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## A Qualitative Analysis of the Problems and Challenges in Special Education from the Teacher's Perspective in Sargodha Division



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**Abstract:** *Students with special needs have come a long way in their education. Numerous transitions have taken place from special education (SPED) to integrated education, as well as from collaborative learning to inclusive education. The objective of the study was to explore teachers' challenges, obstacles in the teaching-learning process and collaborative impediments. This study's respondents were chosen using the purposive sampling technique. The problems and difficulties faced by SPED educators were identified using the Qualitative Research Method (QRM). Data were analysed using a thematic approach. This paper concludes that accessibility, lack of interdisciplinary team, insufficient technological aids, s/t ratio, community attitudes, transition, policy gaps, budgetary constrain, negative social attitudes, parents' negligence about SEN students and administrative laxity are challenges of SPED department that should need to resolve.*

**Key Words:** Special Education, Challenges, Teacher's Perspective

### Introduction

Exceptional pupils are individuals who have a physical or mental deficiency; these young people are highly brilliant and possess several exceptional learning abilities. Today, there will be significant global growth in the number of these students. 10% of the population in Pakistan are kids with special needs. This percentage represents around 7% of Pakistan's overall population. The Poston, D. L. (2019).

There have been many shifts in how students with special needs are taught, from special education (SPED) to integrated education and then to inclusive education. Special schools face a

number of obstacles despite the help they receive from a number of guidelines, policies, and programmes designed to hasten the progress being made in this area. However, the topic of SPED is currently controversial and heavily discussed in the educational community. As part of the global education for all agenda, it has been repeatedly referred to as a new educational paradigm and as educational reform objectives to create inclusive societies. Despite having laws and a legal framework that support education for all, particularly in the implementation of SPED classes, education for all is not implemented adequately. The Declaration of the Rights of the

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Child, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959, stipulates that children must receive the best that humanity has to offer. The following is one of the guiding principles for the education of children with special needs:

*"The child who is "must be given the specific treatment and education that are necessary of his particular condition," according to the law, "whether physical, mental, or visually handicapped."*

Pakistan has a population of 208 million people, and 3.2 million of them have some kind of disability. Special education has problems when it comes to this group's special skills. Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which all UN members must support, says that everyone, including people with disabilities, should be able to get an education that is fair and includes everyone. Pakistan has put its name on this goal (UNO 2018). Pakistan also ratified and signed the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in 2008. (UNO 2018). Article 25A of Pakistan's Constitution says that all children between the ages of 5 and 16 have the right to a free and mandatory education (National Assembly 2019). Because of this, Pakistan has to follow international agreements and treaties that say everyone has the right to education and that people with disabilities have the right to special education. In this case, the government and the state give special education a lot of attention.

To assist students in achieving a smooth and successful transition to postsecondary settings, improving the self-determined behaviour traits of students has become an important component of educational policy, educational research, educational values, and educational teaching techniques (Cho et al., 2013).

It is generally agreed that educators and school administrators play a critical role in the successful implementation of inclusive education. They were essential to the successful implementation of inclusive education because of their roles as key players in the process of integrating students with disabilities into regular courses. This goal cannot be reached if an understanding of inclusive education is not fostered and practised, and if attitudes towards inclusive education are not encouraged (Dalonos, 2013).

According to Sarason (2015), the primary goal of education is to "generate accountable, self-sufficient individuals who have the self-esteem, leadership, skills, and wisdom to continue individual growth and pursue knowledge." This educational concept uncovers efforts aimed at encouraging the self-determination of students with disabilities.

According to Eripek (1998), children that require special education are identified in the preschool years because they exhibit different behaviours from their peers. Zarkowska and Clements (1995) claimed that these improper behaviours cause harm to both the individual and the environment, obstruct the development of new abilities, and keep people from engaging in learning activities (quoted by Sucuolu, 2003).

In spite of the fact that the quality of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a performance evaluation factor that is not very important, the educational system must nonetheless provide a professional development programme and improve the quality of IEP observation in order to raise the achievement of students with special needs and guarantee that the services and goals specified in the IEP were observed and carried out as intended. This is necessary in order to raise the achievement (Tamika et al. 2013).

Teachers are the ones who give these students the special education they need. There has been no study discovered in TRNC, however, studies are conducted both domestically and overseas to identify the issues special education teachers face and to make recommendations for how to address them. Each of these studies identifies various issues pertaining to various levels of special education facilities; the objective of this study is to identify issues pertaining to the entire topic of material supply, programme organisation, physical condition, school staff, and students' behavioural and learning characteristics, as well as to improve the quality of special education services. The perspectives of the instructors regarding the issues they encounter as a result of these issues must be discovered in order to improve the effectiveness of the teachers and so deliver a more extensive and effective educational service.

## **Problem Statement**

It is crucial to be aware of the different problems and challenges in the management of special needs children and special centres as a result educational and carriers of special needs children suffered badly. This study addressed the topic of children with special needs by investigating the difficulties SPED teachers experience when teaching children with special needs and how they attempt to overcome these difficulties. There have been numerous issues with teaching students who have special needs. Most primary teachers are not trained to provide special education for children with special needs.

## **Objectives**

1. To find out how hard it is for teachers to teach students with special needs.
2. To find out how teachers teach children with special needs (SPED) and how they do it.
3. To find out how much administrators and parents of kids with special needs work with SPED teachers.

## **Literature Review**

Students who have severe and profound disabilities require a higher level of medical care and accommodations than students with less severe disabilities. In order to effectively manage severely disabled students, teachers should be able to develop lesson plans that are based on the specific abilities of each student and take into account any dietary restrictions the students may have. If the instructor does not possess the necessary level of expertise, the student may fail to make progress in their capabilities or, depending on the circumstances, may experience unfavourable medical outcomes.

Developmental disabilities, on the other side, relate to individuals who have serious disabilities who require separate measurement and evaluation in the political, social, legal, educational, economic, and economic implications in order to guarantee their opportunities for learning successfully and with the highest quality (Manuel et al. 2014).

There are only 744 of these in the entire country of Pakistan. There are schools operating in Pakistan, but due to a lack of educational

facilities, special needs children are denied the opportunity to exercise their fundamental right to an education. S. Poede (2020). Owing to a lack of educational opportunities, these folks are wandering in different locations here and there. We virtually always see them in Pakistani streets looking like beggars. Additionally, it is claimed that because they were not given the respect and fundamental education they deserved; they will take up the life of a beggar.

The same goes for culture; they do not regard them, and they do not appreciate social people, which is why children choose the wrong side. In accordance with a recent survey, approximately 6 million Pakistani children are classified as special needs. They have failed in offering an impact on pupils Singal, N. (2019)

Students with disabilities are complex learners who also have specific requirements that must be met in addition to their capabilities. In order for teachers of special education to be effective, they need to have a complete understanding of both these demands and strengths. Because of this, these teachers are skilled in a variety of areas, including the utilisation of data, evaluation of data, and assessment. This includes formal, standardised testing that is used to determine which students require individualised education programmes (IEPs), which students require special education services, and which students require ongoing care. Formal evaluations, such as statewide examinations, can provide information about whether or not students with disabilities are meeting the state's content standards, as well as how their academic achievement compares to that of children who do not have disabilities. Another area in which teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in the use of informal evaluations, such as those used to assess the academic, behavioural, and functional abilities and needs of their students. Zhang & Katsiyannis (2002).

The development of programmes, instructional strategies, and curricula that were suitable for students with a variety of disabilities required the utilisation of these general and specific characteristics as essential building blocks. Different factors were responsible for the development of each disability. The majority of people who have disabilities have them because of chromosome abnormalities, having their babies too early, having complications after birth, having

their brains develop too slowly, having viral or bacterial infections, having genetic disorders, or being injured by accident (Centre for Parents Information and Resources 2013).

Children with special needs should be encouraged to take an active role in the evaluation and intervention processes in order to maximise the effectiveness of their educational experiences (Susheel et al. 2015). Instead, interaction and communication that is both clear and effective are necessities for children with special needs (Pinar et al. 2014; Nijs & Maes 2016). Additionally, teachers of special education should have a comprehensive understanding of IEPs (Individual Education Plans) (IEP). The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is an essential component in establishing goals and itemising educational implementation based on the goals that have been defined. In spite of the fact that the quality of the individualised education programme (IEP) is a relatively unimportant factor in determining academic performance, the educational system must still offer a programme for professional development and improve the quality of IEP observation in order to boost academic performance among students with special needs and guarantee that the objective will be attained. The pupils will benefit from the special needs education system that has implemented a variety of efficient procedures or approaches and thorough evaluations or assessments. If the teacher and students use augmentative and alternative interaction in the process of instruction and learning, individuals with serious intellectual disabilities who are mute could profit from the educational system (Noraini et al. 2012).

## Methodology

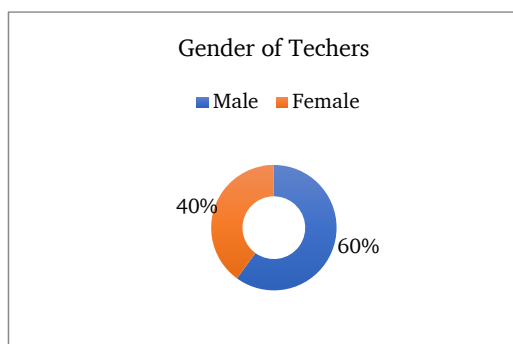
In this particular study, a qualitative research approach was taken. The primary purpose of this research was to investigate the difficulties special education teachers face in the classroom and the strategies they use to cope with those difficulties. In order to gather information from the SPED teachers, a descriptive research design was used to provide answers to the questions that were connected to a specific study problem. This study is used as a suitable way to gather important information about the current status of the issue, which are the challenges faced by teachers when teaching students with special needs and how

they attempt to overcome these challenges. The research method known as descriptive research uses this study as a suitable way to gather this information. The primary purpose of descriptive research is to gain an understanding of what is already present in the field. The participants in this study were all the special education teachers working in the Sargodha Division of Punjab's special education department. With limited available resources for research, the technique of purposeful sampling is used to select participants who are both the most appropriate and provide the most useful information (Palinkas et al., 2015). The sample of 10 SPED teachers was selected using the sampling method of purposive sampling. The selection was based on the geographic location of SPED centres in the Sargodha division. An open-ended qualitative questionnaire was given to SPED teachers in order to explain the difficulties that come with instructing students who have special needs, as well as the strategies and methods of instruction that are utilised by teachers when instructing children who are enrolled in SPED, and in order to investigate the possibility of collaboration. An open-ended questionnaire was one of the self-developed tools that were used to collect data from the selected group of special education teachers. For the purpose of data collection, lorry interviews were carried out, and observations should also be taken into account. After each interview, the recordings were transcribed, and an in-depth thematic analysis was performed using the guidelines provided by (Creswell, 2014).

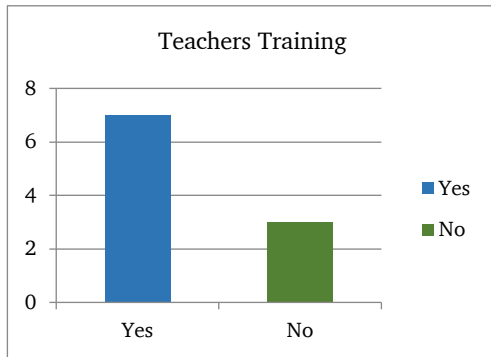
## Results and Findings

### Demographic Information

Figure 1



**Figure 2**

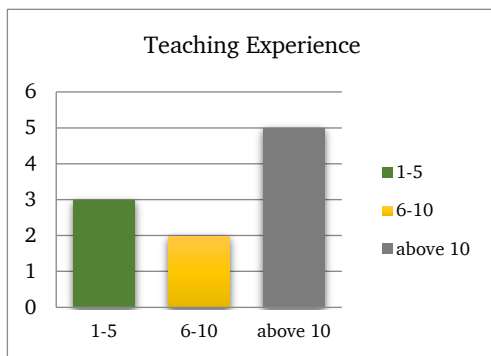


special education centres is also a challenge of accessibility because only one centre at the tehsil level. The infrastructure of buildings is also not friendly for special students.

### Lack of Coordination between Interdisciplinary Team

In the view of teachers, the rehabilitation of special students is teamwork, for the rehabilitation of behaviour, speech issues, motor problems and learning. The team members mostly do not coordinate with each other's and this is a big challenge for the achievements of special needs students.

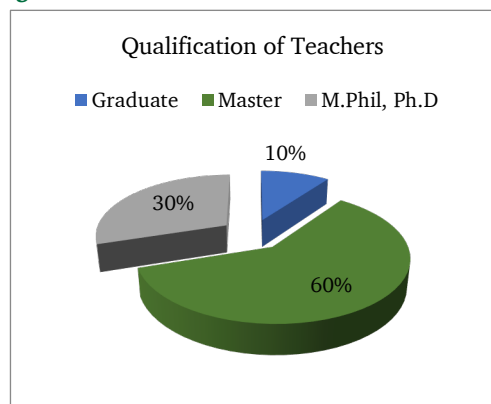
**Figure 3**



### Insufficient Technological Aids

The findings indicate that the insufficiency of technological aids is a challenge for special students as well as teachers. In special children, technological aids are necessary for motility, listening, visual deficiencies and learning.

**Figure 4**



### Community Attitudes

In the view of the participants, these children were socially deprived and society dominantly thinks that disabled person does not need any education. They cannot compete for the different opportunities of life. Most parents have not disclosed the disability of their children at an early stage. Therefore, they suffered from early intervention. The community also restricts their participation in social gatherings. So, overall they face a negative attitude towards the community.

### Transition

Due to the lack of proper transition majority of the students drops out after primary grade because in SPED majority of special education centres are at the primary level. So, the students especially females are not enrolled in second grade due to distance and financial issues also there is no mechanism for vocational pieces of training at the Tehsil level for special students.

## Theme 1: Challenges in SPED

### Accessibility

Results revealed that most children in special education belong to low social economic status. They cannot afford transportation. The distance of

### Policy Gaps

Results indicate that the policy gaps are also a great hurdle in SPED department. Engagement in other activities like Dengue, Enrollment campaigns, and surveys affect the work of teachers. Lack of coordination of general

education is also a policy gap. Transfer policy of teachers and administrative pieces of training on maintaining records, leave rules and behaviour management is also not included in the policy.

### **Budgetary Constraints**

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Budgetary constraints like the availability of hearing aids, assistive devices, availability to pick and drop off every student, higher honorary teacher assistants, and availability of government buildings are challenges in SPED departments.

### **Theme 2: Issues in Teaching Learning Process**

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Results indicate that student-teacher ratio, inappropriate curriculum, insufficient teaching material, lack of teacher pieces of training and conventional evaluation process affect the teaching-learning process badly.

### **Theme 3: Collaborative and Coordination Issues**

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Results show that negative social attitudes, parents' negligence about SEN students, lack of coordination in the IEP team and administrative laxity were dominant issues in collaboration.

### **Theme 4: Proposal for Betterment**

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Results revealed that community awareness (syllabus, social media, print media, seminars), teacher pieces of training on global standers, revision in policy, improve S/T ratio, transition in general education, improvement in coordination and reduce budgetary constraints may overcome the challenges.

### **Discussion & Conclusions**

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Within the scope of this particular investigation, a qualitative research strategy was utilised. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the challenges that special education teachers encounter while working with their students and the methods that they employ in order to overcome those challenges. A descriptive research design was used to provide answers to the questions that were connected to a specific study problem in order to gather information from the SPED teachers. This was done in order to gather information. This study is used as a suitable method to gather important information about the current status of the issue, which are the

challenges faced by teachers when teaching students with special needs and how they attempt to overcome these challenges. Specifically, the study focuses on how teachers attempt to overcome these challenges. This study is being used as an appropriate means to collect this information as part of a research methodology known as descriptive research. To gain an understanding of what is already present in the field is the primary objective of descriptive research, which is conducted for the most part. All of the special education teachers who were employed by Punjab's special education department in the Sargodha Division were the ones who took part in this study as participants. Due to the limited resources available for research, the method of purposeful sampling is used to select participants who are both the most appropriate and provide the most helpful information. This is done so as to maximise the use of the available resources (Palinkas et al., 2015). The sampling strategy known as purposive sampling was utilised in order to select the sample size of ten special education teachers. The decision was made based on the proximity of SPED centres to one another geographically within the Sargodha division. Teachers of students with special educational needs (SPED) were given an open-ended qualitative questionnaire in order to investigate the possibility of teacher collaboration, as well as to explain the challenges that come with instructing students who have special needs, as well as the strategies and methods of instruction that teachers use when instructing children who are enrolled in SPED. In addition, this was done in order to explain the difficulties that come with instructing students who have special needs. One of the tools that the researcher had developed on their own was a questionnaire with open-ended questions, and it was used to collect data from a select group of special education teachers. Interviews with drivers of lorries were conducted for the purpose of data collection, and it is important to note that observations should also be taken into consideration. After each interview, the recordings were transcribed, and a comprehensive thematic analysis was carried out using the guidelines that were provided by (Creswell, 2014).



## **Recommendations**

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### **Community Awareness**

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Educate society about diversities through the syllabus, print media, seminars and social inclusion of disabled persons in government, private gatherings and sports activities.

### **Revision in Policy**

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The policy needs to be revised and remove obstacles like teacher training on global standers

to improve the S/T ratio, transitional issues also need to resolve and ensure coordination among IEP professionals.

### **Budgetary Constraints**

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Budgetary constraints also need to be addressed through the provision of teaching-learning materials, ensuring the pick and drop to all disabled, providing HTA teachers where required and making sure the government buildings instead of rented.

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