

## **I am not against Inclusive Education but...: Teachers' Voices from Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

Teachers as 'agents of change' have an important part in the progressive and meaningful inclusion of children with disabilities in general schools; their positive attitudes toward IE are a pre-requisite for its success. At the same time, teachers' beliefs and predispositions about IE are intertwined with their 'capabilities to make a difference' or in other words teacher agency. The present study has explored these two concepts as Enigmas of IE and Propositions of Agency respectively. The data were collected through a series of focus group discussions with a sample of 70 teachers from general schools of Islamabad Pakistan. Our study points to the co-existence of positive as well as negative attitudes of teachers toward IE. The findings indicate that teachers of general schools may use their agency to resist inclusion in their schools unless and until support structures are put in place. The findings also caution us to explore further whether it is really the anti-IE attitude or under the façade are issues related to the competence and autonomy of teachers rather than their beliefs and predispositions per se.

**Keywords:** Teacher attitude, inclusion; teacher agency, Pakistan

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## Introduction

“In the inclusive classroom, the teacher not only sets up physical opportunities for all students to look included, but the teacher makes students feel included through his/her choice of words and phrases” Nicole Eredics

Pakistan is among the signatory states of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) and has also ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to education in 2011. Despite the fact that different initiatives have been taken to honor these commitments overtime (Razzaq, 2019), the existing participation rate of children with disabilities in education is merely 5% (Government of Pakistan, 2017:119). The current National Education Policy 2017-2025 has a target of raising it to 100% by 2025. For such a huge undertaking the government will definitely need support and assistance of all stakeholders but most of all of the teachers who are directly responsible for students and their academic achievements. A large body of research studies on IE shows that teachers have a key role in the progressive and meaningful inclusion of children with disabilities in general schools (Cipkin & Rizza, 2011; Dorji, Bailey, Paterson, Graham & Miller, 2019; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2007; McHatton & Parker, 2013; Shaukat & Rasheed, 2015). The success of inclusion largely depends on how they perceive IE (Burke & Sutherland, 2004; De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011; Forlin, Cedillo, Romero-Contreras, Fletcher, & Hernandez, 2010; Buehl, & Beck, 2015). Therefore, it is vital to explore teachers' attitudes toward IE in a country like Pakistan with a current participation rate of 5% to be raised to 100% by the year 2025. Teachers have a huge stake in making IE successful; how they perceive IE will determine their attitude and teachers' positive attitude towards inclusion can help in developing inclusive classrooms and schools (Haider, 2008; Silva & Morgado, 2004).

The bulk of research on the attitude of teachers toward IE is huge and ever-expanding nevertheless most of these studies are limited in their scope when it comes to exploring the underlying reasons for holding those views toward IE. A large majority of the studies associates personal factors like age (Agbenyega, 2007; Hind, Larkin & Dunn, 2019; Simons & Kalogeropoulos, 2005), gender (Alghazo & Gaad, 2004; Dorji et. al, 2019; Kuittinen, 2017) and marital status (Fakolade, Adeniyi & Tella 2009). Further, professional background like years of teaching

experience (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Dorji et. al, 2019; Leyser, Kapperman & Keller, 1994; You, Kim & Shin, 2019), Educational qualification (Hsien, Brown & Bortoli, 2009) and training of teachers in SEN (Coelho, Blázquez & Cubo, 2017; Woodward, 2017; Muguwe & Mushoriwa, 2018; Williams, 2018) or school factors like the locale of the school being rural/urban (Chepel, Aubakirova & Kulevtsova, 2016; Meng, 2008) and subjects taught (Saloviita, 2018; Stauble, 2009; Vaz, Wilson, Falkmer, Sim, Scott, Cordier & Falkmer; 2015) have also been identified for causing variations in the attitudes of teachers toward IE. On the other hand the literature on educational policies and programs aimed at improvement and reforms (IE included), teachers are considered "agents of change" (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015) assigning teachers an active and dynamic role in the process of educational changes. Related to this role is the notion of teacher's agency which has equally emerged as an important "means of understanding how teachers might enact practice and engage with policy" (ibid, opp:1).

The role of teacher agency in educational change in general has been highlighted by researchers like Day (2016), Simpson, Sang, Wood, Wang and Ye (2018), Vähäsantanen (2015), Van der Heijden, Geldens, Beijaard and Popeijus (2015) and Vongalis-Macrow (2007), whereas Mu, Hu, and Wang (2017), Pantić (2015) and Pantić and Florian (2015) have specifically drawn attention to its role in helping or hindering IE. The relevance of teachers' agency in the context of IE is prominently advocated by Pantić (2015) by proposing a model of 'teacher agency for social justice' (p.765). The model comprises of four-components of teachers' agency namely, 'sense of purpose, competence, the scope of autonomy and reflexivity, including meaning-making of their present structures (roles and resources) and cultures (relational and ideational contexts)'(ibid, opp). For the present study, the notion of 'agency' is equal to; 'one's capability to originate and direct actions for a given purpose' (Zimmerman & Cleary (2006) as cited by Oppong, 2014, p. 117).

Considering the role of teachers as change agents, their beliefs and predispositions about IE are intertwined with the four components of their agency; for instance, teachers will 'engage purposefully'(Pantić & Florian, 2015, p.338) in promoting (or resisting) IE policies if they believe that the outcome will be positive (or negative). Similarly, teachers who are not only trained but are competent to handle students with disabilities in inclusive setting will be more positive toward IE; the understanding of IE and teachers own role in it, would enhance their sense of professional competence and the likelihood of them being more assertive in demanding material and non-material resources for

successful implementation of IE agenda. In the same way, 'the levels of autonomy and power within given structures and cultures, which can either foster or suspend agency' (ibid, opp), define teachers' agency and shape their attitudes toward IE accordingly; autonomous teachers interact with policymakers and take part in making decisions related to their professional lives; by having purpose, competence and autonomy teachers may be able to avert decisions with potential to harm IE agenda. Likewise reflexivity refers to the ability of teachers 'to monitor and reflect both their own practices and social contexts...and collaborate with others to bring about their transformation' (ibid, opp). Furthermore, teachers 'may use their agency to support, take a critical stance, or even resist educational change in their schools' (Van der Heijden et al. 2015, p. 681).

In light of the above discussion, we believe that teachers' agency should explicitly be taken into account when analyzing their attitudes toward IE. The present study is a step in this direction. Ainscow (2013) and Stanley (2015) have recommended further research on general school teachers' attitudes toward IE in order to improve the quality of IE as well as enhance its implementation for the benefit of all students in general and excluded students in particular.

## **Objectives**

For the present study, our purpose was to understand the underlying 'aspects not directly observable but inferred' and are made up of both beliefs as feelings and behavioral predispositions toward the targeted object (Auzmendi (1992), cited by Santillán, Moreno, Carlos & Zamudio, 2012).

The 'targeted object' for our research was to have teachers' points of view on IE. Our main interest was in 'listening' to the voices of teachers themselves; therefore, we chose to apply a qualitative approach to the research. The intention was to get an in-depth understanding of IE from the perspective of Pakistani general school teachers who are expected to be the vanguards in this movement. Our purpose was not just to explore and provide a surface description of the views of a large sample of teachers which could be done, more efficiently, through descriptive surveys. Our objective was to dig deeper into the realm of teachers' attitude and the underlying reasons that shape their attitude towards IE.

## **Methodology**

Our definition of 'attitude' for this purpose was, 'a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols' (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005, p.150). For data collection, we chose Focus Group Discussion (FGD) which is one of the most commonly used qualitative methods for data collection in a variety of disciplines like education, medical and social sciences.

## **Procedure**

### **Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

'Focus groups are semi-structured discussions with groups of 4–12 people that aim to explore a specific set of issues' (Tong, Sainsbury & Craig; 2007, p.351). Therefore, majority of researchers using qualitative research agree that FGD is a good way of collecting desired information from people having same background (Bannon, McGaughey, Clarke, McAuley & Blackwood, 2019; Jang, Park, Kim & Chang, 2019.; Mishra, 2016; Mohammed, Baig, & Gururajan, 2019; Mohammed, Baig, & Gururajan, 2018). Since the purpose of the present research was to gain an in-depth understanding of the attitudes of government school teachers towards IE in general schools, FDGs were considered more suitable than other methods because for all practical purposes FGD is a form of an in-depth interview in a group setting (Mishra; 2016).

### **The Setting for the FDGs**

Focus group discussions were conducted in six government high schools with one focus group from each school. Three out of these six were girls' schools and the other three were boys'. The sessions were held during school time and teachers who were free at that time and willing to participate were included. The size of a focus group varied between 8-12 members and the duration of a discussion session was between 75 – 90 minutes on average as suggested by O Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, and Mukherjee (2018). In total 70 teachers, 32 males and 38 females, participated in these group discussions.

The method of focus group discussions proved fruitful for understanding the attitude of participants toward IE. The discussion sessions were generally opened with a 'grand tour question' (Onwuegbuzie,

Dickinson, Leech & Zoran, 2009, p.1), like, 'Tell me how you feel about Inclusive Education? This apparently an imprecise question helped 'obtain participants' overall orientation toward' (ibid, opp) inclusive education. We also observed what Tong, Sainsbury, and Craig (2007) have stated: 'group interaction encourages respondents to explore and clarify individual and shared perspectives' (p. 351). As the discussion progressed the environment became less formal; participants needed less prodding and were more open in voicing their beliefs and sharing experiences of IE in general schools. This informality of the context lent a hand in accessing a wealth of insider information which helped explain some of the paradoxical behaviors of the study participants

Additionally, the use of FGDs also enriched the field data by highlighting the contextual realities which would have been overlooked by the use of quantitative methods of data collection. These specific aspects of teachers' context while on one hand shape their attitudes, on the other hand, also provide opportunities to teachers for acquiring and enacting "capability to make a difference" (Oppong, 2014, p.113). One of our fears was that the group members might be reluctant to openly express their 'negative' views about IE as it is still a contentious topic in education and policy circles alike; and also because being employees of the Public sector, teachers are expected to be on the government's side. Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran (2009) have noted that FDGs, "is less threatening to many research participants, and this environment is helpful for participants to discuss perceptions, ideas, opinions, and thoughts" (p.1). We soon realized that FDGs provided them a collective platform where even when they were answering individually they were interacting and talking to others (Tong et al; 2007). Hence, their views were constantly being shaped, re-shaped, expanded and explained as 'shared perspectives' which ensured their anonymity and provided confidentiality as well.

### **Analyzing Data from SDGs**

We used 'Constant comparison analysis' in three steps as suggested by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009: p.5). First, in order to do 'open' coding, recordings of the six focus groups were transcribed, read and re-read in combination with field notes. Next, different labels were attached to identifiable 'units' of information (Chowdhury, 2015; Gläser & Laudel, 2013; Stuckey, 2015). For instance, for the concept of 'teachers negative feelings' toward inclusion, participants' words like, discomfort, self-doubt, lack of support, not trained were put under this label while the

concept of 'teachers positive feelings' consisted of phrases like equal rights, full inclusion, provision of disability-friendly facilities and so on.

Once the data reduction was achieved, we proceeded to 'axial' coding where concepts were grouped in terms of relationships to help organize data into categories; for instance the category of 'teachers attitude toward inclusion' was made up of subcategories like, in favor of full inclusion, partial inclusion by degrees of severity, conditional inclusion, and segregation. At this stage, the patterns in data were becoming explicit and emerging themes were easily discernible. Lastly, in the third stage four main themes, i.e., what of IE, Why accept IE, Why reject IE and How of IE, were drawn through 'selective coding' and analyzed.

### Teachers’ Voices; Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis helped us capture the varied voices of teachers from different focus groups under selected themes. For this purpose we combined Pantić (2015)'s model of teachers' agency labeling it as 'propositions of agency' with the four themes that had emerged from the analysis of FGDs data and were collectively labeled as 'enigmas of IE.' The resulting framework is presented in Figure 1 which was used for analyzing the attitude of Pakistani teachers of general school teachers towards IE.

**Figure 1: Enigmas of IE; Propositions of Agency**

What of IE/ Purpose *	Why-Accept IE/Purpose	Why Reject/ Competence/ Reflexivity*	How of IE/ Autonomy / Reflexivity *
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•understanding of IE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•'Teachers' perceptions of their moral roles'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•'understanding broader issues influencing teachers' practices'</li> <li>•'meaning-making of structures and cultures'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•'opportunities for participation in decision-making'</li> <li>•'broader policy and socio-cultural contexts'</li> </ul>

\* are the elements of 'Teacher Agency Model' adopted from Pantić (2015:773)

Enigmas of IE; Propositions of Teacher Agency  
 What if IE? Understanding the Purpose

In the beginning, in all groups teachers said 'Yes' to IE as a basic right; 'children with disabilities have a right to access education just like students without disabilities'. In our first focused group discussion, one of the male teachers stated categorically; 'education is not a government handout ... it is a citizen's birthright, then why the division ... this distinction between "with" or "without" disabilities should not even exist'. A female teacher assertively shared her views; 'a child is a child...with disabilities they are no less humans...they should be respected and given place and space like other citizens'.

We noted that teachers in our sample were defining IE with phrases like; 'it is a basic human right' or 'it would be morally wrong not to grant this right to children with disabilities'. At this stage, the discourse was being carried out mainly in the language of moral and humanitarian commitments. It seemed that teachers were trying to be 'socially appropriate' and 'politically correct' as the topic of IE is still sensitive in Pakistan.

### **Why Accept IE? Perceptions of Moral Roles:**

'Political commitment' was one of the moral obligations of the state as pointed out by one of the male teachers; 'Pakistan has signed many international treaties on this issue [IE]...hence every government is officially bound to honor these commitments'. The statement was endorsed by a large majority of his associates. Another male colleague was quick to point out the moral dimension of commitments; it is not just a matter of honoring international commitments... it is showing integrity as well...our government is morally bound to fulfill the promises made in our national education policy... I personally know some parents of children with disabilities whose hopes are raised by these promises.

Another female teacher intertwined the spirit of IE with her profession; 'as teachers we are expected to not only teach whosoever is sitting in the classroom but also treat them fair and square'. Almost all teachers made comparable statements about children with disabilities and their right to access education emphasizing the moral and humane dimensions of the Phenomenon. However, as researchers interjected a probe about the 'hopes and expectations' of teachers themselves about the implementation of IE as promised by the government, the ethical overtones were replaced by logistical issues and practical concerns related to IE.



### **Why Reject IE: The issues of Competence and Reflexivity**

The pensive hush that followed this simple question was indicative of either deep divisions among the group members or commonly held strong feelings toward IE. The silence was broken by a female teacher who asked skeptically; 'is that an option?' This rhetorical question and the subsequent statement; 'we have to do it anyway' by many in a chorus, had brought forth the matter of self-reflection and monitoring of their own practices with respect to IE. While none of them opposed 'inclusion' per se, they were uncertain about IE as one of the participants conceded;

I am not against inclusive education but I am afraid; I am afraid for myself; I am not trained to manage classroom situations involving students with disabilities...the other I cannot just watch students with disabilities being ridiculed...In either case, I feel inadequate.

This critical self-appraisal was greeted by many affirmative nods. It was clear that teachers, in general, were not anti-inclusion but they felt ill-prepared for dealing with students with disabilities. Similar feelings of frustration and lack of confidence have been reported by Ismail, Basheer, and Khan (2016) and others like Hind et al., 2019: Kiriungi, Mwiti, and Mburugu (2014), Monje (2017) and Sutton (2013) have also identified training in special needs as an important enabler for IE.

The personal feelings of fear and discomfort due to lack of specific training were further accentuated by being aware of the lack of supporting facilities and services at the institutional levels as was stated by one of the participants; It is easy to believe that inclusion can be achieved if you have good intentions; I have good intentions toward IE and so do my other colleagues but look where are we at present? We all know that a successful and meaningful implementation of IE requires a modified or special curriculum, proper training of teachers, relevant infrastructure and financial resources. All these things are beyond our reach.

Another teacher was quick to add; 'we are not against including children with disabilities into our schools [general schools] but the government must provide all required supporting services to facilitate the integration of students with disabilities into general schools'.

Apparently teachers were caught between the rock and hard place so to speak; on one hand, they believed in access to education as a right of the children with disabilities but their professional judgment, on the other hand, was not with it. As teachers, they had many concerns that included practical limitations like lack of physical and financial resources as well as the extra demands on their time and increased workload in the wake of

IE; a teacher specifically drew attention to the latter; While I agree that children with disabilities have a right to access education but why IE?...just putting an extra burden on teachers as if managing 'normal' but rowdy children was not enough

The point was further driven home by another teacher;

Inclusive education is a moral issue...just like religious followers you have to make a lot of sacrifices if you are a true believer...teachers would need to exercise extra patience, fellow students need to be more sensitive toward children with disabilities, other staff would be required to be more vigilant...more of this more of that...it is not easy to change overnight.

As the discussion progressed, the dilemmas of their personal beliefs and professional judgments were getting sharper than before. The teachers, though in favor of inclusive schools and classrooms, were not comfortable with the prospects of having children with disabilities in their classrooms. Some of them shared their personal and professional experiences that could help understand their feelings of discomfort; one of the teachers shared an episode that occurred in her regular class; I had a student with mild mental disabilities in my class...was usually very calm and peaceful... one day as I returned to the class after recess, I was shocked to see that she was pushing the head of another girl against the window bars, the other girl was screaming for help but none of the classmates tried to rescue for fear of escalating the conflict; I had to struggle alone to untangle the two girls

Based on her bitter experience she was skeptical of the success of IE in general schools and she did not hesitate to declare it; from that day on, I have reservations [about IE] because teachers are not trained in special education, no special facilities are available in schools, no specialized curriculum is available to meet the special needs of the children with disabilities or to separately engage the children with and without disabilities; in such circumstances, I do not think that inclusion can be achieved

It was apparent that teachers despite their positive belief in IE were constrained by practical realities of their profession like lack of special training to facilitate the inclusions of students with disabilities. Additionally, lack of support facilities was further raising their concerns as was obvious from the statement a female teacher made; when we register our concerns about the lack of facilities for including children with disabilities into our schools [general schools] it is perceived as if teachers were against IE... we are not against inclusion... we only ask

our government not to include students with disabilities into general schools without first providing the necessary infrastructure.

Sharing of another rather personal family experience by one of the teachers further highlighted these constraints;

I also have a child with disabilities in my family but we could not find any such facilities or schools for him; as a result, he has to stay at home which is unfortunate... for families like us, any step toward inclusion will be encouraging but as teachers, we know that IE can only be implemented if all the required facilities are provided by the government.

The views of these Pakistani teachers were like sounds coming back from Dubai & Abu Dhabi where teachers showed more motivation to implement inclusion "provided they get adequate resources and support system from their respective schools" (Dev & Kumar, 2015, p.610). Similar findings were reported by Sutton (2013) and Hind et al. (2019), for Jackson, Mississippi and East Midlands, UK respectively.

During these conversations another related issue was emerging that even went beyond schools involving the whole society and societal norms; a female teacher observed; you see, the support that we teachers seek is not limited to material or non-material resources for teachers and schools only... for a successful inclusion of children with disabilities in general schools, educating the general public is extremely important...our students come from homes, from different communities with different perceptions about disabilities.

Extension of the above point was made with a general statement; 'often students do not understand the problems of students with disabilities and make fun of them and laugh at them'. The agreement was expressed by affirmative nods and by sharing a personal experience by a male teacher; I remember a child with a physical disability in our school but his peer's attitude was not supportive...they teased him... their behavior toward him was humiliating...so much so that he finally left the school

Other similar experiences and observations were also shared before male teacher almost concluded the discussion by giving his point of view supported by a general observation; Full inclusion does not seem possible currently in Pakistan because people with disabilities are still deprived of their basic rights; mega awareness needs to be raised in our country for their [people with disabilities] acceptance and respect in society.

Similar feelings by teachers have also been reported by other researchers (Ahsan & Burnip, 2007; Charema, 2007; Glaubman &

Lifshitz, 2001; Khan, 2011; Kibria, 2005; Michelle, 2009; Singal, 2006). The similarity of the findings across different contexts suggests that the issues of competence and reflexivity do not emanate from anti-inclusive attitude but are more structural problems of the teaching profession itself.

### **How of IE/ Autonomy / Reflexivity**

It was 'yes' to inclusion of children with disabilities but 'no' to IE; 'In my observation, students with disabilities will feel more comfortable in special schools as these schools are specially designed to meet their needs and requirements'. Another female teacher added; 'in inclusive settings, students with disabilities feel inferiority complex as they cannot participate in every activity and they suffer from low self-esteem'. Kucuker and Tekinarslan (2015) and Krull, Wilber & Hennemann (2014) have also reported similar feelings of social rejection and loneliness by students with disabilities in inclusive settings. Likewise the contradictory attitudes of teachers reported by other studies (Krischler & Pit-ten Cate, 2019; De Boer et al, 2011) were also visible here; teachers who believed in access to education as an innate right of the children with disabilities were equally emphatic that their right to education could be best served in 'segregated educational facilities' or in other words 'special' schools for children with disabilities. While they all understood the importance of providing equal opportunities to these children, considering the current state of general schools, lack of trained SEN (Special Education Needs) teachers, limited education budget and the lack of practical support from the government, the teachers had reservations about full inclusion. Having discussed the need for special training of teachers, curriculum and teaching aids, they suggested a way out;

First, the government has to divide students with disabilities into two categories: included in the first category are students with severe disabilities and the second category will include children with milder disabilities. Students in the first category [with severe disability] need to be taught in special schools while the students with milder disabilities may be included in general schools.

However, the emphasis was also laid on 'even the inclusion of students with milder disabilities in general schools should be with full facilities, like trained teachers, in-house medical facilities and supportive infrastructure'.

Participants offered justifications for supporting segregation of students with disabilities on various grounds one of them being practical limitations like lack of trained teachers (already discussed above) and

concerns for students without disabilities; Teachers have limited class time. If more of that time is taken up by efforts to enable students with disabilities what will happen to students with no disabilities? We might be disabling them by ignoring them.

Others expressed their concerns by drawing parallel between the introduction of co-education and IE; 'just look at the research on having boys and girls together in one class... single-sex schools benefitted both boys and girls...now there are problems for both genders...inclusive classroom is just like that'. One of the male teachers spontaneously added; 'We are already dealing with children who do not have disabilities per se [not visible] but are "rowdy" is that not enough? They will become even more unmanageable in inclusive settings where more demands on teacher's time and attention will be coming from other sets of students (with disabilities)].

Similar concerns about students without disabilities have also been reported by Ferguson (2014) in his study of challenges to inclusion. These concerns may also be indicative of the accountability concerns of teachers as an important stakeholder in the whole process of inclusive education.

Furthermore, Segregation was also justified on financial grounds like, 'building few but fully equipped special schools for children with disabilities would be more economical and efficient than updating the infrastructure of all general schools'. Another justification was on humanitarian grounds

A student in my class had some mental issues... she would suddenly start shouting and crying ...As a teacher, it was very difficult for me to handle such situations. At the same time, I used to feel bad for the kid because her classmates would laugh...such behavior of her peers would definitely adversely affect her personality by increasing her feelings of helplessness; for this reason alone I think special schools may be a better choice for such children.

A social dimension of 'hidden' exclusion was also exposed as one of the teachers commented; Rather than disrupting the general school's routines by including children with disabilities, we need to make more efforts to bring in millions of normal but excluded children who have never put a foot in school.

To sum up, the teachers, in general, were not anti-inclusion. They did not reject the idea of inclusion but they felt ill-prepared for dealing with students with disabilities. They were cognizant of their moral duty toward students with disabilities but they were also mindful of their own limitations. Their personal feelings of fear and discomfort were further

accentuated by being acutely aware of the lack of supporting facilities and services at the institutional level (Razzaq, 2019). They knew that the government was committed to make inclusive education a norm but the accompanying infrastructure was not in place in most of the schools these teachers represented.

## **Conclusions**

Inclusive education is a contentious issue in Pakistan. Teachers were at the forefront of the implementation of the change agenda are apprehensive and uncertain. These perplexities and uncertainties create an environment rife with contradictions; on one hand, teachers are troubled by their belief in education being a basic human right; then denying inclusion to children with disabilities would be an immoral act. At the same time, they are uncertain about the success of IE on practical grounds; given the unfriendly infrastructure of existing schools, lack of trained teachers and shortage of financial resources for updating or building new schools teachers are concerned whether IE will really benefit students with disabilities.

Overall, the results of our study points to the co-existence of negative as well as positive attitudes of teachers toward IE. The implications of these findings are twofold; a) for the future of IE in Pakistan, the indications are that teachers of general schools may use their agency to resist inclusion in their schools unless and until support structures are put in place; and b) for academicians and researchers who are interested in assessing teachers' attitude toward IE, they need to include the role of teachers' agency in the list of factors that shape their attitude toward IE; what may appear as 'anti IE' attitude could very well be a smokescreen for issues related to 'capabilities' of teachers rather than their beliefs and predispositions per se.

## **Acknowledgment**

We are thankful to our participants who willingly shared with us their views and opinions about IE.

## **Funding for the research**

This paper is adapted from the unpublished Master's Thesis for which funding was provided by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan

(HEC) under a Thematic Grant in the area of 'Education and Development'.

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**Citation of the Article:**

Qureshi, R., & Razzaq, F. (2019). I am not against Inclusive education but...: Teachers' voices from Pakistan. *Journal of Inclusive Education, 3*(1), 63-84.

Received on: 22 Aug, 2019

Revised on: 13 Nov, 2019

Accepted on: 14 Nov, 2019