



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Challenges Faced by Parents of Children with Intellectual Disabilities studying in Government and Private Schools during Lockdown Due to COVID-19 in Lahore**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study was conducted find out the challenges faced by parents of children with intellectual disabilities due to lockdown during COVID-19 across Lahore, Pakistan. It was included a sample of 67 parents (59 = mothers and eight = fathers). Parents of children with intellectual disabilities living in Lahore were the population of the study. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select the sample of the course. The researchers used a self-developed questionnaire, including six perspectives related to challenges faced by parents of children with intellectual disabilities during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Punjab. Researchers have applied descriptive and non-parametric analysis procedures through the SPSS. Mean value (30.2090) of Medical perspectives of parental challenges and mean value (22.8209) of Professional needs-based parental challenges of children with intellectual disabilities revealed that to a great extent, parents of both government and private schools are facing severe difficulties in arranging supplementary aids related to the medical and professional services for children in Punjab during lockdown due to COVID-19. It is concluded that there was no association between parental education and facing challenges, and parents of both government and private schools were facing almost the same kind of challenges.

**Introduction**

Children with intellectual disabilities are a segment at specific risk during lockdown due to COVID-19 because of marked mental health and co-occurring

diseases (Turk et al., 2020; Cuypers et al., 2020). Parents of children with intellectual disabilities generally have lower coping abilities, and therefore they have to face a more significant burden (Courtenay & Perera, 2020). Dealing with children with intellectual disabilities is undoubtedly stressful even under normal living conditions to high levels of perceived stress and physical, mental, or emotional exhaustion (Panicker & Ramesh, 2019; Patton et al., 2018; Rose, 2011; Willner & Goldstein, 2002).

The burden of outstanding care to deal with such a segment demands causes more exacerbation of the stresses and practical challenges generated by the pandemic. Therefore, it places parents and caregivers under unusual increased strain (Alexander et al., 2020). However, anecdotal records advocate that the predictability of life due to lockdown may lead to reduced behavioral challenges for some caregivers (Rose et al., 2020).

Social support diminishes stress levels (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Dean & Lin, 1977). The weaker social support due to lockdown may be severe for parents and caregivers of children with intellectual disabilities. This is because their access to support and services by the concerned professionals is much reduced (Mind, 2020). However, few powerful news stories have been published in the early weeks and months of the lockdown that highlighted the challenges and difficulties experienced by parents and caregivers of children with intellectual disabilities due to lockdown during COVID-19. They reported feeling forgotten and ignored, at breaking point, and "on the brink of collapse" (Coughlan, 2020; Harris, 2020; Hill, 2020; Youssef, 2020).

A report published in April 2020 identified an immediate priority of "collecting high-quality data on the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic across the whole population and vulnerable groups" (Holmes et al., 2020). This study's data was collected in March, April, and May 2020, when Pakistan was under a strict lockdown due to COVID-19. The researchers aimed to document the challenges parents of children with intellectual disabilities face due to lockdown during COVID-19 across Lahore, Pakistan.

## **Material and Methods**

### **Population**

Parents of children with intellectual disabilities of government and private schools were the study population.

### **Sampling Technique**

67 parents (59 = mothers and 8 = fathers) were selected using the Purposive sampling technique living in Lahore, Pakistan.

## Research Design

A descriptive research design was employed to conduct the study.

## Research Instrument

The researchers used a self-developed questionnaire to answer the questions of the study. This questionnaire was included six perspectives related to challenges faced by parents of children with intellectual disabilities during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore such as 1) educational view of parental challenges with four questions; 2) professional need-based perspective of parental challenges with six questions; 3) medical perspective of parental challenges with eight questions; 4) leisure time perspective of parental challenges with five questions; 5) routine organizational perspective of parental challenges with three questions, and 6) Financial challenges with two questions. The researchers obtained responses on a five-point Likert scale such as 5 (to a greater extent); 4 (to a great time); 3 (to some extent); 2 (to a minimal degree); and 1 (not at all).

## Data analysis Procedures

### Statistical Analysis

Descriptive and non-parametric statistics procedures helped the researchers to reach out the data result through the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS).

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1**  
**Analysis of Demographics**

Sr. No.	Demographics		
1	Age		
	Respondents in Number	Obtained Percentages	
	67	20-30 Years 6%	30-40 Years 56%
			40-50 Years 38%
2	Gender		
	Respondents in Number	Obtained Percentages	
	67	Female 88.1%	Male 11.9%
3	Qualification		
	Respondents in Number	Obtained Percentages	
	67	No Primary	2% 2%
		Middle	16.4%

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	Matriculation	31.3%
	Intermediate	28.4%
	Graduation	16.4%
	Postgraduate	3.5%
4	Type of School	
	Respondents in Number	Obtained Percentages
	67	Government 38.8%
		Private 61.2%
5	Family Income	
	Respondents in Number	Obtained Percentages
	67	Below Rs. 10000 4.5%
		Rs.10000- 20000 64.2%
		Rs. 20000- 30000 23.9%
		Rs. 40000 7.4%

Table 1 shows an analysis of demographics

**Table 2**  
**Analysis of different perspectives related to challenges faced by parents of children with intellectual disabilities during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore, Pakistan**

Sr. No.	Statements	5	4	3	2	1
1.	<b>Educational Perspective of Parental Challenges</b>					
a.	Are you facing additional pressure to continue the individualized education plan of your child with special intellectual needs?	58.8%	41.2%			
b.	Are you facing additional efforts to engage your child with special intellectual needs in reading and writing activities?	33.3%	27.5%	27.5%	11.7%	
c.	Are you facing additional pressure to arrange supplementary aids related to your child's school/center's instructions and services?	19.6%	60.8%	15.7%	3.9%	
d.	Are you facing additional financial pressure to arrange private tutoring for your child with special intellectual needs?	23.5%	35.3%	29.4%	11.8%	
2.	<b>Professional Need-based Perspective of Parental Challenges</b>					
a.	Are you facing additional pressure to keep in touch with your child's physical therapist with special intellectual needs?	21.6%	35.3%	29.4%	13.7%	
b.	Are you facing additional pressure to keep in touch with your child's occupational therapist with special intellectual needs?	17.6%	41.2%	27.5%		13.7%
c.	Are you facing additional pressure to keep in touch with your child's speech	21.6%	37.3%	23.5%	9.8%	7.8%

	therapist with special intellectual needs?					
d.	Are you facing additional pressure to keep in touch with your child's physician with special intellectual needs?	33.4%	17.5%	37.3%	11.8%	
e.	Are you facing additional pressure to keep in touch with your child's psychologist with special intellectual needs?	37.3%	33.3%	17.3%	12.1%	
f.	Are you facing additional pressure to keep in touch with your child's psychiatrist with special intellectual needs?	17.5%	37.3%	33.4%	11.8%	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Medical Perspective of Parental Challenges</b>					
a.	Are you taking additional preventive measures for your child with special intellectual needs?	11.8%	41.2%	33.3%	13.7%	
b.	Are you facing additional health care responsibilities for your child with special intellectual needs?	37.5%	31.4%	31.1%		
c.	Are you facing additional financial pressure to meet the dietary needs of your child with special intellectual needs?	17.6%	39.2%	31.4%	11.8%	
d.	Are you facing additional financial pressure for the medication of your child with special intellectual needs?	17.6%	39.2%	31.4%	11.8%	
e.	Are you facing additional pressure to maintain the respiratory hygiene practices of your child with special intellectual needs?	21.6%	37.3%	23.5%	17.6%	
f.	Are you facing additional pressure to protect your child with special intellectual needs against other viruses?	27.5%	27.5%	31.4%	13.6%	
g.	Are you facing additional psychological issues of your child with special intellectual needs?	23.5%	39.3%	15.7%	7.8%	13.7%
h.	Are you facing additional efforts to clean your home environment to prevent your child with special intellectual needs from infections?	21.6%	33.3%	33.3%	11.8%	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Leisure Time Perspective of Parental Challenges</b>					
a.	Are you spending additional time to engage your child with special intellectual needs in indoor activities?	41.2%	34.3%	23.5%		
b.	Are you spending additional time to engage your child with special intellectual needs in certain outdoor	13.7%	9.8%	35.3%	41.2%	

	activities?					
c.	Are you executing additional activities to engage your child with special intellectual needs with his/her siblings?	43.1%	34.4%	22.5%		
d.	Are you executing additional activities to engage your child with special intellectual needs with his/her peers?	23.5%	25.5%	33.3%		17.7%
e.	Are you facing additional efforts to engage your child with special intellectual needs in domestic activities (cleaning, dusting, cooking, and/or others)?	15.7%	43.1%	23.5%		17.7%
5.	<b>Routine Organizational Perspective of Parental Challenges</b>					
a.	Are you putting additional efforts to set your child's sleeping and awakening routines with special intellectual needs?	21.6%	43.1%	19.6%		15.7%
b.	Are you putting additional efforts to set your child's reading and writing routines with special intellectual needs?	31.4%	35.3%	15.7%		17.6%
c.	Are you putting additional efforts to set your child's recreational routines with special intellectual needs (cycling, running, climbing, and others)?	15.7%	45.1%	21.6%	9.8%	7.8%
6.	<b>Financial Challenges</b>					
a.	Are you facing additional financial pressure to provide internet facilities to your child with special intellectual needs?	41.1%	37.3%	21.6%		
b.	Are you facing additional financial pressure to provide assistive technology to your child with special intellectual needs?	37.3%	23.5%	23.5%		15.5%

This table shows percentages across different perspectives related to challenges faced by parents of children with intellectual disabilities during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Punjab

### **Findings and Discussion**

Research Question 1: What are the major educational challenges parents face during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore?

#### **Findings of Educational perspective of parental challenges**

Are parents facing educational challenges during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Punjab?

58.8% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a greater extent in continuing individualized education plans during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 33.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a greater extent in engaging children with special academic needs in reading and/or writing activities during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 60.8% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in arranging supplementary aids related to the instructions and services of children's schools/centers during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 35.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in arranging private tutoring during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. These results show that children with intellectual disabilities have to face additional challenges, as Courtenay & Perera (2020). Ultimately, this burden is increased during a pandemic, as concluded by Alexander et al. (2020).

### **Findings of Professional need-based challenges**

35.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in keeping in touch with a physical therapist during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 41.2% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in keeping in touch with an occupational therapist during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 37.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in keeping in touch with speech therapists related to the instructions and services of children's school/center during lockdown due to COVID-19 Punjab. 37.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in the form of keeping in touch with the physician during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Punjab, and 37.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to some extent in the form of keeping in touch with the physician during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 33.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges considerably in the form of a psychologist during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Punjab. 37.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in keeping in touch with a psychiatrist during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. These results show that children with intellectual disabilities have to face additional challenges, as Courtenay & Perera (2020). Ultimately, this burden is increased during a pandemic, as concluded by Alexander et al. (2020).

### **Findings of Medical based challenges**

41.2% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in taking additional preventive

measures during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 37.5% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in meeting additional health care responsibilities during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 39.2% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in facing additional financial pressure to meet dietary needs during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 39.2% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in facing additional financial pressure for the medication during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 37.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in facing additional pressure to maintain respiratory hygiene practices during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 27.5% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a greater extent in the form of facing additional pressure to protect children during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore, and 27.5% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in the form of facing additional pressure to protect children during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 39.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in facing additional psychological issues during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 33.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in meeting additional efforts to clean your home environment to prevent children during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. These results show that children with intellectual disabilities have to face different challenges, as Courtenay & Perera (2020). Ultimately, this burden is increased during a pandemic, as concluded by Alexander et al. (2020).

### **Findings of Leisure time-related challenges**

41.2% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in spending additional time to engage children with special academic needs in indoor activities during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 41.2% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in spending additional time to engage children with special academic needs in certain outdoor activities lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 43.1% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in executing additional activities to engage children with superior intellectual needs with his/her siblings during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 33.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to some extent in executing additional activities to engage children with special intellectual needs with his/her peers during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 43.1% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in meeting



additional efforts to engage children with special intellectual needs in domestic activities (cleaning, dusting, cooking, and/or others during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. These results show that children with intellectual disabilities have to face additional challenges, as Courtenay & Perera (2020). Ultimately, this burden is increased during a pandemic, as concluded by Alexander et al. (2020).

### Findings of Routine Organizational Challenges

43.1% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in putting additional effort to set the sleeping and awakening routines of children during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 35.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in putting additional efforts to set the reading and writing routines of children during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 45.1% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in putting additional efforts to set the recreational routines of children with special intellectual needs (cycling, running, climbing, and others) lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. These results show that children with intellectual disabilities have to face additional challenges, as Courtenay & Perera (2020). Ultimately, this burden is increased during the pandemic, as concluded by Alexander et al. (2020).

### Findings of Provisional perspectives Challenges

41.1% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in facing additional financial pressure to provide internet facilities to children during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. 37.3% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities responded that they faced educational challenges to a great extent in facing additional financial pressure to provide assistive technology to children during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore. These results show that children with intellectual disabilities have to face different challenges, as Courtenay & Perera (2020). Ultimately, this burden is increased during a pandemic, as concluded by Alexander et al. (2020).

**Table 3**  
**Research Question 2. What are the most common challenges faced by parents during lockdown due to COVID-19 in Lahore?**

Challenges	Mean
The educational perspective of parental challenges	14.7612
The professional need-based perspective of parental challenges	22.8209
The medical perspective of parental challenges	30.2090
Leisure time perspective of parental challenges	19.9552
The routine organizational perspective of parental challenges	11.2090
The financial perspective of parental challenges	7.9403

Table 3 depicts that the most common and severe problem of parents of children with intellectual disabilities living in rural and urban areas was the Provision of Medical facilities (n=67, r=30.2090). Professional need-based perspective of parental challenges (n=67, r=22.8209), Leisure time perspective of parental challenges (n=67, r=19.9552), Educational perspective of parental challenges (n=67, r=14.7612), Routine organizational view of parental challenges (n=67, r=11.2090) and the least severe challenge was financial perspectives.

**Table 4**  
**Difference in facing challenges by parents of government and private schools' children**

	Educational perspective	Professional Needs Challenges	Medical Challenges	Leisure time	Routine Challenges	Financial Challenges
Mann-Whitney U	335.500	512.500	356.000	404.000	398.500	407.000
Wilcoxon W	686.500	1.374E3	707.000	755.000	1.260E3	1.268E3
Z	-2.577	-.267	-2.309	-1.696	-1.764	-1.696
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.790	.021	.090	.078	.090

Table 4 indicates significant differences in related educational challenges (U=335.500, p=.010) and medical challenges (356.000, p=.021) faced by parents of children with ID living in rural and urban areas. And there were no significant differences in Professional need-based, leisure time, routine and financial challenges faced by parents of government and private schools living in Lahore.

**Table 5**  
**Association between Challenges faced by parents and their Education**

		Correlations						
		Educational perspective	Professional needs	Medical Needs	Leisure time	Routine	Financial	
Spearman's Rho	Educational Perspective	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.053	.034	.218	-.070	-.057
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.670	.782	.077	.576	.646
		N	67	67	67	67	67	67
	second	Correlation Coefficient	.053	1.000	.098	.037	-.105	-.037
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.670	.	.431	.767	.397	.768
		N	67	67	67	67	67	67
	Medical	Correlation Coefficient	.034	.098	1.000	-.116	.032	-.289*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.782	.431	.	.350	.798	.018
		N	67	67	67	67	67	67
	Leisure Time	Correlation Coefficient	.218	.037	-.116	1.000	-.027	-.305*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.077	.767	.350	.	.826	.012
		N	67	67	67	67	67	67
	Routine	Correlation Coefficient	-.070	-.105	.032	-.027	1.000	.165
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.576	.397	.798	.826	.	.181

		N	67	67	67	67	67	67
Financial	Correlation Coefficient		-.057	-.037	-.289*	-.305*	.165	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.646	.768	.018	.012	.181	.
N			67	67	67	67	67	67

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 describes that there was no significant association between the challenges faced by parents and their education.

### Conclusion

The researchers concluded that the parents of children with intellectual disabilities were facing an increased burden due to lockdown during COVID-19. Medical perspectives on parental challenges and Professional needs-based parental challenges of children with intellectual disabilities were more severe. To a great extent, parents of government and private schools' children living in Lahore face extreme difficulties in arranging supplementary aids related to the medical and professional services for children in Punjab during lockdown due to COVID-19. It is also concluded that there was no association between parental education and facing challenges, and parents of government and private schools' children were facing almost the same kind of challenges.

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