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Financial Autonomy for Unemployed and Disadvantaged Adolescents with Disabilities through Punjab Vocational Training Institutions

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ABSTRACT

The central focus of this quantitative exploration was to know the awareness level of poor and disadvantaged students with disabilities (hearing impaired, visually impaired, physically handicapped and mild mentally challenged) about demand driven skill training provided by Punjab Vocational Training Institutions. A sample of 105 students with disabilities (male and female) enrolled in elementary and secondary level special education schools and centres located in Lahore division were selected through simple random sampling technique. A self developed and validated questionnaire (Cronbach Alpha 0.92) on five point Likert scale was used to elicit their responses. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis. ANOVA was employed to find difference in awareness level among the students of four disabilities, *t*-test was used to find difference on the basis of gender, type of schools (public & private), and locale (urban & rural). No significant mean difference was found on the basis of gender. There was a significant difference on the basis of type of schools and disabilities. Recommendations were made to Government of the Punjab, Punjab Special Education Department, and private sector to increase employability through the enrolment of students with disabilities in Punjab Vocational Training Institutions.



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1. Introduction

The great challenge faced by almost every young person is his transition from vocational training to employment because it is a great determinant of the future life of a person. Vocational training is the implementation of learned skills practically and it gives a connection between education and the world of work. Vocational training is included in the curricula at the high school level or in the post-secondary vocational institutions. The provision of timely resources and opportunities are important in an individual's life to teach him suitable vocational skills (Ziguras, 2005). The same is true for young people with disabilities. They have to face great challenges and remarkable fears which get intensity in the presence of a disability. As a result, the risk of social exclusion increases for young people who are in phase of transition and have a disability (Wakeford & Waugh, 2014).

Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC) was founded in Oct. 1998. The Government of the Punjab (GOP) laid its foundations with the concept of a collaboration between private and public sector. This institution is using charity money for decrease in poverty through skill development and provision of training to disadvantaged young community in their neighbourhood through the cooperation of private organizations to increase job opportunities. It also aims to help the graduates in their permanent job placement and rehabilitation through making arrangements for monetary assistance to enhance self-employability. The proposal is to get financed from Micro Finance Institutions and Non- Government Organizations. Punjab Vocational Training Council is an exemplary model in the Muslim World which is using Zakat as a source of providing expertise and financial autonomy to the underprivileged youth. It has opened new horizons to channelize Zakat (giving alms to the needy segments of society in Islam) to support an operative programme of vocational training for the rehabilitation of the deserving youth on sound footing. The research studies conducted by EEA, USAID and IYF have also appreciated the efforts of PVTC for providing training and jobs to the young boys and girls who were lacking in economic resources for receiving vocational and technical skills. This council has planned to provide training to half million trainees (www.pvtc.gop.pk).

1.1 Background of the Study

Transition from vocational training to employment is challenging as well as critical for almost every young person because it helps to determine a person's future life. The hand-on implementation of acquired skills is focused in imparting vocational training and it connects the education sector with the world of work. Vocational training is generally imparted at the level of high school or in a vocational school at post- secondary level. Certainly, research has shown that adequate vocational skills are important in an individual's life and it requires timely resources and support services (Ziguras, 2005). It is specifically accurate for youth with special needs as well. These young persons face significant insecurities and great development related issues which become more hazardous when they are having some sort of disability (Yu 2009; Blacher 2001; Dewson et al. 2004; Lichtenstein 1998; Winn and Hay 2009). Therefore, systematic and strategic planning is required for vocational training and employment of persons with special needs.

The vocational rehabilitation system and its role in facilitating the employment of individuals with disabilities, has been the subject of several accounts. The role of school is very important in planning and implementation of vocational rehabilitation plan for students with special needs. Individual with Disability Act (2004) also endorsed that schools are required the type of education system that facilitates student transition from school to adulthood and focuses on their employment goals as well.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

World Health Organization (WHO) has enumerated that around one billion individuals or 15% of the population globally are having some type of disabilities. In the case of Pakistan, the incidence of disability has been guessed as 2.49% (CRPD, Article 31; Population Census, 1998). On the basis of statistics about the population of children and adults with disabilities in Pakistan and the estimation of WHO (10% of the population), and information provided by the local agencies and Population Census, 1998, the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2002) was framed. The following table shows the distribution of 2.49% statistics on the basis of age and optimal need level:

Children under 5 and their families who need any sort of assistance	10.34%
Children between 5-14 years who need any type of special instruction	23.09%
Young individuals till 29 who will require more education, training and opportunities for employment	23.98%
Adults with disabilities who need other help and support	25.15%
The senior citizens with disabilities who require more disability specific facilities	16.56%

The National Census Report (1998)

According to the 1998 census, the following table presents the division of persons with disabilities within the range of specific disabilities:

i.	Persons with physical disabilities	19%
ii.	Persons with mental handicaps	14%
iii.	Persons with multiple disabilities	8.21%
iv.	Persons with visual Impairment	8.6%
v.	Persons with hearing Impairment	7.40%
vi.	Other disabilities which are not categorized but are considered as disabilities	43.33%

The National Census Report (1998)

As indicated by The National Census Report of 1998, there are 23.98% persons with disabilities upto the age of 29 years who need further education, training and employment opportunities. In the light of this information, it is imperative to conduct studies for creating awareness among persons/adolescents with disabilities, their teachers and parents to avail opportunities of training and employment offered by the government.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were framed for the study:

1. To explore awareness level of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities about available resources of demand driven skill training.
2. To create awareness among unemployed and needy adolescents with disabilities about existing opportunities of vocational training.
3. To give recommendation to Punjab Special Education Department and Punjab Vocational Training Council for providing opportunities to unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities for their vocational training.

1.4 Questions of the Study

The following questions were formulated to achieve the objectives of the study:

1. What is the awareness level of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities about available resources of demand driven skill training.
2. How can awareness be created among unemployed and needy adolescents with disabilities about existing opportunities of vocational training.
3. How much willingness has been created among unemployed and needy adolescents with disabilities regarding skill training program of Punjab Vocational Training Institutions?

2. Method

The study was a descriptive survey research in nature. Target population of the study included all the unemployed and needy adolescents having disabilities registered in Government Special Schools and Centres located in Lahore division. The study was conducted in Lahore division in Punjab. All Government Special Schools and Centres located in all tehsiles of the Lahore division were taken for the selection of sample. All 105 needy adolescents with disabilities (male and female) enrolled in elementary and secondary classes were taken for the collection of data. A

questionnaire which was self developed and validated and prepared on five point Likert type scale was used to identify awareness of unemployed and needy adolescents with disabilities about available resources of demand driven skill training for them.

2.1 Data Collection Procedure

The data were collected through the following procedure:

1. Time schedule was made for collecting data through questionnaires.
2. The dates and timings was fixed after consulting with heads of institutions and getting their approval. The availability and ease of the research participants was kept into consideration while deciding date and time.
3. The respondents were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided by them.
4. To assess awareness of enrolled unemployed and needy adolescents with disabilities, data were gathered by research assistants (hired) after imparting training in collecting data and filling up of questionnaires.

2.2 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

The content validity of the questionnaires was ensured by professional and technical experts in the field of vocational and special education. After ensuring content validity, the instrument was pilot tested through obtaining data from 10 participants. The value of Cronbach alpha (.92) was identified to estimate the reliability of the instruments.

2.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive data analysis programme was used to analyze the data. Independent Sample *t*-test was used to find difference in awareness of male and female adolescents with disabilities. Similarly independent sample *t*-test was used to find mean difference in the awareness of adolescents with disabilities. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to identify mean difference in the awareness level of unemployed and needy adolescents with disabilities after field activities. Descriptive statistics were used to identify effectiveness of field activities.

3. Major Findings and Results

The major findings and results are presented as under:

Table 01
The results of ANOVA applied on all four parameters on the basis of class of subjects

		SS	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Skills after passing primary level	Between Groups	1749.902	4	437.476	3.643	.024
	Within Groups	2161.750	18	120.097		
	Total	3911.652	22			
Skills after passing middle level	Between Groups	4024.859	4	1006.215	4.250	.014
	Within Groups	4261.750	18	236.764		
	Total	8286.609	22			
Skills after passing matric level	Between Groups	455.067	4	113.767	1.195	.347
	Within Groups	1714.150	18	95.231		
	Total	2169.217	22			
Skills after passing intermediate level	Between Groups	115.404	4	28.851	.518	.723

Within Groups	1001.900	18	55.661
Total	1117.304	22	

Table 1 shows results of one way ANOVA to identify mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities about the learning of skills after a certain level of education. Results of the table are showing that there is substantial mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities who have passed primary level $F(4) = 3.64$, $p < .05$. It is also evident that there is statistically noteworthy mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities who have passed middle level $F(4) = 4.25$, $p < .05$. Table values are also showing that there is no important mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities who have passed Matric level $F(4) = 1.19$, $p = .35$. Similarly, there is no substantial mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities who have passed Intermediate level $F(4) = .52$, $p = .72$.

Table 02
ANOVA on the basis of institutions of participants

		SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Skills after passing primary level	Between Groups (BG)	96.068	2	48.034	.252	.780
	Within Groups (WG)	3815.584	20	190.779		
	Total (T)	3911.652	22			
Skills after passing middle level	BG	141.772	2	70.886	.174	.842
	WG	8144.836	20	407.242		
	T	8286.609	22			
Skills after passing matric level	BG	508.594	2	254.297	3.063	.069
	WG	1660.623	20	83.031		
	T	2169.217	22			
Skills after passing intermediate level	BG	105.611	2	52.805	1.044	.370
	WG	1011.694	20	50.585		
	T	1117.304	22			

Table 2 is showing results of one way ANOVA to identify mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities about the learning of skills who have completed their education from different institutions. Results of the table are showing that there is no statistically substantial mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities who have passed primary level from different institutions $F(2) =$

2.52 , $p = .78$. It is also obvious that there is no statistically significant mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities who have passed middle level from different institutions $F(2) = 1.74$, $p < .84$. Table values are also showing that there is no important mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities who have passed Matric level from different institutions $F(2) = 3.06$, $p = .07$. Similarly, there is no statistically noteworthy mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities who have passed Intermediate level from different institutions $F(4) = 1.04$, $p = .37$.

Table 03
The results of ANOVA applied on the basis of class/grade of respondents

	SS	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Between Groups	968.128	2	484.064	.291	.750
Within Groups	33239.351	20	1661.968		
Total	34207.478	22			

Table 3 is showing results of one way ANOVA to identify mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities about the awareness of skills on the basis of their class. Results of the table are showing that there is no statistically important mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities on the basis of their class $F(2) = .291$, $p = .75$.

Table 04
Independent sample t-test on the basis of residential area of the respondents

	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total Scores	.438	.516	.489	21	.630

The results of independent sample *t*-test to show mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities about the awareness of skills on the basis of their areas of residence. Results of the table are showing that there is no substantial mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities living in urban and rural areas $t(21) = .489$, $p = .63$.

4. Discussion on Major Findings

Major findings revealed that there was statistically significant mean difference in responses of unemployed and poor adolescents with disabilities who had passed primary and middle level. It means that their level of awareness regarding learning of skills provided by Punjab Vocational Training Institutions was different. It shows that some of them were having more awareness about these skills than others. On the other hand, the awareness level of adolescents with disabilities at Matric and Intermediate level regarding provision of skills was the same. It means that at this level of age, the adolescents with disabilities are more aware of the available skills than others at lower level of education. Moreover, no statistically significant difference was found among the awareness level of adolescents with disabilities enrolled at primary, middle, matric and intermediate level in different schools and centres. It reflects that all schools and centres are providing awareness to them on equal level.

Similarly, there was no statistically significant difference in the awareness level of adolescents with disabilities studying in different grades regarding the provision of skills by Punjab Vocational Training Institutions. No statistically significant difference was found in the awareness level of adolescents with disabilities on the basis of their areas of residence. It means that the adolescents with disabilities residing either in urban or rural area were having same awareness level about the available skills.

5. Recommendations

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

1. The skills being taught by the Punjab Vocational Training Institutions should be introduced in the Government Special Education schools and centres.
2. The unemployed and disadvantaged adolescents with disabilities should be provided with opportunities to learn about the skills being taught by the Punjab Vocational Training Institutions.
3. Directorate General of Special Education should develop a liaison with Punjab Vocational Training Council for the provision of skills related training to unemployed and needy adolescents having disabilities enrolled in Government Special Education Institutions in Punjab.

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