

Inclusive Education: A Global Agenda

Sir,

Educating children with disabilities is considered as an important goal in many countries because education systems are changing drastically in the last few decades. Inclusive education is a global agenda; it means full inclusion of children with various abilities in all aspects of schooling that other children have the ability to access. Teachers have been seen as key persons and considered to play substantial role for the implementation of such educational change. According to American Psychiatric Association (APA), the terminologies like special education needs, refer to the need of population of individuals who have sensory disorders, communication disorders, learning disorders, motor skills disorders, behaviour disorders and mental retardation.¹ Inclusive education is defined as a process that intends to respond to the students' diversity through enhancing their participation and reduces the elimination from and within education. It also includes involvement of students who are at high risk of being marginalized and excluded for many different reasons.²

Parents of children with special needs prefer to choose mainstream schools because they have motives for choosing a regular education setting which helps their children to participate and interact socially in their peer group. Parents believe and expect that physical integration of their children will lead to increase the level of social interaction. However, Pijl *et al.* had established the fact that attending a regular school setting will not automatically cause the enhancement in socialisation, contact, and friendship with peer group. This is supported by the type of disability, because several studies have shown that children with disability are less accepted by their peers, experience fewer friendships, and rarely become the part of network in regular classrooms.³

It has been documented in several studies that teachers mostly agreed on the point that pupils with disabilities should go to special education schools instead of

mainstream schools.⁴ According to a survey, 10% of population of special needs children had disabilities like sensory impairments, mental retardation, physical and learning disability etc. Among them, only 2% had access to attain institutional services.⁵

It is concluded that inclusive education is a dynamic process without any quick fix. Thus to improve the inclusive education, it is necessary to adopt comprehensive grassroots approach. Moreover, the collaboration between special education and mainstream teacher is very essential. There must be emphasis on changing schools' culture for providing resources and to build enough capacity in special as well as regular schools to offer new opportunities to pupils who experience difficulties in learning. Provision of sufficient resources, support to inclusion by school principals, administrators, teachers and students is also recommended.

REFERENCES

1. Association AP. DSM-IV-TR: Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (4th text revision ed.) American Psychiatric Association. Washington DC; 2000.
2. Agbenyega JS. Building new identities in teacher preparation for inclusive education in Ghana. *Curr Issues Educ* 2011; **14**.
3. Pijl SJ, Frostad P, Flem A. The social position of pupils with special needs in regular schools. *Scand J Educ Res* 2008; **52**: 387-405.
4. de Boer A, Pijl SJ, Minnaert A. Regular primary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education: A review of the literature. *Int J Inklus Educ* 2011; **15**:331-53.
5. Haider SI. Pakistani teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with special educational needs. *Pak J Med Sci* 2008; **24**:632-6.

Fazaila Ehsaan¹ and Nameeka Shahid²

¹ *Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, Combined Military Hospital, Lahore.*

² *Lecturer of Linguistics and School Counsellor, SICAS, Lahore.*

*Correspondence: Dr. Fazaila Ehsaan, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, Combined Military Hospital, Lahore.
E-mail: fazailaa.ehsaan@gmail.com*

Received: November 11, 2015; Accepted: March 10, 2016.

