

## Assessment and Therapy Facilities for Students with Disabilities by the Special Schools in 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

**Abstract:** This research study has been designed to investigate the available assessment and therapy facilities for students with disabilities provided by the special schools in Pakistan. These facilities included; psychological, speech, language audio-logical and performance assessment and provision of speech and physiotherapy facilities by government and non-government special schools of Pakistan. The data was collected with the help of structured questionnaire from 62 special schools of visually impaired, hearing impaired, mentally retarded and physically handicapped persons, located in Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Islamabad and selected through purposive sampling. Hypotheses were tested through percentage method and Chi-square method and the results were interpreted and findings were compiled to give a clear picture of study. The results of the study indicated that most of the special schools do not have the facilities of psychological assessment, speech and language assessment, audiological assessment, speech therapy and physiotherapy to cater the special needs of students. In conclusion, most of the schools were having annual system of performance assessment, but still significant number of schools had no assessment system at all.

**Key words:** Speech-therapy • Audio-logical • Learning • Physiotherapy • Psychological assessment

### INTRODUCTION

Assessment for students with disabilities is necessary and possible from one or more angles [1].

- Medical-the functional and/or organic limitations imposed by the disability;
- Physiological and physical-the actual physical performance in terms of effort and working capacity;
- Psychological-to assess intelligence, mechanical and constructional aptitudes, interests, etc;
- Vocational-to evaluate level of skills, aptitude, occupational abilities, etc. Assessment of this nature can evaluate work performance under actual work conditions, indicates to degree of work tolerance-the hours a person can work without due fatigue, ability to stand noise, hurry, bustle, interruptions, etc. It can assist in developing self-confidence, self-reliance and personal adequacy; and help the disabled person to realize and accept his or her own potentialities and also help in vocational orientation.

Assessment in special education setting is used for various purpose like; screening and diagnosis of disability, designing Individualized Educational Plan

(IEP), educational, vocational or job placement of disabled and evaluation of students' progress and performance. Assessment data are used to clarify and verify the existence of educational problems in the area of academic functioning, behavioral and social adaptation and physical development. Assessment also provides data for decision making pertinent in special education assessment: referral, screening, classification, instructional planning and evaluation of pupil progress [2]. Unfortunately, in our institutes the process of assessment is probably inappropriate and obtained in a haphazard manner, which is unable to show the strengths and weaknesses of the child [3].

This study explored the assessment and therapy facilities for students with disabilities provided by the special schools in Pakistan.

**Methodology:** This was an exploratory research. The sample of the study consisted of 62 schools/institutes of special education selected through purposive sampling. Out of these 62 schools, 23 schools from Karachi, 20 schools from Lahore, 07 schools from Rawalpindi and 12 schools from Islamabad were selected for the purpose of study. In Karachi the data was

collected through interview method by using structured questionnaire. The researcher approached the administrators/ principals of these special education centers for interviewing these persons. In Lahore, Rawalpindi and Islamabad a questionnaire was sent to the administrators/ principals of these special schools/ Institutes and the data was collected through correspondence method. The questionnaire used both pre-coded items as well as open-ended items framed for in-depth information.

**Objectives:**

- To find out the available psychological assessments facilities in government and non-government special schools of major cities of Pakistan including; Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Rawalpindi.
- To explore the provision of speech and language assessment for the students with disabilities provided by special schools/ centers in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Rawalpindi.
- To inquire the provision of speech therapy for the students with disabilities studying in special schools/ centers.
- To find out the facility of audio-logical assessment provided to disabled students by special schools/ centers.
- To explore the provision of physiotherapy facility provided to disabled students by their special schools.
- To investigate pattern of performance assessment of disabled students in these special schools/ centers.

**Findings**

**Category of Students:** Table 1 indicates the categories of students studying in 62 special schools including, 18 schools (29%) of hearing impaired students and 15 schools (24%) of visually impaired students, 17 schools (27%) of mentally retarded students and 12 schools (20%) of physically handicapped students.

**Facility for Psychological Assessments:** Table 2 reveals that the psychological assessment facility is available in more than half of the schools of Karachi (65.2%), where as in considerable number of schools (34.8%), this facility is not present. In Lahore, more than half of the schools (55%) did not have this facility where as in less than half of the schools (45%) this facility is provided to the students.

In more than half of the schools of Rawalpindi (57.1%), this facility is not present, where as in less than half of schools, (42.9%) this facility is available.

In Islamabad, almost all the schools (91.7%), had this facility where as very few (8.3%) did not have this facility for their students. Overall in most of the special schools (62%), selected as sample from all four cities, the facility of psychological assessment is present but I 38% schools, this facility is not present.

**Facility for Speech and Language Assessment:** As indicates by table 3, majority of the schools in Karachi (55.2%) had this facility, still considerable number of schools (34.8%) did not have this facility for their students

Table 1: Category of students studying in special schools

Category of students	Karachi		Lahore		Rawalpindi		Islamabad		Total	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Hearing Impaired	07	30.4	07	35.0	03	42.8	03	25.0	18	29
Visually Impaired	04	17.4	04	20.0	02	28.6	04	33.0	15	24
Mentally Retarded	08	34.8	05	25.0	01	14.3	02	16.0	17	27
Physically handicapped	04	17.4	04	20.0	01	14.3	03	25.0	12	2
Total	23	100	20	100	07	100	12	100	62	100

Table 2: Availability of Psychological Assessments

Response	Karachi		Lahore		Rawalpindi		Islamabad		Total	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Available	07	30.4	07	35.0	03	42.8	03	25.0	18	29
Not available	04	17.4	04	20.0	02	28.6	04	33.0	15	24
Total	23	100	20	100	07	100	12	100	62	100

Table 3: Arrangement for speech and language assessment

Response	Karachi		Lahore		Rawalpindi		Islamabad		Total	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Available	07	30.4	07	35.0	03	42.8	03	25.0	18	29
Not available	04	17.4	04	20.0	02	28.6	04	33.0	15	24
Total	23	100	20	100	07	100	12	100	62	100

Table 4: Arrangement for speech therapy

Response	Karachi		Lahore		Rawalpindi		Islamabad		Total	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Available	07	30.4	07	35.0	03	42.8	03	25.0	18	29
Not available	04	17.4	04	20.0	02	28.6	04	33.0	15	24
Total	23	100	20	100	07	100	12	100	62	100

Table 5: Arrangement for Audio-logical Assessment

Response	Karachi		Lahore		Rawalpindi		Islamabad		Total	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Available	07	30.4	07	35.0	03	42.8	03	25.0	18	29
Not available	04	17.4	04	20.0	02	28.6	04	33.0	15	24
Total	23	100	20	100	07	100	12	100	62	100

Table 6: Arrangement for physiotherapy

Response	Karachi		Lahore		Rawalpindi		Islamabad		Total	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Available	07	30.4	07	35.0	03	42.8	03	25.0	18	29
Not available	04	17.4	04	20.0	02	28.6	04	33.0	15	24
Total	23	100	20	100	07	100	12	100	62	100

Table 7: Pattern of assessment of performance

Response	Karachi		Lahore		Rawalpindi		Islamabad		Total	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Available	07	30.4	07	35.0	03	42.8	03	25.0	18	29
Not available	04	17.4	04	20.0	02	28.6	04	33.0	15	24
Total	23	100	20	100	07	100	12	100	62	100

In Lahore more than half of the schools (60%) had this facility, while less than half of the schools (40%) did not have this facility for students.

In Rawalpindi this facility is not available in majority of the schools (57.1%), where as in 42.9% schools this facility is available.

**Facility for Speech Therapy:** As far as the speech therapy facility is concerned, as indicated by table 4, majority of the schools in Karachi (65.2%) had this facility; still considerable number of schools (34.8%) did not have this facility for their students.

In Lahore more than half of the schools (60%) have speech therapist, while less than half of the

schools (33.3%) did not have this facility for students. Over all in most of the special schools (62%) the facility of speech therapy is provided to students, where as 38% schools did not have this facility for their special students.

**Facility for Audio-logical Assessment:** As indicated by table 5, majority of the schools in Karachi (52.2%) had audiological assessment facility; still considerable number of schooled (47.8%) did not have this facility for their students.

In Lahore more than half of the school (70%) had this facility, while less than half of the schools (30%) did not have this facility for students.

In Rawalpindi this facility is available in majority of the schools (71.4%), where as in 28.6% schools this facility is not available.

In Islamabad almost all the schools (91.7%) had audio-logical assessment facility while some schools (8.3%) did not have this facility for students. Over all in most of the special schools (84%), the facility of speech therapy is provided to students, where as 16% schools did not have this facility for their special students.

**Facility for Physiotherapy:** Table 6 illustrates that physiotherapy facility is not present in majority of the schools in Karachi (56.5%), still considerable number of schools (43.5%) had this facility provided to their students. In Lahore more than half of the schools (60%) did not have the facility for physiotherapy while less than half of the schools (40%) had this facility for their students.

In Rawalpindi the speech therapy facility is not available in majority of the schools (in 71.4%); where as in 28.6% this facility is available. In Islamabad the situation is different from other cities, i.e. more than half of the schools (58%) had physiotherapy facility, while less than half of the schools (42%) did not have this facility for students. Over all in most of the special schools (56%) the facility of physiotherapy is not provided to students, where as in slightly less than half of the schools (44%) this facility is provided for their special students.

**Pattern of Performance Assessment:** Table 7 elucidates the pattern of performance assessment in different special schools of Pakistan. In Karachi, most of the schools (67%) were following only annual system of assessment. A considerable number of schools (22%) were following all types of assessments i.e. monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annual system. In few schools (11%) there was no system of assessment.

In Lahore most of the schools (34%) were following quarterly system. The second highest numbers of schools were either using half yearly system or there was no system of assessment at all (22% each). Few schools (11% schools) were using monthly system or annual assessment system (by 11% schools). There was no such school having all different types of assessment systems.

In Rawalpindi the schools were either having annual system, or were conducting all types of assessments i.e. monthly, quarterly, half yearly and annual assessment for students (50% each).

In Islamabad half of the schools (50%) were using monthly assessment system. Among the other half of the

schools 25% schools were using half yearly system and the rest of the schools (25%) were using all types of assessment i.e. monthly, quarterly, half yearly and annual. Over all most of the schools in these four cities (29%) were having annual assessment system.

## DISCUSSION

The assessment plays a very important role in the education and training of disabled children. Evaluating and assessing a child's needs in an educational setting today are ambiguous and imprecise processes. Assessment aims at discerning individual characteristics that are important for establishing an individual program in relationship to the child's educational needs. [4]. Our study revealed that all special schools either government or private, are not providing full range of assessment facilities. In most of the special schools selected as sample from all four cities, the facility of psychological assessment is present but in considerable number of schools, this facility is not present. Psychological assessment suggests a process of understanding and helping people cope with problems [5] and in the absence of this facility the teacher can not understand the problems faced by the students with disability and can not help them manage their behavior in the classroom. This may have adverse impact on their learning. To classify a student as mentally retarded and further for program planning, the adaptive behavior is needed to be assessed. The aim of personality assessment is to discover the underlying causes of behavior. Different methods can be used to assess personality i.e. projective technique, rating scale, self-report measures, situational measures and observational procedures

Vision and hearing deficiencies can have a significant effort on the performance of children in educational environment. The actual diagnosis of sensory deficiencies must be completed by specialists: ophthalmologists, optometrists, audiologists and otologists [6]. Identifying and remembering oral-language disorders is believed to have a board, general and positive effect on personal and academic development of disabled children.

Physiotherapy facility is also not present in most of the schools. In the same way most of the schools were having annual system of performance assessment, but still significant academic achievement provide a global picture of a student's skill development in academic content area.

On the basis of the data collected it can be pointed out that the existing assessment and therapy facility do

not suffice the needs of the disabled children. All the schools do not have the facilities of psychological assessment, speech and language assessment, speech therapy and physiotherapy to cater the special needs of students. 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.

**Recommendation:**

- A multidisciplinary team of trained professionals is a critical need for all the special schools to assess all the students with disabilities.
- Both formal and informal assessment needs to be carried out for every student with disability.
- Assessment should be on going process and not just once a year activity.
- All the schools should have a proper system of assessment of vocational courses and other academics. This can help to evaluate the achievements of students and also the quality and effectiveness of training programs.

- The teachers of special schools can be trained for conducting informal performance assessment with the awareness of purpose of using it.
- The special schools should have speech trainer, audiometer and all the necessary equipment for physiotherapy.

**REFERENCES**

1. International Labour Office, 1985. Basic Principles of Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Geneva.
2. Salvia, J and J.E. Ysseldke, 1991. Assessment. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
3. Yasmeen, S., 1991. Assessment of Mentally Retarded Children in Special Schools of Karachi. Master's Thesis, University of Karachi, Karachi. Pakistan.
4. Swanson, F.L. and L.B. Watson, 1982. Educational and Psychological Assessment of Exceptional Children: Theories, Strategies and Application. London: The C.V. Mosby Co.
5. Walsh, W.B. and N.E. Betz, 1990. Tests and Assessment. New Jersey: Printice Hall.
6. Salvia, J. and J.E. Ysseldke, 1991. Assessment. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.