

## **Pre-Vocational and Vocational Training Programs for the Persons with Disabilities in Karachi, Pakistan**

*<sup>1</sup>Shahida Sajjad, <sup>2</sup>Muhammad Farooq Joubish and <sup>2</sup>Muhammad Ashraf Khurram*

<sup>1</sup>Department of Special Education, Karachi University, Pakistan

<sup>2</sup>Department of Education, Federal Urdu University, Pakistan

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**Abstract:** This research study has been designed to investigate the status of pre-vocational and vocational training programs for the persons with disabilities in Karachi. Data were collected with the help of structured questionnaire from 23 special schools located in Karachi and selected through purposive sampling. Hypotheses were tested through percentage and Chi-square method. Results of the study indicated that most of the special schools were offering only pre-vocational training programs and few schools were offering vocational courses. The reason for providing vocational courses was that fewer resources were needed to conduct the courses and not because of the market demands. There was no standard curriculum for the vocational courses offered to special students. The special schools did not have any record as to where as the students were absorbed after leaving the schools. Some students got jobs in the skill areas in which they were trained, some got jobs in other areas and some were said to "go home" with no further details on their activities. It was concluded that there are no such affective pre-vocational and vocational training programs for the persons with disabilities in Karachi.

**Key words:** Career guidance • Vocational training • Communication skills • Special students

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In Pakistan since 1980, interest in vocational rehabilitation, vocational training and placement of disabled has increased considerably. The education for the person with disabilities, vocational skills training facilities, career guidance and counseling, job finding, organizational and institutional support all are needed to do this work in different places to cater to the adverse training needs of at least 1.1 million young people of fourteen to twenty year's age. Vocational training centers for person with disabilities need co-ordination with National Training Bureau of the Ministry of Labor for the purpose of employment and placement of trained disabled persons in suitable jobs. Government of Pakistan has promoted various schemes for the rehabilitation of the disabled [1]. Accelerated implementation of Disabled Persons (Employment and Rehabilitation) Ordinance 1981 by National Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled persons is a relatively important step taken by government. The main characteristics of the Ordinance are fixing two percent

quota in all agencies, which employ more than 100 persons.

There are many institutions/ schools established by Government and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) offering pre-vocational and vocational training programs for the disabled persons in Pakistan. This study was carried out to investigate the status of pre-vocational and vocational training programs for the persons with disability offered by special to revise curricula focusing vocational training programs to match with the business market demand.

**Methodology:** This was an exploratory research and the data were collected with the help of structured questionnaire by interviewing administrators/ principals or senior teachers of 23 special schools including 4 schools of visually impaired, 7 schools of hearing impaired, 8 schools of mentally retarded and 4 schools of physically handicapped persons selected through purposive sampling. The questionnaire consisted of 5 sections having 23 items. The first section was designed to get general information about special schools. Section

two contained information about pre-vocational and vocational training programs included in the syllabus of school. Third section was designed to obtain information about the teaching aids and equipment used for pre-vocational and vocational training of students and the facilities provided to the students to cater their special needs. Fourth section gave information about the availability of trained vocational teachers. Fifth section highlighted the relationship between vocational training and job settlement of special students. The questionnaire used both pre-coded items as well as open-ended items framed for in-depth information. Hypotheses were tested through percentage method and Chi-square method.

**Objectives of the Study:**

- To find out the available pre-vocational and vocational training facilities in government and non-government special education schools/ centers of Karachi.
- To find out the courses offered by special schools for pre-vocational and vocational training programs.
- To explore the relevance between the market demand and vocational training extended to disabled persons.
- To observe the equipment used for vocational training of special students and other facilities provided by special schools to cater the needs of these students.
- To find out the availability of trained vocational teachers in special schools of Karachi.
- To investigate the matching of vocational training with job settlement of disabled students.

**Findings**

**Type of Vocational Training Courses Offered by Special Schools:**

Table 1 elucidates that the largest of schools in Karachi i.e. 73.9% offered artwork. The second large group of schools i.e. 21.7% was offering music training, next comes the group of schools providing computer training, embroidery and plaster of Paris work. (13% each).

**Vocational Training Courses Offered by Special Schools:**

Table 2 represents that the majority of the special schools (61%) were not providing vocational training where as only 39% schools were providing vocational training.

**Reasons for Offering These Courses:**

It was found and as indicated through table 3 that majority of the schools in Karachi (45%) were offering these courses as fewer resources are needed to conduct them. The next highest number of schools gave the reason as demand of the market 33%.

**Types of Equipment for Vocational Training in Special Schools:**

While inquiring about the types of equipment present in schools, as indicated in table 4, the highest number of schools had sewing machines, music instrument and broilers (21.73% each).

**Students Absorbed after Training:**

The response in table 5 provides information about the settlement of the students in various jobs, Majority of the students (11.25%) became teachers and the second highest numbers were self-employed and became carpenter (7.50% each).

Table 1: Type of Vocational Training Courses Offered in Schools

Types of Training	No.	%(out of 23)	Types of Training	No	%(out of 23)
Tailoring	03	13.0	Plaster of Paris	03	13.0
Pottery	01	4.4	Art Work	17	73.9
Telephone Operator	01	4.4	Beautician	01	4.4
Typing	04	17.4	Packing	02	8.7
Computer	03	13.0	Cooking	01	4.4
Cane work	01	4.4	Accounts	01	4.4
Ceramic work	02	8.7	Gardening	02	8.7
Wood work	02	8.7	Education toys making	01	4.4
Book Binding	02	8.7	Embroidery	03	13.0
Block printing	02	8.7	Weaving (Khaddi work)	01	4.4
Leather work	01	4.4	Knitting	02	8.7
Electrical work	02	8.7	Music	05	21.7
Mechanical work	02	8.7			

Table 2: Provision of vocational training by special schools

Response	No	%
Schools provide vocational training	09	39
Schools do not provide vocational training	14	61
Total	23	100

Table 3: Reasons for providing vocational training

Response	No	%
Demand of market	03	33
Less resources are needed to conduct the courses	04	45
Vocational teachers are easily available for these courses	01	11
Vocational training s necessary for special children	01	11
Total	09	100

Table 4: Equipment for vocational training present in schools

Equipment	No.	%	Equipment	No	%
Sewing machine	05	21.73	Writing frames	04	17.39
Type writer	04	17.39	Slates	04	17.30
Computer	03	13.04	Abacus	04	17.39
Knitting machine	03	13.04	Leather work tools	01	04.35
Wood work tools	02	08.69	Tools for block printing	03	13.04
Packing machine	02	08.69	Broiler	05	21.73
Unit of boo binding	02	08.69	Welding plant	02	08.69
Perkins machine	04	17.39	Machine lathe	02	08.69
Music instruments	05	21.73	Weaving frame	01	04.35
Television and VCR	02	08.69	Gardening tools	02	08.69
Radio & Cassette recorder	02	08.69	Kitchen set	01	04.35
Low vision devices	04	17.39			

Table 5: Students absorbed after completing education and training

Response	No.	%	Response	No	%
Advertising	05	6.25	Pakistan International Airlines (PIA)	01	01.25
Business	05	6.25	Self-employment	06	07.50
Carpentry	06	7.5	Shopkeeper	04	05.00
Computer Operator	02	2.50	Tailoring	05	06.25
C.P.L.C.	02	2.50	Teaching	09	11.25
Dress Designing	03	3.75	Teacher aide	02	02.50
Handicrafts	05	6.25	Technician	04	05.00
Hospitals	03	3.75	Telephone operator	02	02.50
Management	01	2.50	Vending	01	01.25
Multinational Co.	03	3.75	Weaving	03	03.75
Musician	04	5.00			
Office Assistant	03	3.75			
Total				80	100

## DISCUSSION

Through our study it was generally observed that most of the special schools/institutes are offering only pre-vocational training programs and very few are providing vocational courses with a blend of academic subjects. Pre-vocational training included development of

fine motor skills, gross motor skills, eye-hand coordination, pre-writing skills, pre-reading skills, mathematical skills, social skills and communication skills. Activities like painting, cutting, bead threading etc. were included in the pre-vocational curriculum for developing fine motor skills. Activities for learning concepts of number, quantity, mass and volume were included in the

curriculum for developing mathematical skills. Similarly for developing social skills, communication skills included both expressive and receptive language development. It was also observed that some of the activities were common for developing different areas e.g. gripping was used for fine motor development and at the same time also for developing pre-writing skills.

In the schools of mentally retarded persons the emphasis is given on prevocational training, where as artwork, bookbinding, block printing and gardening were offered to students as vocational subjects. In the schools of hearing impaired persons, artwork, typing, compute, knitting, embroidery, tailoring and plaster of Paris work was popular as vocational subject. In the schools of visually impaired persons, there was a trend of teaching music, training as telephone operator and training in cane work. In the schools of physically handicapped persons, electrical work, mechanical work and weaving was more popular.

A study conducted by a Pakistani researcher, revealed the same results that the vocational training in most of the schools is of pre-vocational training in nature [2]. A similar situation can be seen in the experience of other countries e.g. in Taiwan it was found that most of the curricula of adult education institutes were regular curriculum for the elementary and junior high level students, basic 3R and basic life skills for the adult [3]. Some other research studies indicated the vocational training provided in other countries, for example, the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons' Board in Mauritius is offering the courses in telephone operation, computer skills, wood work, leather craft, horticulture, dressmaking, handicraft ship, jewelry, hairdressing, mechanics and electronics.

In USA, many schools are providing instructions in such areas as ceramics, sheet metal, foundry, welding, auto mechanics, auto body and painting, food service, home maintenance, individual business skills and other vocational areas [4]. Many schools in their curricula blend together the academic, recreational, independent-living and vocational training areas so that each individual can be more thoroughly prepared for community placement possibilities [5].

Our study revealed that while in Pakistan, courses with identical names are provided in several schools, there are however no standard curricula. The lack of a standard curriculum is compounded by the fact that the level of training courses is relatively low, with the result that students are not adequately prepared for work, which they will be required to meet in open employment.

Majority of the schools are offering courses, which are not certified by Technical Board and hence the quality and standard of their curricula could be doubtful. In the new Education Policy of Pakistan [6], it is mentioned that the technical and vocational curricula will be completely revised in consultation with the industrial sector. In this new educational policy it is also mentioned that 305 new secondary vocational institutions will be opened.

In this study it was found that most of the vocational training courses are offered because vocational teachers are easily available for conducting these courses and also because fewer resources are needed to conduct these courses and not on the basis of market demand of vocational courses. One school also mentioned that the reason for including cane work as a vocational subject is for the motor development of disabled students and not for job placement or vocational purpose as cane work is no more in fashion. It is interesting that most of the schools to be "facility driven" in that they train students in the particular skills which they have the equipment and the instructor, rather than in the skills for which their clients want and for which there is a demand in the market place. Harper and Momm [7] also highlighted the same situation obtaining in Asia and Africa. "Many vocational training institutions are thus training people in skills for which there is little or no demand. Disabled people who have been trained in institution are even less likely than able-bodied to find a job or to start a successful enterprise of their own."

Most of the schools were providing vocational training of maximum one-year duration (including three months vacations). When asked for the time spent for vocational training per week it was found that most of the schools were spending 1-5 hours per week, so we can say that the maximum duration of training was almost 180 hours per year. This duration is not sufficient to get mastery on the skills required to do the job and to compete with the able bodied persons e.g. computer training provided in many schools is not sufficient to have mastery on the skill and hence to compete with the personnel who are trained by recognized computer institutes. Harper and Momm [8] endorsed the view as to these disabled people will presumably need more rather than less training than able-bodied, partly because of their physical disabilities and partly because of the need for emotional rehabilitation.

In majority of the schools, the training equipment were present but not sufficient to adequately meet the requirement of disabled students e.g. the computers were present but the use of internet could not be observed.

Whatever equipment was present, its proper utilization was not guaranteed. The wide applications of accessible information communication and technologies in education and independent living of children having special needs has enhanced special students performance, motivation and satisfaction along with other academic outcomes such as social adjustment, stress relaxation, problem solving and collaborative learning and encouragement to reinforce. A great number of recent technological innovations for orthopedically, visually and hearing impaired individuals have dramatically expanded their job possibilities. The efficiency of computers, though potentially promising for disabled persons, is at present somewhat limited. In a study conducted by Odetii [9], it was found that disabled worker with a solid back ground in information technologies and telematic related fields can today reach a high employment profile, just like every worker, from the public administration domain to the field of services, to independent job. It was also noted through our study that all the schools do not have the facility of psychological assessment, speech therapy and physiotherapy to cater special needs of students.

In Pakistan, being a developing country, lack of professional personnel for vocational preparation in schools is another problem. This study revealed that majority of the schools did not have trained vocational teachers and majority of the teachers were holding certificates or diploma and very few had master's degree. A study conducted by Shah [10] also mentioned that the teachers are not provided with appropriate systematic training in Pakistan. They usually train themselves on their own. The system for staff development and the equipment procurement is not even worth mentioning. A similar situation can be observed in the area of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). There are practically not cables and whatever cables exist, are not fitted or linked with internet to allow remote resources to be integrated into classroom instruction. The concept of technology instructor or coordinator is yet to be realized. "Yet much is to be done," is a remark by a Pakistani observer close to the scene [11].

A similar situation is found in USA, which is a developed country. Brolin [12] has mentioned that the psychologists, occupational therapists, vocational counselor, Speech therapists and representatives of other crucial disciplines are often few in numbers in special schools.

On leaving the school, some special students get jobs in the skill areas in which they were trained, some get jobs in other areas. Some students are said to 'go home',

with no further details on their activities. Schools do not have a record to provide information about job placement of students. Thus, it is not possible to say what the longer-term job retention rate is. A local newspaper highlighted that "The education that special children receive has to have a professional or skill development orientation so that the physically handicapped persons are able to earn a living and not be dependent on others [13].

Owing to the pioneering work of voluntary organization (NGOs) and the initiative taken by the Government since 1980, the educational provisions for special children have witnessed an increase, but still a great number of disabled need provision of educational and vocational training facilities. It is also mentioned in a study conducted by Shah that the special education institutions are hardly serving more than 19% of the school going special children i.e. 22% of the total population of visually impaired children; 28% of hearing impaired; 15% of physical disabled; 13% of mentally retarded and 22% of multiple handicapped. (Shah, K.H. 2003) [14].

## CONCLUSION

- Most of the special schools are offering only pre-vocational training programs.
- There is no standard curricula and only those vocational skills are taught for which vocational teachers are easily available and also because fewer resources are needed and not on the basis of market demand. More over the duration of vocational courses is not sufficient to get mastery on the skills required to do a job and to compete with the able bodied persons.
- Most of the schools were having annual system of assessment, but still significant number of schools had no assessment system at all. These were schools teaching mentally retarded children. Many schools have all different types of assessment system like; monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annual system.
- Due to the shortage of teachers in schools the teacher-student ratio is high i.e. 1:15, which is not and ideal situation in Pakistan.
- The training equipment is present in most of the schools but not sufficient to the need of students or is not properly utilized due to non-availability of trained vocational teachers.
- All the schools do not have the facilities of psychological assessment, speech therapy and physiotherapy to cater the special needs of students.

- There is a lack of trained vocational teachers due to insufficient teachers' training facilities.
- The special schools do not have any record about the job placement of their ex-students. Some of the special students were employed by their own schools, where as others got job in fields not compatible with the training they got in their schools. Some of the students were absorbed in their family business.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The existing courses should be reviewed in terms of their relevance to employment and self-employment opportunities. In revising the vocational training program, the model of on-job training could also be explored.
- The International Labor Organization can provide technical assistance and advice to the Ministry of Special Education and Social Welfare Pakistan for greater investment in training equipment.
- Administrators have to develop a proper professional staff structure in the rehabilitation field with routes of promotion, staff training and staff upgrading.
- All the schools should have a proper system of assessment of vocational courses and other academics to evaluate the achievements of students and also the quality and effectiveness of training programs.

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