

Barriers in Implementation of Inclusive Education in Punjab Government Schools

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Education is one of the human rights, undeniable and fundamental in nature encompassing all ethical, social, economic and legal dimensions. As a signatory of UNCRPD, Pakistan has to take steps for effective implementation of the UN Convention on the Right of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD). This study attempts to analyse the barrier faced by stake-holders in implementation of inclusive education in schools. The method of research adopted for this study was descriptive and quantitative. The data collected was to identify the barriers faced by stake-holders of the inclusive education system and concerned Government functionaries. The detailed and in depth understanding of the subject has been acquired through reading of available relevant Government's instructional material and policy documents. In this study convenient sampling technique was used. The sample of the current study was comprised of concerned Government functionaries, Principals and teachers of the Institutes of Education working in the Punjab. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher.

Key words: *Implementation of Inclusive Education, Punjab Government Schools*

Introduction

Inclusive education is a global concept useful to formulate programs and strategies of educational change addressing the issues of inclusion of disabled and disadvantaged children in both developing and developed countries. The concept of inclusive education has been developed by the international agreements on the rights of persons with disabilities and especially the right of education recognised by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in its Article 24, whereby all member states are obliged to implement the concept of inclusive education and remove the barriers in the way of implementation of inclusive education. Pakistan, being a signatory of the convention, is also under obligation to implement this in her educational institutions. Some efforts have been made by the Government of the Punjab for popularisation, the significance of inclusive education but the concept of inclusive education is still in its rudimentary form as far as its implementation is concerned (Robert,2008). Inclusive education, being a universally recognised right of the disabled children requires a meaningful change in educational frameworks and Government policies in both developing and developed countries. Inclusive education also requires strategies to firstly identify the barriers in implementation of inclusive education, secondly to remove them and thirdly to include the implementation agenda within the holistic framework of the EFA goal so as to enable disabled children to get an equal education (Loreman,2010).

Being a responsible country, it is the constitutional obligation of Pakistan to provide equal education to all children of society irrespective of their class, creed and disability. Article 38(d) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan ensures provision of basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, housing, medical relief and education for all citizens, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race. Article 37(b) also pledges removal of illiteracy and to provide free and compulsory secondary education within a minimum possible period (Stubbs,1993). Article 25 A has made it obligatory on the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years (Susan,2004). Despite the constitutional safeguards, 25 million children are out of school including a sizeable population of disabled children in Pakistan. Hence, one goal of EFA in terms of 100% enrolment of children has not so far been achieved. The Government of Pakistan is seeking to provide equal education to all children by implementing the concept of Inclusive Education. The first visible step taken by Pakistan in this regard was the policy framed for persons with disabilities in 2002. This was a paradigm shift to address the national and international commitments and a plan of action for reforming the educational structure for persons with disabilities in Pakistan. Pakistan has not only signed this treaty on 15th September 2008 but also ratified it on 5th July 2011. Albeit, in Pakistan, implementation of Inclusive Education is obligatory, and it poses many challenges. The concept of Inclusive Education needs clear understanding by the masses through awareness campaigns and full implementation at all levels including all downgraded communities and stopping discrimination in Punjab.

The Punjab Government has made some efforts to implement inclusive education. More or less all these efforts brought forward some barriers that require strategies to remove the barriers in implementing the inclusive education in special institutions. Thus, this study was carried out to analyse the barriers identified in implementation of inclusive education as envisaged in the United Nations convention on the rights of persons with disability (UNCRPD) in special institutions of the Punjab Government.

Objectives of study

The following were the objectives of study:

1. To identify the barriers in implementation of inclusive education in institutions of the Punjab.
2. To identify the initiatives for inclusive education taken by the Government of the Punjab.
3. To lay foundations for future research in the field.

Research Questions

The following were the questions of study:

- 1: What are the barriers in implementation of inclusive education in special institutions of the Punjab?
- 2: What are the challenges faced by the Punjab Government in implementation of UNCRPD in Punjab?
- 3: What is the way forward for implementation of inclusive education in the Punjab?

Significance of the Study

The concept of inclusive education in Pakistan came into circulation in the beginning of 21st century. Realising the importance of Inclusive Education, the Government of Pakistan in collaboration with UNESCO and the Regional Office of South Asia, UNICEF signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD) in September 2008 and later ratified it in July 2011 which moved the Punjab Government to take initiatives to promote inclusive education but, in its attempt, to promote and develop inclusive education system, the Punjab Government has faced enormous challenges. The objective to create a society which could embrace disability in a uniform education system and address equality, quality and providing opportunity to young people to develop their potential, is really a challenge itself for a third world country like Pakistan. Although Article 24 of UNCRPD sets the direction for inclusive education but Pakistan being an underdeveloped country inherited culture of low literacy where still education is one of the major concerns. That's why despite the Punjab Government's efforts, objectives of inclusive education have not yet been fully achieved. In the ending part, the study has also strived to put forth a way forward for a future course. Peters, 2004, refers to as the "continuum of placements" paradigm; that is, when inclusive education is conceptualised as a place and not as a service delivered. The debate on inclusive education

and integration is not about a dichotomy between integration and inclusion policies and models, but rather about identifying to what extent there is progress in the understanding that each school has the moral responsibility to include everyone. Such a requirement is also challenged when education systems have to address effectively other core universal education issues such as poor school attendance, repetition, dropouts, and low learning outcome. The inclusionary setup essentially requires trained and motivated educational and support staff. In an inclusive education set-up, the distinction between "general education" and "special education" disappear because the inclusive school is so restructured where students learn together under one roof (Scheyer et al.1996). However, the special need students are provided special services like speech, physical and occupational therapy outside the regular class (Feldman, Robert S. 2008)

Students in an inclusive classroom are placed with their age fellows without regard to academic level for their age to create a unique comradeship and relationship making them part of a community removing barriers of all kinds of discrimination (Douglas P, et al. 2006). However, there are some exceptions of those children who cannot be put under an inclusive set--up owing to their long hospitalisations and severe behavioural problems that may physically harm others (Simpson& Richard 2009).

There are many positive effects of inclusions where both the students with special needs along with the other students in the classroom both benefit (Douglas,2006). Research has shown positive effects for children with disabilities in areas such as reaching an individualised education program (IEP) goal, improving communication and social skills, increasing positive peer interactions, many educational outcomes, and post school adjustments. Positive effects on children without disabilities include the development of positive attitudes and perceptions of persons with disabilities and the enhancement of social status with nondisabled peers (Bennett, T., Deluca, D., & Bruns, D. 1997).

Methodology

This section will illustrate the methodology that has been adopted to conduct the study. The method of research adopted for this study was descriptive and quantitative. The data collected was to identify the challenges faced by stake-holders of the inclusive education system and concerned Government functionaries. The detailed and in depth understanding of the subject has been acquired through reading of available relevant Government's instructional material and policy documents.

Research Design

The research design applied for this study was descriptive in nature. All the data has been collected and analysed in numerical form.



Population

All the concerned Government functionaries, Principals and teachers of the Institutes of Special Education working in Punjab were the population of the study.

Sample

In this study convenient sampling technique was used. A sample of the current study was comprised of concerned Government functionaries, Principals and teachers of the Institutes of Special Education working in the Punjab.

Research Instrument

In the present study data was collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was pilot tested on 10 special education teachers 10 principals of special education institutes and 5 government functionaries. The total sample of pilot testing was 25. After pilot testing, reliability of the questionnaire was 0.7.

Demographic Questionnaire

A questionnaire comprising 30 questions was used to assess a participant's basic opinion on the Likert scale about the issues concerning inclusive education with their basic information such as gender, age, education and job title, qualification and institution.

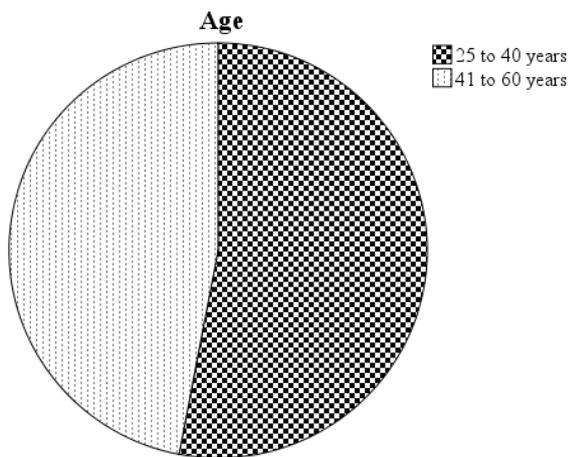
Data Collection

After taking permission from participants, data was collected from 200 participants. Proper permission was sought from respective institutions. The participants were approached personally and elaborated about the significance of the research and prior consent was taken. In addition to it, they were assured about the confidentiality of data that it would only be used for research purposes and the research publication does not contain any physical /psychological harm to them. They were requested to fill the questionnaire giving their honest and complete responses. The questionnaire was distributed to 200 respondents. One (1) questionnaire per person was distributed and an average 15 to 20 minutes were given for the completion of the questionnaire per participant. After completion of the questionnaire, participants were thanked for their valuable responses.

Analysis and interpretation of data

Descriptive Analysis

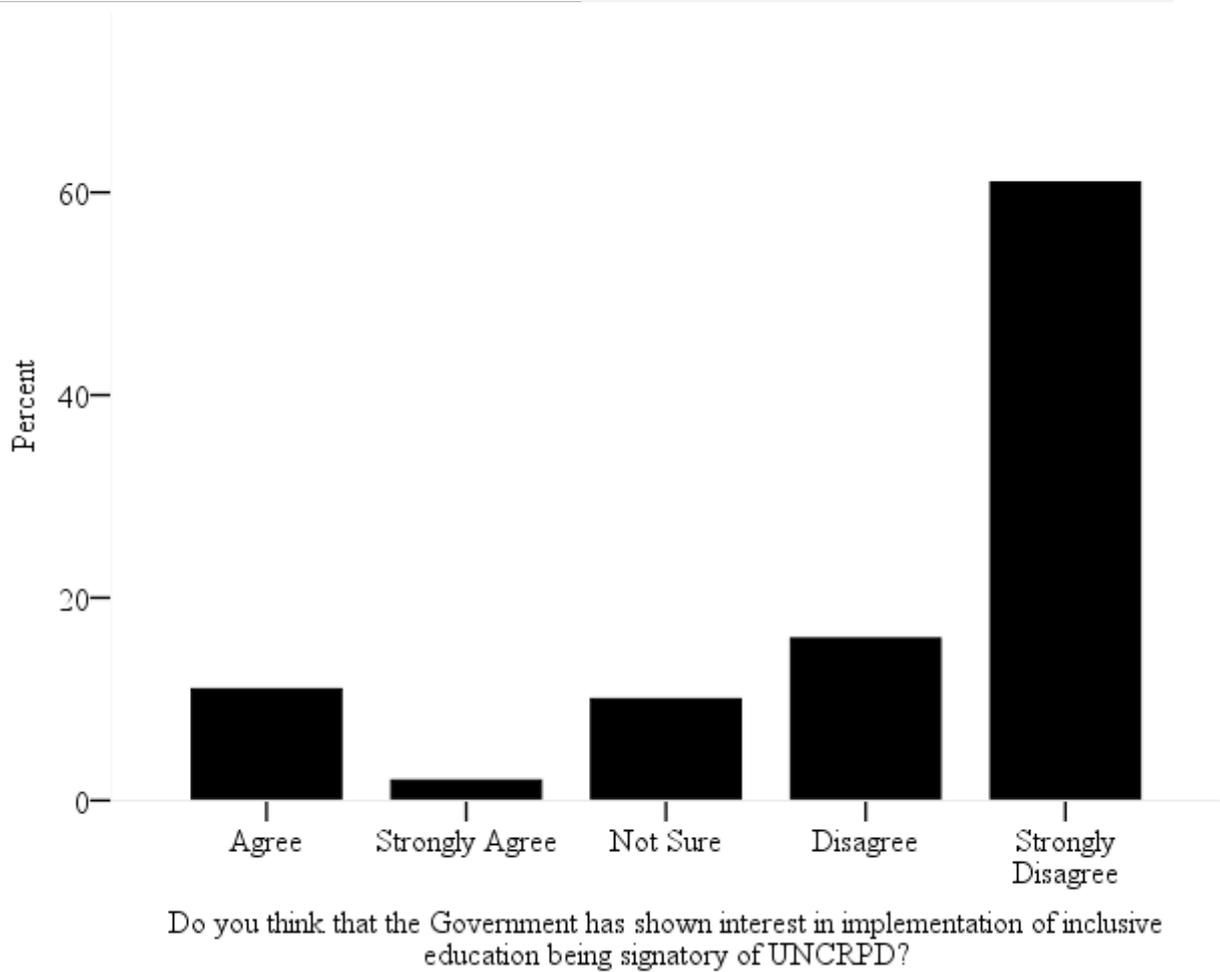
There were 200 respondents who participated in this study out of which 56% were male and 44% were female. The data is further divided into two age groups 25 to 40 years & 41 to 60 years. 53% of participants were from 25 to 40 years and 47% of participants are from 41 to 60 years.



Do you think that the Government has shown interest in the implementation of inclusive education being signatory of UNUNCRPD?

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	22	11.0
Strongly Agree	4	2.0
Not Sure	20	10.0
Disagree	32	16.0
Strongly Disagree	122	61.0
Total	200	100.0

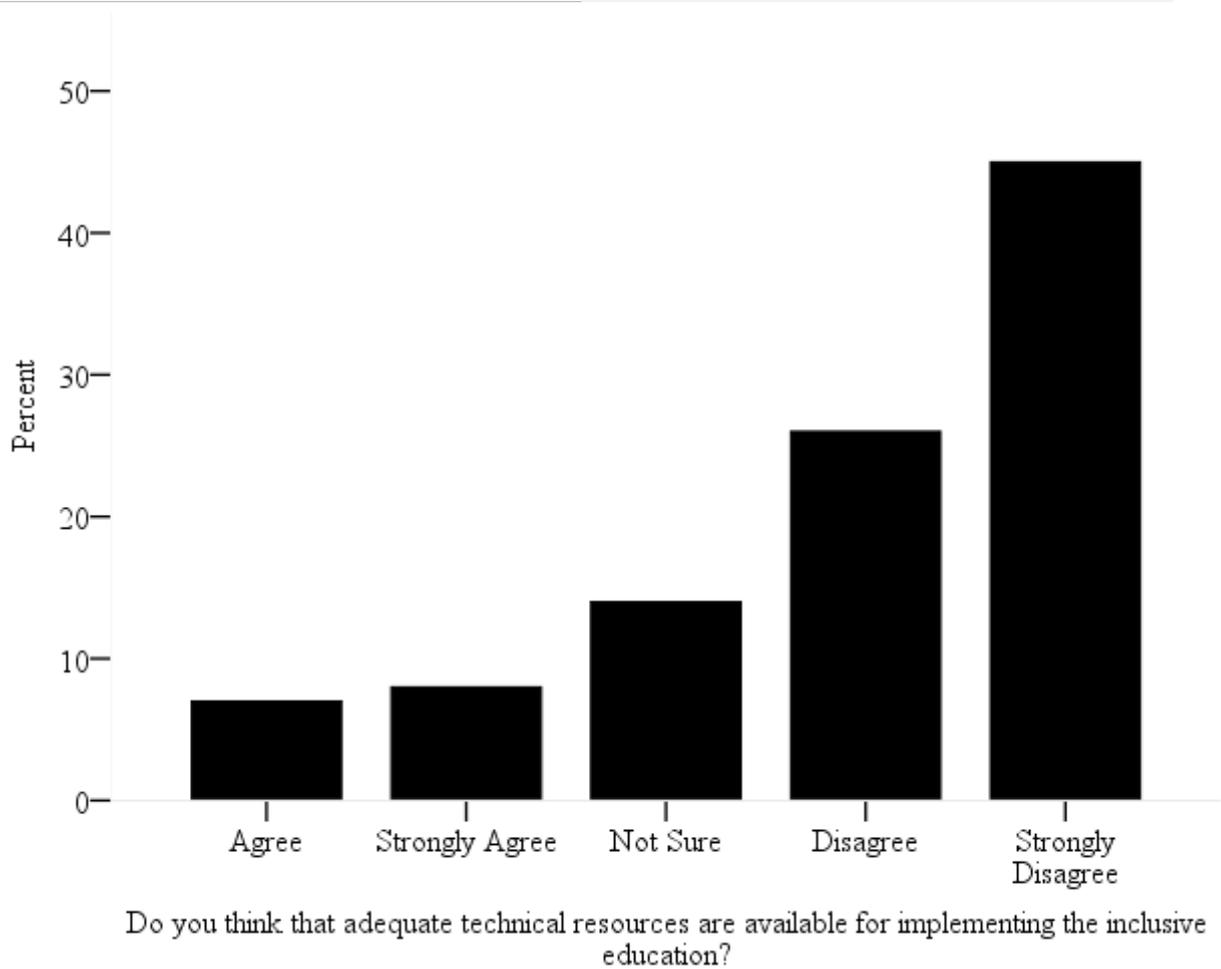
There are 77% respondents disagreeing that the Government has shown interest in implementation of inclusive education being signatory of UNUNCRPD, 10% of them are not sure and only 13% were agreeing with the statement.



Do you think that adequate technical resources are available for implementing the inclusive education?

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	14	7.0
Strongly Agree	16	8.0
Not Sure	28	14.0
Disagree	52	26.0
Strongly Disagree	90	45.0
Total	200	100.0

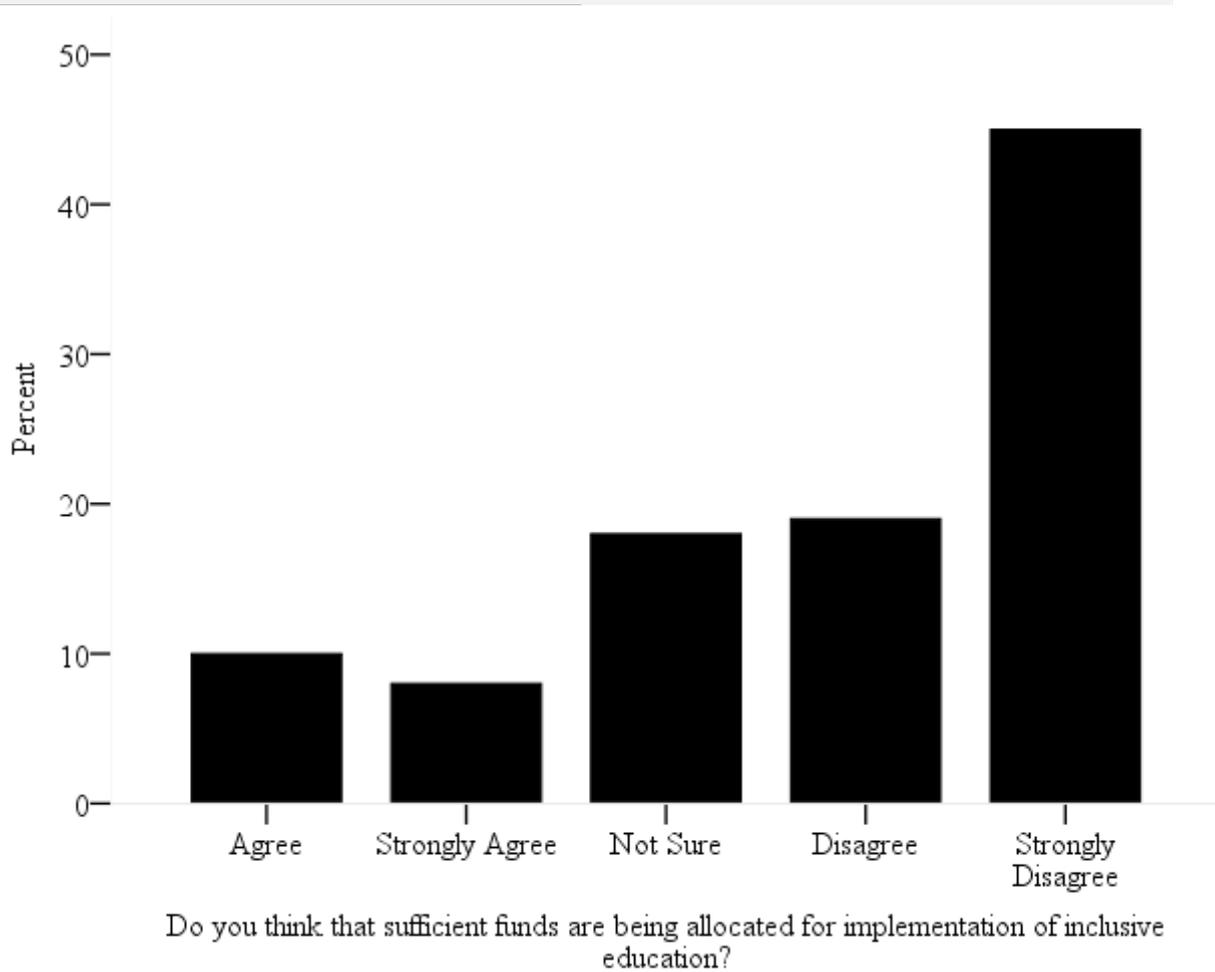
There are 71% respondents disagreeing that adequate technical resources are available for implementing the inclusive education, 14% are not sure and only 15% are agreeing upon the statement.



Do you think that sufficient funds are being allocated for implementation of inclusive education?

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	20	10.0
Strongly Agree	16	8.0
Not Sure	36	18.0
Disagree	38	19.0
Strongly Disagree	90	45.0
Total	200	100.0

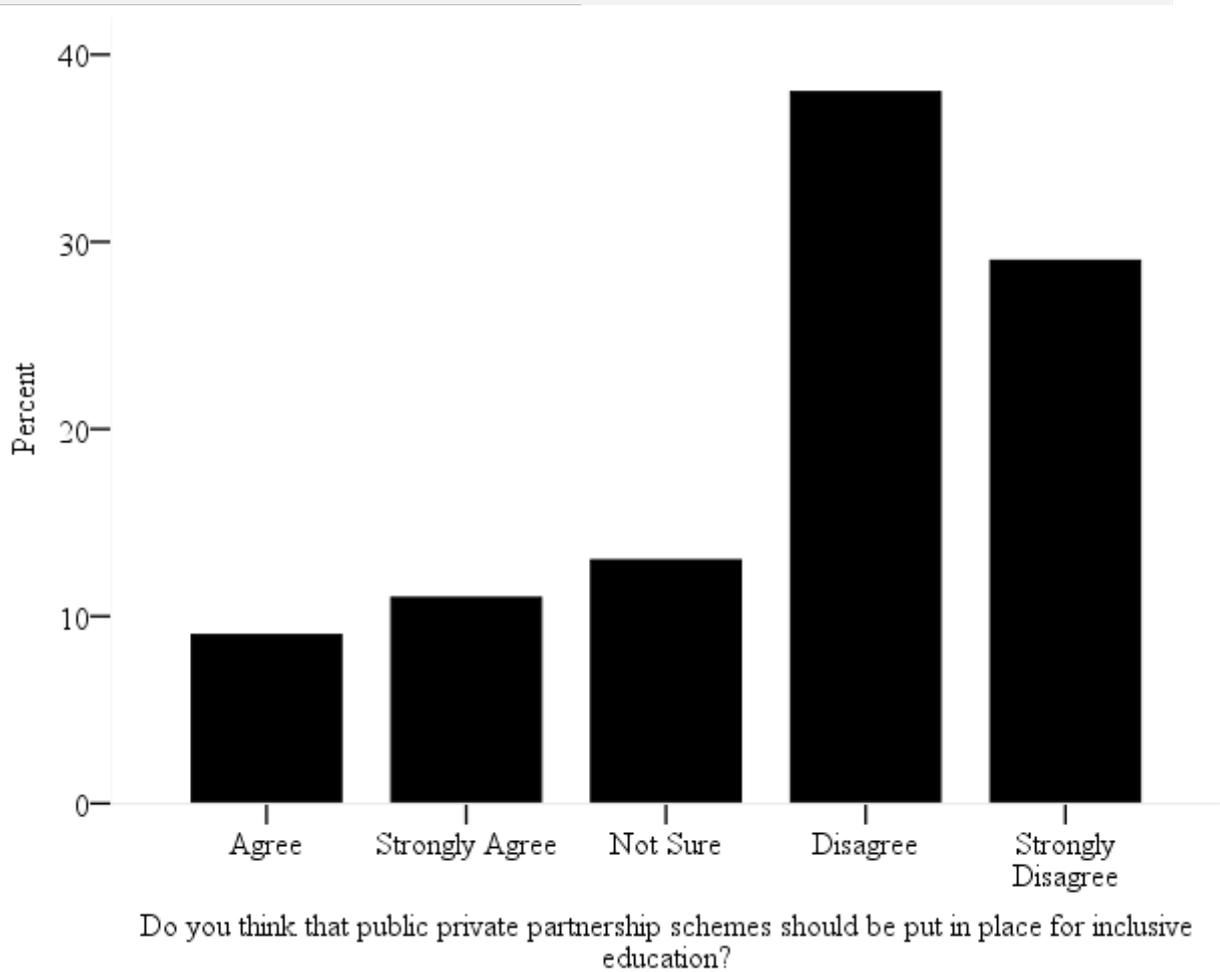
There are 64% respondents are agreeing that sufficient funds are being allocated for implementation of inclusive education, 18% are not sure and only 18% agreeing upon the statement.



Do you think that public/private partnership schemes should be put in place for inclusive education?

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	18	9.0
Strongly Agree	22	11.0
Not Sure	26	13.0
Disagree	76	38.0
Strongly Disagree	58	29.0
Total	200	100.0

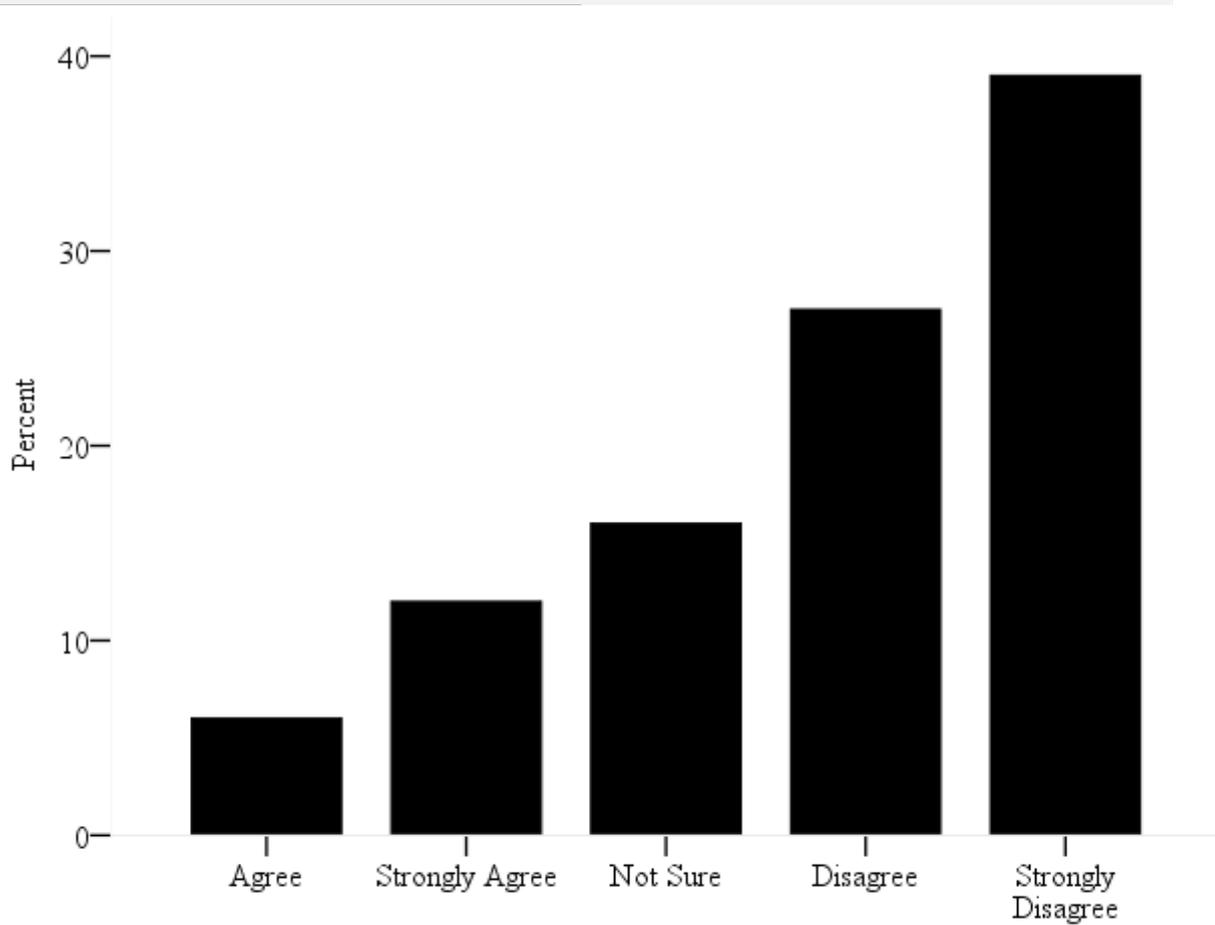
There are 67% respondents disagreeing that public/private partnership schemes should be put in place for inclusive education, 13% are not sure and only 20% are agreeing upon the statement.



Do you think that any legal instrument exists for implementing inclusive education?

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	12	6.0
Strongly Agree	24	12.0
Not Sure	32	16.0
Disagree	54	27.0
Strongly Disagree	78	39.0
Total	200	100.0

There are 66% respondents disagreeing that any legal instrument exists for implementing inclusive education, 16% of them are neutral and only 18% agreeing upon the statement.

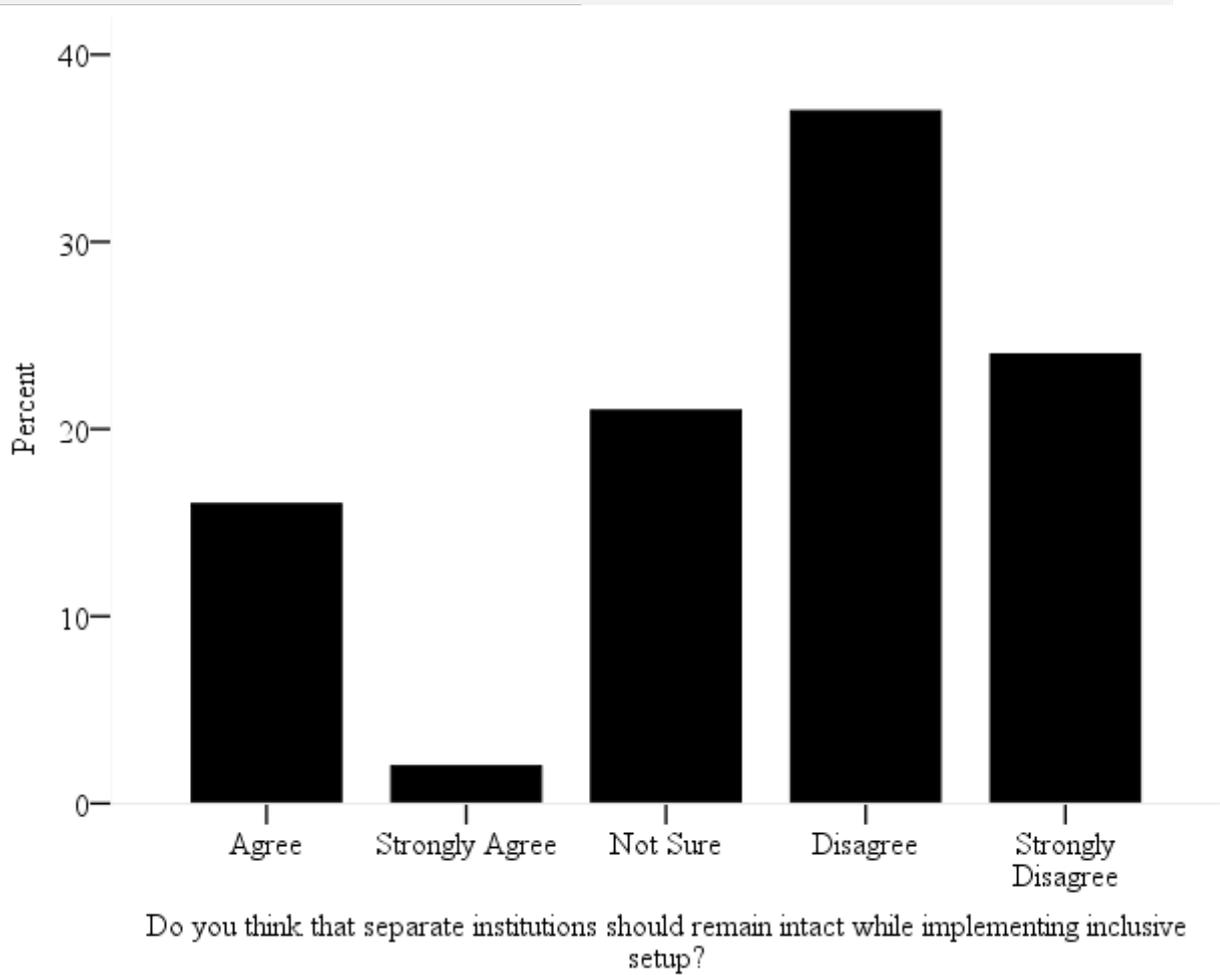


Do you think that any legal instrument exists for implementing inclusive education?

Do you think that separate institutions should remain intact while implementing inclusive setup?

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	32	16.0
Strongly Agree	4	2.0
Not Sure	42	21.0
Disagree	74	37.0
Strongly Disagree	48	24.0
Total	200	100.0

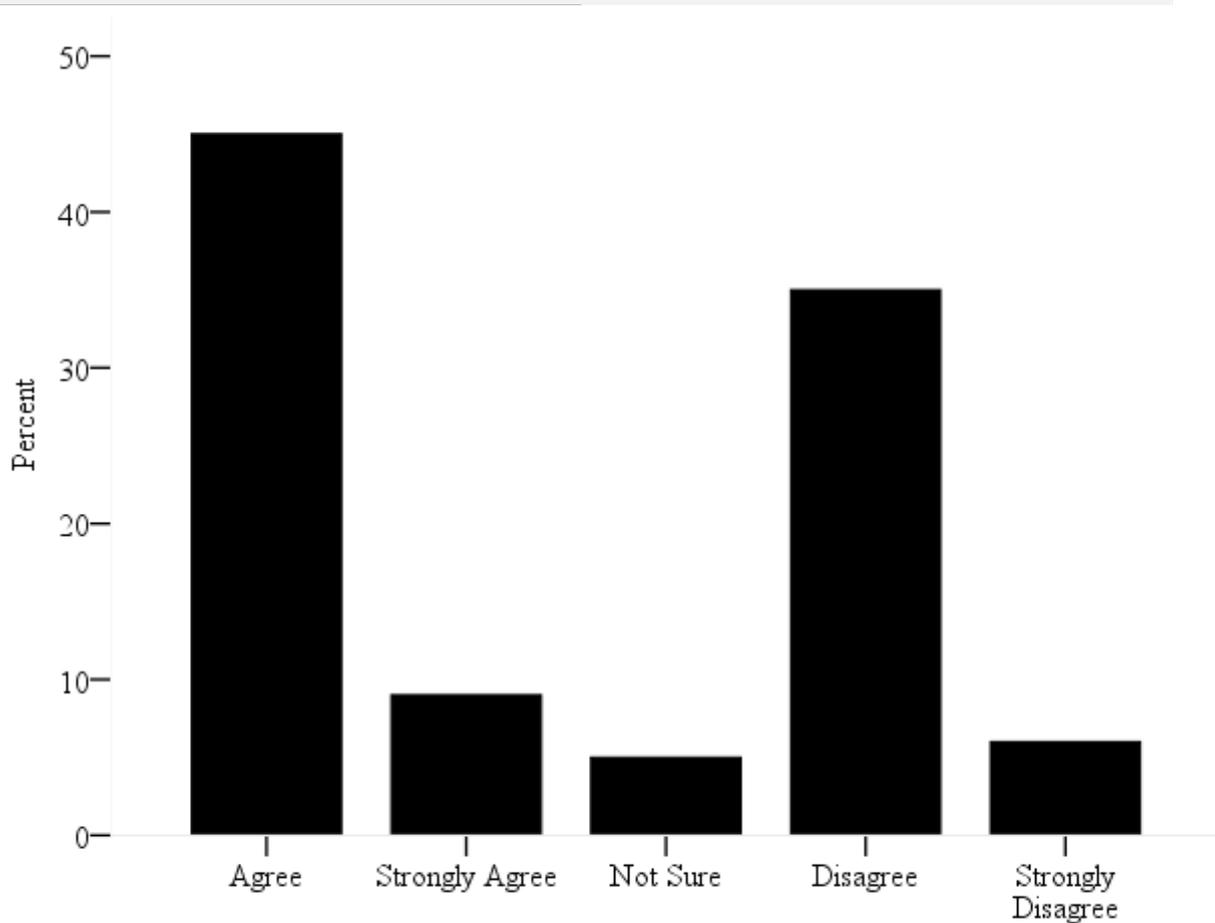
There are 61% respondents disagreeing that separate institutions should remain intact while implementing inclusive setup, 21% are not sure and only 18% agreeing upon the statement.



Do you think that more efforts are needed to include female gender in inclusive setup?

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	90	45.0
Strongly Agree	18	9.0
Not Sure	10	5.0
Disagree	70	35.0
Strongly Disagree	12	6.0
Total	200	100.0

There are 54% respondents agreeing that that more efforts are needed to include female gender in inclusive setup, 5% of them are not sure and only 41% are disagreeing upon the statement.

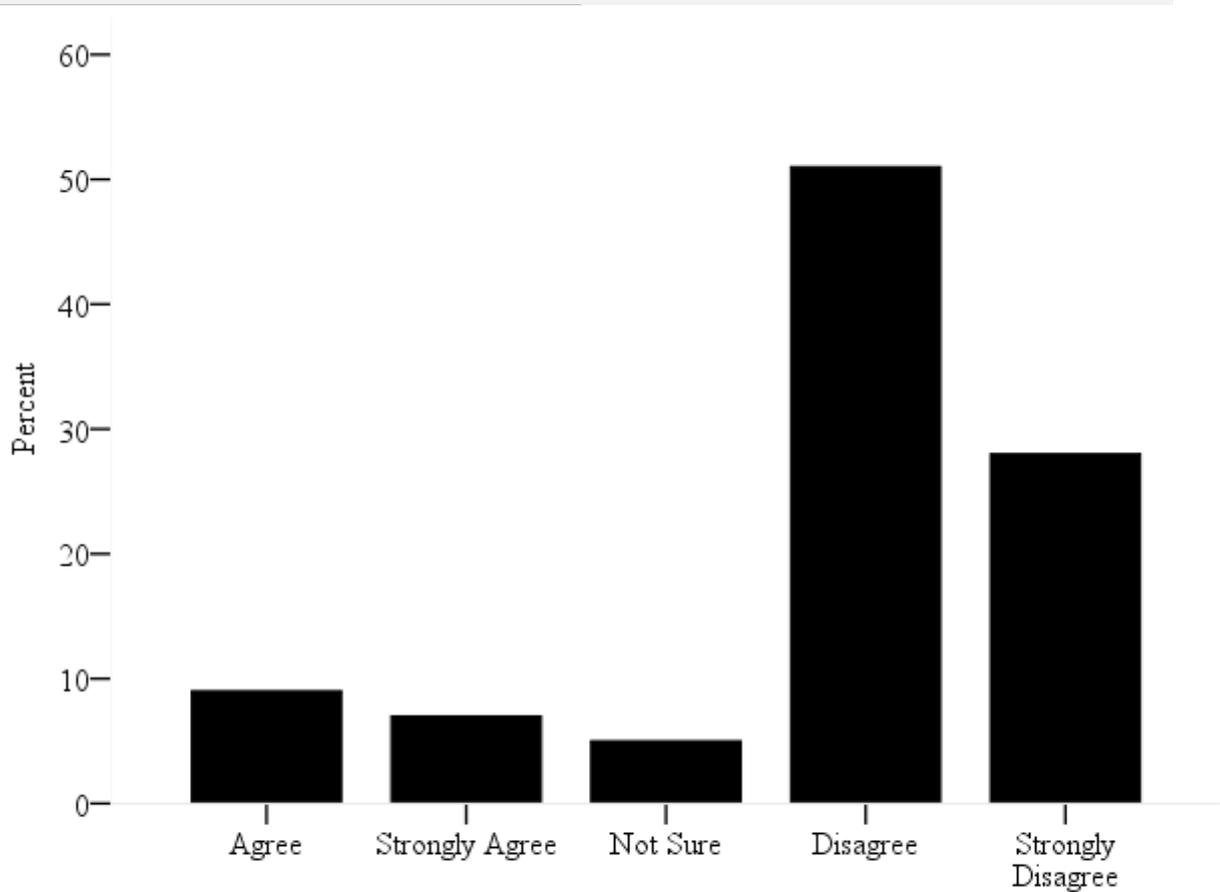


Do you think that more efforts are needed to include female gender in inclusive setup?

Do you think that serious efforts regarding mapping of out of school disabled children are being made?

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	18	9.0
Strongly Agree	14	7.0
Not Sure	10	5.0
Disagree	102	51.0
Strongly Disagree	56	28.0
Total	200	100.0

There are 79% of the respondents disagreeing that serious efforts regarding mapping of out of school disabled children are being made, 5% are not sure and only 16% agreeing upon the statement.



Do you think that serious efforts regarding mapping of out of school disabled children are being made?

Do you think that reliable data of disabled children in the Punjab is available?

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	5	5.0
Strongly Agree	5	5.0
Not Sure	13	13.0
Disagree	40	40.0
Strongly Disagree	37	37.0
Total	100	100.0

There are 77% of the respondents disagreeing that reliable data of disabled children in the Punjab is available, 13% are not sure and the 10% agreeing with the statement.

Do you think that an inclusive setup will show a lack of friendly attitude by peers towards their disabled classmates?

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	28	14.0
Strongly Agree	22	11.0
Not Sure	22	11.0
Disagree	68	34.0
Strongly Disagree	60	30.0
Total	200	100.0

There are 64% of the respondents disagreeing that inclusive setup will show lack of friendly attitude by peers towards their disabled classmates, 11% of them are not sure and only 25% are agreeing with the statement.

Do you think that top management in the Punjab is fully aware of the concept and benefits of inclusive education?

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	14	7.0
Strongly Agree	20	10.0
Not Sure	42	21.0
Disagree	71	36.0
Strongly Disagree	52	26.0
Total	200	100.0

There are 62% respondents disagreeing that top management in the Punjab is fully aware of the concept and benefits of inclusive education, 21% are not sure and only 17% are agreeing with the statement.

Inferential Analysis

Testing of Hypothesis using an Independent Sample T test

An independent sample t test is used to find out the significant difference of opinion between male and female about the statement questions.

Sr. No.	HYPOTHESIS	T	P	Conclusion
1	H₀ : The opinion of Male and Female about “Do you think that adequate technical resources are available for implementing the inclusive education?” is the same.	2.6320	0.121	As $p > \alpha$ Insignificant result, i.e Accept H ₀
2	H₀ : The opinion of Male and Female about “Do you think that more efforts are needed to include female gender in inclusive setup?” is the same.	-1.727	0.006	As $p < \alpha$ *significant result, i.e Reject H ₀
3	H₀ : The opinion of Male and Female about “Do you think that serious efforts regarding mapping of out of school disabled children are being made?” is the same.	4.4679	0.009	As $p < \alpha$ *significant result, i.e Reject H ₀
4	H₀ : The opinion of Male and Female about “Do you think that reliable data of disabled children in Punjab is available?” is the same.	-2.6967	0.108	As $p > \alpha$ Insignificant result, i.e Accept H ₀
5	H₀ : The opinion of Male and Female about “Do you think that top management in the Punjab is fully aware of the concept and benefits of inclusive education?” is the same.	1.423	0.001	As $p < \alpha$ *significant result, i.e Reject H ₀
6	H₀ : The opinion of Male and Female about “Do you think that sufficient training centres for inclusive education are available in the Punjab?” is the same.	-2.373	0.301	As $p > \alpha$ Insignificant result, i.e Accept H ₀
7	H₀ : The opinion of Male and Female about “Do you think that public/private partnership schemes should be put in place for inclusive education?” is the same.	1.946	0.000	As $p < \alpha$ *significant result, i.e Reject H ₀

8	H₀: The opinion of Male and Female about “Do you think that continued professional development is required for workable inclusive setup?” is the same.	1.375	0.063	As $p > \alpha$ Insignificant result, i.e Accept H ₀
9	H₀: The opinion of Male and Female about “Do you think that any policy frame work for implementing inclusive education is in place?” is the same.	-2.434	0.003	As $p < \alpha$ *significant result, i.e Reject H ₀
10	H₀: The opinion of Male and Female about “Do you think that extracurricular activities can create friendship between gifted and disabled children?” is the same.	-1.435	0.210	As $p > \alpha$ Insignificant result, i.e Accept H ₀

From the above analysis we have observed that the male and female have the same opinion about adequate technical resources are available for implementing the inclusive education (frequency table shows that 71% of respondents are disagreeing with this statement), that reliable data of disabled children in the Punjab is available (77% of respondents are disagreeing with this statement), sufficient training centres for inclusive education are available in the Punjab (81% of respondents are disagreeing upon this statement), continued professional development is required for workable inclusive setup (72.5% of respondents are agreeing with this statement), extracurricular activities can create friendship between gifted and disabled children is the same (87% of respondents are agreeing with this statement), while males and females have different opinions about more efforts are needed to include female gender in the inclusive setup (53% of respondents are agreeing with this statement), serious efforts regarding mapping of out of school disabled children are being made (79% of respondents are disagreeing with this statement), top management in the Punjab is fully aware of the concept and benefits of inclusive education (62% of respondents are disagreeing with this statement), public private partnership schemes should be put in place for inclusive education (67% of respondents are disagreeing with this statement), and the policy framework for implementing inclusive education is in place (73% of respondents are disagreeing With this statement). The decision was based on p-values and $\alpha=0.05$.

Testing of Hypothesis using Kendall's Tau B test for association:

SR. NO	HYPOTHESIS	τ	P	Conclusion
1.	H ₀ : There is no association between the Government has shown interest in implementation of inclusive education being signatory of UNUNCRPD and thinking that public/private partnership schemes should be put in place for inclusive education.	-0.106	0.057	As $p > \alpha$ Insignificant result, i.e Accept H ₀
2.	H ₀ : There is no association between adequate technical resources are available for implementing the inclusive education and sufficient funds are being allocated for implementation of inclusive education.	0.261	0.000	As $p < \alpha$ *Significant result, i.e Reject H ₀
3.	H ₀ : There is no association between media campaigns should be launched for public awareness about inclusive education and extracurricular activities can create friendship between gifted and disabled children.	0.242	0.000	As $p < \alpha$ *Significant result, i.e Reject H ₀
4.	H ₀ : There is no association between Principals & teachers' commitment level is compatible with inclusive setup and employees of special education department feel fear of losing jobs due to inclusive education.	0.023	0.683	As $p > \alpha$ Insignificant result, i.e Accept H ₀
5.	H ₀ : There is no association between top management in the Punjab is fully aware of the concept and benefits of inclusive education and serious efforts regarding mapping of out of school disabled children are being made.	0.122	0.025	As $p < \alpha$ *Significant result, i.e Reject H ₀

Kendall's Tau b test was applied to check the association between different variables. It was found that there is no association between the interest shown by the in implementation of inclusive education being signatory of UNCRPD and the idea that public private partnership schemes should be put in place for inclusive education. Principals & teachers' commitment level is compatible with inclusive setup and employees of special education department feel

fear of losing jobs due to inclusive education. It was also found that there is association between adequate technical resources are available for implementing the inclusive education and sufficient funds are being allocated for implementation of inclusive education, media campaigns should be launched for public awareness about inclusive education and extracurricular activities can create friendship between gifted and disabled children, top management in Punjab is fully aware of the concept and benefits of inclusive education and serious efforts regarding mapping of out of school disabled children are being made. The decision was based on p-values and $\alpha=0.05$.

Major Findings

- The finding based on the opinion of respondents is that the Punjab Government has not shown interest in implementation of inclusive education. This is proven with the pace of implementation of inclusive education set by the Punjab Government. Neither the Special Education Department nor the School Education Department has spearheaded the cause of inclusive education. Some efforts were only by the Special Education Department and those too were insufficient.
- The second finding was that the respondents hold the opinion that adequate technical resources are not available for implementing the inclusive education. This is substantiated with facts that the Special Education Department could not make serious efforts for mobilisation of technical resources which are the back-bone for the establishment of resource centres in special institutions.
- Sufficient funds are being allocated for implementation of inclusive education was the third finding based on the opinion poll. The Special Education Department remained complacent with its existing organisational setup and its roles and responsibilities and therefore, was not willing to accept change. The funding commitment could not be obtained from the Planning and Development Department and Finance Department by the Special Education Department for inclusive education. The pilot project launched by the Special Education Department through ADP could not even utilise full funds committed by the Government for inclusive education.
- The fourth finding was that as per respondents; public/private partnership schemes should not be put in place for inclusive education. This is an unhealthy sign that the persons at the helms of affairs feel that public/private schemes should not be launched to implement inclusive education.
- The fifth finding is that legal instrument does not exist for implementation of the inclusive education. This is a very important factor for enforcement of a policy like inclusive education. After devolution of the subject of education to provinces owing to the omission of the 4th schedule containing 47 subjects of a concurrent list, education along with its planning and curriculum development is now a provincial baby. Any legislation on inclusive education can be made by the Provincial Assembly of Punjab. This effort can provide legal cover to the concept of inclusive education.

- Separate institutions should not remain intact while implementing inclusive setup is the sixth finding of this research. This opinion of the respondents is based on the true spirit of the implementation of inclusive education which demands education for all under one roof except those intervals in which physiotherapy, speech therapy or other psycho medical aids are required by the persons with disabilities. Here it must be remembered that separate institutions will remain intact for those who cannot be admitted in inclusive set up due their multiple ailments that hinder their cognitive and motor skills.

Conclusion

Where inclusive education provides opportunities, it also brings challenges along with it. Educating special children in a developing country in an inclusionary setting is a gigantic task on many counts. For thousands of children with physical and mental impairments, the Punjab has 292 schools. Evidently, despite efforts of the Punjab Government, many barriers are in the way of implementation of inclusive education. The top level barriers are lack of clear understanding of the implementers at school level as is found in the findings of research, non-availability of reliable data of special children in the Punjab, deficiency in policy initiative by the government, lack of understanding of benefits and proper awareness of the fruits of inclusive education in the educational framework, lack of policy framework containing a supportive enabling environment, media campaigns and a legal instrument for implementation of inclusive education. The removal of the aforementioned barriers requires an unflinching resolve at the level of policy-makers and funding commitment by the Planning & Development Board of the Punjab Government.

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