ii). To explore the problems hearing impaired students faced in their education.
- iii). To present suggestions and recommendation for the improvement of their education.

#### *Hypotheses of the study*

The null hypotheses of the study were

- i). There is no association between the views of teachers and capacity building initiatives in different special education institutions.

- ii). There is no association between the views of students and capacity building initiatives in different special education institutions.

### **Research Design**

It was a non-experimental research design with a special reference to descriptive research. The reason for opting this type of research was to explore the ideas and the notion of the respondents of the study.

#### *Population and Sample of the study*

The population constitutes all the teachers and hearing-impaired students' in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Standardized protocol for sample size selection with the stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample size of the study, which constitutes 52 students' (male 36 and female 16) and 12 teachers' (6 male and female each) from hearing-impaired schools of entire Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

#### *Research Instrument for data collection*

The nature of the research was quantitative, and the instrument for data collection was a close ended questionnaire with five point Likert scale. The questionnaire deals with the capacity initiatives of hearing impaired students, their teachers and the school instituted.

#### *Validity and Reliability of research instrument*

The questionnaire was validated from five experts in the relevant field. After validating the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted through adaptive trial design, opting sample via rule of thumb. The responses collected from the respondents were analyzed using SPSS. The coefficient of Cronbach alpha was 0.6 (range 0.4–0.9), which means that the questionnaire is ready for collecting the data from actual respondents. A total research design procedure was used to subject the questionnaire among the respondents.

#### *Data Analysis*

The collected data were analyzed through SPSS using Ordinal Regression Analysis (ORA). This test was used because the nature of data was ordinal, nature of variables was independent and number of samples was more than two.

### Findings

- Daily domestic skills & training are given in your school e.g. dressing, grooming, Teachers were 100% agreed, while students were agreed 94.3% and undecided 5.7%.
- Parents take keen interest in the education of their special children only 33.3% agreed while 66.4% disagreed were the teacher respondents, while the Students were agreed 94.2%, undecided 3.8%, disagreed 1.9%.
- Roundabout, 100% of teachers were agreed that Opportunities are provided to students to participate in recreational activities as well as students were Agreed 96.2% and undecided 1.95, disagreed 1.9%.
- Respondent Teachers and students were 100% agreed that scholarship is provided to students in their school.
- As far as Free admission and other facilities provision such as free books and uniform to the children in schools respondent 100% teachers were agreed along with agreed 75.0% of students, while other students were undecided 15.4% and disagreed 9.6%.
- The facilities such as medical, psychological counseling are provided to special children teachers were agreed 33.3%, undecided 25% while 41.7% disagreed. Apart from it, Students were agreed 23.1%, undecided 30.8% and disagreed 46.1%.
- Trainings are provided to teachers on various aspects by government / other department the respondent teachers were Agreed 25%, undecided 41.7% and disagreed 33.3% while respondent students were 100% undecided.
- Responsive Teachers were agreed 16.7%, undecided 8.3 %, disagreed 75% regarding the Opportunities and support are provided to teachers towards higher professional educations while respondent students were 100% undecided.
- Relevant academic & professional experience of teachers is considered for the job respondents teachers were 100% agreed while respondent students were 100% undecided.
- Approximately, 100% teachers were agreed on the Satisfactory pay scale is awarded for teaching staff while students were 100% undecided.
- The provision of latest books, journals, research in the field of special children is available to teachers in schools

the respondent teachers were 100% disagreed while respondent students were 100% undecided.

- Teachers are satisfied with the promotion criteria. Agreed 66.7% disagreed 33.3%, while students were 100% undecided.
- Coordination and cooperation among staff, students and departments are effective as the teachers were Agreed 100%, but students were Agreed 57.7%, undecided 34.6%, disagreed 7.7%.
- The respondent teachers were Agreed 100% that Friendly and conducive environment is provided to students and them in school also respondent students were agreed 94.2% and undecided 5.8%.
- Head of the institute has the administrative and financial skills and powers teachers were agreed 41.7 %, undecided 33.3% and disagreed 25 % similarly, students were 3.8% agreed and undecided 96.2%.
- Available services provided in school for special children are sufficient teachers were agreed 8.3% and disagreed 91.7%, while students were Agreed 15.4%, undecided 28.8% and disagreed 55.8%.
- Assistive /helping tools available in the school e.g. white cane, wheelchair, etc., the respondent teachers were agreed 8.3%, undecided 8.3%, disagreed 83.3%. Apart from it, respondent students were agreed 36.5%, undecided 25%, disagreed 38.5%.
- The Curriculum taught in institute is up-to-date as teachers were agreed 8.3%, undecided 8.3%, disagreed 83.3%, while students were agreed 57.7%, undecided 36.5% and disagreed 5.8%.
- 100% of the teachers were agreed and were in viewed that the improvement and modification required in a present taught curriculum similar to it the students were agreed 92.3%, undecided 7.7%.
- The Financial condition of the institution is good enough respondent teachers were agreed 50%, undecided 16.7%, disagreed 33.3% beside this respondent students were agreed 3.8%, undecided 96.2%.
- Teachers were in viewed that the existing special education policy need modification 100% agreed while students were 100% undecided.

- There is need to established new schools for special children education the teachers were agreed 100% along with the student respondent were agreed 90.4%, undecided 7.7%, 1.9% disagreed.
- Teachers do not prepare Lesson plan & relevant materials arrangement for lesson respondent teacher were Agreed 83.3% and disagreed 16.7%, while students were agreed 76.9%, undecided 17.3%, disagreed 5.8%.
- School buildings are not designed properly, i.e. door, stairs, etc. Teachers were agreed 16.7%, disagreed 83%, and undecided 13.5%, disagreed 86.5%. While respondent students were 100% agreed.
- Special Students face problem in day to day activities, traveling, communication, learning, etc. the teachers and students were agreed 100%.
- Similarly, Students face problem in communication with the teacher, therefore, the respondent teachers were Agreed 58.4%, undecided 8.3%, disagreed 33.3%, but respondents students were 100% agreed.

### **Conclusion**

It was found out from the data that different capacity building initiatives were taken by hearing impaired schools, but all of those initiatives were not sufficient and lacking. Similarly, for capacity building of hearing-impaired school teachers no regular in-service training majority of the schools was lacking teaching and administrative staff due to which teachers are overburden. Likewise the schools were lacking institutional capacity building initiatives.

### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

Capacity building Initiatives in hearing-impaired children education through

- i). School Intervention such as Identify and deal with hearing-impaired students in individual difference and teach them in the appropriate are learner's centered approach, because in this approach individual student are instructed according to ability and interest along with supporting flexibility in learning pattern, curricula, methods and materials of teaching, assessment and examination system, along with easily manageable classroom.

- ii). The hearing-impaired students curriculum needs to be flexible and accommodate a range of learning styles which focus on the skills and knowledge that are relevant to students present and future needs.
- iii). Create liaisons among NGOs needed to work on collaborations with government institutions at national, provincial and district levels for providing facilities and services of academic and vocational training to hearing-impaired children.
- iv). Teachers and the supporting staff vacant posts need to be filled up and responsibilities in school are to be given an orientation, make known and guiding continuously about the location of the school, school infrastructure, surrounding pathways, building, playground, classrooms, corridors, toilets etc to the special children.
- v). Initiate programs to motivate Parents and family involvement in support program for special children.
- vi). Initiating a media awareness program on a continuous basis in order to remove the negative attitude of people towards hearing-impaired children education.

## Notes & References

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