

Ghulam Sughra*

Ziarab Mahmood†

Nazir Haider Shah‡

Perceptions of Educational Environment in Punjab Degree Colleges

Abstract *The present investigated the level of student support services' current condition of libraries and the level of safety in degree colleges of Punjab by sampling 65 teachers and 120 students. A survey with 15 questions divided into three areas in educational environment and was posed to two cohorts of the above sample. The first are of the survey contained 4 questions on support services, 4 questions on libraries and 7 questions on safety were completed by the teachers and the students (see below for details). Percent agreement-disagreement scores were collected to assess how teachers and students perceived degree college environment. Results suggested teachers and students did not differ much on their assessment of colleges and agreed (56%; disagreed: 23%) student support, libraries and safety were adequate in their educational environment.*

Key Words: College Safety, Degree Colleges, Educational Environment, Library Strength, Student Support Services

Introduction

Educational environment is comprised of all types of features as well as events in any educational institution. It generally made up of physical, psycho-social as well as service delivery fundamentals. But education can take place at any place, however constructive results required by the educational systems was inclined to occur in quality education atmospheres. In this background, the central business of any educational organisations is to deliver the input to the learners with a huge learning situation that is open, reverential, helpful as well as safe. This best educational environment improves the satisfaction of students as well as finally leads towards better learning results. Educational environment replicates an optimistic organisation culture that makes the organisation a stimulating as well as motivating place, where education can take place. Usually, the perception of educational environment was inadequate to physical edifices of educational organisations containing places, apparatuses as well as instruments inside the organisation. Educational environment has evolved into even more multifaceted system that contains teaching tools, sources of information as well as actions outside from the institute, where the learners can join the learning procedure both openly as well as seriously. The word evolved as an outcome of the new alterations taking place in teaching, whereby real education is progressively being transferred outside of the institutes through interaction as well as by using information technology. In this perspective, the learning development is becoming more modified, supportive, inter-active as well as expanded, (OECD, 2011).

Educational environment is the composition of all those things which directly or indirectly link with the teaching-learning process. It includes college students support services, infrastructure, building, ground, lawn, boundary wall, classrooms, teaching staff, library, laboratories, health service, security services, teachers, and peers. All these variables form an educational environment. Among them, the students support service, libraries and security services are more important (OECD, 2011).

Students support service is a modern term used in education. It is very vast term in terms of meaning. All those things, activities, and services which help the students in any way are all included in it. In its narrow meaning, scholarship, stipend, and loan are included in it. It means financial

*PhD Scholar, Department of Education, Mohi-ud-Din Islamic University Nerian Sharif, AJ&K, Pakistan.

†Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Mohi-ud-Din Islamic University Nerian Sharif, AJ&K, Pakistan.

‡Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Mohi-ud-Din Islamic University Nerian Sharif, AJ&K, Pakistan.

Email: nazirshah786@gmail.com

services may also be called student support services. In short it can be concluded that student support services are integral part of educational environment ([Mahmood, 2016](#)).

The second most important part of educational environment is library services. Library is an essential part of school, colleges and universities. It directly helps in students learning. So, for better educational environment college must have well equipped library, sufficient funds for its maintenance, peaceful environment, and adequate books in term of subjects and discipline taught in that college.

Safety and security are the demands of every rational man. It is major part of the educational environment because learning demand peace of mind and it cannot be ensured without proper security system. There is terrorism in the whole world, now days. Hence, proper security services are arranged in types of organisation to ensure peace and safety. This is why colleges have developed their security system, which includes, CCTV cameras, security guard, emergency alarm system, boundary wall and check in gate etc. ([Mahmood, 2016](#)).

Literature Review

Educational Environment

Educational environment is based on how much the learning opportunities are improved and provided to the students with different socio-cultural backgrounds. The educational environment consists of the range of activities and components such as the physical, psycho-social and service delivery. However, learning is not bound to any place or environment, but it has been observed the best and positive outcomes take place only in a rich learning environment. Hence the primary purpose of the institutions is the provision of positive and rich learning environment that is safe, open and caring to every student. The positive learning environment stimulates and excites the learning of students by optimizing their wellbeing and improving their outcomes, while it also reflects the positive culture of institutions. Traditionally the educational environment is only limited to the physical infrastructure of an institution that includes, equipment, space, and tools available in the institute. But with the passage of time it has evolved by including the teaching resources, information sources, extracurricular activities outside the institute and more complex structures that engage students virtually and directly. The term has been evolved as a result of changes recently taken place that has made the learning easy to impart at any place through recent developments of information and technology ([OECD, 2011](#)).

In this context, the learning process is becoming more personalized, co-operative, inter-active and diversified. In this regard the most comprehensive definition of the physical environment of educational institutions is proposed by the OECD which describes, “physical space supporting the diverse and multiple programs of teaching and learning, including the modern technologies, demonstrating cost-effective, optimal performance and operation of building over time, one that respects and harmonizes with the environment, encouraging social interaction, providing comfortable, healthy and secure context for the learners”. In its narrowest sense the physical learning environment refers to the classroom and other conventional setting and in its broader sense it refers to the formal and informal system of education that makes learning easy to take place both inside and outside of the institutions. Therefore, “the learning environment” as the concept has got the significant importance in the developed societies as the institutions are being transforming successfully to become the lifelong learning centers. According to [OECD \(2011\)](#) the notion has brought the new challenges and has exerted the pressure on the institutions to change and improve physical learning environments.

Elements of Effective Educational Environment

UNICEF has conducted comprehensive studies on the quality of education that outline the effective forms of educational and learning institutions. The three categories of effective learning environment have been described as physical elements, psychosocial elements and service delivery. The study has shown the significant relationship between the available resources of physical elements with the increased outcomes of student learning. Following are the details of elements of effective educational environment ([UNICEF, 2000](#)).

Educational Facilities

These are the physical places where formal education takes place that ranges from open-air places to well-built and well-equipped buildings. The effect of quality of facilities provided in an institution is difficult to measure. But according to the recent research studies children are deprived of basic facilities in schools such as libraries and are less productive in test scores than the children who are provided well equipped schools.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure of institution also play positive role in promoting educational environment. It includes furniture, classrooms, library, washrooms, and ground etc. Well-equipped classrooms, maintenance of classrooms, provision of water and sanitation and provision of required furniture positively impact on the learning of students (UNESCO, 2011).

Classrooms

Classroom has also positive effect on learning. Classroom size, well-equipped classrooms, maintenance of classrooms, provision of water and sanitation and provision of required furniture positively impact on the learning of the students. In contrast, small and poorly equipped classrooms have negative effect on the educational environment and students' learning (Government of Pakistan, 1998).

Peace and Safety

Peace is the basic requirement for effective learning environment. In the same way safety of the students and teachers, is also very essential in present environment. It is necessary to have a non-discriminatory and warm climate for developing the quality learning climate. Many barriers such as social taboos and discriminatory attitude about the education of girls hinder in providing the quality education to every student ([UNESCO, 2011](#)).

Teachers Behaviour

In many situations teachers unintentionally create an unwelcoming environment that is not safe for the students. Corporal punishment always prevails along with emotional and physical harassment in number of institutions in the world. When there is not the provision of needs and self-protection and the teachers exerts such kinds of behaviours that threatens students, quality cannot take place in such kind of environment (Government of Pakistan, 1998).

Policy of Educational Institution

Formulation of policies regarding the schools and its discipline must entail students and teachers to reinforce the sense of ownership to all of the stakeholders of the institution. It has positive effect on students' learning and vice versa (Government of Pakistan, 1998).

Inclusive Environment

Quality of learning environment is directly associated with reducing the discriminatory environment. It is one of the great challenges for many countries to establish inclusive learning environment for different type of students. In spite of effective policy formulation on inclusive education there is always the gap between policies and practices at schools. Students from different backgrounds, cultures, languages and minorities may suffer from policies and practices based on discrimination and it can hinder the quality of education enhancement (UNESCO, 2011).

Health Service

Learning outcomes can be improved with the provision of health services and health environment. Health services and nutritional facilities can enhance the learning of students and reduce

absenteeism. School administration can add to this through providing the service of guidance and counselling to needy students ([Ali, et.al, 1993](#)).

Library Service

Library is an important student support service in colleges. It provides facility of learning. The worth of institution is also measured its strength of library e.g. size of library hall, peace, furniture, number of books and usage of library services by the students (Government of Pakistan, 1998).

Objectives

- To assess the availability of student support services in degree colleges.
- To explore the current condition of libraries in degree colleges.
- To examine the level of safety in degree colleges.

Research Questions of the Study

- What is level of students' support services in degree colleges?
- What is current condition of libraries in degree colleges?
- What is the level of safety in degree colleges?

Methodology of the Study

Design of the Study

The current study was quantitative by nature. The design of the study was descriptive as well as survey type.

Population

Population of the current study was all teachers and students of the government degree colleges of Punjab.

Sample and Sampling

Sample of this study was consisted 65 teachers 120 students. While convenient sampling techniques was used in the selection of teachers as well as students.

Instrument of the Study

Two self-made questionnaires were developed for the current study. One questionnaire was developed for the teachers while another questionnaire was made for the students. Both questionnaires were consisted on Five Point Likert Scale.

Validity and Reliability

The validity of questionnaire was ensured by the help of expert in same field of the study. According to their useful suggestions, the researcher changed and modified the statements of questionnaire while the reliability of the instrument was checked by the help of Cronbach Alpha. It was 0.83 which indicates that the questionnaire is highly reliable.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher personally visited all the selected degree colleges of Punjab, and personally collected the data. Data were analysed by the help of SPSS. Frequency, Percentage and Mean score were used for data analysis. Data were presented in the form of tables and interpreted.

Results

Table 1. Perceptions of Teachers about Student Support Services

| S. No | Statements | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | Mean |
|-------|---|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------|
| 1 | Financial support for poor but talented students is available. | 40 66.7 | 10 (16.7) | 3 (5) | 3 (5) | 1 (1.66) | 4.26 |
| 2 | The quality of student Support services is maintained at the college. | 15 (25) | 30 (50) | 12 (20) | 3 (5) | 0 (00) | 3.95 |
| 3 | Proper planning is done for Student support services | 18 (30) | 23 (38.3) | 18 (30) | 1 (1.7) | 0 (00) | 4.03 |
| 4 | Govt. allocates funds for Student support services | 2 (3.2) | 3 (5) | 5 (8.1) | 20 (32.4) | 30 (50) | 1.78 |

Table 1 reflected that the three statements rated, Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Neutral, Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed, the perceptions of teachers about students' support services at degree colleges. According to the results, 66.7% of the teachers strongly agreed that the financial support for the poor but talented students is available. 50.0% of the teachers agreed that the quality of the student support services is maintained at the colleges. 38.3% of the teachers agreed that proper planning is done for students' support services. Majority of respondents are disagreed (Mean=1.78) that government of Punjab allocates sufficient funds for the students' support services.

Table 2. Perceptions of Teachers about Current Condition of Libraries

| S. No | Statements | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | Mean |
|-------|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------|
| 1 | Availability of online Library. | 0 (00) | 0 (00) | 0 (00) | 20 (33.3) | 40 (66.6) | 1.33 |
| 2 | The college has annual allocation of funds for development of library. | 22 (36.7) | 20 (33.3) | 17 (28.3) | 1 (1.7) | 0 (00) | 4.05 |
| 3 | The college library is updated with relevant books and periodicals. | 14 (23.3) | 24 (40) | 19 (31.7) | 2 (3.3) | 1 (1.7) | 3.8 |
| 4 | Adequate educational learning resources are available. | 19 (31.3) | 17 (28.7) | 21 (35.5) | 3 (5) | 0 (50) | 3.87 |

Table 2 revealed that the four statements rated, Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Neutral, Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed, the perceptions of teachers about the current condition of libraries. According to the results, 100 % respondents disagreed about the availability of online libraries. 36.7% of the teachers strongly agreed that the colleges have annual allocation of funds for the development of library. 40.0% of the teachers agreed that the college library is updated with relevant books and periodicals. 35.5% of the neutral agreed that adequate educational/learning resources are available.

Table 3. Perceptions of Teachers about Level of Safety

| S. No | Statements | F | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | Mean |
|-------|--|-----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------|
| 1 | Safe location of learning environments | F 15 % | 22 (25) | 22 (36.7) | 22 (36.7) | 1 (1.7) | 0 00 | 3.8 |
| 2 | Secured storage spaces for students. | F 20 % | 17 (33.3) | 23 (28.3) | 23 (38.3) | 20 (33.3) | 2 (3.3) | 4.05 |
| 3 | Secured storage spaces for teachers. | F 24 % | 19 (40) | 19 (31.7) | 14 (23.7) | 2 (3.3) | 1 (1.7) | 3.8 |
| 4 | The college has CCTV Cameras. | F 17 % | 21 (28.7) | 21 (35.5) | 19 (31.7) | 2 (3.3) | 1 (1.7) | 3.87 |
| 5 | Check in gates used in your | F 1 | 3 | 2 | 24 | 30 | 1.7 | |

| S. No | Statements | F | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | Mean |
|-------|-------------------------------|---|-------|------|-------|-------|------|------|
| 6 | college | % | (1.7) | (5) | (3.3) | (40) | (50) | 4.1 |
| | The college boundary Wall has | F | 24 | 30 | 1 | 1 | 4 | |
| | safety wires. | % | (40) | (50) | (1.7) | (1.7) | (6) | |

Table 3 revealed that the six statements rated, Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Neutral, Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed, the perceptions of teachers about level of safety. According to the results, 36.7% of the teachers agreed to have Safe location of learning environment, free of non-pedestrian traffic. 38.3% of the teachers agreed that Secured storage spaces for the students. 36.7% of the strongly agreed that secured storage spaces for the teachers. Mean value of check in gate is 1.7 which is less than average. It indicates that in majority of colleges there is no check at the gates.

Table 4. Perceptions of Students about Students’ Support Services

| S. No | Statements | F | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | Mean |
|-------|---|--------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------|
| 1 | Financial support for poor but talented students is available. | F % | 64 (52.9) | 37 (30.6) | 11 (9.1) | 4 (3.3) | 4 (3.3) | 4.3 |
| 2 | The quality of student Support services is attained at the college. | F % | 27 (22.3) | 64 (52.9) | 24 (19.8) | 4 (3.8) | 1 (0.8) | 3.9 |
| 3 | Proper planning is done for Student support services | F % | 31 (25.6) | 53 (43.8) | 27 (22.3) | 7 (5.8) | 2 (1.7) | 3.8 |
| 4 | Govt. allocates funds for student support services | F % | 4 (3.2) | 6 (5) | 10 (8.1) | 40 (32.4) | 60 (50) | 1.78 |

Table 4 stated that the three statements rated, Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Neutral, Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed, the perceptions of the teachers about the students’ support services at degree colleges. According to the results, 52.9% of the respondents were strongly agreed that financial support for poor but talented students is available. 52.2% of the respondents were agreed that the quality of the students’ support services is maintained at the colleges. 43.8% of the teachers agreed that proper planning has been done for Student support services. Mean value of one statement is less than average which show that government does not provide adequate funds for supporting students.

Table 5. Perceptions of Students about Current Condition of Libraries

| S. No | Statements | F | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | Mean |
|-------|--|--------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------|
| 1 | Availability of online Library | F % | 0 (00) | 0 (00) | 1 (00) | 40 (33.3) | 79 (66.6) | 1.33 |
| 2 | The college has annual allocation of funds for development of library. | F % | 37 (24) | 46 (38) | 31 (25.6) | 5 (4.1) | 4 (3.3) | 2.24 |
| 3 | The college library is updated with relevant books and periodicals. | F % | 31 (25.6) | 38 (31.4) | 38 (31.4) | 9 (7.4) | 4 (3.3) | 2.54 |
| 4 | Adequate educational learning resources are available. | F % | 29 (24) | 46 (38) | 35 (25.6) | 5 (4.1) | 4 (3.8) | 2.05 |

Table 5 revealed that the three statements rated, Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Neutral, Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed, the perceptions of teachers about the current condition of libraries. According to the results, 38.0% of the respondents were agreed that the College has annual allocation of funds

for development of library. 31.4% of the respondents were agreed that the college library is updated with relevant books and periodicals. 38.0% of the respondents agreed that adequate educational/learning resources are available. In case of the on-line library services (mean=1.33 < 2.5) respondents strongly disagree the statements. It indicates that the government has not launched any policy regarding online library services.

Table 6. Perceptions of Students about Level of Safety

| S. No | Statements | F | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | Mean |
|-------|---|--------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------|
| 1 | Non-violent situation of Learning atmospheres | F % | 30 (24.8) | 38 (31.4) | 42 (34.7) | 8 (6.6) | 2 (1.7) | 2.28 |
| 2 | Secured storage spaces for students. | F % | 26 (21.5) | 49 (40.5) | 33 (27.3) | 9 (7.4) | 3 (2.5) | 2.16 |
| 3 | Secured storage spaces for teachers. | F % | 36 (29.8) | 45 (37.2) | 26 (21.5) | 9 (7.4) | 4 (3.3) | 2.05 |

Table 6 revealed that the three statements rated, Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Neutral, Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed, the perceptions of teachers about the level of safety. According to the results, 34.7% of respondents were neutral that Non-violent situation of learning atmospheres. 40.5% of respondents were agreed that Secured storage spaces for students. 37.2% of respondents were agreed that Secured storage spaces for teachers.

Conclusions

It is concluded that proper planning is done for Student Support Services, but financial support for poor but talented students is not available at all. Furthermore, there is no allocation of funds for merit base scholarship and students' loan.

It is concluded that colleges of Punjab have well equipped libraries and sufficient funds for its improvement. Libraries have updated and relevant books and periodicals. Online libraries have not been developed yet in the government colleges of Punjab.

Most of the respondents were agreed with the statements that, Safe location of learning environments, and Secured storage spaces for students.

CCTV cameras and safety wire on boundary wall are properly maintained in the government colleges of Punjab.

Check in gates either not present or not functional in government colleges of Punjab.

Discussion

The main objective of the prevailing study was to study the current educational environment of the degree colleges in Punjab. The researcher has measured the responses of the respondents regarding the current educational environment of the degree colleges in Punjab. Most of the respondents showed positive responses towards the current educational environment of the degree colleges in Punjab.

In the current study, the research scholars also explored to analyse what type of the measures have been taken for quality improvement in the degree colleges of Punjab. Therefore, the researcher measures the responses of the respondents in order to analyse what type of the measures have been taken for quality improvement in the degree colleges of Punjab. That government of Punjab has taken some imitative steps for the improvement of quality education at degree levels. In this regards the government provides them each and every facility to the education sector. The respondents were also agreed that Govt. has provided large funds to education sector for the purpose to improve quality education.

The present study also discusses to ascertain the provision of physical infrastructure, academic facilities and learning resources in the degree colleges of Punjab. The researcher also measures the responses of the respondents to ascertain the provision of physical infrastructure, academic facilities

and learning resources in the degree colleges of Punjab. Most of the respondents have positive responses towards the physical infrastructure in the degree colleges of Punjab. The respondents were agreed that physical infrastructure in the degree colleges of Punjab were sufficient.

It is very good that the government of Punjab is very conscious about the students' support services, libraries, infrastructure, and security measures like boundary wall, safety wires, CCTV cameras are the prominent examples of government initiatives.

Although, the above mentioned are positive parameters of the government progress in the government colleges for providing educational environment but there is still some shortcoming on the part of the government. There is no concept of online libraries services in colleges although it is the demand of modern time. It enables the students to get benefit from libraries 24 hours a day and seven days in a week. So, the government must take necessary measures to start it very soon.

The second deficiency found on the part of the government of Punjab is the lack of funds for need based and merit base scholarships. So, for better learning environment the government must have to allocate adequate funds for the said purpose. Otherwise the enrolment trends of the students will be in private colleges.

The third deficiency was found in security system. Although there is CCTV cameras in colleges and safety wires on boundary walls but there is lack of check at the gates. It may lead terrorism which is threat in now days. So, the government should arrange check at gate with full time gunman.

Recommendations

There is lack of funds in the colleges for providing needs based and merit scholarship. Therefore, it is recommended that the Government of Punjab must allocate sufficient funds for these grants. So that the poor and deserving students may get need based scholarship and can continue their education. As a result they can contribute for the nation in future. They might be allocated for genius students so that they might be motivated to study in government colleges. It is also recommended that there might be sufficient funds to provide the loan to the students to start their own business. Recently the students, after getting technical education, wander here and there in search of jobs.

The government of Punjab may conduct survey of every college to allocate funds for the provision of students' support services, enrich libraries, and insurance of proper security services.

Every government Degree college may develop a cell for student support services.

Library is a source of knowledge, so as per modern trends the administration of colleges may introduce online libraries services to their students. Furthermore, libraries may be enriched with updated books.

There is lack of proper security system in colleges, like check in gate, and gunman. So, it is recommended that the government of Punjab must take necessary measure to ensure safety and security of colleges especially girls' colleges. It was also observed that the students do not cooperate to ensure security measure. Therefore, it is recommended that college administration may organize series of seminars on students' safety. In these seminars, well known key note speakers may be invited to motivate students for the said purpose.

References

- Adams, D. (1993). *Defining Education Quality. Improving educational Quality Project Publication # 7*, Biennial Report Arlington, VA: *Institute for International Research*.
- Akram, M. (1981). Impact of Social Studies Teaching Kit in Elementary Schools of District Lahore. (Unpublished Master's Thesis) Lahore: IER, University of the Punjab.
- Ali, Zafar and Masood-ur-Rehman. (1993). Use of Teaching Kit in Primary Schools of Haripur District. (Unpublished Master's Thesis) Lahore: IER, University of the Punjab.
- Anwar, J. (1999). Evaluation of Integration Curriculum/Textbooks. Govt. of Punjab: *CRDC* (Unpublished Research Report).
- Aspin, D.N. and Chapman, J.D. (1994). *Quality Schooling: A Pragmatic Approach to Some Current Problems and Issues*. London: *Cassell*.
- Begum, S. (1979). Use of Teaching Kit in Girls Primary Schools of Tehsil Lodhran. (Unpublished Master's Thesis) Lahore: IER, University of the Punjab
- CRDC. (1999). Evaluation of Integrated Curriculum/Textbooks of Grades I-III. Lahore: *CRDC*.
- CRDC. (2001). Report on Monitoring the Use of SRM in 3-UPE Districts. Lahore: *CRDC*.
- DFID. (1998). A Study into the Use of Supplementary Readers. Lahore: *PMSP*.
- DFID. (2000). Impact of Supplementary Readers on Urdu Reading Comprehension of Middle Grade Students. Lahore: *PMSP*.
- Federal Directorate of Education. (2002). Constitution of Parent-Teacher Associations. *Islamabad: Federal Directorate of Education*.
- Govt. of Pakistan. (1998). National Education Policy 1998-2010. Islamabad: *Ministry of Education*.
- Mahmood, Z. (2016). Comparative Effective of Internal and External Monitoring System in Punjab Education Department. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Mansehra: Hazara University, Mansehra.
- Saeeda, C & Perveen, Z. (1988). Use of Teaching Kit in Girls Primary Schools of Tehsil Shakargarh. (Unpublished Master's Thesis) Lahore: IER, University of the Punjab.
- UNESCO. (2011). *Learning Achievement in Primary Schools of Pakistan: A Quest for Quality Education*. Islamabad: UNESCO.