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Violence Inflicted on Students with Disabilities in Special Education Institutions at Public Sector: A Remedial Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

The central theme of this investigation was to explore types of violence being inflicted on students with disabilities (deaf, blind, mentally retarded and physically handicapped) enrolled at primary grade level in private and public sector Special Education Institutions in Punjab-Pakistan. A sample of randomly selected 5 districts (Lahore, Gujranwala, Okara, Pakpattan, Rawalpindi) out of 36 districts of Punjab was taken. A conveniently available sample of 68 special education teachers (male: 22, female: 46) including 20 Senior Special Education Teachers (SSET) and 48 Junior Special Education Teachers (JSET) was taken to collect data on a self-developed and validated questionnaire with statistically significant reliability index (Cronbach Alpha: 0.85) containing 30 statements on violence on five point Likert type scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The data were collected personally and with the help of research assistants. Data were analyzed on SPSS version 21. Descriptive analysis was run to find frequency distribution of responses, percentages and mean score. Independent sample t-test was employed to find difference in responses of special education teachers on the basis of gender. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run to find difference in the opinions of special education teachers on the basis of their age, qualifications, and teaching experience. There was statistically substantial variation in the responses of special education teachers based on their qualifications. There was not statistically significant difference among the responses of special education teachers on the basis of their gender, age and teaching experience. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations to Punjab Special Education Department were made.

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1. Introduction

There are approximately 150 million children with disabilities in the world. Figures state that the levels of violence in disabled children are three to four times greater than non-disabled children in technologically advanced countries (Devries, Kyegombe, Zuurmond, Parkes, Child, Walakira & Naker, 2014). Children with hearing, vision, physical or intellectual disabilities are an easy victim of violence at home, in school, in community, at workplace and in all other social institutions. All children are an easy prey to violence, but children with disabilities are more at risk due to unawareness and ignorance of the caregivers, decreased support from society, negative attitude and lack of awareness of people towards disability, stigmatization and marginalization, reduced chances for education, limited job opportunities and decreased community participation (Chen, & Astor, 2010). All these factors lead to isolation of children with disabilities and their families which results in increased levels of familial distress and suffering (Unicef, 2005), Sobsey and Calder, (2014) also report that disabled persons are at risk to crimes including physical or sexual violence, because it is difficult for them to identify danger, protect themselves, and take help from the courts of justice (Şahbal, Sema, and Sevgi TIMBİL, 2016; Anderson, Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Huesmann, Johnson, Linz, Malamuth & Wartella, 2003).

In many settings, children with disabilities are less likely to be attending school, and have lower levels of educational attainment than their peers. Understanding barriers to school attendance and performance is crucial for understanding how to improve the experience of disabled children in schools (Devries, Kyegombe, Zuurmond, Parkes, Child, Walakira & Naker, 2014). Violence can take the form of a physical, verbal or emotional offense, or it can have a more pervasive effect in the form of an aggressive relationship. Violence can be aimed towards the victim directly or indirectly, through rumors and gossip to which students are exposed. In addition, research findings have revealed that in general, boys are victims of violence more often than girls. The consequences of violent behavior influence the school's environment, have an effect on the personal welfare of students and cause feelings of unsafety around school (Blain-Arcaro, Smith, Cunningham, Vaillancourt, & Rimas, 2012; Vizer, 2015).

Almost 15% of adults have some sort of disability globally. This number is being increased due to elderly population, the vulnerability of disability in ageing people and a global increase in chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer, mental and cardiovascular problems (Beyene, Chojenta, Roba, Melka, & Loxton, 2019; Ward, Artz, Leoschut, Kassanjee, & Burton, 2018). It is now a main precedence to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and let them participate in society stresses by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. To support act on this urgency, the World Report on Disability collected information about the prevalence of disability globally, its effects on betterment and finding ways to overcome obstacles undergone by disabled population (Hughes, Bellis, Jones, Wood, Bates, Eckley, McCoy, Mikton, Shakespeare, Officer, 2012; WHO, 2011). In societies where there is stigma against those with disability, research indicates that some parents respond with violence because of the shame the child had brought on the family or respond with violence because a lack of social support leads to intense stress within the family (Groce, 2005).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the design to attain a viable, supportive and better future for all human beings. These goals state the worldwide challenges related to poverty, discrimination, peace and justice, healthy nations, quality education, clean water, efficient use of energy, recycling of waste material, clean air, industrial innovations, climate change etc. The Goal 16 deals with promoting just, non-violent and inclusive communities with strong institutions (Ansong, Okumu, Bowen, Walker, & Eisensmith, 2017; Romero, Halln & Cluver, 2019). For sustainable development, it is inevitable to reduce the threats of international assassinations, and violence in all forms against children (Chen & Astor, 2011). It paves the way for providing access to justice at all levels and for all and for constructing operative, responsible, and answerable institutions at all levels (Devries, Fabbri, Allen, Barongo, Shayo, Greco, Kaemingk, Qiu, Steinacher & Rodrigues, 2019; United Nations Organization, 2015).

The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan has clearly condemned any form of violence against children. Article 25 (1) of the Constitution of Pakistan describes that "all citizens are equal before law and entitled to equal protection of law". Article 37 (a) of the Convention goes that "no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" (The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973). The National Commission for Child Welfare and Development (NCCWD) is working under the domain of Ministry of Human Rights. This organization is responsible for coordinating, monitoring and facilitating to implement the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It also takes care of other national and international agendas concerning the

rights of children. The NCCWD also presents compulsory reports periodically on implementation of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, Geneva and other quarters (Ministry of Human Rights, 2019).

All religions of the world preach love, peace and violence free societies. Islam is a complete code of life. The holy Quran and Hadith teach to be beneficial to all humanity. The holy prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that one cannot be declared a Muslim if he does not respect elders and love youngsters.

2. Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore different kinds of violence being inflicted on children with disabilities enrolled in Government Special Education Centres in Punjab.
2. To sought opinions of special education teachers about using violent behaviour to maintain discipline in the classroom.
3. To find difference between the opinions of special education teachers regarding use of violence in the classroom on the basis of their gender.
4. To find difference in the opinions of special education teachers regarding use of violence in the classroom on the basis of age, qualifications and experience.
5. To give remedial suggestions to eliminate all sorts of violence in special education institutions.

3. Methodology

The study was a descriptive survey research. The study consisted of all SE teachers serving in Govt. Special Education Centres located in five districts of the province of Punjab. A randomly selected sample of 68 special education teachers (male: 22, female: 46) including 20 Senior Special Education Teachers (SSET) and 48 Junior Special Education Teachers (JSET) was taken from randomly selected five districts (Lahore, Gujranwala, Okara, Pakpattan, Rawalpindi) for the collection of data. Their age ranged between 20 to 45 years. They were having experience between one to 25 years. They were having qualification between Bachelor to M.Phil.

The instrument of the study was a questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part include demographic characteristics of the sample containing gender, age, qualifications, teaching experience, designation, locale (urban, rural) and district. The second part consisted of 30 statements on five point Likert type scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The reliability index of the questionnaire was .85 (Cronbach Alpha) which was statistically significant. The questionnaire was validated by a panel of three experts from the field of special education. Initially, there were 36 statements related to different types of violence being inflicted on children with disabilities by the special education teachers. On the suggestions of the experts, six statements were removed which were not contributing to the validity of the questionnaire. Out of 30, seven statements were rephrased.

The data were collected personally by the researchers and with the help of a research assistant. First of all, consent of the head teachers of different centres located in 15 districts in the Punjab was sought. Due to the summer vacations, permission was granted by the heads of only five Government Special Education Centres located in five districts which is insufficient to generalize the results. Another study will be conducted to collect data from more districts for making sample representative and generalizing the results.

The data collected from special education teachers were analyzed on SPSS (IBM, version 21). The demographic information of the sample was tabulated. Frequency distribution of special education teachers' responses was calculated. Independent Sample *t*-test was applied to find difference between the responses of special education teachers about the use of different types of violence on the basis of their gender. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run to find difference among the responses of special education teachers about the use of different types of violence on the basis of their age, qualifications and teaching experience.

Table 1

Special education teachers' demographic information

Variables	Description	Number	Percentage%
Gender	Male	22	32.4

	Female	46	67.7
Age	20-25	4	5.9
	26-30	25	36.8
	31-35	18	26.5
	36-40	13	19.1
	41-45	8	11.8
	Total	68	100
Area	Urban	51	75.0
	Rural	17	25.0
	Total	68	100
Experience	1-5 yrs.	27	39.7
	6-10	25	36.8
	11-15	11	16.2
	16-20	3	4.4
	21-25	2	2.9
	Total	68	100
Qualifications	JSET	48	70.6
	SSET	20	29.4
	Total	68	100
Districts	Lahore	16	23.5
	Gujranwala	25	36.7
	Okara	12	17.6
	Pakpatan	9	13.2
	Rawalpindi	6	8.8
	Total	68	100

Table 2

Frequency distribution of special education teachers' responses

S. No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree to some extent %	Agree %	Strongly agree %
1.	I have to scold children to maintain discipline in classroom.	4.4	33.8	26.5	22.1	13.2
2.	Children get attentive after scolding and learn their lesson better.	10.3	33.8	25.0	22.1	8.8
3.	I have to punish children physically in classroom for their mischievous behaviour.	19.1	33.8	30.9	10.3	5.9
4.	After punishment children pay more attention to their lesson.	14.7	38.2	27.9	16.2	2.9
5.	I have to create fear in children to control them in classroom.	14.7	27.9	32.4	16.2	8.8
6.	After creating my fear in children their learning ability gets better.	20.6	26.5	29.4	17.6	5.9
7.	I have to shout frequently in the class room to refrain children from making a noise.	19.1	42.6	13.2	14.7	10.3
8.	On my shouting, the children get silent and pay attention to their lesson.	25.0	33.8	23.5	10.3	7.4
9.	I have to tap the table frequently to control children	16.2	29.4	13.2	19.1	22.1

	in the classroom					
10.	After taping the table the children get controlled and pay attention to their lesson.	20.6	22.1	16.2	20.6	20.6
11.	I have to punish children physically in the classroom for fighting with one another.	32.4	44.1	20.6	1.5	1.5
12.	After physical punishment children pay more attention to their lesson.	30.9	45.6	20.6	1.5	1.5
13.	I have to frighten children with a stick on dozing in classroom.	29.4	35.3	20.6	2.9	11.8
14.	The children get ready for learning lesson after getting frightened.	17.6	38.2	26.5	7.4	10.3
15.	I give examples of intelligent children in classroom.	11.8	13.2	16.2	38.2	20.6
16.	The children get influenced after giving examples of intelligent children and they learn their lesson in a better way.	11.8	14.7	26.5	27.9	19.1
17.	I have to get children out from classroom on violating discipline.	7.4	36.8	41.2	4.4	10.3
18.	After getting out of classroom, the children learn a lesson and pay attention to their studies.	17.6	32.4	35.3	7.4	7.4
19.	I have to call children with bad names in classroom to make them attentive.	42.6	50.0	4.4	2.9	0.0
20.	Children feel ashamed on calling with bad names and pay attention to their lesson.	47.1	44.1	5.9	1.5	1.5
21.	I have to make children under pressure to stop them from going out of classroom through making lame excuses.	17.6	61.8	14.7	5.9	0.0
22.	After being under pressure, the children remain in control and pay attention to their lesson.	35.3	47.1	11.8	4.7	1.5
23.	I have to pull children's ear when they don't do their homework.	22.1	55.9	7.4	2.9	11.8
24.	After getting their ear pulled, the children do their homework.	20.6	57.4	7.4	2.9	11.8
25.	I have to insult the children frequently when they don't answer the questions.	26.5	47.1	13.2	2.9	10.3
26.	Due to fear of being insulted in front of their classmates they pay more attention to their lesson.	25.0	46.5	13.2	7.4	8.8
27.	I frequently make the children stand in the	35.3	50.0	11.8	0.0	2.9

classroom on coming late.					
28. On standing for a long time on coming late, the children become active to learn lesson.	41.2	38.2	17.6	0.0	2.9
29. I frequently hit the children with a stick on not learning the lesson.	51.5	39.7	5.9	1.5	1.5
30. After getting beaten with a stick the children learn their lesson quickly.	47.1	36.8	13.2	1.5	1.5

Table 3

ANOVA for difference in special education teachers' responses about violence inflicted on students with disabilities on the basis of age

Age	<i>SS</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
Between groups	537.167	4	134.291	.317
Within the groups	26703.778	63	423.869	
Total	27240.941	67		

Table 3 reflects that ANOVA was applied according to age to show the variation in special education teachers' responses about violence inflicted on students with disabilities in special education institutions. Teachers' responses were collected on different types of violence inflicted on students with disabilities. There was no statistically significant difference among the responses of teachers on the basis of their age $F(4, 63) = .317$, $p = .866$. It means that special education teachers' opinions were same on the basis of age regarding types of violence being inflicted on students with disabilities.

Table 4

ANOVA for difference in special education teachers' responses about violence inflicted on students with disabilities on the basis of teaching experience

Experience	<i>SS</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
Between groups	1772.305	4	443.076	1.096
Within the groups	25468.636	63	404.264	
Total	27240.941	67		

Table 4 depicts that ANOVA was applied keeping in view teaching experience to show the variation in special education teachers' responses about violence inflicted on students with disabilities in special education institutions. Teachers' responses were collected on different type of violence inflicted on students with disabilities. There was no statistically significant difference among the responses of teachers on the basis of their job experience $F(4, 63) = 1.096$, $p = .366$. It means that special education teachers' responses were same on the basis of experience regarding types of violence being inflicted on students with disabilities.

Table 5

ANOVA for difference in special education teachers' responses about violence inflicted on students with disabilities on the basis of qualifications

Qualification	SS	DF	M	F
Between groups	2551.079	3	850.360	2.204
Within the groups	24689.863	64	385.779	
Total	27240.941	67		

Table 5 exhibits that ANOVA was run keeping in view qualifications to show the variation in special education teachers' responses about violence inflicted on students with disabilities in special education institutions. Teachers' responses were collected on different types of violence inflicted on students with disabilities. There was statistically substantial variation in the responses of special education teachers based on their qualifications $F(3, 64) = 2.204$, $p = .096$. It shows that special education teachers' responses were different on the basis of qualifications regarding types of violence being inflicted on students with disabilities.

Table 6

Independent sample t-test for difference in special education teachers' responses about violence inflicted on students with disabilities on the basis of male and female

Variable	Male			Female			95% CI for	T	DF
Violence	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	means diff.		
Total score	73.09	18.815	22	70.78	20.983	46	-8.191,12.807	.439	66

Table 6 indicates that there was no significant difference between special education teachers' responses about violence inflicted on students with disabilities in special education institutions (male $(M = 73.09, SD = 18.815)$ (female SE teachers $(M = 70.78, SD = 20.983)$; $t(66) = .439$, $p = .662$ (two-tailed). There was difference in the means (Mean difference = 2.308% CI: -8.191 to 12.807). It shows that responses of special education teachers (both genders) were not different about violence inflicted on students with disabilities in special education institutions.

4. Discussion on Major Findings

Major findings reflected that 62% special education teachers responded that they scolded children with disabilities to maintain discipline in classroom which helped them to get children's attention for learning lessons. On the other hand 53% teachers disagreed on punishing children with disabilities physically for maintaining discipline in classroom and drawing their attention to lessons. But 47% teachers agreed on inflicting physical punishment on children with disabilities for maintaining discipline which is a matter of concern as Government of Pakistan has put restrictions on all types of punishments in schools. It is also alarming that they had to create their fear in children to control them in classroom and get them ready for learning. Now the question arises that how can learning take place in the presence of fear in the heads of children with disabilities who require more attention and loving attitude? Moreover, 41% special education teachers responded that they used to shout in classroom to make children silent for lesson. It is good to note that 97% teachers disagreed on punishing children with disabilities physically for fighting with one another. A large number of teachers (85%) disagreed on using a stick to frighten children on dozing in the classroom. On the other hand, 44% teachers agreed on frightening children with a stick for remaining active and learning lesson in the classroom. This higher percentage is in conflict with that of the previous statement.

The majority of special education teachers (75%) responded that they used to give examples of intelligent students in classroom to motivate the other children and 74% teachers agreed that this act was beneficial to the children in learning their lessons. Sometimes, teacher's appreciation for others poses negative effects on his students and they start feeling themselves inferior to others.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made on the basis of major findings:

1. All types of physical punishment should be banned in all educational institutions of children with disabilities.

2. The Government of Pakistan should assure the implementation of the laws mentioned in the Constitution of Pakistan regarding discouraging all forms of violence.
3. The special education teachers should be trained in dealing with children with disabilities with love and without creating their fear in children.

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