



Constructing Disability and Special Education: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Punjab Special Education Policy 2020

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Abstract

Utilizing a framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA), this paper focuses on the Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 to evidence how disability and special education are discursively produced or positioned within the broader policy context of Pakistan. This paper analyzes this policy document, using Mullet's (2018) CDA framework to explore the linguistic dimension and discursive strategies employed and their ideological underpinnings. That study finds a move to the social model of disability and rights-based education rather than traditional medical or charitable models. However, the analysis also highlights restrictions and inconsistencies in the policy's inclusive and empowerment approach for persons with disabilities. This study exemplifies this point, and it illustrates how language and rhetorical methods can depoliticize power and render inclusion an inevitable process rather than an ongoing social battle. The findings offer an essential contribution to the broader field of disability and education in Pakistan, further informing our understanding of policy discourse as a mobilizing force behind enhancing rights and inclusion for people with disabilities. The research concludes by discussing the implications for policy and practice and suggesting areas for future research to further explore the implementation and impact of the policy.

Keywords: *Critical discourse analysis, special education policy, disability rights, inclusive education in Pakistan; social model of disability and educational equity*



Introduction

After independence in 1947, a slow evolution took place in special education schools' development in Pakistan (Ahmad & Yousaf, 2011). After being established as a charitable and segregated affair, it has gradually moved towards rights-based inclusive education models for persons with disabilities. Notwithstanding legislative and policy gains, the achievement of inclusion in practice has been a major challenge for Pakistan, with many children still being excluded from schools because they are disabled.

The roots of special education in Pakistan are ancient. In 1906, the first school for blind students was established in Lahore (Hossain et al., 1999). However, special education became a significant national policy concern in the 1980s. The first policy of its kind, specifically dealing with the education and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in Pakistan, was the *Disabled Persons (Employment and Rehabilitation) Ordinance* (GoP, 1981). Since then, several national policies have been established related to the rights and inclusion of disabled people, as well as access to education for all individuals.

Special education has been a government priority in the largest province, Punjab. To look after the special education facilities in Punjab province, a separate Special Education Department (SpED) has been constituted by the Government of Punjab (Government of Punjab, 2020). Since its establishment during 2003-04, SpED has now run 303 special education institutes, schools for children with disabilities, vocational training, and degree colleges that provide inclusive higher education to over 38,000 students with disabilities.

In this background, Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 was implemented as a comprehensive policy document to steer the provision of special education services in the province. The policy was drafted with the consensus of all stakeholders, and it sets out the vision and mission to be followed while imparting special education in Punjab.

It identifies key challenges and constraints in the current special education system and outlines three main pillars. The three formulated objectives of the SpED include the enhancement of (i) The capacity of SpED's governance and institutionalization, (ii) The education of children with disability, and (iii) The quality of special education.

The policy document also focuses on the change of disability from a medical model to a social model that identifies barriers within society that hinder persons with disabilities. One of the important messages that comes out of this policy is that there is a need for



collaboration among the different stakeholders when dealing with the complex tasks that define children with disabilities (and their families).

Moreover, since this policy document concerns the creation of educational experiences and opportunities for children with disabilities in Punjab, a critical review of the discursive construction of disability and special education inherent in this policy document is required. In this respect, this study endeavors to identify such heterogenous latent ideologies and discourses in the Punjab context to improve the region's real-life understanding of disability and special education.

Due to this, the primary interest of this study is the evaluation or, more specifically, the critique (Mullet, 2018) of the Punjab Special Education Policy Document 2020. Grounded in the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis, this research considers the policy document and seeks answers to these questions: Grounded in the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis, this research considers the policy document and seeks answers to these questions:

1. How does the Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 construct, maintain, or challenge hegemonic discourses around disability and special education in Punjab?
2. How does a policy document's language mirror and maintain ideologies and power relations related to disability and special education in Punjab?

This research uses the qualitative textual analysis of policy documents approach to critically examine Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 (Government of Punjab, 2020) and hopes that findings may shed light on discursive practices and social implications brought forth by it, thus contributing to an enriched understanding of how language within policies structure the experiences and opportunities of persons with disabilities in Punjab.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework and Methods

This research is based on (CDA). CDA is an interdisciplinary approach that combines linguistic analysis with social theory and examines how language and discourse contribute to shaping society and structure, including power relations and ideologies (Fairclough, 2001, 2003). Discourse in CDA is conceived of as a social practice that reveals and shapes the world, with interest specifically in how power relations are exercised through discourse (Lee, 2013).



CDA is an effective method grounded in several principles that define its view on language and society (Jones, 2024). In other words, CDA submits that discourse is constitutive of society in the way that it is formed and forms social structures and relations (Johnstone & Andrus, 2024). Thus, the described bidirectional relation emphasizes the close connection between language and the social environment. Analyzing relations of power is one of the main concerns of CDA as it studies language (Statham, 2022).

It also examines how and why people use language and discourse to create, maintain, or alter power relations and social injustice in society, which explains when language contributes to and when they oppose oppression. CDA also pays attention to historical aspects of discourse because it is acknowledged that all the texts and talks are contextualized in history and culture (Catalano & Waugh, 2020).

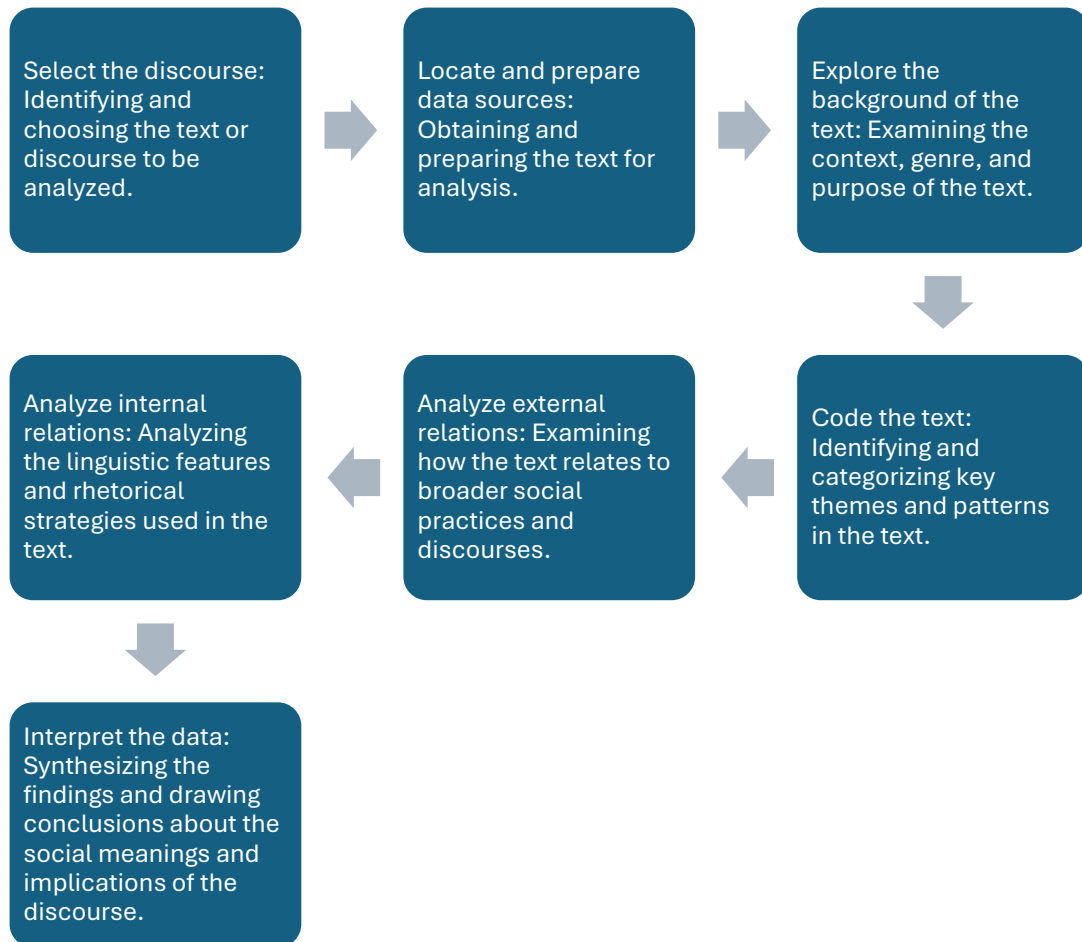
This contextual awareness is essential for the further understanding of such specifics of discourse and its development. Moreover, CDA is more interpretive and explanatory as its goal is to reveal the latent politics of a number of forms of communication. In this way, CDA attempts to pull back the curtain of the various layers to reveal what essentially governs ideology and perspective (Catalano & Waugh, 2020). It is important to acknowledge that according to CDA, discourse is considered a social action (Van Dijk, 1985). It rises above the level of analysis, seeking to make a difference in changing oppressive sociopolitical relations. This activist orientation makes CDA unique as a method that attends equally to analyzing the world and transforming it.

In the context of the current research study, it is used in the analysis of the Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 document. By applying this analytic lens, the study also hopes to discern the assumptions, politics, and ideologies implicit in the production of knowledge about disability and special education in the policy document within the Pakistani context.

Mullet's (2018) CDA Framework

The analysis of the current study follows Mullet's (2018) general CDA framework. The framework presents a detailed, structured construction of CDA as applicable to multiple subject fields and investigation issues. The framework of Mullet has seven stages in it.

Figure 1



In this context, the framework presented offers valuable guidelines for carrying out an extensive and profound CDA of Punjab Special Education Policy 2020. This fits nicely with the appeal of CDA in that it allows for a more holistic analysis of both the linguistic features and situated nature (conveyed by “the social” aspect) found within texts.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 (Government of Punjab, 2020) is the main document and primary source of data for this study, which was collected from the special education department’s website. We included the complete 38-page, seven-sectioned policy document in our analysis. The analysis was conducted with the seven-stage structure of Mullet’s (2018): We considered the Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 document a significant issue in setting up special education services provided to and by people with disabilities in Punjab. The document was downloaded in PDF format, and the first author reviewed it to ensure its completeness and accuracy. Background exploration included an exploration of the genre,



purpose, intended readership, and historical context of the policy document (for example, previous national and provincial policies and Pakistan's international commitments).

The document was coded within the NVivo (version 14) software, employing a combination of both inductive and deductive approaches to coding (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). Open coding was performed to generate initial codes- meaningful text segments concerning the research questions. For the axial coding, these codes were further classified into more inclusive categories and themes (Miles et al., 2020).

'Analysis of external relations' was deployed by analyzing interdiscursive connections between the policy document and the other manifestations of social practices and structures. The author focused on how this text re/produced or subverted the paradigms of disability and education discourses/ideologies.

'Analysis of internal relations' was done by a close linguistic examination of the policy document that focuses on lexis, grammar, and stylistic features. This has been done largely with reference to concepts and approaches of systemic functional linguistics (SFL).

The culmination of the outcomes of the two prior steps is this summarized statement, which enunciates the logical and argumentative storyline as to how policy documents deliberate and organize Disability and Special Education in Punjab. The researchers employed a reflexive approach in order to be cautious about biases arising from the researcher's perspective. Owing to this, inter-coder reliability was used, where the creation of a detailed codebook ensured that consistency and reliability in coding were achieved.

In this way, a thick description of how disability is discursively constructed about special education within the Punjab Special Education Policy document (GoP, 2020) was achieved. The findings hope to contribute some ideas that might enrich or expand existing debates about inclusive education or disability rights in Pakistan and beyond.

Findings

The Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 document analysis has identified broad themes that base the policy's attitude towards disability and special education. These themes cover the most critical areas of the major issues, priorities, and strategies highlighted in the policy.

Shift from a Medical to a Social Model of Disability

The need for a cultural change, moving from the medical model to one based on a social approach, has been identified as a central theme across this policy document. The policy



document is explicit that this will be the change in direction, and it states clearly, “This policy represents a paradigm shift from a medical to a social perspective on disability” (Government of Punjab, 2020, p. 25). The social model is described as another welfare model that is aligned with the human rights approach and shifts the understanding of disability from the personal traits of an individual towards the contexts and barriers that define relationships between people with disabilities and the world.

As stated in the document, this transition may be observed through its definition of disability. The policymakers understanding of persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (Government of Punjab, 2020, p. 24).

On the other hand, tensions and contradictions in their endorsement of a social model were noted as well. For example, the use of medical terms and categories like “hearing impaired,” “visually impaired,” and “mentally challenged” (Government of Punjab, 2020, p. 16) reflects a medicalized understanding of disability that is at odds with the social model.

Access and Inclusion in Education

The other key theme is promoting education for children with special needs and including them in mainstream schools. It is a crucial human right for all children and young people, with or without disabilities. As such, this document presents strategies and initiatives that outline the education plans designed for these categories.

The policy also recognizes the broad educational access and participation divide in Punjab for children with disabilities in Punjab, sharing that “a vast majority of children with SEND remain out of schools because SpED facilities are not available to them” (Government of Punjab, 2020, p. 27). To fill these gaps, the policy recommends expanding special education schools, especially in rural and marginalized communities, the availability of transport and assistive devices for students with disabilities, community mobilization initiatives, and awareness-raising activities.

The document also underlines the need for inclusive education and mainstreaming of children with disabilities. The analysis did find, however, that the document mostly called for mainstreaming children with mild to moderate disabilities and relegating those with more



severe/profound needs, while those with severe and profound disabilities are expected to be served in segregated special education settings.

Quality and Relevance of Special Education Services

The focus of this policy document is to achieve better quality and relevance in special education services, especially in Punjab. It also identifies where its present SpED system falls short and is bounded with limitations like physical facilities that are inadequate resources for teacher development, and insufficient support services suited to their needs, and a lack of assessment tools.

It also lists recommendations for improvement of school buildings and facilities, provision of aids or assistive devices/technology as well a relevant curriculum adapted to the needs of such children. The document also highlights the necessity for training and learning opportunities to be available, with a focus on professional development. The document notes that, “There is a lack of a Continuous Professional Development programme for the teachers which pertain to: Competency standards for SpED teachers and teacher trainers have not been set” (Government of Punjab, 2020, p. 30).

Collaboration and Partnerships

The policy document focuses on cooperation and partnerships between stakeholders across the education and disability sectors. It acknowledges the need for a collaborative, multi-sectoral response to meet holistic needs and address the challenges facing children with disabilities and their families.

The policy highlights the collaboration of different government departments and agencies, including the Special Education Department, School Education Department, and Social Welfare Department, which can help meet some of these requirements. It also highlights the need for partnerships with civil society organizations, NGOs, and the private sector: “Close coordination with development partners will be important in enhancing technical as well as financial capacity of the department” (Government of Punjab, 2020, p. 32).

External relations between the policy and broader societal discourses about disability, education, and development in Pakistan were considered through an analysis of the Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 document. These relations to the outside world demonstrate how a policy text reflects and produces favored conceptions of disability education in Punjab.



The analysis identifies a primary external link in how the text is linked to the prevailing global discussions on inclusive education and the rights of persons with disabilities. Its elaboration on the social model of disability and positioning of education as a universal human right for all children is influenced by international human rights discourses, including the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The document directly cites these international frameworks, with an observation that “the policy outlines the role of SpED in meeting the needs of children with severe and profound disabilities. Integration of children with mild to moderate disabilities is the responsibility of School Education Department (Inclusive Education)” (Government of Punjab, 2020, p. 5). This framing is part of a broader global shift towards inclusive education and the detailed mainstreaming strategies embedded in contemporary educational and development policy.

This analysis also highlighted tensions and contradictions in its engagement with the inclusive education discourse. The focus of the document on giving segregated special education services and an inadequate understanding of inclusion into mainstream schools indicate this tension between the policy’s discursive level inclusive agenda and its embodied enactment.

Education and Development Discourse in Pakistan

A second significant external relationship is its dialogue with discourses about education and development in Pakistan. The policy notes that education is critical to sparking social and economic change: “each Policy objective, SpED commits to reassess, improve, upgrade and deliver quality education and skills to children and youth with SEND. Policy actions under each of the above pillars will promote the fundamental right to education for children with SEND while equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to develop them as productive individuals and members of the society” (Government of Punjab, 2020, p. 5-6).

Viewed in this context, it becomes part of a larger discourse around education as human capital and agentic for economic development that has been relatively prominent in Pakistan’s recent educational policy documents. Still, the analysis acknowledged several areas for improvement in this approach, especially around disability-specific needs and challenges children face. While the document’s strong focus on vocational training and employment for people with disabilities is critical, it may also signal a vision of education



that is reductionist in its approach - focusing narrowly, if not solely, upon economic returns as opposed to broader goals around social inclusion or participation.

Historical Context of Special Education in Pakistan

The historical background of special education in Pakistan has also influenced the portion of the policy document concerning students with special needs. The stress on the collaboration of government, civil society organizations, and the private sector in providing special education services is extracted from how history has developed this service provision through significant involvement by non-governmental organizations and charitable institutions.

While the approach acknowledges a critical role for these actors, it points to questions about how sustainable and prosperous such a model is long-term as well as what critical responsibilities of the state must be met in guaranteeing access, participation, and learning outcomes for all children—including but not limited to those with disabilities.

Linguistic Features and Ideological Implications

The analysis of the Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 document also explored how it represents a particular education policy, what specific linguistic features and rhetorical strategies are used in its text, and their ideological implications for rendering disability and constructing a particular education type. This type of analytical approach used tools and concepts taken from critical discourse analysis and systemic functional linguistics.

Among all the linguistic features that have been distinguished in the analysis, the most numerous categories are the use of nominalization and abstraction. Nominalization is the action wherever verbs or adjectives are converted into nouns, and this may reduce the agency and responsibility. The policy document repeatedly uses nominalized phrases such as “implementation of the policy” and “provision of quality education” (Government of Punjab, 2020), which can serve to abstract and decontextualize complex social processes and actions.

Nominalization can be used to conceal the agents and stakeholders responsible for these processes as if they were natural or necessary rather than being produced by political choices. For instance, the use of passive voice throughout, “new posts of specialist M&E inspectors at the district level will ensure that the SpED institutions are monitored efficiently and effectively” (Government of Punjab, 2020, p. 26), can relegate particular actors behind or remove human agency from actions.



Another key linguistic feature is the presence of another positive language and ambition in the policy document. The document repeatedly uses words and phrases such as “empowerment,” “inclusion,” “quality,” and “fundamental right” (Government of Punjab, 2020, pp. 5-6) to frame its vision and goals for special education in Punjab. Using positive and aspirational language it contributes to creating a narrative based on shared values, such as rights or inclusion for persons with disabilities.

However, the analysis also identified tensions and contradictions in the terminology. This language of “empowerment” and “inclusion,” however, is typically discussed abstractly without indicating any concrete measures or tactics to remedy exclusionary structures on the ground.

The conceptualizations in the document concerning the categorization and labeling of disabilities and people with disability have serious ideological ramifications. The document adopts a social model of disability. However, it employs medical language: it continues to use medical categories and labels such as “hearing impaired,” “visually impaired,” and “mentally challenged” (Government of Punjab, 2020, p. 16). This lexicon supports a medical view of disability, leading to possible increased stigmatization and stereotypes.

Based on the review of the document, the analysis focused on the modal verbs and expressions, which showed the extent of commitment or extent of obligation professed in the policy. In the document, there is a tendency to frequently use the modal verbs of the future ‘will’ and ‘shall,’ commitments and plans are expressed: “Special Education Department (SpED) will initially develop a five-year implementation plan” (Government of Punjab, 2020, p. 8). This turning to a strong modality can thus help to establish a tone of certainty and assertiveness concerning the policy’s aims and plans.

Nevertheless, the analysis also identified hedging and lower modality with more complex or resource-intensive parts of this policy. One reason for the differences in modality is the tension between policy aspirations and practical implementation.

Discursive Construction of Disability and Special Education

The discourse analysis conducted in this paper examined how the Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 positions disability and special education, inequalities produced by exclusion, and implications for the lived experiences of persons with disabilities in Pakistan as per the constructions drawn from policy language.



An essential category of construction identified in the study involves framing disability as a social and environmental issue rather than an individual medical problem. The focus of the document on the social model of disability and the recognition that societal factors affect people with disability is an essential departure from the historically dominant medical mode attached to Disability in Pakistan.

This will help change how we perceive persons with disabilities and address the stigma and discrimination often associated with them while advancing a rights-based narrative regarding their right to be in school or part of society. However, the analysis also highlighted constraints and contradictions in this framing, e.g., staying within medical categories and relying on segregated special education for language use.

Another major construction found in the analysis is on the issue of special education as a separate and unique entity different from the general schooling system. The emphasis of the document on placement and roles to be performed by the Special Education Department and its institutions indicates a siloed approach in Pakistan that was historically created around segregated special education programs.

However, this policy document does not break with the philosophy of separation and specialization that dominated the establishment of special education services, even in recognizing the need for increased collaboration/coordination between the Special Education Department and School Education Departments. This stance can reinforce marginalization and exclusion from mainstream education and society as a whole.

Persons with Disabilities as Rights-Holders and Economic Contributors

The document constructs persons with disabilities as rights-bearing and potential economic actors. On the one hand, it underscores a fundamental right to education—for all children, particularly disabled ones. By contrast, it often attempts to justify the education and training of people with disabilities in terms of their inherent capitalist drive for productivity.

There is a tension or convergence between rights-based and neoliberal ways of constructing disability on the conceptual level that also informs schooling practices. It is undeniable that acknowledging the specific rights of persons with disabilities is a critical step; however, the focus placed on their economic usefulness might contribute to a form of expanded ‘seeing’ which will not encompass the aspects of personal and social growth of an individual.



Inclusion as Integration

The document interprets inclusion as the integration of children with mild to moderate disabilities rather than an all-inclusive approach that also includes persons with more severe and profound disabilities in integrated settings. Such a construction of inclusion as integration is pejorative and rests below a more extensive concurrence with its deference, comprising the maximum depository of posters for instruction relative to encircling all students in general education.

This narrow definition of inclusion may further entrench current divisions and inequities in the education system, especially for learners who require higher levels of support.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The document analysis of Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 has identified multiple perspectives and layers in the construction, categorization, and policy context of disability and special education in Pakistan. The findings hold essential policy, practice, and public lived/epistemic implications for persons with disabilities in Punjab (and beyond).

In the Pakistani context, it is an essential ideological departure that explicitly commits to changing from a medical model of disability to a social one. This transition is also consistent with the global direction of disability rights discourses. It has the potential to counter a long-standing debilitating societal image where people limited by impairments are viewed as individuals characterized only through deficit or medical diagnosis. This policy recognizes the function of societal barriers and their resultant disabling some imaginations on how inclusion/access can be achieved, imagining different angles than just individualizing focus.

However, the analysis showed discrepancies in policy engagement with the social model, and tension existed within it to the extent that it still relied upon medical terminology, indicating its use of categories. This inconsistency makes us wonder whether the shift to a social model being proposed might be more rhetorical at this stage than real. Without a more thorough reconceptualization of disability across the policy and its approaches to implementation, these risks continuing medical versions of disabilities undercover as social models.

This policy, which emphasizes improving education access for children with disabilities and supporting their enrollment in the inclusive education system, is a positive step towards ensuring the right to quality education for all. Considering the international human rights



frameworks, recognizing education as a fundamental right for children with disabilities is an advancement in Pakistan.

This analysis, however, did find that the policy was limited in its approach to inclusion, opting to integrate more for children with mild and moderate disabilities while preserving a new form of inclusion that would run parallel but separated from mainstream schooling when it came to children with severe and profound disabilities. However, while an essential step towards more inclusive practices, it needs to fully represent the international understanding of inclusive education articulated in relevant global frameworks such as UNCRPD, where all learners are expected to be able to participate and learn from the general system.

This narrow approach to inclusion contains the danger that it can contribute to continuing a two-tier education system. It may also mean maintenance of rather than challenging distinctions between children with more noticeable support needs. It also risks ignoring how inclusive education can benefit all learners, not just students with a disability.

Improvement in the quality and relevance of special education services, such as upgrading infrastructures, developing relevant curriculums, teacher training, etc., are essential gaps addressed by this policy, but those again work within a system-level agenda. This commitment to promoting quality can potentially advance educational results and experiences for children with disabilities.

However, the analysis found that in practice, the policy for quality remains oriented chiefly towards a segregated school system. It includes improvements to the quality of special education services; however, it does not address an end to segregation and its continuing implications for social inclusion and life opportunities in accessing a variety of societal institutions.

Furthermore, underscoring collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders throughout the policy shows an awareness that disability and education issues are complex. This can potentially harness disparate resources and skills to address accessibility for a broader range of children.

Nevertheless, the analysis pointed out deficiencies in how collaboration was addressed within this policy area concerning enabling meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in decision-making. Without centering on the voices and



experiences of persons with disabilities themselves, there is a risk that top-down approaches will be perpetuated, which may not meet disability community needs/priorities.

The results from the present analysis are consistent and build upon existing research on disability and educational policy in Pakistan and other low- to middle-income countries. The move of the policy toward a social model of disability was in line with broader global movements within disability rights discourse (e.g., Oliver, 2018; Shakespeare, 2006). However, such tensions and contradictions are congruent with research by Singal (2006) on translating rights-based discourses into practice in contexts where medicalized understandings of disability remain strong.

The policy strategy of inclusion, focusing on the integration of some children with mild to moderate disabilities and providing segregated facilities for others, is akin to a more standard “continuum of provision” approach common in many low- and middle-income countries as critiqued by Singal (2006). While some integration is an improvement compared to completely separated systems, it still does not reflect the full inclusion in line with international frameworks and demands of disability rights advocates.

This focus on enhancing the quality of special education services reflects more significant trends in educational policy in Pakistan, as described by Hameed and Manzoor (2016). However, the concentration on quality within a system that remains formally compartmentalized represents various questions and concerns in the literature regarding such distribution of resources: is it better to invest in the idea of special education and its further enhancement, or should more try to be invested in modifying the general education for children with learning disability?

The policy for collaboration and partnerships is indicative of the history of special education in Pakistan, which shows the large involvement of NGOs and charitable organizations. However, the remaining challenges regarding the lack of fulsome participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes correspond to the critics of disability studies scholars and activists, who urged them to consider “nothing about us without us” approaches to policymaking and policymaking.

The critical discourse analysis conducted in this paper has offered a constructive understanding of the construction of disability and special education in the Punjab Special Education Policy 2020; however, some limitations are as follows. The findings are based on a single document, do not utilize data about implementation, and do not contain a broad range



of stakeholders' perspectives. In addition, interpretations could be a result of the researcher's positionality and issues in translating languages may become a challenge in identifying nuances.

Nonetheless, the study presents the hidden ideologies and different structures of power in the policy language, hence supplementing the knowledge of how discourse affects the education of persons with disability in Pakistan. It demonstrates the advances and setbacks over the years in the efforts to attain inclusive and equitable education. More diverse documents should be included in future research implementation studies, engaging all the stakeholders and using the local languages for analysis.

Conclusion

This paper presents a critical discourse analysis of the Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 in Pakistan. From the analysis, it is evident that the current social model of disability is suggested, and a relatively greater focus on inclusion and access is observed. Areas of emphasis are research-based knowledge utilization, personnel training and development, and partnerships with the stakeholders.

The tensions revealed in the policy's interpretation and implementation are presented in the debates on disability–education–development linkage in Pakistan. While it means that the policy is based on international human rights documents, it remains a system of segregated special education.

Nominalization and abstraction are also identified from a linguistic point of view, which might lead to the blurring of certain accountabilities. However, the policy removes the medicalization elements of special education while returning disability and special education to the policy as social issues. They include the expansion of the idea of the social model, rethinking of disability for all learners, proximity between quality of special education and inclusion of other learners, and meaningful engagement of persons with disability in policy decisions.

The suggestions for future studies include studies on policy application, inter-provincial comparison, stakeholder-engaging research, and the analysis of disability combined with other types of diversity.



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