

## Identification of Problems Faced by the Heads of the Special Education Institutions

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, <sup>2</sup>Sarwat Nawaz & <sup>3</sup>Jahan Ara Shams

iamzafariqbal@gmail.com

### Abstract

*In the recent years special education is being focused in Pakistan. Many institutions of special education have been established in the country. Heads of these institutions are facing many problems for sustainable development and to cope with emerging challenges. So, keeping in view the importance of special education, the purpose of the study was to identify the problems faced by heads of special education institutions in Sargodha. The study was qualitative in nature. Census sampling technique was used to select a sample for the study. All the 12 heads of special education institutions in Sargodha city in the province of Punjab-Pakistan were included as a sample. Semi structured interviews were conducted to collect data from the heads of special education institutions. The interview protocol was consisting of five questions regarding problem and issues facing by the heads. It was developed by the researchers and was validated by five experts of the field. Interviews were audio recorded by the researchers. The average time for an interview was thirty minutes. Collected data from interviews were first transcribed then translated from Urdu, a National Language of Pakistan, to English and analysed through descriptive coding techniques and percentages. Findings of the research showed that heads of special education institutions were facing many problems such as shortage of finance, political pressure, lack of teaching and administrative staff, and lack of awareness.*

**Key words:** Heads, Problems, Sargodha, Special Education

### Introduction

A nation's self-consciousness develops through the process of education, mainly by the individuals who sensitizing it. Education is not only a public instruction but also a social institution and it provides training regarding mental, physical, ideological and moral capabilities, (Bruner, 1960) to the individuals of that nation. Education is thought to be necessary particularly for the development of the sound mind in a sound body (Cohen,

1999). According to the Dewey, "education is living through the continuous reconstruction of experiences". Education is defined as, "development of all capabilities of an individual, which assist him to control the environment and complete his responsibilities in a better way".

Special education is considered as an important sub-component among the whole education system. This sub-component of the education system not

only provides a strong base for the rehabilitation of the special persons but also play its role in the basic frame work of the economy. It is the quality of special education that generates productive as well as independent persons in the country's social and economic fields (Bruner, 1960). It is of a great need to organize this sub-component of the education system in a comprehensive way so that it can generate the students who pursuit their education and later on they adjust to their practical lives meaningfully and productively.

Growth, development and progress of these future citizens mainly depend on the schools which are generally considered as social institution in a society (Dweek, 2006). It is a fundamental principle of any organization, "Without the good and efficient leadership, an institution cannot work smoothly and properly" (Witziers, et al, 2003). Heads/headmaster (he/she) is basically responsible for the management of the whole school. So the success of either academic or administrative functioning of any special education school depends mainly on the capabilities of the respective school heads. Generally, headmasters cannot maintain the effective management in the school and always face trouble due to the un-necessary interference from the outside. An effective headmaster should have control over

position and the duties which are being provided to the same designation throughout the world. At personal level, he/she should be capable of handling his staff in a righteous way, having geniuses ideas with proper solution (Deen, 2000) of the problem and last but not the least, his character should be a bright example for his students/colleagues/staff members.

A special education school plays an integral role in the functioning of the persons with disabilities. In many communities, the cooperation and the coordination between special education schools and other government agencies has been maintained on voluntarily basis (Parker, 2006). Democratic operation of schools is a highly desirable trait". For the smooth operation of the democratic system of any schools, a head should not be a dictator but he/she should have abilities to cooperate and coordinate with his subordinates. A leader/head should take care for the willingness/availability of his follower for any operation. A headmaster of special education institution, who just gave order and in return expects them to be completed, is not considered as a good leader. He is a dictator. His colleagues seem obedience towards him (as he has powers) but such heads are never to be loved or to be dignified. He/she could be successful if he/she considers properly the

willingness/availability of his co-workers and make them to realize that the problem is of their institution (Panda, 2000) and not his private problem. All of them work collective to find out the ways to solve the problem.

The headmasters, being occupy a unique position (teacher as well as major part in the management of education) in school system, and play a central role in the inter-relationship of the school. Therefore, for the improvement of the growth and development, it is the first and foremost duty of headmaster of the special school to cooperate and coordinate properly with public/community and with his co-workers. My main aim of the study is to investigate the what kind of difficulties were being faced by the special school heads and what kind of remedies be provided/suggested to overcome the problem which led them to an efficient heads and decrease their work load tension as well.

In order to achieve the desired objectives and goals of the special education, there are many difficulties and problems, which are being confronted by the special school head master/head mistress. Schools are becoming a profit gaining business while urbanization of the rural areas also contributes towards the complex community relations (Parker,

2006). New trend are arises continuously in the field of instruction, (Khan, 2008) which also a challenge for leaders/heads to be met properly. Teachers are often comparatively less patient with authoritarian administration as they are becoming more articulate (Riley, 1994).

Sarita and Tomer (2004) considered training for competence does not involve training a person's mental faculties so that they will be available to serve him in every appropriate situation which arrive- not entirely a matter of person the correct habits competence then is patterned behaviour a pattern of general action which tends by and large, to repeat itself as similar situation arises.

A good administrator takes his faculty/colleagues into confidence and then makes plans along with them rather than making plans for them. As he knows the human nature means he can guess art of human relation. A complete system of human relationship cannot be obtained overnight (Witziers, 2003). And there are no such administrative protocols which completely eradicate all problems/stresses and frictions. Administrators, which are generally, obtain advice from their staff/community and use these advices, along with their own ideas, in the process of decision making process are successful

and their decision has best chance to a vision.

Generally, special education schools face many problems as well as many constraints regarding adequate facilities. Under such circumstances, it is a school head that has to function effectively and make the system to run smoothly. As special education school head, he/she has also some additional duties like to deal with pupil, parents and staffs as well as he/she has to supervise, inspect and fulfil the responsibilities which are assigned to him/her from time to time. There are reasonable numbers of heads that are fulfilling their duties not only as head but also has some teaching of course to the different classes. It is head who is responsible for the achievements of the students and for the staffs as well. Heads can influence the achievement via creating an environment which facilitates the process of teaching and learning (Smith, 1994). So the challenges which a head is facing is manifold and often remain un-elusive, though the lacunae of an effective leader in a school setting lies in how a principal goes about meeting those challenges.

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Identify the problems faced by heads of special education institutions.

- ii. Give fruitful suggestions to cope the problems faced by heads of special education institutions.

### **Research questions**

Following were the research questions of the study:

- i. What are the social problems faced by heads of special education institutions?
- ii. What are the political problems faced by heads of special education institutions proving hindrances?
- iii. What are the administrative problems faced by heads of special education institutions which create complications?
- iv. What are the financial problems faced by heads of special education institutions which stop them to achieve the goals?
- v. Being a head of special education institution, what do you suggest to overcome the aforesaid problems?

### **Methodology**

It was a qualitative study by nature; but broadly, it was a survey type of research (Cohen et al 2007). Researcher used semi-structured interviews in order to identify the problems faced by heads of special education institutions in Sargodha city. All the heads of special education institutions of Sargodha city i.e. 12 were the targeted population of the study.

Census sampling technique was used and all heads were interviewed. Krejcie and Morgan (1970), suggested that if the researcher was devising a sample from a wider population of thirty or fewer than she or he would be well advised to include the whole of the wider population as the sample.

### **Instrument**

To illustrate the different problems which heads were facing, researcher had conducted semi-structured interviews. Ratification of the prepared questions for interview was done through five expert professors (with experience of 10-15 years). Small-scale trial with three special education institutional heads was conducted and used this trial for the validation of the interview methodology. On average, half an hour time was allocated to an interview.

Following are the items for interview protocol;

- What are different problems that you are facing as a special education institutional head?
- What are social problems that you are facing to achieve your goals as a head of special education institution?
- What are political problems that you are facing as a special education institutional head?
- What are the administrative issues which you are facing as special education institutional head? As well as the financial problems which are creating hindrances to accomplish your goals?
- How can we resolve or overcome these problems? What are your suggestions as a head of special education institution?

First of all, collected data (via interviews) was transcribed and subject to segregation into broader categories. Later on, the descriptive coding technique was used to generate code for the data.

### **Findings**

Main findings of our study are shown in table 1 (given below);

**Table 1** *Problems faced by the special education institutional heads*

Broad Categories	Small Categories	F	%age
Social Problems	Parents do not take care about the education of their children.	10	83
	Society is not cooperative in implementing new Policies.	5	4
Administrative Problems	Shortage of teaching staff.	11	92
	Staff is not regular and punctual.	3	25
	Staff is not cooperative in the development and implementation of policies.	6	50
	Pressure of stake holders.	7	58
	Undue political pressure.	7	58
Political Problems	Threats from the political leaders some time slowdown the process.	9	75
	Transfers and appointments of staff are done on political bases.	11	92
Financial Problems	Shortage of funds for the necessary and latest equipment.	11	92
	Complex channel to utilize funds, if available.	9	75
	Numbers of donors are very few.	6	50

Table 1 is depicting the various problems which were being faced by the special education institutional heads in the region of Sargodha (Punjab, Pakistan) in response of the interview questions. Almost 83% of the heads indicated the behaviour of parents, in response of researcher's questions regarding the social problems. The researcher attributed the parent's behaviour to their careless attitude towards the educational career of their own children. One of the heads quoted, "during meetings, parents use harsh language toward teachers". Another head mentioned

by saying, "parent's lack of interest in the celebrations of the national events, which are being organized by the institution".

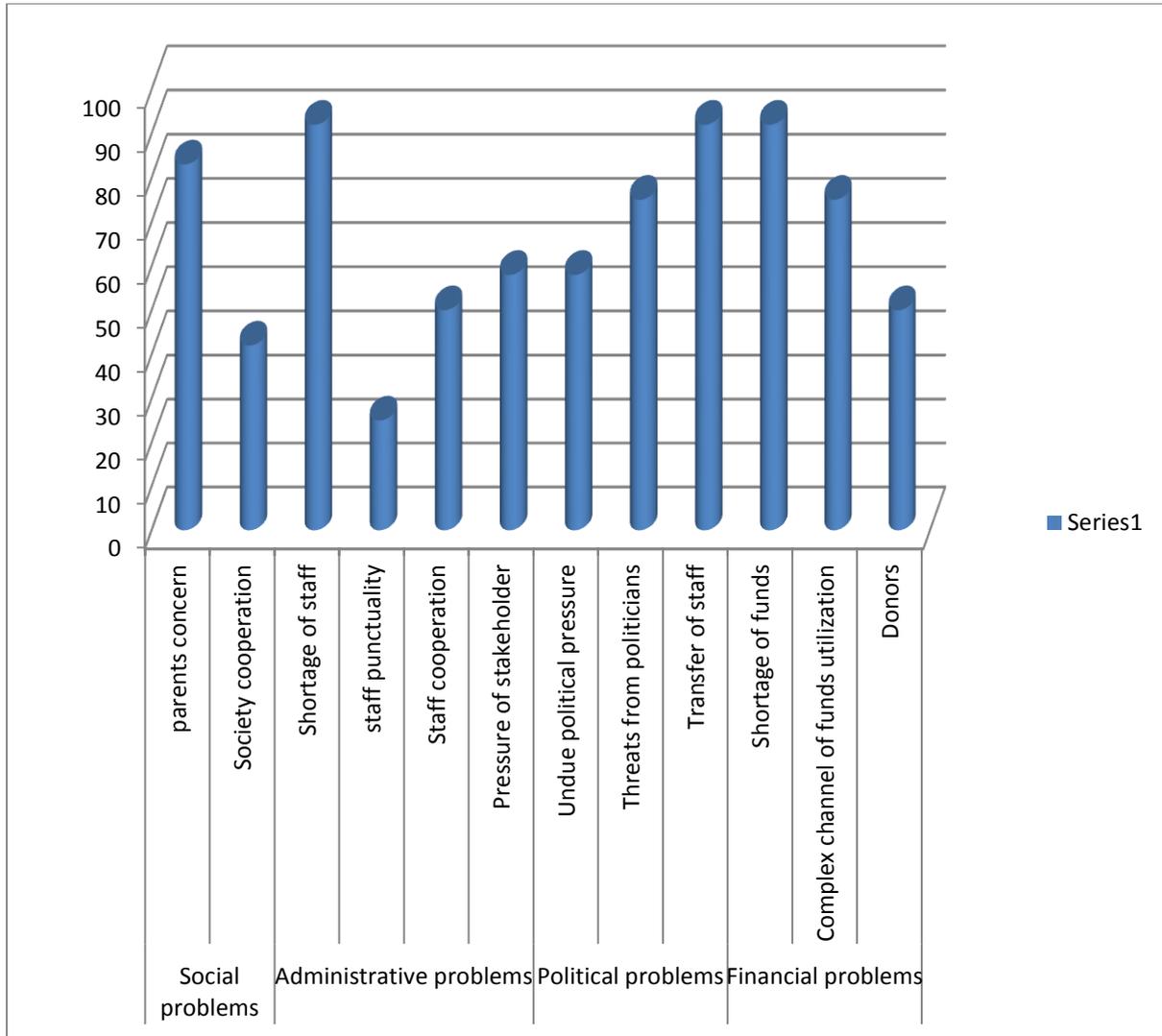
About 42% of the heads mentioned the society as a main hindrance to implement the new policies, approved by the government for the welfare of the students. One of the head revealed about the society, "Societies are supposed to play their significant role in the uplifting and development of any institutes but regretfully that is not going to be happened in the near future".

As for as administration problems, around 92% of the heads are concerned about the sufficient members in the staff. Shortage of the staff members directly affect the teaching process at any institute. One of the head added to this dilemma, "We lacked not only experienced but well qualified staff members, as well". While 50% of the heads also pointed out the non-cooperative attitude towards the better development implementation of the new policies at institute.

When the interviewed heads asked about the political issues, they are facing, 92% of them declared that political interests directly affect the procedure of the transfers and appointments of the staff members, in different institutes. One of the heads further said, "Political pressure is the main driving force behind the appointments of mostly cases". Another head cited, "I have faced shortage of skilled and experienced staff members, on

and off, due to their transfer on political bases". Almost 58% of the heads agreed that they have faced unjustifiable political pressures.

When researcher asked the heads about their financial problems, around 92% heads specified the scarcity of the required funds, in term of necessary and latest equipment. According to the one of the heads, "instruments, which are being in use of mostly the institutes, are not only out dated but are damaged as well. And we do not have sufficient funds to cope with this problem". While 75% of the heads are in the favour of following difficult and complex channels to acquire such funds. Comprehensively, our research shows the intensity of the miscellaneous problems which special education institutional heads are facing at social, political, financial and administrative level. Findings are shown on graph below.



## Conclusions

The main concluding points drawn from the study were:

1. The most severe problem is the transfers and appointments of staff on political bases, which is faced by heads.
2. The second serious problem is the shortage of funds as well as the shortage of qualified teaching staff.
3. The third main problem is the complex channel to utilize funds, if available.
4. The fourth genuine problem is the lack of cooperation at parent's side, regarding the education of their children.

## Recommendations

Following recommendations were drawn in view of the preceding conclusions:

- Political intrusions may be discouraged in order to make the procedure of appointment and transfer of teaching staff members, transparent.
- Appointment and posting in far-flung areas affect the performance of teachers and increase the rate of transfer. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers should

be appointed and posted in their local areas.

- As it was found that lack of teaching staff negatively affects education. Therefore, sufficient and competent teaching staff should be appointed to fulfil the educational deficiencies in schools.
- Provision of facilities plays an important and crucial role in rehabilitation and strengthening the PWDs but unfortunately our institutions have lack of facilities. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that these facilities should be provided to each school as early as possible.
- Sufficient funds may be provided to buy the necessary and new fashioned equipment.
- Local government should play its role especially for proper utilization of the available funds; we may make simple and transparent channels.
- Funds for other basic facilities in schools must be provided.
- Biometric system for staff attendance and punctuality should be used.
- Parents may be prompted to cooperate and interact with the heads

and teaching staff in order to improve the special education standards.

- The cooperation from the society should be obtained through awareness campaigns and seminars in small cities.

## References

- Bruner, J. (1960). *The Process of Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cohen, J. (1999). *Educating Minds and Hearts*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Cohen, L. Manion, L. Morrison, K (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. New York, Taylor & Francis Group
- Deen, M. Y. (2000). Differences in the solution-oriented conflict style of selected groups of 4- H youth development volunteers. *Journal of Extension*, 38 (1). Retrieved from [www.joe.org/journal-archive.php](http://www.joe.org/journal-archive.php)
- Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Random House LLC.
- Khan, S. M. (2008). Problems of School Teachers & Students in Pakistan. Retrieved from [http://research-education-  
edu.blogspot.com/2008/06/problems-of-school-teachers-students-in\\_29.html](http://research-education-<br/>edu.blogspot.com/2008/06/problems-of-school-teachers-students-in_29.html)
- Krejcie, R. V. and Morgan, D. W. (1970) Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30,607–10. Retrieved from [epm.sagepub.com/content/by/year](http://epm.sagepub.com/content/by/year)
- Panda B.K., (2000). *Nothing but the school: What the head can do! A proposition for the developing countries*. New Delhi, Anamika publishers.
- Parker, W. (2006). Public Discourses in Schools: Purposes, Problems, Possibilities. *Educational Researcher*, 35, 11 -18. Retrieved from [www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net) > ... > ER Issues and Archives
- Riley, D. (1994). *Studying Teaching*. Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, USA. 9-13.
- Sarita & Tomer, M. (2004). *Teacher Education*. Dehli: Isha Books.
- Smith. J. K, & Smith. L. G. (1994). *Education today the foundations of a profession*. St. Martin's press, Inc.
- Witziers B., Bosker R.J. and Kruger M. L. (2003). Educational leadership and student achievement: The elusive search for an association, *Educational administration quarterly*, 39(3), 398-425.