

An Exploratory Study on Inadequacies in Examination System for Visually Impaired Children in Punjab

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Abstract

Dispensing quality of education is constitutional responsibility of every country across the world. Provision of quality education to visually impaired children is a motive endorsed by special education experts in Pakistan. From the previous few decades, the newly created informational technologies have introduced a myriad of assessment tools in the area of Examination system. This paper explores inadequacies in the existing examination system for visually impaired children. Accordingly, researcher constructed achievement test for students and Five point Likert scale type instrument. This research design was a survey. The sample for the study involved visually impaired students and teachers who teach such institutions. It was purposively sampled. The data collected from the respondents was analyzed by using SPSS software. The major objectives included: (1) to investigate the defects of the existing examination system for visually impaired children,(2) to identify the inadequacies in the conduct of Braille examination of visually impaired children. It was concluded that inadequate arrangement and facilities by the concerned assessing agencies intercept students with visual impairment for concerned exams. Respondents' illustrated perceptions' in the current study would provide feedback to administratively higher authorities, parents, assessment agencies and examiners.

Keywords: assessment, examination system, visually impaired children, special education

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Introduction

Special Education is a mechanism which exhibits the idea of dispensing education to the entire strata of special needs within formal educational institutions (Nilholm, 2020). Mentioned education system recognizes the polarization and innovative requisitions of learners and have belief on the students' competencies. Adjusting in the classroom and teaching learning process, systematical arrangements and imparting education through specialized equipments are fundamental principles of education system for students with visual impairment (Walton, 2016).

In Pakistan, there exist a few educational institutions where visually impaired children are registered along with other students with disabilities. The historical background of special education dates back to the PL. 94 – 142 demanding the dissemination and communication of openly adequate special educational instructions for entire strata of special needs beyond and dissimilarity in exclusively cognitive and physical disability (Lammichhane, 2017) . In this contextual scenario, Salamanca slogan appreciated the statement of Education for All (EFA) and reiterated that special educational institutions require to provide it to all individuals without discriminations of physical, cognitive and educational abilities. Additionally, Government of Pakistan has currently signed understanding of memorandum for promulgation of sustainable developmental goals (SDG) as a national statement. So educational agencies are trying to introduce adequate services to establish special educational institutions for students with visual impairment particularly (Boardman & Ranger, 2018).

There are two types of classification in terms of visual impairment i.e. blindness and low vision. Vision indicates significant role in performing routine work in daily life of an individual. Eighty (80 %) of individual's perception is banked on what he sees and is correctly important for communication. Partially segment of all correspondence is facial expression incorporating body language, clues, signs and facial outlook (Banyard, Dillon, Norman & Winder, 2015).

Accordingly, individuals with visual impairment experience difficulties and inadequacies during their life routine. Empirical work carried out in African contextual scenario exhibits that learners with visual impairment are inclined to adverse experience with their peer groups and

mentors. Their fundamental requisites leg unfulfilled and they are not bestowed bounties to demonstrate their hidden talents.

Pakistani individuals with visual impairment have rights to claim their educational and constitutional provisions as others in daily routine work. Along with individuals with normal vision, students with visual impairment fundamentally have right of improved and altered educational assessment mechanism. Individuals with visual impairment need large print and electronic services, Braille and substantial amended supports in education system. Accordingly, the researcher made mind to conduct empirical study to explore inadequacies in existing examination system for visually impaired children in Punjab.

The alteration and development in examination mechanism for students of VI is not adequately appropriate in seclusion. Examination difficulties and irregularities are bonded with educational programs. A substantial improvement in examining mechanism may be just by making betterment in the entire education sector. If the standard of pedagogical development is below satisfaction and excellence, the academic outcome of institutions will not be effective. In order to develop and enhance the standard of instructional programs, professional development and teaching faculties' integrity must be sustained. In addition to that the entire system of conducting exam i.e. paper construction, scripts evaluation and issuing of certificates need to be revamped entirely (Rehmani, 2003).

Students with low vision face numerous problems from preparation to attempting their exams. As per the obtained responses, the challenges the students face while preparing for their examination can be classified into two major categories: Dependency and the built environment. Thirteen out of the fifteen participants reported, often, they depend on others in taking exams due to low vision. Though the participants are provided with the writer during exams, they feel dependent on the writer in such cases. For example, a participant stated, it is challenging to prepare for exams on an individual ground (Khalid, Muhammad, & Masood, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

Significantly impact of examination system for students with visual impairment on academic achievement is greatly recognized

throughout the world. Without systematical examining system, scholastic and professional development cannot be explored and outcome of educational institution may not be successfully determined. Accordingly, there is dire need to explore inadequacies of examination system for students of VI in Punjab. Specifically focus of this empirical work is to identify difficulties and problems faced by the students during Braille examination conducting.

Research Questions

- i. What are the defects of present examination system for Visually Impaired Children?
- ii. What are the inadequacies in the conduct of Braille examination for Visually Impaired Children?
- iii. What model examination system do the teachers suggest for Visually Impaired Children?

Research Methodology

The present study was quantitative in nature and was a descriptive research. Descriptive research is usually described as a sort of quantitative research. It is ostensibly conducted for the purpose of descriptive illustration. This type of research design is manipulated and managed in order to determine and validate the results and findings. All the special education institutions in Punjab and students studying in these institutions were involved in population of the study. The sample comprised (25) twenty five visually impaired children of 8th grade at elementary and Secondary school from each district Okara and Lahore were selected by using purposes sampling Technique with equal allocation. One hundred (100) teachers were randomly with equal allocation selected from elementary and secondary schools / Centers at district Okara and Lahore. Before conducting the actual study, the researcher visited the institutions of above mentioned districts. For retrieval the relevant data, 50 students were consulted through head of the institutions as well as question papers. And that, 100 teachers were consulted through questionnaire to assemble perceptions regarding existing examination system of visually impaired children. Subsequently, the researcher went through regarding review of literature comprising bookish material, official documents, reports, policies, projects and evaluations reports, the researcher constructed one questionnaire and two question papers. A Questionnaire consisting of 60

items for the teachers of special education institutions. An objective type question paper comprising of 50 MCQ items in the subject of English for 8th grade students was developed. An objective type question paper covering 50 MCQ items in the subject of social study for 8th grade students was also constructed by the researcher himself. The instruments were developed with the help of supervisor and other consultants. The questionnaire for special education teachers was developed on five point likert scale and tests for 8th grade students in the subjects of social studies.

Table 1

Description of the sample size of students school wise.

<i>Ser.</i>	<i>School Name</i>	<i>No of Students</i>
1	F G Gunj_e_Shakar OKARA	5
2	Home for Blind Chack No=6	5
3	SEC Depal Pure	5
4	Covent Special. Education	5
5	SEC Renalakhurd	5
6	Govt.Sp. Ed.Se.School Sheran Wala Lhr.	5
7	Aziz Jahanara Trust. Lahore	5
8	Govt. SP.Ed.School Khyber Block Lhr.	5
9	F G Alhajvery Sp. Ed.Center Lahore	5
10	Govt. SpEd. School S.Rise Lahore	5

Five (5) students were selected as sample from each mentioned above schools with equal allocation.

Table 2

Description of Frequency and Percent in terms of Gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Male	33	66.0
Female	17	34.0
Total	50	100.0

There were fifty (50) visually impaired students of which 33male and 17female students in sample. As for as percentage is concerned, 66% male and 34% female students.

Findings

Q. No 1

What are the defects of present examination system for Visually Impaired Children?

Table 3

Preparation for exam instead of knowledge.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Options</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
It focuses the preparation for exam instead of giving knowledge.	S A	28	28.0
	A	40	40.0
	U D	6	6.0
	D A	26	26.0
	S D A	0	0
	N R	0	0

Strongly Agree (S A), Agree (A), Un Decided (U D), Dis Agree (D A), Strongly Dis Agree (S D A), Not Respondent (N R)

The above table shows that 68 % respondent supported the statement that it focuses the preparation for exam instead of giving knowledge. Whereas only 26% denied it. The existing examination system for visually impaired children confirms the special children in the preparation to get good marks by adopting a variety of means. It can be concluded that visually impaired children not only prepare for examination but also widen their knowledge.

Table 4

Arrangements are ineffective.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Options</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Arrangements of exam are ineffective.	S A	26	26.0
	A	39	39.0
	UN D	9	9.0
	DA	22	22.0
	S D	1	1.0
	N R	3	3.0

The above table shows that 66 % respondent supported the statement that arrangements of exam are ineffective. Whereas only 23% denied it. The study revealed that the arrangements of examination for visually impaired children in all aspects are in effective.

Table 5

Weakness of teachers is also measured.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Options</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Weakness of teachers is also measured more effectively through examination system	S A	21	21.0
	A	60	60.0
	UN D	6	6.0
	D A	10	10.0
	S D	3	3.0
	N R	0	0

The above table shows that 81 % respondent supported the statement that weakness of teachers is also measured more effectively through examination system. Whereas only 13% denied it. The examination also evaluates the performance of special teachers. The study concluded that in the existing examination system for visually impaired children, the weaknesses of special teachers also come soon. Thus special teachers cover their weaknesses very soon.

Q. NO 2

What are the inadequacies in the conduct of Braille examination for Visually Impaired Children?

Table 6

Examination in Braille leads to segregation.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Options</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
The examination in Braille leads to segregation.	S A	28	28.0
	A	37	37.0
	UN D	15	15.0
	DA	14	14.0
	S D	3	3.0
	N R	3	3.0

The above table shows that 65 % respondent supported the statement that the examination in Braille leads to segregation. Whereas only 17% denied it.

Table 7

Write and Braille are commonly used for VIC.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Options</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Write and Braille system are commonly used for visually impaired children.	S A	30	30.0
	A	46	46.0
	U D	6	6.0
	DA	2	2.0
	S D	6	6.0
	N R	10	10.0

The above table shows that 76 % respondent supported the statement that write and Braille system are commonly used for visually impaired children. Whereas only 8% denied it.

Table 8

No formal examination system for Visually Impaired Children.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Options</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
There are no formal examination Procedures for visually impaired children.	S A	23	23.0
	A	37	37.0
	UD	21	21.0
	DA	4	4.0
	S D	5	5.0
	N R	10	10.0

The above table shows that 60 % respondent supported the statement that there are no formal examination procedures for visually impaired children. Whereas only 9% denied it.

Q. NO 3

What model examination system do the teachers suggest for Visually Impaired Children?

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores on examination system for visually impaired children scale of male and female teachers.

Table No 9.*t-test for Gender*

<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t-value</i>
<i>Male</i>	48	209.29	98	0.21*
<i>Female</i>	52	219.67		

* Significant at 0.05 level

The above table with t value .21 with df 98 reflects that null hypothesis, "No significant difference in the mean achievement scores on examination system for visually impaired children scale of male and female teachers" is rejected and hence it can be concluded that female teachers were more concerned (mean score 219.67) than male teachers (mean score 209.29) about the examination system for visually impaired children.

Ho 2: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students in sum of two tests.

Table 10*t-test for Gender*

<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t-value</i>
<i>Male</i>	33	59.18	48	0.21
<i>Female</i>	17	58.70		

Not significant at 0.05 level

The above table with t value .21 with df 48 reflects that null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students in Sum of two tests" is accepted and hence it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students in Sum of two tests. So we can say that male and female students performed equally in Sum of two tests.

Discussion

Sustained Examination mechanism is pivotal ingredient of educational programs of any country and nation. When examining mechanism has inadequacies and fails to bridge the gap, it adversely affects the standard of educational instructions. The prime and foremost purpose of examination is to promote teaching learning process and determine

students' achievement. Ostensibly, Examination looks the horrible and burdensome but intriguingly, it motivates for purposeful teaching and education. Students with visual impairment basically require conducive physically environmental scenario, appropriately administering and conduction of exams. The present work is linkage with inadequacies in examination for students of VI. Accordingly, the data and results retrieved from the study highlighted a few difficulties and challenges combated by students during exams (Amaele,2013).

Saleem (2012) and Saddiqi (2012) reported in his literature review and findings of the research work that responses from teachers, teaching to students with visual impairment experiencing to some extent a few difficulties and discomfortable arrangements during the examinations. Close related findings have been found and explored in the present research work where teachers of students with visual impairment have revealed unfair means, distant examination centers, overcrowded rooms without facilities for students with visual impairment. Examination system in Pakistan is not conducted as per latest communication technology and still inadequate and inappropriate. Non accessibility to students with special needs, load shedding, unfriendly environmental scenario in the exams are great and grim issues for students with visual impairment (Banyard, Dillon, Norman, & Winder, 2015).

It was suggested by the teachers that students with visual impairment may be affiliated with special arrangement, suitable ,appropriate, adequate and conducive environment as well as cooperative behavior of supervisory staff and examining entity. Pakistani existing examination system for students with visual impairment requires some changes and modifications under dire and emergent reforms. Accordingly, community, parents and school administration desire excellent performance and satisfactory results from the students with visual impairment in Pakistan (Rehmani, 2003).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current research work presented the perceptions of students with visual impairment and their teachers concerning the difficulties, inadequacies and Braille examination system for visually impaired children. Mostly participants reflected the lack of supportive services and inaccessibility to required process of their exam preparation and have far-

reaching effects that go beyond exam preparation. The process of their exam preparation has far-reaching effects on their language development, abstract thinking, problem-solving and reasoning skills, altogether affecting their quality of life. Almost the maximum teachers reported that write and Braille system was commonly used for visually impaired children. Whereas only 8% denied. It was also concluded that in Sum of two tests, no significant variance was found in the mean achievement scores in terms of gender. So we can say that all the students with V I performed equally in existing examination system for visually impaired children. Further more, teachers reported that there were no formal examination procedures for visually impaired children.

On the basis of findings of the present research work, underlying implications for policymakers are devised: Policymakers should determine that institutions with Visual impairment students provide adequate and sufficient arrangements to facilitate the learnings and teaching process. These facilities include; braille's, tactile diagrams, large-print materials, audiobooks, among others.

The students of VI needs to be permitted to appear in the examination in such types, as, by an audio recording, Braille, writer, and computer. Entire supporting services, textbooks, key documents, perspective views, and other documentations may be managed both in Braille and soft form. If learners and candidates are provided with these facilities in taking the examination, students' experiences can be researched using qualitative methods.

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Citation of the Article:

Khalid, M. N, Shakir, M. A & Shafiq, F. (2022). An exploratory study on inadequacies in examination system for visually impaired children in Punjab. *Journal of Inclusive Education*, 6, 1-12

Received on: 4th Aug, 2022

Revised on: 15th Nov, 2022

Accepted on: 15th Nov, 2022