



RESEARCH REPORT ON
**INCLUSIVENESS OF
EDUCATIONAL
SERVICES
IN AJK**

*"Our School & Institutions Need to be well Accessible
for Children with Disabilities"*

Voice for Making Education Inclusive in AJK



WOMEN WELFARE ORGANIZATION POONCH (WWOP)

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Acronyms

AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
CWD	Children with Disabilities
EFA	Education for All
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
IDI	In-Depth Interview
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PWD	People with Disabilities
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social sciences
UNESCO	United Nation Education and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nation International Children Education Fund
WWOP	Women Welfare Organization Poonch

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WWOP Team

Executive Summary

The study has been carried out as part of the project titled "Voice for making Education Inclusive in AJK". The project is being implemented by Women Welfare Organization Poonch (WWOP). The overall aim of the project is to improve educational access and quality of education for children with disabilities. The objective of this study was to generate reliable data for evidenced based advocacy with government for increasing its educational provisions for children with disabilities. The specific objectives of the study were:

- To assess whether the educational services being offered are inclusive;
- Assess whether educational facilities are meeting the requirements of the children with physical disability; and
- Assess perceptions of communities and children about educational facilities.

Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used for the study. The study focused specifically on the Locomotive Disability (person's inability to execute distinctive activities associated with moving both him/herself and objects, from place to place and such inability resulting from affliction of musculoskeletal and/or nervous system.). The geographical coverage of the study was all 10 districts of AJK¹. Along with measuring the inclusiveness of the educational facilities through a comprehensive check list, the knowledge, perceptions and attitudes of the school authorities, Children With Disabilities (CWDs), their parents and the general community towards inclusive education were also measured. The schools selected for the survey included both public and private sector schools. The respondents of the Knowledge Attitude and Practices (KAP) survey included school authorities, CWDs, parents of CWDs and general community. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and In Depth Interviews were conducted to validate the findings of the quantitative study. 10 FGDs (one in each district) were conducted with Children with Disabilities, their parents and teachers. Similarly 10 IDIs (one in each district) were also conducted with EDOs and Senior Head Masters.

¹Muzaffarabad, Hattian, Nelum, Poonch, Haveli, Bagh, Sidhnoti, Mirpur, Bhimber and Kotli

Findings of the Study

The findings of the study present an alarming situation with reference to inclusiveness of the educational facilities. The findings also reveal that existing knowledge and perceptions of the educational authorities and general community regarding inclusive education, its importance and its requirements. The study shows that children with disabilities are being denied their basic right of education by not providing them a supportive and enabling environment in mainstream schools. Instead of encouraging CWDs to actively pursue education, the existing system discourages them and in fact drives them out. The societal norms also work against CWDs, as parents try to hide their children with disabilities instead of supporting them to get education and realize their potential. On the other hand inclusive education is not on the agenda of the state government and until now, no efforts have been made to include CWDs in mainstream schools. The study also points towards the need for a strong awareness and advocacy campaign if CWDs are to realize their basic right of education.

Inclusiveness of Infrastructure

Inclusive infrastructure refers to physical facilities in school which allow CWDs to actively participate in all aspects of educational activities in the school. A comprehensive checklist was developed to assess whether the facilities being offered in the schools were supportive for the children with disability or not. Six hundred schools including public sector and private sector schools were assessed for inclusiveness using that checklist. It was revealed that not a single public sector educational facility visited in this survey has a completely inclusive infrastructure, only a small number fulfill one or two requirements of inclusiveness, e.g only 9% of the sampled schools in AJK have ramps at entrance for the children, only 16% schools buildings are accessible from the road, only 9% schools have some kind of handrails to support the children with disability, only 3.5% schools have ramps inside the schools and just 9.3% provide easy access to canteen and library to CWDs. 71.5% schools do not have proper bathroom facilities designed to accommodate students with physical disabilities. 24% schools have tables with proper height. 81% class rooms do not have appropriated desks for the children with disability. Supportive and facilitative sitting arrangements are available in only 32% of the class rooms. This lack of supportive and enabling environment makes it extremely difficult for CWDs to access these educational facilities or to continue studying in the. This is reflected by the fact that only a small number of public and private sector schools have CWDs studying in them. On the other hand no funds are allocated by the state government in the annual budgets to improve the inclusiveness of the structure. There is an immediate need of advocacy for allocation of special funds in the educational budget for making the structure of the schools more inclusive.

Knowledge

The knowledge about exact meaning of inclusive education and also about the right of CWDs to study in mainstream schools is far below the satisfactory levels. The acceptance of the rights of the CWDs to get education in mainstream schools is very low among school authorities and this creates strong barriers for CWDs. Only 49 % of the school authorities feel that it is their right. Understanding of what inclusive education actually meant was very low. 88% parents and 57 % among educational authorities believed that Inclusive education is special education. This points towards the need of the raising awareness among general community in general and educational authorities in particular about the exact meaning, nature and requirements of inclusive education. These misperceptions about the meanings of the inclusive educations have serious implications for the policy development processes and can lead it to a wrong direction. Inclusive education is not on the agenda of the state government and 62 % parents and 88 % respondents from general community report that schools in their areas are not supportive and are not geared to deal with the issues of children with disabilities. This highlights the need to review the existing educational policies. This will help in identifying gaps from inclusion perspective and developing recommendations for making the policy more responsive for the needs of the CWDs

Attitude

On the surface, the attitude towards CWDs is not negative, only a very small number of CWD i.e. 2.0 % reported that they had faced rejection from schools. Similarly, only 9.9% of School Authorities accepted that they had rejected the admission of children with disabilities. Among those who accepted that they had rejected the admission requests of CWDs, 88% of schools authorities stated that the main reason of their refusal was non-availability of trained teachers in their institutions. There was a difference of opinion regarding the main reasons for not sending CWDs to schools. 59 % respondents from school authorities and 42% respondents from general community believed that access to school/mobility issue is the main reason for parents for not sending their children with disabilities to school. On the other hand, 52% of the parents of CWDs reported that behavior/attitude of others towards their children is the major reason for not sending the children to schools. If CWDs are to realize their right of education, these attitudes have to be changed and parents need to be encouraged to send their CWDs to schools. Only 5 % of schools encourage CWDs to apply for admission in their admission advertisements. In order to ensure participation and inclusion of CWDs in mainstream education, it should be made mandatory for the schools to encourage CWDs to apply in their admission advertisements.

Practices

Many factors influence the decisions regarding the education of CWDs. Educating CWDs in mainstream schools is not an easy task and CWDs and their parents face many challenges. 64 %

of respondents from CWDs reported that access to schools was a major issue for them. Similarly 38% of school authorities and general community feel that lack of suitable transport is the main barrier because of which parents do not send CWDs to schools. This shows that CWDs find it extremely difficult to reach schools. Only 7.5% targeted schools had CWDs studying in them. In the schools where CWDs were studying only 2.2 % had trained teachers. In the 97 % of the schools where CWDs are studying do not have trained teachers available. There is a need to introduce incentive schemes for the teachers, who have received special trainings for inclusive education. Availability of trained teachers will have a positive effect on the enrolment of the CWDs. Inclusive education also needs to be made part of the curriculum of the teacher training courses. Special advocacy efforts are required for this purpose. An advocacy campaign involving the education department of AJK should be initiated by civil society organizations.

Recommendations

A comprehensive multi-sectoral approach is required to make education inclusive for children with disabilities. All stakeholders including parents, children with disabilities, general community, parents of other children, media, donor agencies, civil society organizations, policy makers, decision makers, legislatures and authorities need to be involved in consultative processes to identify the gaps in the existing policies and structures and for developing recommendations for bridging these gaps. For this purpose, a comprehensive advocacy strategic plan should be developed, which should guide the process of targeting different audience groups in a effective and efficient manner. Development of key messages, based on the findings of the study, for different stakeholders should also be part of the advocacy strategy. Key policy makers should be invited through a consultative process to review, revise and develop recommendations for development of an inclusive education policy at the state level. This policy should work as a public- private partnership model so that the dream of education for all can be achieved.

1. Introduction and Background

Women Welfare Organization Poonch (WWOP) is carrying out a two phase research and advocacy project titled "Voice for Making Education Inclusive in AJK" with support of Ilm Ideas. The overall objective of the project is to improve educational access and quality for children with disabilities in AJK. Inclusive education means inclusion of all children in a meaningful learning process irrespective of their disability. To be precise, inclusive education is defined as: "all students being educated where they would be educated if they did not have a disability (i.e., in age-appropriate general education classes in their neighborhood school) with necessary supports provided to students, educators, and families so that all can be successful"².

Children with disabilities are often denied their basic right of education due to various social, environmental and systemic barriers. The barriers they face are more frequently as a result of the environment in which they live than as a result of their impairment. Schools are not inclusive, teachers are not sensitized and trained, physical access to schools is difficult and policy makers are not sensitized about the issues of children with disability. In hilly and mountainous areas like AJK, their problems increase manifold. Education has been a priority of the AJK government, with about 26% of its total recurring budget plus 8% of the total development budget allocated to this sector. As a result of this substantial investment, AJK's literacy is well above 66% and is significantly higher than 56 per the national average of Pakistan³, but situation of children with disabilities in AJK is much worse as compared with children with disabilities from other parts of Pakistan. There are several ongoing projects in AJK by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and National 2005-2010) Commission for Human Development to improve the current state of education. The CIDA project focuses on teacher training by organizing two week workshops of Education, 2009) at the district level to improve the teaching skills of untrained primary and junior teachers in the subjects of English, mathematics, and science. CIDA conducts training for head teachers of primary and Education Sector (Institute of Social and middle schools. UNICEF's School Sanitation and Hygiene Education project is currently under way in the AJK districts of Muzaffarabad and Bagh, in collaboration with the Directorate of Education Extension (DEE). UNICEF is also providing support in early childhood education, gender and education equality, teacher training, and resource materials. National Commission for Human

²Dukes & Lamar-Dukes, 2006, p. 4

³file:///C:/Users/MP/Downloads/AJK%20TES.pdf

Development is providing assistance to the Education Department to meet Education for All goals in adult literacy and non-formal education. The National Education Commission is supporting the government in non-formal, basic education. Intermittently, and on a small scale, other organizations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Adult Basic Education Society, and Idarai Taleem Agahi are also working on capacity-building programs for teachers on various aspects of teaching and learning including population education and HIV/AIDS⁴. However all these initiatives suffer from a common flaw, i.e. none of them focuses or has any component on inclusive education.

In the absence of any policy regarding education of children with disabilities, children with disabilities and their families in AJK constantly experience barriers to enjoyment of their basic human rights and to their inclusion in society.

In first phase of project, a comprehensive study has been carried out in all ten districts of AJK. The overall objective of the study was to provide reliable data for evidenced based advocacy with government for increasing its educational provision for children with disabilities.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- Assess whether the educational services being offered are inclusive
- Assess whether educational facilities meeting the requirements of the children with physical disability.
- Assess perceptions of communities and children about educational facilities

According to a survey carried out by Helping Hand for Relief and Development in 2012, the disability rate in Pakistan is 2.65 percent⁵. Rural areas contribute 65.7% in the total PWDs population compared to 34.3% in urban areas at national level. Total population of PWDs (5.035 million) in Pakistan is more than the population of any of the individual countries population of Norway, New Zealand, Lebanon or Kuwait⁶. It is estimated that around 1.4 million (28.9% of total number of Persons with Disabilities PWDs) are the children of school going age (including 0.6 million girls). No reliable data regarding the number PWDs or CWDs is available for AJK.

⁴<file:///C:/Users/MP/Downloads/AJK%20TES.pdf>

⁵[-content/uploads/2013/02/PWDs-Statistics-in-Pakistan-2012-2.pdf](#)

⁶<http://hhrd.pk/crp/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/PWDs-Statistics-in-Pakistan-2012-2.pdf>

However, according to estimates the number of PWDs in AJK is between 1,000,000 and 2,000,000⁷. The number of children with disabilities is estimated to be between 280,000 and 560,000. The number increased significantly after the earthquake of 2005,, which wrecked thousands of households and along with killing thousands of people left hundreds of dwellers disabled for the rest of their lives. The level of awareness regarding the issues being faced by CWDs is very low in AJK. No government policy exists for ensuring right to education for children with disability. However AJK government has developed a an education sector development plan. This education sector development plan also does not focus on inclusive education. There exist many myths and misperceptions regarding CWDs and instead of facilitating and supporting their children with disabilities to get education, parents tend to hide their children from the eyes of the society. In the backdrop of these enormous challenges, "Voice for making the Education Inclusive" project was initiated as the need of the hour. The project aims at improving educational access and quality for children with disabilities in AJK.

The findings of study will be used for evidenced based advocacy at multiple levels i.e. community, district and state levels. The findings of the study will be widely disseminated through ten district level seminars and one state level seminar and many other advocacy events to raise awareness about the issues being faced by CWDs and about the possible steps which need to be taken in order to address these issues. In the second phase of the project the findings of the study will be used to initiate the process of the review of education sector development plans through a consultative process. Advocacy meetings will be held with policy makers and legislators for signing of the relevant international conventions on disability. A draft educational policy will be developed through a consultative process with the experts from various sectors. The draft educational policy will be responsive to the needs and requirements of children and young people with disability. Advocacy campaign will be initiated for tabling of the draft amended policy in the legislative assembly.

⁷http://www.alhasan.com/sites/default/files/09-9_0.pdf

2. Literature Review

Pakistan is a signatory to the commitment that calls for the provision of quality education to all children by 2015 or earlier (UNESCO, 2000). However, this goal seems almost impossible to be achieved, especially when viewed in the context of inclusive education. It is estimated that in Pakistan 2.54 % of the population consist of persons with disability⁸, while in AJK the number is estimated to be between 1,000,000 and 2,000,000⁹. The number of children with disabilities in AJK is estimated to be between 280,00 to 560,000. These children often remain out of school due to number of factors and barriers.

Inclusive education is a relatively new concept. Inclusive education promotes the concept of inclusion of children with disabilities in regular school, but not a single policy or piece of legislation has ever enacted by the government of AJK to bring children with disabilities into the mainstream education. Various barriers and impediments that prevent children with disabilities to attend regular schools. To begin with, there are societal values and beliefs; parental resistance; lack of commitment and passion among teachers; economic constraints; inadequate educational infrastructures particularly in rural and remote areas; and resistance from society. There are several studies available which help us in understanding the basic concept of inclusive education and the issues related to its practical implementation.

Defining Inclusive Education

Inclusive education, according to its most basic definition, means that students with disabilities are supported in chronologically age- appropriate general education classes in their home schools and receive the specialized instruction delineated by their individualized education programs (IEP's) within the context of the core curriculum and general class activities.

Inclusion is an effort to make sure students with disabilities go to school along with their friends and neighbours while also receiving whatever, "specially designed instruction and support" they need to achieve high standards and succeed as learners. Inclusion is not the same as mainstreaming or integration. Mainstreaming attempts to move students from special education classrooms to regular education classrooms only in situations where they are able to keep up with their typically developing peers without specially designed instruction or support.

⁸<http://hhrd.pk/crp/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/PWDs-Statistics-in-Pakistan-2012-2.pdf>

⁹http://www.alhasan.com/sites/default/files/09-9_0.pdf

Integration provides only “part-time” inclusion, which prevents the students from becoming full members of the classroom community¹⁰.

Inclusive Education vs. Special Education

Previously, separate special schools used to be built for children with disabilities. This aged practice of segregated special school could be considered a discriminatory act in itself. It is a formidable obstacle in the implementation of inclusive education. Mittler (2000) observed that the identification of children with special educational needs as labeling and discriminatory¹¹. Mel Ainscow in his book “Understanding the Development of Inclusive Schools” mentioned the very concept of ‘special education’ as a barrier to inclusion. He further observed in his book that:

“I think the concept of special educational needs, particularly as it is seen in this country, becomes another barrier. I don’t think it has a productive contribution to make to the inclusive education agenda. If anything, it is one of the barriers to moving forward”¹².

In case of inclusive education, children feel amiable in a nearby regular school. In the words of Lip sky & Gartner (1996, 1999) it is “students with disabilities having full membership in age-appropriate classes in their neighborhood schools, with appropriate supplementary aids and support services¹³”.

Shifting Focus towards Inclusive Education

The Salamanca statement (1994) in its Article 2 states:

“Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within child centered pedagogy capable of meeting these needs¹⁴”.

¹⁰http://www.cpeip.fsu.edu/resourceFiles/resourceFile_18.pdf

¹¹Mittler, P. (2000) Working Towards Inclusive Education: Social Contexts. London: David Fulton.

¹²Ainscow, M. (2000) Profile, in P. Clough and J. Corbett (Eds.) Theories of Inclusive Education (pp. 39-42). London: Paul Chapman

¹³Lipsky, D. K., & Gartner, A. (1996), Inclusion, school restructuring, and the remaking of American society, Harvard Educational Review, Volume 66, pages 762-796

¹⁴<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000984/098427eo.pdf>

The emphasis on a regular school has always been a priority issue for the avid supporters of the inclusive education. However, it remained impossible in almost all of South-Asia to bring children with disabilities fully into the mainstream education. It is the most desirable education process that ultimately is beneficial for all the children. An inclusive setting in regular schools is the most cherished dream of educationists and social scientists. It undoubtedly is the best way to save children from discriminatory behaviors and make them a part of their society instead of leaving them alone. The Salamanca statement further provides:

“Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving an education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system”.

In recent times, UN in its 61st session in 2006 established, Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons. Article 24 of the convention thus elucidates: “States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and life-long learning”.

Though, David Mitchell¹⁵ in his review commented that both the convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons and Salamanca statement are ambiguous on the issue of education of children with special need. However, the comment does not seem factual. Rather those two developments at the International level confirmed and reinforce the view that CWD’s education in regular school is their right, denial of which is a denial of basic human right. Both the aforementioned convention and Salamanca statement proved to be the landmark developments in the context of inclusive education and provided detailed and unequivocal concept of inclusive education with its consistent mode of practice and promotion.

Pre-Requisites of Inclusive Education

Until now, the concept of inclusive education provided in this analysis through review of different studies makes an impression that children should be sent to the regular school

¹⁵Mitchell David, Education that fits: review of international trends in education of students with special education needs pp 126. 2010

whether disable or not but in actual, inclusive education involves a lot of more things to be considered. In the words of Barton (1997), “[inclusion] is not merely about placing disabled pupils in classrooms with their non-disabled peers ... Rather, it is about how, where and why, and with what consequences, we educate all pupils”.¹⁶Barton (1997) explains that inclusive education is almost certainly a matter of right but it involves a complex web of queries and problems. Therefore, besides developing child centered pedagogy and other policy instruments to understand the concept of inclusive education, it is appropriate to consider answering how, where and why someone with such and such setting is being educated in such and such school.

Challenges in Introducing Inclusive Education in Pakistan

Above discussion leads us to discuss the challenges in introducing inclusive education. This includes issues of teachers’ trainings and provision of infrastructural support which all require financial allocations for achieving the objectives.

Shagufta Shahzadi (2000)¹⁷ states in her study that we need to clarify and expand the concept of inclusive education in order to develop acceptance of the provision among the teachers and professionals concerned with the teaching of special children. Awareness of the concept will bring forward the roles and responsibilities of teachers and professionals in the process of inclusive education and this will make it implementation possible.

Sonia Haider (2008)¹⁸ explains that more efforts are needed for teaching students with special education needs in Pakistan. Inclusive education enhances social interaction thus minimizes negative attitude towards students with special needs. Collaboration between the mainstream and the special education teachers is important and that there should be clear guidelines on the implementation of inclusive education. However the implementation of the guidelines would be real challenge as Shaheen Pasha (2012)¹⁹ states that Mainstream schools in Pakistan are currently facing enormous challenges regarding the successful implementation of inclusive education. Findings of the study reveal that mainstream primary schools are not ready yet to

¹⁶ Baton, Len Inclusive education: romantic, subversive or realistic?

¹⁷http://www.isec2000.org.uk/abstracts/papers_s/shahzadi_1.htm

¹⁸<http://www.pjms.com.pk/issues/julsep08/article/bc2.html>

¹⁹<http://ue.edu.pk/JRRE/articles/62003.pdf>

meet the challenges of inclusive education. More efforts are needed to make mainstream schools ready for inclusive education.

To materialize this model and mode of education, decisive steps and arrangements need to be considered. Failing to which can result in the exclusion of CWDs from education altogether. As described in 2004 International Conference on Education:

"A child's exclusion from education leads to a lack of the professional and social competencies needed in order to access essential knowledge and to exert an autonomous and responsible citizenship".

Sebba and Ainscow (1996)²⁰ in this regard explained in:

"Inclusion describes the process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering its curricular organization and provision. Through this process, the school builds its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in so doing, reduces the need to exclude pupils" (p.9).

To address the needs of children with disabilities, the very method of teaching itself needs paradigm changes. Mainly, copying and memorizing pedagogical method is used in Pakistan, whether it's a regular, special or inclusive school. This method has severe disadvantages when observed in the context of inclusive education because it does not fit to the needs of all children. Mental retarded and slow learners will face immense difficulties in this mode of teaching. There should be a way of teaching that is helpful for all learners. The need for the development of child-centered pedagogy can further be analyzed by the below stated statement of UNESCO:

"The challenge confronting the inclusive school is that of developing a child –centered pedagogy capable of successfully educating all children, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities. The merit of such schools is not that they are capable of providing quality education to all children; their establishment is a crucial step in helping to change discriminatory attitudes, in creating welcoming communities and in developing an inclusive society" (UNESCO, 1994, Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, p.6).

²⁰<http://www.col.org/pcf2/papers%5Cjha.pdf>

Another serious dilemma for the successful implementation of inclusive education is the perception and superstitious attitude of the society. Besides discrimination and prejudice, a perception of society attached to the disability is that it is a curse or happens due to some evil forces.

Through the analysis of all the above discussed studies and books we can say that it is now a universally accepted fact that inclusive education is the right of the children with disability and education of CWDs in mainstream schools proves far more effective and useful than teaching them in separate schools. Unfortunately this realization does not exist in AJK. In 2013, a task force was constituted by AJK government to develop the education sector development plan. The education sector plan also does not have any focus inclusive education and needs to be revised in order to make it more inclusive. The educational allocations in the annual budget of AJK are made according to the Pakistan National Educational Policy 2009²¹. The educational policy 2009 also does not have any focus on inclusive policy. The focus is still on special education which is now considered an outdated concept. On the other hand all the studies also reveal that there are several challenges in promoting inclusive education for CWDs, cost being the least of them. There are many social cultural and psychological barriers which need to be broken before we can actively advocate for inclusive education. Along with allocating costs for the infrastructural assistance, comprehensive teachers, training program to be launched in order to provide an enabling and supportive environment for CWDs. The communities and stakeholders also need to be sensitized about the importance of inclusive education.

The analysis of the studies also revealed that until now the focus of most of the studies and books have been on the theoretical aspects of inclusive education and little data is available on the inclusiveness of the educational structures, perceptions of the stakeholder about inclusive education and actual problems being faced by CWDs in mainstream schools. There is need for a comprehensive study covering all these aspects in order to facilitate the process of the planning and development of inclusive education policies by providing evidence of on ground situation and felt needs of CWDs

²¹<http://ajk.gov.pk/images/stories/Budget/Budget201415/Budget%20Speech%202014-15.pdf>

3. Methodology

The study focuses specifically on the Locomotive Disability (person's inability to execute distinctive activities associated with moving both himself and objects, from place to place and such inability resulting from affliction of musculoskeletal and/or nervous system.). The study has been conducted in all ten districts of AJK and uses both qualitative and quantitative methods. Along with measuring the inclusiveness of the educational facilities through a comprehensive check list, the knowledge, perceptions and attitudes of the school authorities, children with disability, their parents and the general community towards inclusive education were also measured.

3.1 Quantitative Research

For the quantitative part of the study, a checklist for schools and five separate questionnaires for general community, schools without CWDs, schools with CWD, parents and the CWD themselves were designed. The questionnaires were developed to capture information on accessibility, inclusion and awareness. The variables highlighted in the questionnaire were quintessential for the development of an education system that is responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities. Each questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part assessed the knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) of the respondents and the second part catered to their perceptions and opinions. The second part of the questionnaire used the Likert-scale approach (Likert, 1932)²², for scaling responses. Three Point Likert-scales was adopted for the questions, disagree, agree and strongly agree. Few categories were formed (government role in facilitating CWD, Social Development of CWD and School Sensitivity towards CWD) by clubbing questions which catered for those categories. The percentages of the responses were taken which were later clubbed in the already formed categories and finally the mean was taken of all the responses.

3.1.1 Sample Size

Schools

²²<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/Likert-scale.html>

Total number of schools in AJK is 7236 (Total Government Schools: 5866 and Total Private Schools: 1370). The Sample Size of 7326 is 555 at 95% confidence level with 4% margin of error and 50% precision

For all 10 districts of AJK: $555/10 = 55$ schools were selected from each districts

The percentage of private schools derived from the formula is: $1370/5866*100 = 23.3 \Rightarrow 23$ approx

The SS of private schools: $55/100*23=12.65 \Rightarrow 13$ approx

The SS of Government schools: $55-13 = 42$

The schools to be evaluated through the check list were selected through simple random sampling technique.

The respondents of the knowledge, attitude and perceptions regarding inclusive education survey were divided into three categories.

- School Authorities
- Children with Disabilities and their Parents
- General Community

School authorities

Respondents included teachers or principals of all the schools selected for the administration of the check list.

Children with Disability and Parents

Convenience sampling technique was used in this category. 100 % of the disabled children and their parents were selected from the targeted schools. The questionnaires addressed the issues of students with disabilities and their parents and highlighted their needs and requirement within the schools. The respondents were further divided into male and female students equally.

General Community

Simple Random Sampling was used for this category to measure the opinion of general community about the provision of services, facilities and environment within the schools for children with disability.

Population in AJK: 3860000²³ est.

The Sample Size of above population 600 at 95% Confidence level with 4% margin of error and precision of 50%

3.2. Qualitative Research

10 FGDs were conducted with 10-12 participants (teachers, parents and community) per FGD and 10 IDIs with Government officials (EDOs and Head masters) (1 in each district) were conducted to explore the underlying issues and problems being faced CWDs in AJK in their daily lives. The FGDs and IDIs were conducted by lead researcher.

3.2.1. Data Collection and Analysis

Pre-testing was done to minimize the errors of the research tool. The field researchers collected data through personal visits. Two data collectors (One male and One Female) were selected from each district. A comprehensive training workshop, on data collection tools, was conducted for the field data collectors. Data collection process was closely monitored by research assistants to ensure the quality of data. Upon completing the questionnaires and checklists, the forms were collected by the data collectors in the field and handed to the Research Assistants. Once the questionnaires were collected, the process of data analysis started.

In analyzing the data, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized. This provided a truly scientific analysis of the data and made writing of the report much easier. Upon completing the analysis of the data, the report was developed. The findings of the study are now being published in this document for public consumption. The facts as extracted from the questionnaires are clearly stated. However, they are followed by observations from the lead researcher, based on his experience and knowledge of the subject under analysis

²³http://www.ajk.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28&Itemid=11

Challenges

Several challenges hampered smooth implementation of research activities. Geography as well as the demography of the area posed serious challenges to the research team. Research activities started in the height of winter season, made data collection very challenging. Some of the challenges confronted during this research are listed below:

- Majority of the area of AJK remained inaccessible due to persistent snowfall throughout winter.
- Communication and road network were often blocked due to frequent land sliding and caused interruption in establishing contacts in the area.
- People were often found reluctant to discuss and share their personal views.
- There was a sheer lack of trust on NGOs and on some occasions people exhibited rude and offensive behavior towards the data collectors as they were working for an NGO. People in the remote districts of AJK did not have any concept of inclusive education. This posed challenges for conducting productive FGDs.

4. Findings of the Study

4.1 Inclusiveness of the Infrastructure of the Schools

Exclusion from meaningful participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of communities is one of the greatest problems facing individuals in any society today. Such societies are neither efficient nor desirable²⁴.

Inclusive education aims at providing CWDs opportunities for studying in mainstream schools so that they do not feel marginalized and discriminated and can feel themselves to be active and useful members of the society. But this also means that schools have to be properly equipped with appropriate facilities to ensure that CWDs can easily access and participate in all educational and non-educational activities going on in the school. For the purpose of the study, a comprehensive check list was developed to assess the inclusiveness of infrastructure in the public and private sector schools. The objective of the checklist was to look at the infrastructure in public and private sector schools and observe whether, the facilities available in the institutions respond to the needs of the children with this disability. For this purpose a survey of 600 schools was conducted in all the 10 districts of AJK. The checklist included the list of basic requirements to make education inclusive for children with disabilities. For Example, when children with disabilities arrive, whether driving, being driven, cycling or walking to school, they all need equal ease of entry. Ramps at the entrance make it easier for them to enter the school. Lack of ramps at the entrance or the inaccessibility of the school building from the road, becomes a big deterrent for the children with disabilities to reach schools and access their basic human right of education.

“When we are working without proper building and infrastructure in our schools, how can idea about ramps for handicapped and other facilities come to our minds?”

A senior teacher in the government school

²⁴http://www.childinfo.org/files/childdisability_GuidelinesforInclusion.pdf

Table 1: Inclusiveness of Infrastructure in School

	Total	%
Ramps in school entrance	58	9.70
Buses have ramps	0	0
Light weight doors	215	35.95
Wide passages	216	36
Accessible corridors	132	22.05
Table tops(29")	144	24.08
Handrails available	54	9.03
Water facilities(30"-35")	185	30.94
Ramps or elevators available	21	3.51
Supportive arrangement of chairs in class	189	31.61
Large desks	112	18.73
Pillows are available	12	2.01
Wide bathrooms	39	6.52
Accessible sinks in bathrooms	23	3.85
Accessible system to go canteen and library	56	9.36
School building accessible from the road	97	16.22

The table shows that only 9% of the sampled (600) schools in AJK have ramps at entrance for the children. Most of the schools which have the ramps at the entrance are those schools which have either been constructed after the earthquake through UNICEF and other NGOs or are private schools. Similarly only 16% schools buildings are accessible from the road. The situation inside the school buildings is not any different either. Inside the schools, only 9% schools have some kind of handrails to support the children with disability, 3.5% schools have ramps inside the schools and only 9.3% provide easy access to canteen and library to children with disability. This means that once inside the schools the children with disabilities face even greater issues of access and mobility.

Approximately 71.5% schools do not have the proper bathroom facilities designed to accommodate students with physical disabilities. Only 31% schools have water taps installed at the proper height for children with disability. The absence of proper bathroom and water facilities in the schools is indeed a major contributing factor for the exclusion of children with physical disabilities from the general education system. It would be extremely difficult for school administrators to admit children with physical disabilities in such an environment.

Children with disability are facing issues within the class rooms. Only 24% schools have tables with proper height. 81% class rooms do not have appropriate desks for the children with disability. In only 32% class of the class rooms supportive and facilitative sitting arrangements are available.

These findings confirm a view that has been held amongst the community of persons with disabilities that the vast majority of schools in AJK are inaccessible. It therefore points to the possible reasons that why a vast majority of children with disabilities are not accessing tertiary education as they lack the basic qualification which will help them to matriculate for these higher level educational institutions.

Considerable resources are required to make the schools in public and private sector ready for inclusive education. Unless the schools have the required supportive infrastructure available, they will not be able to attract CWDs. Currently only 7.5% schools in AJK have CWDs studying in them which is a very low number and shows how excluded these children are. In the absence of supportive infrastructure parents of CWDs, and especially parents of the girls are not likely to send their children to these schools.

4.2 Knowledge Attitude and Practices of the Community and stakeholders regarding Inclusive Education

4.2.1 Knowledge

Article 24 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Disabled Persons makes it mandatory for the governments to makes education system inclusive and to provide equal opportunities for CWDS to study in mainstream schools. The governments in Pakistan in general and AJK in particular have done little to fulfill this basic right of CWDs. It is a reality that most of the times, governments act only when there is a strong demand from the communities and grassroots level for a particular service or facility. Therefore, it is necessary that persons with disabilities, community and other stakeholders at the grassroots level not only recognize the right of CWDs to inclusive education, but also demand for it. Though the right is internationally and nationally acknowledged, yet it is the understanding, recognition and acceptance at the local level, which really matters for the CWDs. The study focused on developing an understanding of how the local communities and other stakeholders perceive inclusive education and what is their understanding of it.

“Government should set up more special schools for CWDs. It is not possible for us in mainstream schools to accommodate these children. We do not have trained teachers and we do not have infrastructure to provide facilities to these children. We do not have enough budget to make regular repairs in schools, How can we make our schools inclusive?”

Muhammad Aslam (name changed) Head Master, during In-depth Interview

When asked, whether CWDs have a right to study in mainstream schools, a very high number of respondents i.e.95 % of CWDs aged between 8-15, 73% respondents from general community and 88 % parents agreed that educating children with disability in mainstream schools is their basic human right. However, among school authorities i.e. Head masters/Mistresses and Senior Teachers, only 49% agreed that education in mainstream schools was the right of CWDs.

Majority of them, i.e. 51%, were of the opinion that CWDs should be taught in special schools. This is an alarming situation as this awareness is lowest among the group in which it needs to be highest. It means when CWDs and their parents approach mainstream schools for admissions, most probably they will be denied admissions. There is need for strong advocacy with school authorities, considering that without this awareness they are more likely to refuse the CWDs admission in the mainstream schools.

Many misperceptions exist regarding the actual definition of inclusive education. Many people claim that they know about inclusive education and strongly advocate for inclusive education for CWDs, but further probing reveals that very few really understand what inclusive education actually means.

Table No: 2

Familiarity with the Term of Inclusive Education

School Authorities	General Community	Parents
80 %	80 %	50 %

Majority of respondents from all the categories reported that they have heard the term of Inclusive Education. However when probed further about the definition and understanding of inclusive education, it was revealed that understanding of inclusive education was very low among the respondents from all categories. Majority of respondents claimed that they are aware of the term inclusive education but a vast number of School Authorities, General community and Parents which is (57%) (50%) and (88%) respectively believed that Inclusive education is actually Special education. It is understandable that general community and parents of the children do not have this understanding and cannot make this distinction, but this lack of understanding among the schools authorities and educational officials is alarming and can have very negative implications in the policy making and decision making processes. Difficulty in developing a comprehensive understanding of inclusive education has also stemmed from the fact that the term has often been interchangeably used with integration.

Whereas the use of terms like mainstreaming and integration with reference to education of the disabled is well-documented in policy and legal taxonomy, inclusive education has been a recent entrant. Inclusion encompasses curriculum flexibility, pedagogy, infrastructural changes, sensitization of parents and peers as integral components of the accommodations that schools must make. Hence, initiative and commitment on part of a school must be viewed as imperative to the successful implementation of an inclusive education programme. Unless a school wholeheartedly embraces the ideology of inclusion in principle and in practice, there are no guarantees for its success.

This shows that there is a strong need for increasing awareness at all levels that what inclusive education really means. An awareness campaign needs to be launched to familiarize people specially the education authorities with the real meaning of inclusive education and its requirements.

Knowledge about the Existence of the Government Policy Regarding Inclusive Education

A policy is a statement of intent by the government and should lay out the principles and approach for the development of a specific sector. A comprehensive educational policy needs to promote an approach of mainstreaming inclusion into all aspects of Education Programmes. The existing educational policy in AJK does not make any reference to inclusive education. Though, the district educational authorities and school authorities have heard about the educational policy of AJK, most of them have never actually seen it or read it. A significant number of respondents from school authorities (41%) claimed to have knowledge about the government policies on inclusive settings or education in schools of AJK followed by very low number of General Community (19%) and parents (2%) respectively. However, it is interesting to note that there are no government policies regarding inclusive settings in AJK.

Currently inclusive education is not part of the educational policy. The focus has until now been on special education. Even special education institutions are very limited in numbers. A significant number of the school authorities and education officials (41%) claimed that inclusive education is part of the educational policy but this misunderstanding was caused because of their confusion regarding inclusive education and special education. Majority of the parents and general community are not even aware whether any educational policy exists or not. There is strong need for the review of the existing policies and programs in AJK with an inclusive lens. In

this regard much can be learned from India, where many policy measures have been taken to facilitate the education of CWDs in mainstream schools. Policy support for inclusion has been provided by the launch of programs like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) during the Tenth Plan (2001) and the Right to Education Act, 2009. The act is considered an important milestone in India's efforts to achieve Education for All goals. Analysis of these policies and acts can help AJK government in review and development of their own policies as India and Pakistan share a similar context in many respects.

In the next phase of the project WWOP plans to carry out a comprehensive consultative process to review the existing education sector related plans to identify the gaps and recommend changes from an inclusiveness perspective.

Inclusive settings in schools

A high number of respondents from general community i.e. 86% and 62% of parents reported that schools in their areas are not supportive and are not geared to deal with the issues of children with disabilities. The reason for high number of negative response from parents is that their children are experiencing multiple issues because of lack of facilities in schools. 12% from general community who believed that schools are inclusive, think so because they are not experiencing the issues and unaware about the needs of CWDs.

Based on the type of disabilities the school is likely to admit, the schools need to make some basic infrastructural changes. Building of ramps, railings, disability friendly toilets, and magnified sign boards may be some of these. As stated earlier, the schools authorities cite non availability of financial resources for not being able to do so.

Assistance by the Government

In order to make educational facilities inclusive, strategic investments have to be made to make the facilities accessible for CWDs. Since inclusive education is not on the agenda of the AJK government, no budgetary allocations are being made to make the schools inclusive. When asked about the infrastructural assistance by the government, majority of the respondents from school authorities were not aware about any type of infrastructural support from the government to make the mainstream schools inclusive for CWDs. On the other hand, a high number of General community and parents also stated that government is not providing any

infrastructural support to make mainstream schools inclusive that is 58% and 60% respectively.

Table No: 3

Technical assistance being provided by the Government

	School Authorities (%)	General Community (%)	Parents (%)
Yes	11	5	-
No	30	58	64
To some extent	42	25	2
Don't Know	17	12	34
Total Percentage	100	100	100

According to school authorities (42%) Government is providing technical assistance (trainings, advocacy and campaigns) to make the mainstream schools inclusive to some extent, whereas more than half of the general community (58%) and majority of parents believed that government is not providing any type of technical assistance in this regard.

Inclusive education is sometimes seen as a luxury. Governments sometimes take the view that they cannot afford to educate all 'mainstream' children, let alone those considered to have extra support needs. They believe that barriers caused by lack of funding, such as large class sizes, make inclusive, diversity-friendly education impossible – particularly for disabled children, who are seen as needing expensive equipment and one-to-one teaching. But working towards inclusive education does not have to be expensive, although it does require strategic and

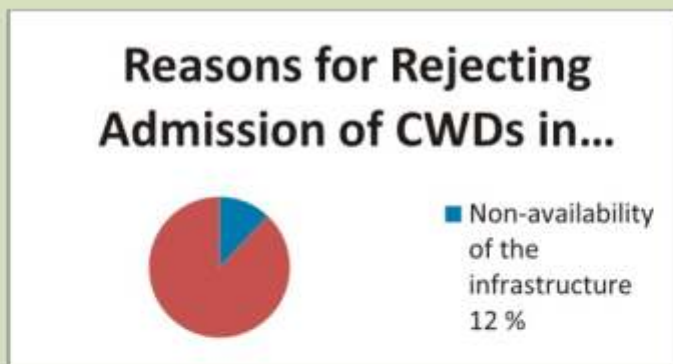
focused investment of available resources. It does not have to involve large amounts of specialist expertise, although teachers should be able to understand and respond to the needs of all children in their classes. Inclusive education does not have to involve extensive infrastructural change, although modifications to the material set-up of schools can be valuable.

4.2.2 Attitude

Attitude of the school authorities towards CWDs

Importance of positive attitudes towards CWDs can never be over emphasized, because negative attitudes can become one of the key barriers to children and adults with disabilities achieving equality and participating in any society. It was good indicator that generally school authorities have positive attitudes towards CWDs and if they seek admissions in mainstream schools, they seldom face rejection.

Very small number of CWDs i.e. 2.0 % reported that they have faced rejection from schools because of their physical impairment. 4.0% Parents of CWD shared that their children got rejected from schools whereas 9.9% of School Authorities accepted that they rejected the admission of children with disabilities. When asked about the reason for rejection, School authorities identified the following reasons shown in Table 2.2 below:



A very limited number of mainstream schools refused the admission of CWD in their institution. Out of them 88% stated that the main reason of their refusal was the non-availability of trained teachers in their institutions.

The lack of teachers trained in inclusive education is strong barrier for CWDs, though a very small number of the school authorities reported having refused admissions to CWDs, yet a vast majority of them reported lack of trained teachers as the main reason for refusing such admissions. Orientation and training of teachers for inclusive education can make a significant difference in creation of an enabling environment for the children with disabilities in the mainstream schools. It was also reported during different FGDs that along with facing negative attitudes from community and fellow students, the children with disability faced negative attitude of the teachers. This is because the teachers are not properly trained and are not sensitive to the needs of the children with disability. The participants were unanimous in their recommendations that training of teachers was a pre-requisite for any program of inclusive education in AJK.

It must be mentioned that, training must be done both at the pre-service and in-service levels. Pre-service training refers to training individuals before they become teachers. This includes training at teacher training colleges and universities at all levels. Ideally, inclusive education should be a compulsory subject for all teacher candidates and an integral part of teacher training curricula. Fundamental knowledge and skills of inclusive education, such as understanding needs and abilities of children with special needs and pedagogic skills such as instructional accommodation and activity differentiation, should be provided widely to teacher candidates. Countries with strong track records of implementing inclusive education, such as the United States and Australia, have adopted this model for a long-time. As a long term goal, countries should work towards promoting inclusive education as a compulsory subject in pre-service training programs²⁵. In places like Pakistan and AJK, where such courses are not yet compulsory, developing a teaching module or unit in inclusive education in lieu of changing the entire curriculum can be an effective first step.

4.2.3 Practices

Educating children with disabilities is a challenge not just for the educational authorities but also for parents who often prefer not to send the child with disability to schools to avoid the allied complications and issues.

²⁵http://www.crsprogramquality.org/storage/pubs/education/edhowto_vietnam2.pdf

When respondents were asked to discuss the reasons that why sometimes parents do not send their CWDs to school, different explanations and reason were offered. However, majority of the school authorities (59%) and General community (42%) believed that access to school/Mobility issue is the main reason for parents not sending their Children with disabilities to school. On the other hand most of the parents of CWDs did not seem to agree with this view. 52% of the parents of CWDs responded that Behavior/Attitude of others and fear of stigma and discrimination is a major reason that parents are not sending their children with disability to schools.

Children with disabilities are often targets of violence, bullying and abuse in schools by teachers, other staff and other children. Also, children with disabilities are amongst the most frequent victims of corporal punishment. This is another challenge, related to that of violence and bullying. The fear of violence leads parents of children taking their children out of school, or to the children themselves wanting to be taken out, or preferring a special school as a more protective environment. Parents often do not send their children with disabilities to school for a number of reasons, including their fear that they will be unsafe, the belief that they cannot learn and lack of communication with teachers and Head Masters. All this is often combined with stigmatization and prejudice in the school and in the community.

Stigma and prejudice also 'allows some members of the community to see disabled children as easy targets of rage, anger or sexual aggression'. 'Lack of social support, limited opportunities for education or participation in the community further isolates disabled children and their families, leading to increased levels of stress and hardship.'²⁶

Ease of Admission for CWDs

As stated earlier, generally schools authorities have positive attitudes towards CWDs and if they seek admission, they are rarely refused. Most of the school heads do not refuse admission to children with locomotive disability.

²⁶Nora E. Groce, *Summary Report. Violence against Children with Disabilities, UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children, Thematic Group on Violence against Children with Disabilities, UNICEF, 2005, pp. 15 and 5.*

Table No: 5

Number of School Authorities that easily give admission to CWD in schools

Yes	85.6 %
No	14.4 %
Total	100.0 %

85% of school authorities reported that they easily give admissions to the children having disabilities in their schools. The sensitivity of schools towards CWD admission was measured by asking whether school administrations mention specifically about the admissions of CWD in their advertisement (banners, newsletters, information leaflets etc). It was revealed that though children with disability are not denied admission yet there is no affirmative action from the education department schools to actively encourage the students to seek admission. Affirmative action is often reflected through advertisements as many organizations encourage women to apply for the advertised posts. But when schools in AJK advertise admission in newspapers, they seldom show this sensitivity.

Table 6

Schools showing sensitivity towards CWD admission through advertisement

Yes	5.0%
No	95.0%
Total	100.0

A very low number of school authorities (5%) reported the sensitivity towards the admission of CWD in their schools. Most of the institutions which have shown this sensitivity are private schools

Incentive Schemes for Teachers Trained to Teach CWDs

As discussed earlier, most of the schools which had refused admission to children with disability reported that main reason for doing so was non availability of trained teachers. Yet very few schools have introduced any schemes for the teachers who have these skills, thus making it unattractive for the teachers to gain any skills of this type. Inclusive education does not just mean providing supportive physical infrastructure for CWDs in mainstream schools, it also means availability of the teachers, who understand the special requirements of children with disability and are trained to cater to their needs.

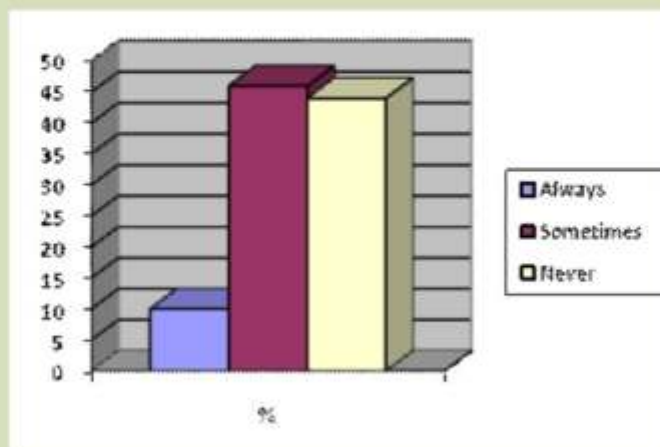
Majority of the respondents (98%) shared that their schools don't have any scheme to facilitate the CWD trained teachers. This is an alarming situation as in the absence of trained teachers the dream of inclusive education cannot be realized. There is a need to introduce schemes for the teachers who get special training for teaching CWDs. This will increase the number of such teachers and in turn will encourage CWDs to enroll in schools. Education department also needs to incorporate inclusive education in the teachers' education policy as the current policy does not make any reference to inclusive education.

Involvement of CWDs in Co-Curricular Activities

Inclusive education is not limited to facilitating CWDs to get education in mainstream schools, it means providing them opportunities for participating in every aspect of school life. Co-curricular activities play a very important role in developing the personalities of the children, but very few of the CWDs, who study in mainstream schools, reported that they were provided these opportunities

Table No: 7

Teachers involving CWDs in Co-Curricular activities



Participation in extracurricular activities can have an array of social benefits for students. Participation in such activities provides students with the chance to assume leadership responsibilities and demonstrate talents that may not be apparent in traditional classroom settings. Because many staff members involved in co-curricular activities are outside of the field of special education, it is imperative that they are informed of students' abilities and needs, as well as strategies, assistive and adaptive technologies, and other supplemental services that can help address their needs while capitalizing on their strengths.

Students' interests rather than their needs should guide their decision for selecting extracurricular activities. However, it is inevitable that many students with special needs will be unable to participate in every activity that is of interest to them, just as it is the case for their non-disabled peers.

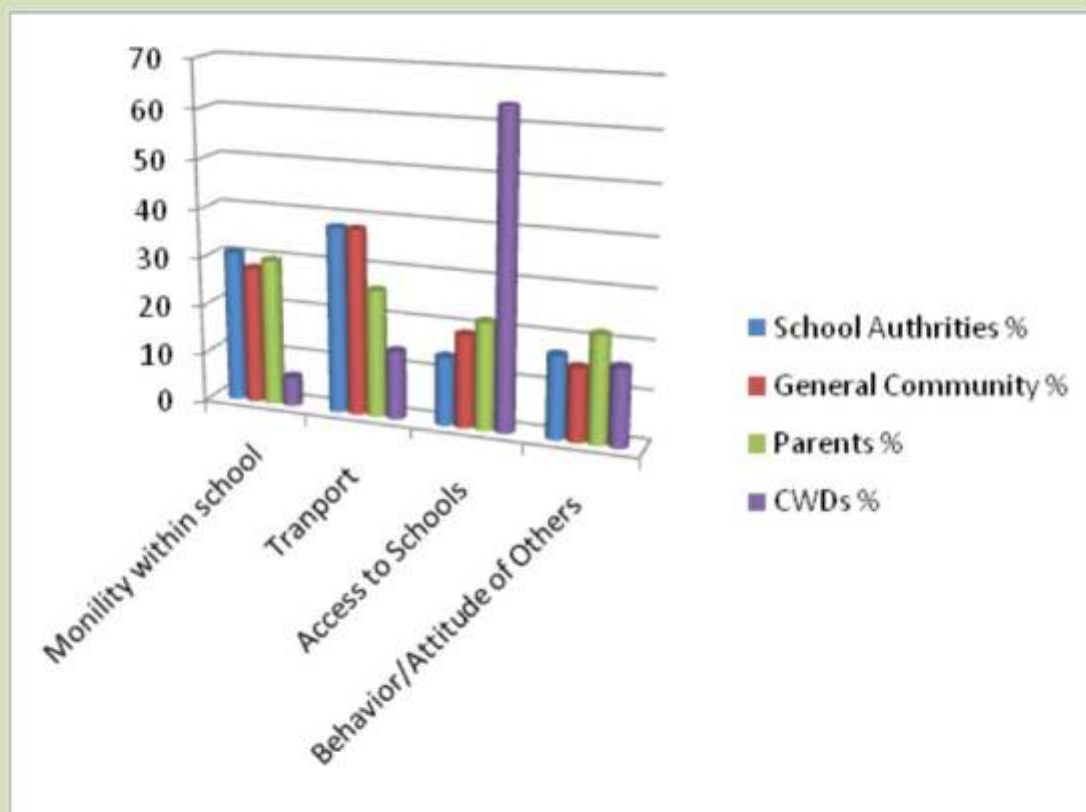
Barriers Faced By CWDs

Children with disability many barriers face many problems within an outside schools. The study revealed that there are major gaps in understanding of issues being faced by CWDs. CWDs, their parents and other stakeholders are not on the same page and think differently about the issues.

While 64% CWDs think that access to schools is the biggest issues for them, stakeholders like school authorities, community members and parents think that other problems like transport and mobility are more important. Schools in AJK are often built away from the roads and students have to climb up and down the hills to reach the schools.

Table No: 8

Barriers faced by CWDs



Travelling to and from school can be very difficult for all children, and is often used as an excuse for not sending disabled children to school. Obviously the location of the schools cannot be changed, however the approach can be made easier by paving the pathways leading to schools and by making them wider.

“Many of our schools are not easy to access”. There are schools where normal and healthy children can't reach. How a child with disability can reach such schools. Schools should be at a place where everyone can reach with ease and comfort”

Ch Muhammad Raiq (Name Changed),

Once children have reached school, there are other physical access issues to consider such as entering the school buildings and ease of movement around the teaching and recreation areas. The checklist has already revealed that the infrastructure of the schools in AJK is not at all inclusive which is a big hurdle for the children as they are not comfortable within the institution. Negative attitudes to disability are, also a strong barrier to disabled children accessing and benefiting from mainstream education. Negative attitudes are found at all levels: parents, community members, schools and teachers, government officials and even disabled children themselves. In order to remove the barrier of negative attitude, reparation and sensitization of teachers as well of all the children of the school about the inclusive education and its importance for is quite necessary. It is critical that children are presented with facts and that the sensitization process is not a onetime affair. Constant reinforcement is necessary for children to truly appreciate and respect diverse needs of children with different abilities. Storytelling, role plays, informal discussions in class and sharing of experiences by CWDs are some steps that the schools may consider. Teachers must present information to the children in a factual manner and inclusive education should be projected as integral to the school. Only then, we can hope of solving the problem of negative attitudes within the schools.

Percentage of Schools in Which CWDs are Studying and Availability of Trained teachers

Only 7.5% targeted schools had CWDs studying in them. The reason for this limited number is the barriers associated with inclusive education and also the fact that parents don't send their

CWD to schools due to multiple factors. The next table shows the availability of trained teachers in the schools having children with disabilities

Table No: 9

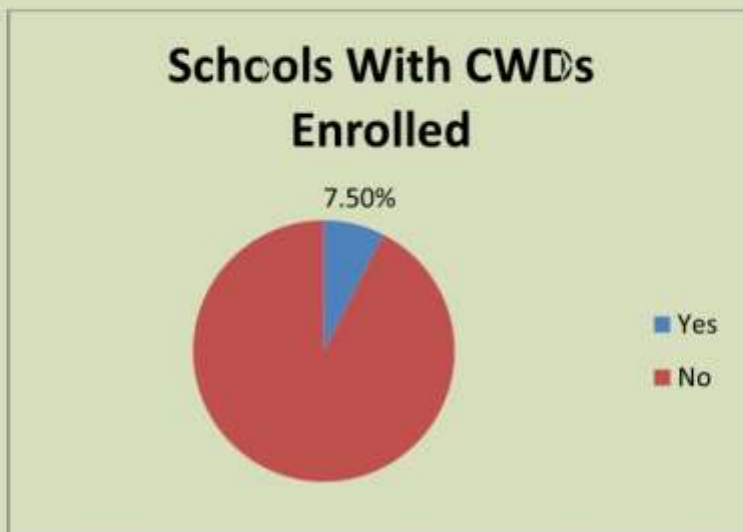


Table No 10

Availability of trained teachers for inclusive education

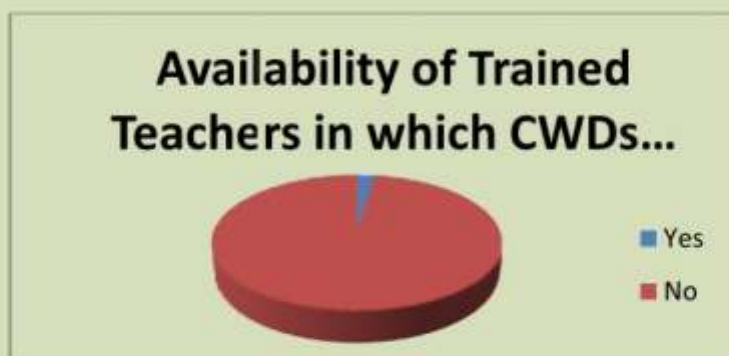


Table No 10 states that only 2.2 schools have trained teachers along with children with disabilities whereas 97 % have children with disabilities but the trained teachers are not available.

Studies have shown that the success of the inclusive education depends, to a large extent, on the willingness and the ability of teachers to make accommodations for individuals with special needs.²⁷ Unfortunately, most of the teachers have never been taught how to teach children with disabilities, or generally how to teach in a child-friendly, active way. To rectify this situation, both in service and pre-service teacher training programs need to be initiated. This can be done by following the model of a successful project in Bagh district by Leonardo Cheshire Disability in which two teachers from each school can be trained through short-term workshops led by teacher training institutions. These teachers then return and spread the inclusive education message and methodology to the other staff. Subjects covered can include participatory, child-centered teaching and learning methods, an introduction to sign language, and creating inclusive materials.

Pre-service training, with student teachers at teacher training colleges or universities, can obviously cover these subjects in more depth. Therefore, inclusive education should also be added to the teacher training curriculum.

²⁷<http://www.pjms.com.pk/issues/julsep08/article/bc2.html>

5. Recommendations

It is pertinent to note that it is lot less costly to make provisions for the education for CWDs in mainstream inclusive schools rather than establishing special schools. The additional/marginal cost to transform mainstream schools to inclusive ones is minimal and can easily be adjusted in the annual educational budgetary allocations. However, strong misperceptions and misunderstandings exist about the definition and nature of inclusive education and the requirements of the children with disability. Therefore, until now inclusive education has been confused with special education and no serious effort has been made to make the mainstream schools inclusive and supportive for CWDs, Until now the focus has been on special education and it has been considered enough a establish a few special education schools across AJK. Serious efforts are required at multiple levels to address these issues.

In the light of the findings of the study we can recommend the following:

5.1. General Recommendations

- A comprehensive Advocacy Strategy should be developed to raise awareness among children with disabilities, their parents, parents of the children studying in mainstream schools, media, civil society, education authorities, policy makers and legislatures.
- There is a need to develop IEC material and other awareness packages to remove the misconceptions about disabilities and to promote inclusive education.
- It was observed during the research that in some segments of the society disabilities is perceived as a curse. There is a need to develop strong messages from religious, social and humanitarian point of view to negate this misperception.
- Parents of other children are apprehensive about inclusive education. Therefore, awareness sessions need to be arranged with them to encourage inclusive education.
- There is a need to work with the families to go for sufficient diagnostic and rehabilitations steps at early stage of the disability to avoid later stage complexities.

5.2. Recommendations at General Community, Media, Teachers and Civil Society Level

Promotion of favorable attitude of all stakeholders, including normal children, schools' administration, staff, families towards the inclusion of children with disabilities

- An advocacy and awareness campaign needs to be launched to create a positive attitude of the community towards inclusive education.
- The private sector has taken a lead in promoting and implementing inclusive education. There is a need to support these efforts by providing grants from the government and international donor agencies.
- The print and electronic media should be used to prepare proactive perceptions for the community including parents. Various associations working for drama and cultural events can be involved on regular basis in monitoring how characters and stories project disability.
- There should be coordination among the health units, special schools and mainstream schools. Coordination committees comprising the leaders of these three systems should be established at the district level and state level.
- It was observed that there is insensitivity of mainstream teachers towards children with disabilities. Therefore, there is a need to perform comprehensive training need assessment for the teachers so that they can understand the concepts of inclusive education and can work for the promotion of Inclusive at all level. As teachers are always the first contacts for all the school going children.
- It has been observed that some Special Education schools are run by the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the AJK there is a need to work with these CSOs and to convince them for promotion of inclusive education instead of special education.

Recommendations at Policy Makers & Authorities Level

- Existing educational planned practices need to be reviewed in order to facilitate inclusion of children with disabilities through a democratic and consultative process. State educational policies, school management, facilities and support services, curriculum, admission policies, infrastructural accessibility features, evaluation and assessment procedures should be reviewed with a lens of inclusive education.
- Work with edu authorities to add a chapter on inclusive education in the education sector plan of AJK, On the basis of a unit in the edu sector plan and advocacy strategy, WWOP can provide technical support in developing a PC-I for the year 2015-2016 for inclusive education

- The education policy of the government should clearly set out the agenda for finding the most practical, cost-effective ways of meeting the needs of all children in ordinary schools.
- Lack of accessibility options in schools were identified as a key constraint in promoting inclusive education. It is, therefore, recommended that sensitization and awareness workshops on accessibility needs for the children with disability be held at district levels for district government, engineering council, city and regional planning departments, management staff and decision makers in the P&D departments. The IEC material can be developed on accessibility issues of the CWDs.
- There should be legislation that makes it compulsory for every public school to admit all children irrespective of their special needs. However, at the initial stages, severely mentally challenged children or children with severe physical impairments may be referred to a special school.
- Pre-service and in-service inclusive education training should be arranged for teachers, staff and school administration
- There is a need to improve coordination between of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education with the ultimate aim of shifting the portfolio of education of children with disabilities and other marginalized groups to the Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education should be assigned the task of training teachers working in inclusive schools through short training courses and workshops.
- Rural primary schools in remote areas should receive preference, and should be encouraged to start inclusive education in the first phase.
- Private ordinary schools funded by national and international agencies should be asked to start inclusive education. Furthermore, implementing inclusive education should be made a precondition for disbursement of grants.
- It is recommended that an appropriate education management information system should be developed. This would require the establishment of resource centers at district and tehsil levels for management of data on disability. The information received from the respective districts should be disseminated to all key stakeholders.
- Insufficient awareness of the development and socio-economic implications of disability by policy makers, planners and professionals is a major constraint in implementing programmes to promote inclusion in education. It is recommended that

national action plans raise awareness and mobilize support for inclusion and disability as part of their advocacy and communications initiatives.

6. Conclusion

Incorporating inclusion as a guiding principle typically requires change in education systems, and this change process is frequently faced with several challenges. It involves important shifts and changes at the systems as well as the societal level. To understand change at all levels, it is important to know what change looks like from different points of view. How the teacher, student, local and national government see change is vital to understand how individuals and groups act and, indeed, react to each other. Reforming education system to become inclusive is not only about putting in place recently-developed inclusive policies that meet the needs of all learners, but also about changing the culture of classrooms, schools, districts and universities etc. It is important to note that these change processes towards inclusion often begin on a small scale and involve overcoming some obstacles such as: existing attitudes and values, lack of understanding, lack of necessary skills, lack of proper infrastructure, limited resources, inappropriate organization etc. Civil society can play a significant role in this regard. The role of the civil society is to raise voice on the behalf of the people and along with highlighting the issues being faced by common people also to advocate for the redressal of these issues at appropriate forums. We hope that this research will play significant role not only in highlighting the issues being faced by CWDs and the poor state of educational facilities but will also contribute in initiating a dialogue on the steps which need to be taken for addressing these issues. We also hope that the research will provide credible evidence for advocating for the process of review of polices from an inclusion perspective but also that its findings will help in identifying the gaps and suggesting steps for addressing those gaps.

Annexures

Research Tools

Schools Checklist (for assessing the inclusive education friendly building codes)

School Name: _____

District: _____ Tehsil: _____ UC: _____ Village _____

YES NO

1. At-least one school entrance provides a ramp into the building		
2. The school vans/buses have ramps		
3. Doors within the school are light enough to be operated easily by person on wheelchair or person with weak arms		
4. All doorways are wide enough to permit wheelchair passage (32" minimum at a point requires)		
5. All corridors and aisles accessible to wheel chair bound person		
6. Tables that have tops at least 29 inches from the floor		
7. Handrails on all stairways		
8. Drinking water facilities set at a lower than normal height(30-35 inches from the floor)		
9. Elevator or ramps to access upper floor if the building is multi-storey		
10. Arrangements of chairs in class room is supportive to move wheel chairs		
11. Larger desks are available to balance books, papers, and classrooms supplies		
12. Pillows are available to support a child sit upright		
13. Bathrooms door are wide enough for wheel chairs and bathrooms have enough space to park the wheel chair. Bathrooms have easily accessible sinks and toilets and other washing facilities in the bathrooms.		
14. Suitable system is present to go in the library, class and canteen		
15. At least one trained inclusive education teacher		

1. Yes
2. No
3. To some extent
4. Don't Know

9. Do you think your school is fulfilling the requirements of inclusive settings?

1. Yes
2. No
3. To some extent
4. Don't Know

10. Do you think schools in your district are well-equipped to deal with student with disabilities?

1. Yes
2. No
3. To some extent
4. Don't Know

11. Do you think Government is providing any technical assistance to make schools inclusive?

1. Yes
2. No
3. To some extent
4. Don't Know

12. Do you think Government is providing any infrastructural support to make schools inclusive?

1. Yes
2. No
3. To some extent

4. Don't Know

13. According to you, which type of disability can be included in inclusive schools?

1. Learning
2. Visual
3. Physical
4. Hearing
5. Mental
6. All of them
7. None of them

14. Did you/your child ever face rejection in regular school admission on the basis of disability?

1. Yes
2. No

15. Do you know educating children with disability in regular schools is their basic human right?

1. Yes
2. No

16. Are you aware of any Government policy about inclusive settings in schools of AJK?

1. Yes
2. No

17. Rate the barriers faced by children with disabilities in your school from 1 being the highest and 4 being the lowest

Transport

Behavior/Attitude of others

Access to School

Moving one place to another within school

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Teachers are trained to deal with children with disabilities			
School authorities do not discriminate with me/my child			
Teachers wait for me/my child before starting a lecture			
School vans/ buses have ramps			
Teachers assigned me/my child responsibilities like any other student			
Regular children interact with me/my child in a positive way			
Ramps are available in school premises			
Teachers never taunt me/my child			
School authorities involves me/my child in co-curricular activities of schools			
School floor are CWD friendly			
Washrooms are accessible for me/my child			
Teacher student ratio is appropriate			
Teachers ask me/my child about the preference to sit in the classroom			
Teachers kneel down for longer discussions with me/my child			

I/ My child get/s individual attention in class			
I/ My child prefer/s inclusive school on special one			
I/My child can move/s easily within the institution			
I/ My child have/has no problem in access to school			
Parents of other children behave positively with me/ my child			
I/ My child have/has friendly relationship with classmates			
I/My child do not/does not feel isolated in school			
Teachers include me/my child in field trips			
I/ My child have/has no problem in carrying books/bags			

Questionnaire for School Authorities/ Teachers about the Inclusive Settings in Schools of AJK

School Name: _____

District: _____ Tehsil: _____

UC: _____ Village _____

6. Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

7. Qualification: 1. Matriculate 2. Intermediate 3. Graduate 4. Masters

8. School Type 1. Government 2. Private

9. Designation: _____

5. Duration of employment: 1. Less than 1 year

2. 1-3 years

3. 4-6 years

4. 6+ years

6. Have you ever heard about Inclusive Education?

1. Yes

2. No

7. If yes, what do you understand by Inclusive Education?

1. General Education

2. Special Education

3. Education of children with disabilities (CWD) with regular children

4. Any Other

8. Do you easily give admissions to children with disabilities in school?

1. Yes

2. No

9. In your banner/advertisement/notification regarding admission does your school mention about enrollment of children with disabilities?

1. Yes

2. No

10. Did your school ever reject the admission of child having disability in school?

1. Yes

2. No

11. Do you have children with physical disability in your school?

1. Yes

2. No

12. If yes, please mention the number: _____

13. Have you categorize them according to children's special needs?

1. Yes

2. No

13. Do you think your school is fulfilling the requirements of inclusive settings?

1. Yes

2. No

3. To some extent

4. Don't Know

14. Why parents don't send their children with disability to school?

5. Lack of educational preference to their CWD

6. Behavior/Attitude of others
7. Access to school/Mobility issues
8. Rejection from schools

15. Do you think all schools should have inclusive settings?

5. Yes
6. No
7. To some extent
8. Don't Know

16. Do you think school managements are taking proper measures to solve the issues of students with disabilities?

5. Yes
6. No
7. To some extent
8. Don't Know

17. Do you think schools in your district are well-equipped to deal with student with disabilities?

5. Yes
6. No
7. To some extent
8. Don't Know

18. Do you think Government is providing any technical assistance to make schools inclusive?

5. Yes
6. No
7. To some extent
8. Don't Know

19. Do you think Government is providing any infrastructural support to make schools inclusive?

- 5. Yes
- 6. No
- 7. To some extent
- 8. Don't Know

20. 6. According to you, which type of disability can be included in inclusive schools?

- 8. Learning
- 9. Visual
- 10. Physical
- 11. Hearing
- 12. Mental
- 13. All of them
- 14. None of them

21. Are you aware of any Government policy about inclusive settings in schools of AJK?

- 3. Yes
- 4. No

22. Rate the barriers faced by children with disabilities in your school from 1 being the highest and 4 being the lowest

- Transport
- Behavior/Attitude of others
- Access to School
- Moving one place to another within school

(MANDATORY SECTION)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Children with disabilities should be educated in inclusive schools			
Going to a regular school is best for the development of a child with disabilities.			
Teachers should be highly qualified for the children with disabilities			
Teachers should be well trained for the inclusive setting			
There should be equal educational opportunities for the children with disabilities in inclusive schools			
Inclusion is better for all the students			
Teachers should be able to teach in any type of classroom setting			
Awareness raising programs for inclusive settings in schools are required			
Children with disabilities will have opportunity to develop friendships with typically developing children.			
Children with disabilities get access to education in their communities instead of being sent away to special schools or staying at home			
Students will be able to learn more realistic and accurate views about children with disabilities			
Students can develop positive attitudes towards those different from them			
Children with disabilities can learn new skills through imitation.			
Both slow and gifted learners can benefit from the inclusion			
Communities economize by providing one program for all children rather than separate programs			
Children with disabilities will feel less isolated from the rest of the community			
Students will learn about individual differences			
Teachers should be well trained for inclusive education			

(FOR THE SCHOOLS HAVING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Students with disability does not feel inferior in regular schools			
Regular children do not tease the children with disabilities in inclusive schools			
Regular children interact with children with disabilities in a positive way			
Teachers are trained and oriented in interacting and providing assistance to children with disabilities			
Children with disability participate in co-curricular activities			
Parents of other children behave normal with children with disabilities			
Inclusive education setting increase the confidence of children with disabilities			
School authorities always cooperate with children with disabilities			
The rate of attendance of Children with disabilities is similar to the regular students			
Parents of children with disabilities cooperate with school authorities			
Parents of other students cooperate with children with disabilities			
Other students accept the children with disabilities			
Children with disabilities easily adjust themselves in inclusive schools			

Questionnaire for General Community about the Inclusive Settings in Schools of AJK

District: _____

10. Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

11. Qualification: 1. Matriculate 2. Intermediate 3. Graduate 4. Masters

12. Have you ever heard about Inclusive Education?

1. Yes

2. No

4. If yes, what do you understand by Inclusive Education?

1 General Education

2 Special Education

3 Education of children with disabilities with regular students

4 Any Other

5. Do you know educating children with disability in regular schools is their basic human right?

1. Yes

2. No

6. According to you, which type of disability can be included in inclusive schools?

15. Learning

16. Visual

17. Physical

18. Hearing

19. Mental

20. All of them

21. None of them

7. Why parents don't send their children with disabilities to school?

- 9. Lack of educational preference to their CWD
- 10. Behavior/Attitude of others
- 11. Access to school/Mobility issues
- 12. Rejection from schools

8. Do you think all schools should have inclusive settings?

- 9. Yes
- 10. No
- 11. To some extent
- 12. Don't Know

9. Do you think school managements are taking proper measures to solve the issues of student with disabilities?

- 9. Yes
- 10. No
- 11. To some extent
- 12. Don't Know

10. Do you think schools are well-equipped to deal with student with disabilities?

- 9. Yes
- 10. No
- 11. To some extent
- 12. Don't Know

11. Do you think Government is providing any technical assistance to make schools inclusive?

- 9. Yes
- 10. No
- 11. To some extent

12. Don't Know

12. Do you think Government is providing any infrastructural support to make schools inclusive?

9. Yes

10. No

11. To some extent

12. Don't Know

13. Are you aware of any Government policy about inclusive settings in schools of AJK?

5. Yes

6. No

14. Rate the barriers faced by children with disabilities in school from 1 being the highest and 4 being the lowest

Transport

Behavior/Attitude of others

Access to School

Moving one place to another within school

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Children with disability should be educated in regular schools			
Going to a regular school is best for the development of a child with disability.			
Teachers need trainings to provide assistance to children with disabilities.			
Children with disabilities need extra help and attention in regular schools			

Awareness about inclusive education should be given to local community			
Inclusive education is important for social and economical development			
The enrollment of all CWD in schools must be ensured by the government			
Inclusive settings in all schools must be ensured			
Technical assistance and resources should be provided to schools from the district education departments			
Parents should admit their CWD in regular schools			
General education system should accept the responsibility for education of CWDs			
Inclusion gives students with disabilities skills they can use in and out of the classroom			
Inclusion is more effective for the students with special needs.			
Inclusion develop tolerance among the students			
Inclusion develop sense of empathy among students			

In-Depth Interview Guidelines

Purpose of the Interview: To get the information about the policies supportive to inclusive education for children with disabilities.

Selection and knowing the Interviewees: Please select the relevant individuals for the interview. It is very important to know about the interviewee profile, department, designation and authority. This beforehand information will help you to develop, design and ask specific question to get the relevant information to supplement the purpose of the interview.

Preparation for an In-depth Interview:

1. Always take an appointment of the interview.
2. Reach before time so avoid any unforeseen situations.
3. Please practice all the question a lot to avoid any embarrassment during the interview
4. You should know the sequence of the questions so that without seeing the paper you ask the next question.
5. All the questions should be very relevant and logical.

Facilitating the Interview:

1. Ask for the interviewee's qualifications and background experiences this will help you to pace the interview.
2. State the purpose of your interview and research.
3. Obtain permission to record the interview and for photograph.

Note:

Although the interviewer should encourage responses, she/he should not influence or bias answers of the interviewee.

1. If time permits, once the interview is transcribed, the interviewee may check the transcription for content and meaning.

Sample Questions (questions can be added or deleted according to the profile of interviewee):

1. Have you ever heard about Inclusive education?
2. Do you favor that children with disabilities should attend the regular schools?
3. What facilities our schools have to mainstream the concept of inclusive education?
4. Does you district have a well defined education policy to encourage children with disabilities to attend the regular schools?

5. What should government do to make the education for all (including children with disabilities)?
6. Do you think your government has enough resource to make all schools inclusive education friendly?
7. What kind of barriers are there to inclusive education?
8. Does parent and society have any role to give the education right to children with disabilities?

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Consent Process

Consent forms for focus group participants are completed in advance by all those seeking to participate. The summary of the information in the consent form, that focus group organizers and facilitators should use to make sure participants understand the information in the consent form, is attached at the end of these guidelines.

Introduction:

1. Welcome

Introduce yourself and the note taker, and send the Sign-In Sheet with a few quick demographic questions (Name, age, gender, Qualification, Contact Details, signatures) around to the group while you are introducing the focus group.

Review the following:

- Who we are and what we're trying to do
- What will be done with this information
- Why we asked you to participate

2. Explanation of the process

Ask the group if anyone has participated in a focus group before. Explain that focus groups are being used more and more often in development project and other human services research.

About focus groups

- We learn from you (positive and negative)
- Not trying to achieve consensus, we're gathering information
- No virtue in long lists: we're looking for priorities
- In this project, we are doing both questionnaires and focus group discussions. The reason for using both of these tools is that we can get more in-depth information from a smaller group of people in focus groups. This allows us to understand the context behind the answers given in the written survey and helps us explore topics in more detail than we can do in a written survey.

Logistics

- Focus group will last about one hour
- Feel free to move around
- Where is the bathroom? Exit?
- Help yourself to refreshments

3. Ground Rules

Ask the group to suggest some ground rules. After they brainstorm some, make sure the following are on the list.

- Everyone should participate.
- Information provided in the focus group must be kept confidential
- Stay with the group and please don't have side conversations
- Turn off cell phones if possible

4. Turn on Recording device

5. Ask the group if there are any questions before we get started, and address those questions.

6. Introductions

- Go around table: Make them feel comfortable so that they feel at home before sharing the information.

Discussion begins, make sure to give people time to think before answering the questions and don't move too quickly. Use the probes to make sure that all issues are addressed, but move on when you feel you are starting to hear repetitive information.

Questions:

1. Let's start the discussion by talking about what is a Disability?
2. Do you think that education is a right of every human being irrespective of one's gender, race, religion, physical condition etc?
3. Have you ever heard about the inclusive education?
4. Do our schools provide a comfortable environment to promote inclusive education?
5. What do you think is the major barrier in educating a child with disability?
6. Do you think our teachers are trained enough to advocate and implement inclusive education?
7. What government should do to promote education for all concepts in your district?

8. Any other thing you want to share for the project/policy benefits?

That concludes our focus group. Thank you so much for coming and sharing your thoughts and opinions with us. If you have additional information that you did not get to say in the focus group, please feel free to write to us or call us (share your contact information with participants).

Materials and supplies for focus groups

- Consent forms along with attendance sheet.
- Papers & Pencils for each participant
- Focus Group Discussion Guide for Facilitator
- 1 recording device
- Keep a separate record of recording file for each FGD mentioning FGD name, venue, and date
- Notebook for note-taking
- Refreshments

Consent Form/ Attendance sheet

Thank you for agreeing to participate. We are very interested to hear your valuable opinion on how the Government can create policies to improve the situation of inclusive education for children with (mild/minor locomotive) disability.

- The purpose of this study is to learn that what are the problem/ barriers to promote the inclusive education.*
- The information you give us is completely confidential, and we will not associate your name with anything you say in the focus group.*
- We would like to tape the focus groups so that we can make sure to capture the thoughts, opinions, and ideas we hear from the group. No names will be attached to the focus groups and the tapes will be destroyed as soon as they are transcribed.*
- You may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at anytime.*
- We understand how important it is that this information is kept private and confidential. We will ask participants to respect each other's confidentiality.*
- If you have any questions now or after you have completed the questionnaire, you can always contact a study team member like me, or you can call the project team leaders whose names and phone numbers will be provided to you later on.*
- Please check the boxes on page 2 and sign to show you agree to participate in this focus group.*

S.No.	Name	Gender	Age	Contact	Signatures
1					
2					
3					
4					

WOMEN WELFARE ORGANIZATION (POONCH) PAKISTAN

Head Office

Sarracha, P.O. Paniola, Teh. Rawalalkot, District Poonch (AJK)

Ph: +92-5824-426570, Fax: +92-5824-425863

Liaison Office Islamabad

PD 89, Street No. 04, Near NBP Bank, Saidpur Road, Pindora, Rawalpindi

Ph: 051-4845666

E-mail: wwopoonch@gmail.com, headoffice@wwop.org

web: www.wwop.org

Facebook/WWOP

Twitter@wwopoonch



WOMEN WELFARE ORGANIZATION POONCH (WWOP)