



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Job related Experiences of Women with Disabilities in Punjab Province**

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**ABSTRACT**

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The substantive purpose of this study was to explore challenges and difficulties faced by working women with disabilities at workplace. A self-developed semi-structured interview containing twenty (20) open ended questions was developed. The reliability of instrument (Cronbach alpha) was 0.75. A sample of fifty (50) women with disabilities was selected through snow ball sampling technique from twenty one cities of the Punjab. Data were analyzed by using SPSS and Nvivo software was used for the analysis of data collected through interview schedules. Major findings revealed that the attitudes of heads, teaching staff and non-teaching staff were positive towards women with disabilities. They had shown serious concerns about insufficient job quota, salary packages and medical allowance. School buildings were not disabling friendly and there were no provision of technical aids. Fewer in-service training opportunities were given to them. The study recommended that Government should construct purposeful buildings and allocate additional financial resources to modify the infrastructure of existing buildings. Develop guidelines and policies in order to improve the overall working situation of women with disabilities serving in special schools of Punjab province

**Introduction**

In general, approximately 15 percent of the net population of the world is suffering from one or another disability. In fact, in different developing nations, individuals with disabilities are not represented effectively at workplaces with 80 to 90 percent of rates of unemployment. Meanwhile, this rate is 50 to 70 percent in different developed nations. The identification and sustenance of work, for disabled people, is a significant challenge. For instance, in the US, it has been identified that

34.9 percent of all disabled people are employed in comparison with 76 percent of those people who do not have disabilities. Over time, this disparity is only rising (Kraus, 2017; Houtenville & Ruiz, 2012; Lauer & Houtenville, 2017; Ahmad et. al. 2015).

In a large number of industrialized nations, similar gaps in employment have been identified. The employment rate, for instance, among the Canadians of working age with a disability, is 49 percent and for people without any type of disability, it is 79 percent (Turcotte, 2014). In addition, in the European Union, these rates are 66.9 percent for the latter and 47.3 percent for the former (Eurostat, 2017). Although the World Health Organization (2011) indicates that the rates of employment tend to vary across a number of nations, all over the globe, a disabled individual is comparatively less likely to find employment than an individual who is not disabled (Heymann, Stein, & de Elvira Moreno, 2014, p. 4). Employees with disabilities, even when they are specifically employed, are specifically more probable than normal individuals to report and observe unemployment and salaries that are lower than the average standard (Konrad, Moore, Ng, Doherty, & Breward, 2013; check Baldrige, Brault, 2012; Beatty, Konrad, & Moore, 2016).

Women with disabilities face double discrimination in society because of lower level of formal education, personal salary and job opportunities (Lavano, Abdul & Ortega, 2015). Social attitudes play important role to increase the rate of employability of the women with disabilities. Employment is an essential activity to generate income for social prosperity and welfare but few people accept this reality (Theeraphong, 2014). Significant barriers found in studies were environmental barriers, negative attitudes of non disable community, specifically employers and over protection by family members create hurdles in employment opportunities. Disabled women and their employability issue still limited yet which cause poverty problems because non disabled community is neglecting the power of these women (Mitra & Sambamoorthi, 2008; Yeo & Moore, 2003). Due to employers negative believes women with physical disabilities are excluded greatly and considered as stigma than the man with disability (Crooks & Chouinard, 2008; Gannon & Nolan, 2007; Bell & Heitmueller, 2009; Scott & Mete, 2008). Less job opportunity for the women with disability can be cause of their community behavior, poor planning of local government and non- existence of supportive legislation. (Bualar & Ahmad, 2009; Bualar, 2010). Women with disabilities are considered less capable for job because of less social exposure and less information regarding labor market (Yeo & Moore, 2003; Jones, 2008).

Consequently, from productive work, these females are not included, acquiring employment opportunities and a salary in general. Actually, it can be determined that among normal people, general attitudes tend to foster and enhance a negative identity and attitude towards women who are disabled (Jones, 2008). Therefore, it deprives them of social activities, economic tradeoffs, and even paid jobs.

## Material and Methods

The population of study consisted of all women with visual impairment and physical impairment working in special education institutions of Punjab province. The sample of study comprised 50 women with disabilities (physically impairment=11, visual impairment=39) who were selected through snow ball sampling technique from twenty-one cities of Punjab province. The complete detail of sample is presented in table I.

**Table 1**  
**The characteristics of the sample**

Variables	Type	Frequency	Percentage
Disability	Physically impairment	11	22.0
	Visual impairment	39	78.0
Nature of appointment	Contract	19	38.0
	Permanent	31	62.0
Age	26-30 years	8	16.0
	31-35 years	19	38.0
	36-40 years	14	28.0
	41- 45 years	3	6.0
	46-50 years	3	6.0
Designation	Braille Teacher	4	8.0
	Music Teacher	3	6.0
	Art & Craft teacher	1	2.0
	JSET	10	20.0
	SSET	27	54.0
Qualification	Headmaster	4	8.0
	B.ED (Special Education)	4	8.0
	M.ED Special Education	6	12.0
	M.A Special Education	33	66.0
	M. Phil Special Education	7	14.0
Experiences	1-5 years	28	56.0
	6-10 years	9	18.0
	11-15 years	6	12.0
	16-20 years	1	2.0
	26-30 years	4	8.0
	31-35 years	2	4.0

JSET(Junior Special Education Teacher), SSET(Senior Special Education Teacher)

After reviewing the related literature, A self-developed semi-structured interview containing twenty (20) open ended questions was developed. Interview schedule was validated by three experts in the field of special education. The reliability of instrument (Cronbach alpha) was 0.75.

## **Results and Discussion**

This segment presents the major findings of the study on the obstacles and challenges faced by disabled women working in special education institutions/schools. The findings were generated in line with the research objectives. Researchers incorporated the quantitative and qualitative data to examine the voices of respondents. Nine major themes were emerged from data and percentages were reported under each theme.

The findings of the study were:

### **Theme 1 Institutional Policy**

Majority of women with disabilities (90%) were satisfied with public sector jobs because these were more secure, (66%) were not satisfied with their job quota which is 2% according to the Disabled Persons (Employment and Rehabilitation) Ordinance 1981. (42%) women reported that their salary packages were sufficient, (84%) were not satisfied with medical allowance and facility. Moreover (80%) women with disabilities were not satisfied with the rules of getting study leave for further professional growth and development.

### **Theme 2 Mobility and Transport**

Most of the institutions (88%) were far away from workplace and they had to face serious problems in absence of transport facility. In order to cope with this difficulty, women with disabilities wake-up early in the morning and wait for long hours at the bus stop. This enables them to board the buses comfortably. They also reported the negative attitudes of the bus drivers and conductors. Usually, they manage mobility aids by themselves such as white cane and wheelchair.

### **Theme 3 Physical Environment**

Majority of women (54%) reported that school buildings were not disabled friendly and proper ramps, modified toilets and railing not exist in the institutions. (66%) said that no orientation regarding building of institution is arranged for them by head of institutions when they started their jobs.

### **Theme 4 Attitudes of Head of Institution**

Most of women reported (74%) that institution's head appreciate their work and (68%) administration of institute cooperates with them, (50%) reported that they were given administrative duties and tasks occasionally by their principals.

### **Theme 5 Psycho-social Environment**

In organizations, (68%) of the respondents agreed that protection from of psycho- social and sexual abuse is ensured completely and they tend to feel

protected at their work place whereas (44%) experienced psychological pressure due to professional responsibilities at workplace.

### **Theme 6 Attitude of Teaching and Non- teaching Staff**

The findings revealed that most of teaching staff and non-teaching staff (66%) were positive towards women with disabilities and they were being involved (56%) in official meetings. Colleagues (60%) convey complete information to them and (72%) colleagues were supportive and share their work load.

### **Theme 7 Opportunities for Training and Professional Growth**

Most of women with disabilities (90%) were professionally trained, (46%) reported that they are provided for further training opportunities. (74%) reported that large print/ reading material in braille form or printed are not provided during in-service training. (92%) stated that disability was not a hurdle in their promotion.

### **Theme 8 Working Aids and Assistant Personnel**

72 percent of the females said that working tools like printers, writing frames, and computers are not accessible at workplace. In fact, they are required to purchase these tools by themselves. Persons with visual impairment reported that official notices, policies and curriculum guidelines were available in regular font and size. They further described that they often request their colleagues to read such documents for them.

### **Theme 9 Over- loaded**

Most of women stated (72%) that they were often overburden and their work schedule is tough because of excessive number of students in classes and they had to engage multi-grade and more than one disability at the same time. Most of the institutions did not have the provision of teacher assistant to support special education teachers.

### **Conclusions**

On the basis of results above it is concluded that the attitudes of heads, teaching staff and non-teaching staff were positive towards women with disabilities. They were involved in official decisions and colleagues shared their work load. Most of women with disabilities prefer to serve in public sector jobs because these jobs were secure but they had shown serious concerns about insufficient job quota, salary packages and medical allowance. They further reported that the institutions were far from workplace and they have to face serious problems in absence of transport facility. School buildings are not disable friendly and no provision of technical aids to enhance their mobility such as manual/electronic wheelchair and white canes by institutions. Women with disabilities are professionally qualified and trained but

fewer in-service training opportunities are given to them. They reported that large print/ reading material in braille form or printed are not provided during in-service training. Furthermore, They were not satisfied with the rules of getting study leave for further professional growth.

### **Recommendations**

Following recommendations are made on the basis of conclusions:

1. Government should develop guidelines and policies and effectively implement and in order to improve the overall working situation of women with disabilities serving in special schools of Punjab province.
2. People with disabilities especially women, should be given priority in the provision of Government houses which are available near their working to reduce their mobility problems.
3. Institutions can arrange transport to assist those who stay far from their working places.
4. Government should construct purposeful buildings and allocate financial resources to modify the infrastructure of existing buildings.
5. The percentage of employment quota need to be increased.

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