

Why Inclusive Education in Punjab?

Policy Brief

**A Case for Children
with Disability**



Issue

Pakistan's recent education indicators reveal that it is falling short of its Millennium Development Goal and Education For All targets.

- Net enrolment at primary level in Punjab is 70% for urban and 59% for rural, and about 16% children aged 6-16 years are out of school
- Almost half the students enrolled in primary school do not complete their education

There is a rising concern in the number of children who are out of school. About 33% are estimated to be children with disabilities.

13% are street children, while the remainder include refugees and children living in conflict situations. Inclusive education is about improving education systems so that all out of school children have access to quality education.

The World Disability Report of 2011 indicates that the prevalence of disability may be as high as 13.4%. Recent data from carpet surveys of 80,000 households in 23 Union Councils conducted by Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund has clearly revealed that 8% of the population is disabled and that every fifth disabled person is a child.

The same data has also shown that the prevalence of children who are disabled in the age group 0 - 14 years is about 3%-4%.

The prevalence for the age group 5 - 14 years is 3.5%.

In Punjab, there are an estimated 34 million children under the age of 15 years. Out of 27 million children who are school aged, there are an estimated 0.94 million children in the school aged group who are disabled.

Currently, there are 40,000 disabled children enrolled in 240 government special education and 50 private/NGO run schools in Punjab.

Where are the rest?

Inclusive Education is integral to the new National Education Policy 2009

Every fifth disabled person is a child

Every third child who is out of school is disabled

There are 0.94 million disabled school aged children in Punjab

Only 40,000 are studying in various special schools

What is Punjab going to do about this?

The School Reforms Road Map of Punjab would be incomplete without Inclusive Education

Opportunities

Punjab has a network of 240 government special schools and about 50 private/NGO run special/inclusive schools across the province. However, majority of these schools are situated in urban centres. This poses challenges for children in rural areas to access these schools.

On the other hand, there are over 60,000 general schools in the province located close to the communities.

The technical expertise for assessing children with disability lies with special educa-

tion, while the opportunity for geographic access lies with general education.

Furthermore, more than 80% of disabled children can be enrolled in general schools if teachers are provided additional training, the curriculum and learning materials are made disability friendly, and minimal changes in classrooms can greatly enhance enrolment and retention.

Conclusion

Special Education can play a critical role in promoting inclusive education by working alongside general teachers to build their capacities to teach children with mild to moderate disability.

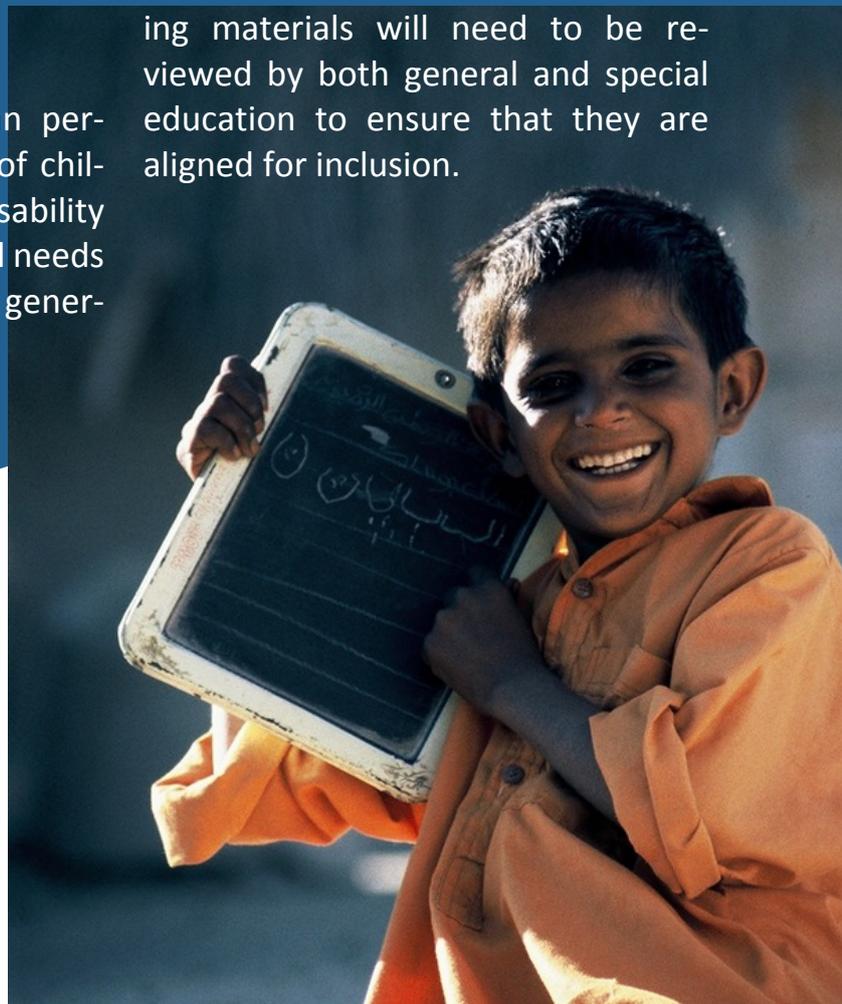
Special education schools can perform functional assessments of children identified as having a disability to determine their educational needs and appropriate placement in general schools.

Children with severe disability can continue to be enrolled in special schools.

The education curriculum and learning materials will need to be reviewed by both general and special education to ensure that they are aligned for inclusion.

“The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law”

Article 25-A, Chapter No 1: Fundamental Rights - Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan



Recommendations

Define a joint coordination mechanism between education, special education and health for planning, implementation, monitoring and review of inclusive education

Establish a core group to facilitate development and implementation of inclusive education

Train teacher educators in inclusive education and incorporate similar modules into training programmes for pre-service and in-service teachers

Strengthen special education centres to conduct functional assessment of disabled children and to operate as nodal or resource centres for general education

Incorporate mandatory inclusion of disability indicators in Education and Health Management Information Systems and enhance capacities at various data collection tiers for improved information flow



Selected Bibliography

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- Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey 2010-11
- Strengthening Inclusive Education. Asian Development Bank. 2010
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