



**PROBLEMS FACED BY VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS IN
HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF ISLAMABAD**



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HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF ISLAMABAD



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DEDICATED TO

MY BELOVED PARENTS

MY HOPE, MY INSPIRATION, MY LOVE, MY WORLD

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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It is certified that thesis submitted by Ms. HINA HAMEED, Reg. No 322-FSS/MSCSOC/F12 titled "problems faced by visually impaired in higher education a case study of Islamabad" has been evaluated by the following viva committee and found that thesis have sufficient material and meets prescribed standard for the award of the degree of "Master in Sciences" in the discipline of Sociology.

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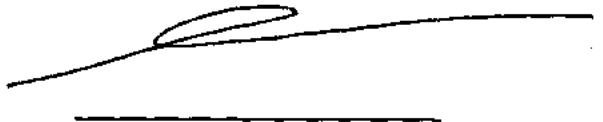
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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to know the problems of visually impaired in higher education. The aim was also to explore the copying strategies used by such students to manage their studies. To explore those problems the researcher used qualitative method with case study and interview guide as the tool of data collection. A sample of 10 respondents was selected randomly to collect data. Thematic and content analysis methods were used to analyze the data. The collected data indicates that visually impaired students face numerous problems in getting admission in universities and they face challenges while living in hostels. For example, the examination procedure is not supportive for them; they face problems in utilizing course material. And the attitude of other people living around them is not much supportive. Also such students cannot assess facilities provided at department and use of technology is not easy for them. As a result such students are not very optimistic in getting a suitable employment. The study suggests that visually impaired people can perform much better in overall life generally and in education specifically if they positively adopt the resilience and coping strategies. This study suggest that policy makers should review the policies regarding disable students so that they may better participate in education and fellow students should modify their behavior so they may better integrate in education.

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CHAPTER NO 1 INTRODUCTION

Back ground of study

Disability is a global phenomenon. The term disability is used to refer to the state of impairment which is significantly different from the usual state of a normal person. It also refers to the individual working, including physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual impairment mental illness, and various types of chronic disease.

Disability is a multidimensional practice for the person who is suffering from it. Disability affects body parts of a person and that may affect a person's participation in all the areas of life. Likewise, three areas of disability are documented in ICF. Body structure and function (and impairment thereof), activity (and activity restrictions) and participation (and participation restrictions). The classification also recognizes the role of physical and social environmental factors in affecting disability outcomes. Visual impairment is one of the major types of disability.

Hence, visual impairment means limitation or absence of sight. It adversely affects a child's educational performance. In impairment eyesight cannot be corrected to a normal level. It requires special education service. It allows limited use of accommodation. Visually impaired people are more in danger than any other disable in all the fields of life whether in education, socialization; in family etc. This is because they cannot even walk and response to other without the help of someone else. Especially in the field of education they suffer a lot because they cannot participate in class, take proper notes, do class assignments and take exams without the help of a writer etc. so one may consider them most disadvantaged group out of the whole disability. The condition may become adverse in higher education.

As higher education demands more participation and concentration of students in studies. Students have to make notes and assignments by themselves. They must have to participate and communicate in class. Students have to polish their communication skills and knowledge through class presentations. Access to library and internet is something essential for university

students. But the students, who enroll in higher education with visual impairment, cannot use properly the opportunities like access to library, transportation and fulfill the requirements like making notes, class participation, assignments etc due to their disability. So it can be said visual impairment adds to the problems of students in their higher education.

Global scenario

Almost 15% of the world's population lives with some kind of disability, of whom 2-4% practice considerable problems in functioning (World Report on Disability, 2011). Most of these people belong to poor and third world countries as they lack all the facilities of health food and medication.

According to World Health Organization 285 million people are visually impaired among 15% of total disabled population. 90% of these visually impaired are living in developing countries (World Health Organization Media centre, 2012). According to 1998 census the occurrence of disability was 2.94% of total population which numbered 3,286,630 people with disabilities. Situation in Pakistan is not much different.

In Pakistan millions of people are facing vision problems. Very little portion of children are studying in special education institutions. There are no special higher education institutions for these students. With normal students they experience many troubles in getting education in general setting. Many researchers recognize their difficulties in higher education like use of computer technology. According to literature visually impaired have to face problems not only during their education but in getting admission and accommodation at first in university or college. As the researches below prove this fact.

According to Hameed (2008) the access to universities is viable and marginalizes the students with any kind of impairment. There are only 2% fixed seats for disabled students. The procedure of enrolment is not clear and fair (Hameed, 2008). There is need to assimilate atmosphere for disabled students in post secondary education. Fuller (2004) suggests there should be education policies that create an inclusive environment to reduce barriers for students with disabilities.

When Disabled students enroll in inclusive higher education they sense more in danger (Bradley, 2004). Facing a lot of difficulties they spoused to leave their education. Hirsch (2010) mentioned that the dropping rate of students with disabilities is increasing at university level. Students with visual impairment bear many problems in educational, social and emotional approach to the information possessions. Hamilton and Dan (2000) argued that the visually impaired students should be provided with the same information as sighted students in the form of printed papers. The visually impaired students also find it difficult to communicate with their class mates and teachers. Here the question is whether all these studies are according to Pakistani society because most of these studies are foreign.

Most of the previous studies are conducted in developed countries where institutions are able to provide all the needed accommodations and facilities to their disabled students. Because they have resources and policy in this regard. But in developing countries like Pakistan the institutions are not providing specific facilities to their special children because there are limited resources and policies like integration of disabled in inclusive education.

Disabled students face a lot of problems at higher level of education because they are not integrated in inclusive education from their childhood. This problem would be eradicated by following the phasis of inclusion of disabled in inclusive education from their childhood. This can be done in multiple ways; Firstly, remote rural primary schools with high incidence of disabilities. Second, rural primary schools with low incidence of disabilities. Third all rural primary schools and middle schools. Forth, that all primary schools and rural high schools. Fifth all high schools and rural colleges. Finally at last all colleges and Universities

Moreover, the National Policy Education 1998 considered about Inclusive Education and National Policy for Person with Disabilities 2000 set policy for provision for disabled persons (National Report on the Development of Education, 2008). The Higher Education Commission emphasised and devised policy for inclusive education in higher level. All these steps in consideration of needs of disabled people helped them to get more education. In spite of all these policies the problems of disabled are unaddressed. The students with visual disability appearance more vulnerable than the others students in inclusive environment. As they are unable

to get class notes, information, participation etc. That's why the researcher will explore the problems faced by visually impaired specially.

Statement of the problem

This study explored the problems faced by visually impaired in higher education. At the same time it studied that how visual impairment affects the studies of pupils in their secondary education. The study also attempted to explore if education at the university level is inclusive for disabled students in our institutions or not.

Significance of study

This research was a positive contribution in the specific discipline of sociology 'sociology of disability'. The main purpose of this branch of sociology is to deal with the problems of disabled and development of this branch is a challenge of the practitioners of special education yet (Allan, 2010). This study helped at different levels. First of all as it explored the problems of visually impaired, it created awareness among common people about the problems of disabled people. It helped visually impaired in solving their problems as once they get clear about their problems they were better able to solve these problems. Secondly it was a guide for the university administration, teachers and co-students to better understand and co-ordinate the students with disabilities. Thirdly it provided a domain for policy makers and practitioners of education to follow and make policies for the neglected, disabled pupil. Lastly it helped and guided new researchers to study this domain from different angles. As this area of study is relatively new in Pakistan, this study helped new researchers in literature review, methodology etc.

Research questions

- 1) Is visual impairment effecting the education of students at secondary level?
- 2) What are the problems faced by visually impaired in higher education?
- 3) Are our universities providing inclusive education for visually impaired students?

4) What are the coping strategies visually impaired students adopt to manage in higher education?

Objectives of study

- 1) To analyze the impact of vision impairment on the education of students in higher education.
- 2) To explore hurdles faced by visually impaired students during their higher education.
- 3) To suggest some recommendations for policy makers.

Hypothesis

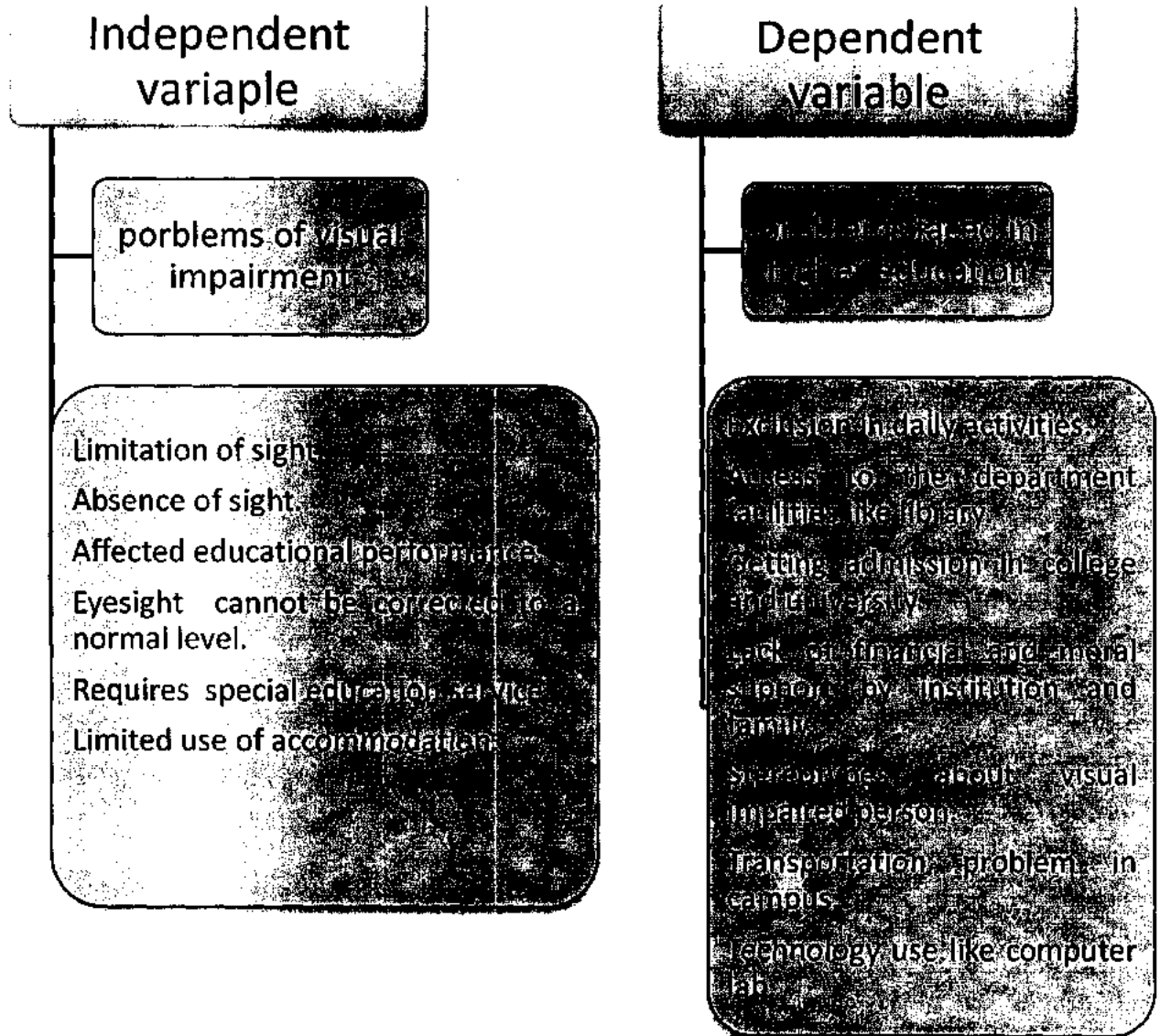
Visual impairment creates problems for students of higher education.

CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

CONCEPT 1	CONCEPT 2	CONCEPT 3
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Higher education	Visually impairment	problems of visually impaired
Study beyond the level of secondary education. It includes institutions like colleges, universities and professional schools.	Visually impairment means limitation or absence of sight. It could adversely affect a child's educational performance.	Problems faced by visually impaired in higher education include admission in institution, lack of facilities, poor access to accommodation, lack of financial and moral support etc.

Operational frame work



Theoretical frame work

Tinto's Theory of Student Departure

Tinto (1975) proposed a theory to enlighten the student retention. He stated that students quit higher education without obtaining a degree due to the nature and eminence of their connections with the college or university. He argued that students penetrate higher education with distinctive and individual characteristics with variety from socioeconomic circumstances, family support, clarity of purpose for higher education, and cultural and social values. Colleges and universities, too, have their own individual and unique characteristics. The characteristics of both students and the colleges or universities they enroll may not match and because of that it may create conflict between students and their college or university. Students may depart, or drop out, if the causes of disagreement are not resolute.

Tinto proposed three specific areas in which causes of student departure lies. These areas are basically the "academic problems, failure to integrate socially and intellectually with the culture of the college or university, or a low level of commitment to the college or university". He suggested that colleges and universities necessity incorporate students intentionally in all three areas to diminish the risks of drop out. Colleges and universities must create deliberate chances for extracurricular activities, informal student interactions with environment, and interactions between students and facility.

Tinto argued that students and colleges and universities describe failure in different ways according to their own perceptions and experiences. Often colleges and universities infer the students' lack of attaining a degree at that particular college or university to be a failure. Students quit a college or university for various reasons, such as career development, family responsibilities and health restrictions. Students may shift to other colleges or universities for better educations or they restart their higher education to accomplish degrees after some time or after a break. Thus students may not consider there drop out as a failure at all. Student advisor affairs experts help them to make the academic and social alteration at their colleges and universities by making early contact with students and community construction. They examine the academic performance of students and make recommendation to therapists, educational advisors, and instructors. Professionals and experts of student affairs help in creating

compassionate social and educational environments in which students are respected and considered the full members of their communities (Milner Library, 2012).

This theory is better fitted to elaborate the status of blind students in higher education. Nature and quality of interaction of visually impaired students with their institute of higher education are much affected by their disability. As their individual characteristics like poor economic support specially for getting education, low family support, ambiguity about the purpose, importance and utilization of their higher education conflict with the unique requirements and characters of higher education institutions which include colleges and universities. These institutes demand high level of integration, proactive participation, self efforts for learning and tough competition which are almost impossible for blind people to compete; this disability to integrate cause conflict and this conflict if not resolve lead them to low performance or even drop out from higher education. If we further discuss the three main areas of conflict between student's characteristics and college or university requirements which leads to the depart of students from higher education discussed in Tinto's theory we might know that visually impaired students are more vernal to be the victim of these conflicts.

Academic Problems

There are countless academic problems which encounter visually impaired students during their higher education. They face problem with course selection as they cannot choose practical subject or the subject without previous understanding. They face problem with the course material as they cannot utilize the normal material usually available in bookish and printed form. They cannot access to the class room easily as normal student do. They cannot take examination in regular process of examination formulated for normal student. They cannot contract teachers and class easily and frequently. They cannot access the library. They cannot use technology like multimedia and computer respectively without training and talking software like JAWS which are usually not provided in academic blocks by the colleges and universities. All these and a lot other problems create conflict between student performance and academic requirements. This conflict cause barriers for visually impaired students to get university education and on some stage some of them may depart from higher education.

Failure to integrate socially and intellectually

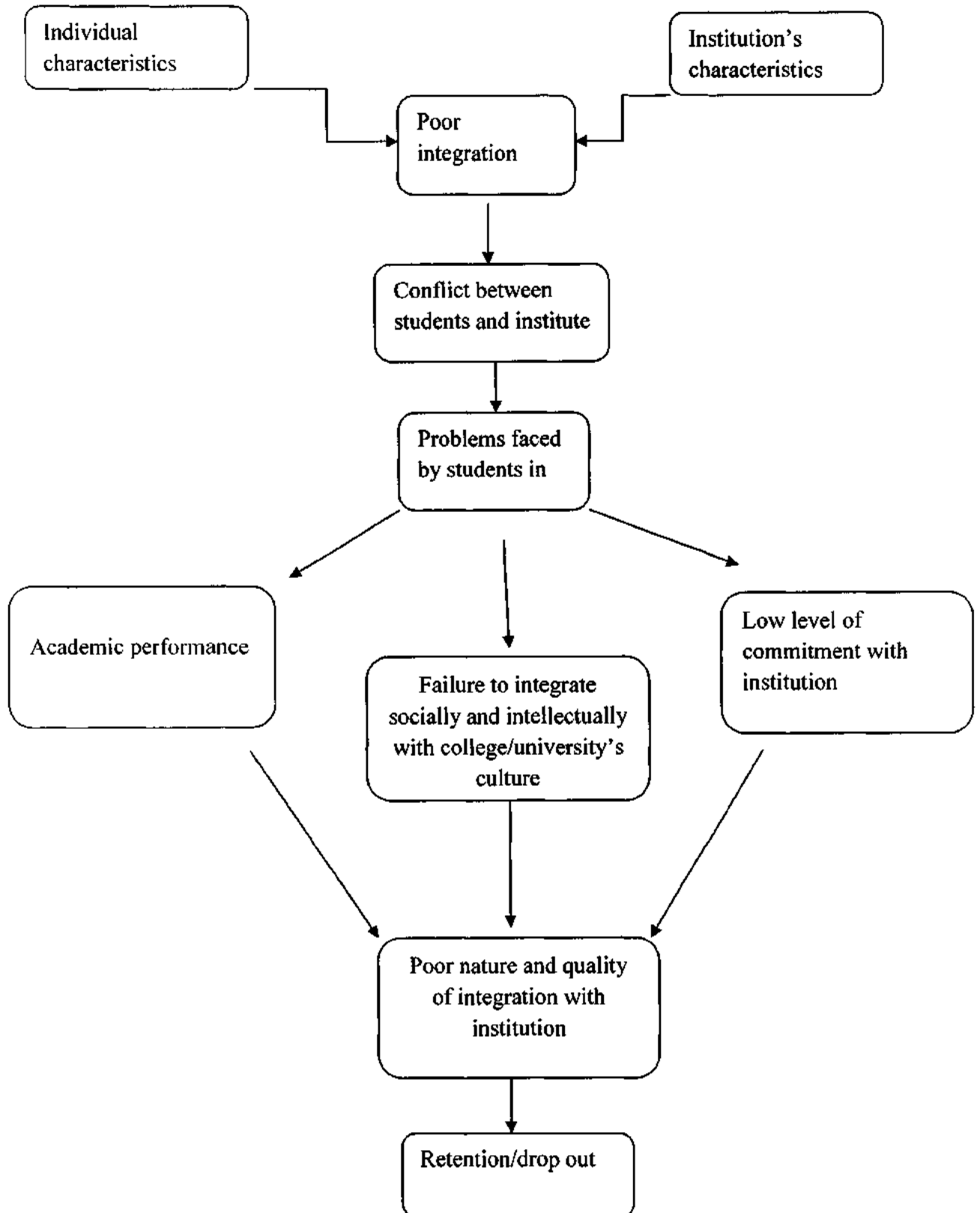
Visually impaired students are not able to integrate in the culture of their higher education institute both socially and intellectually. In social integration the problem of mobility becomes a hurdle. As visually impaired students cannot move by themselves, they cannot attend seminars, get-togethers, fund raising and awareness campaigns by the department etc. They face difficulties to be a member of a group in class as most of people hesitate to include them in their group due to their disability.

On the other hand in intellectual integration they may have feelings of failure and deprivation. As visually handicapped students cannot participate in group discussions, class participation, seminars, debate competitions etc. This disability may be due to number of reasons as they cannot read pre provided material for discussion, they cannot communicate frequently and cannot use facial expressions while communicating with others etc. This can cause problems for visually impaired students to get quality higher education and sphere little room for them to get integrated in higher education.

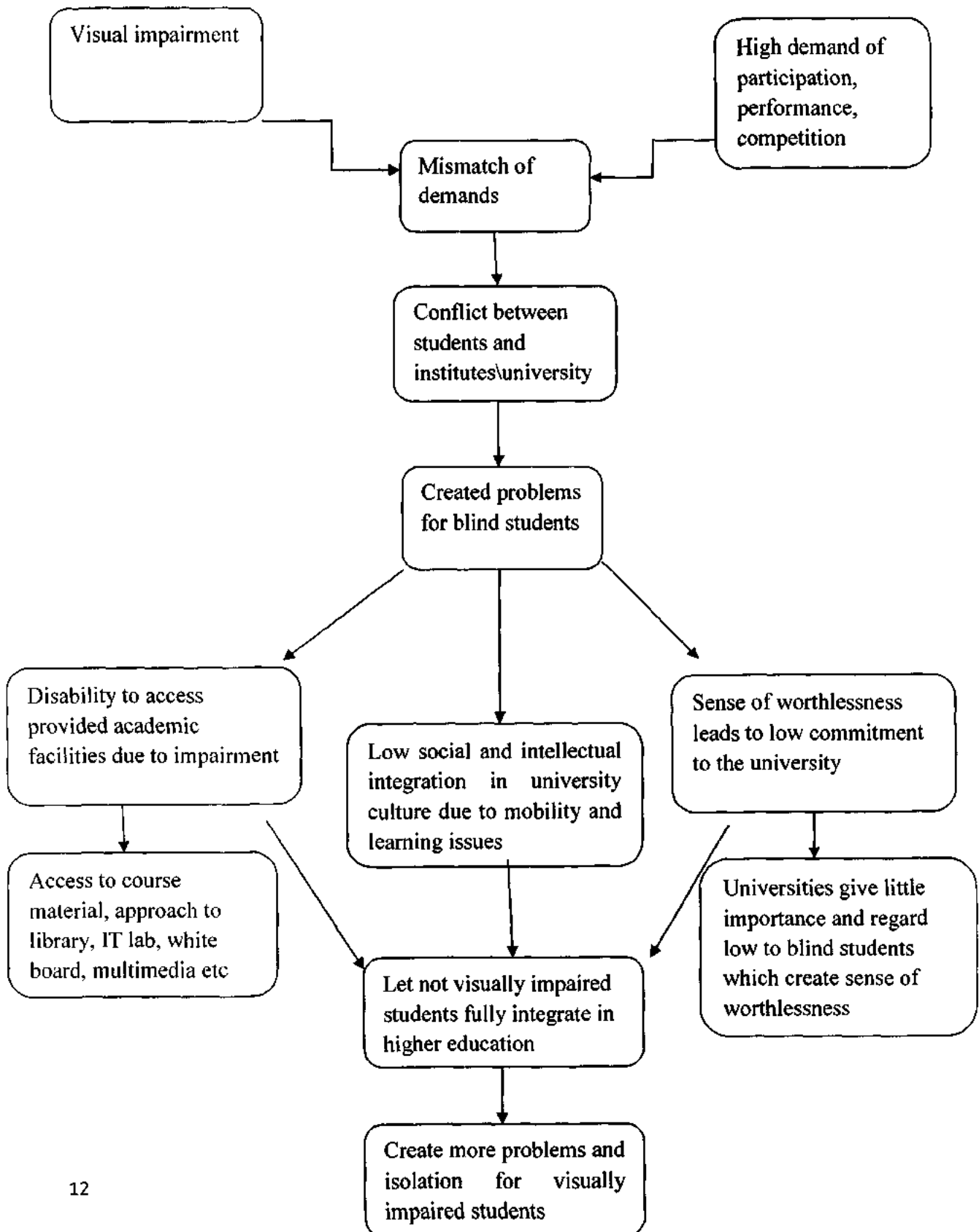
Low level of commitment with institute

A student with visual impairment feels less committed with his/her college or university. This feeling comes from other students, administration, teachers and atmosphere of the institute and eventually shows in the behavior and activities of the students. Institution let them feel that their presence in the institute have no or little value. Sometimes they feel themselves as a burden on institution. Sympathetic behaviors of teachers and other students make them feel that they are misfit in the place. In the result students with visual impairment show less commitment with the institution and may depart at any stage.

Tinto theory of student departure



Application of the theory on the subject matter



CHAPTER NO 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I will discuss the relevant literature about the problems faced by visually impaired in their life especially in the time period of higher education. This chapter will elaborate the problems like adjustment, mobility, social isolation and educational awareness etc. at the end this chapter will suggest some adaptive strategies and rehabilitation domains to better integrate visually impaired in inclusive higher education.

Disability is a relative term. It is defined differently in every culture and society according to the definition of normality of that culture. Every culture assigns different tasks and practices to the normal person which excludes people with disability from the list of normal people as they are not able to fulfill recommended practices (Elwan, 1999).

The normality or usual is itself the condition of following definite limits that characterize the range of regular functioning (Tom, 2007). Disability or impairment is not the attribute of individual but social systems describe it (Hughes & Peterson, 1997). It is important to understand Society's perception of disability because it provides a structure of conceptualizing how a bodily impairment causes the social segregation in society.

People with disability of all kinds are underrepresented in higher education because most of the education systems of the world do not follow the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and statements about disability delivered by the individual institutions to the government are just information provider then statement of mission. Now with the growth of proactive thinking and a little empowerment of disabled people changing the thinking of society about the education and social living of handicapped people (O'Connor & Robinson, 1999).

Some models have been constructed that enlighten the perception of disability in different framework .There are two major models of disability: medical model and social model. The medical model is frame that perceives that the disability is dilemma of a single person with impairment. This model defines disability as incapability to practice any action in normal way.

Impairment is shortage of or defect of psychological, physiological or anatomical arrangements or utility.

On the other hand the social model of disability argues that the society is accountable for labeling a person as disable. The society cuts off the people with impairment from all kind of social functioning. While the people with disability can contribute in society by making the required modifications in formation. The disability is defined as the drawback or limitation by social institute to physically or mentally disadvantaged people. The society excludes people with impairment from mainstream of life and stigmatized them to restrict their functioning (Models of Disability, 2013; The Social and Medical Model of Disability, 2013). Although some institutions offer the specialized coaching needed by students who are visually impaired, there is enormous room for betterment.

A number of students who are victimized by the vision loss leave school without getting full grip on the skills and knowledge which are vital for further education, essential for the productive employment, and necessary for the self-sufficient living at home and in their communities.

American federation of blinds states that there is a serious scarcity of orientation and mobility experts and capable teachers of visually impaired students, which limit the approach to the particular skills visually impaired children need. As a result, students with visual impairments often obtain directions from the consultants who are not competent to teach important skills such as Braille, cane and other orientation and mobility skills, and they cannot train them fully the valuable use of existing vision. This problem is augmented in rural societies and communities, where deficiency of eligible personnel is most receptive (www.google.com).

More over the idea that the special need schools along with residential facilities for blind and visually impaired students are much costly and might in worse condition still exists which is unnecessary at some times. This misleading notion keeps forcing the education experts to disagree that special need base schools are the finest environment for some handicapped students, and that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act passed by the U.S. Congress makes it possible to approach the suitable educational environments which notably include the

special schools for the blind that is the right of every visually impaired student besides the sighted children (American Federation For Blind, 2010).

The prohibiting of disabled from mainstream has bad effects on them. The students with impairment usually get admission in special need institution. Because of limited interaction with society they have low integration and find it difficult to participate with normal students. It is much difficult for the developing and third world countries to set a complete separate structure for disable students because it is very expensive and practical.

Castellano (2005) suggests that blind students can be categorized into three groups to understand their educational needs and process. First of all there are blind students who can fully integrate and participate in class and have same motives as their sighted class fellows have. These students modify their blindness by using adaptive tools in enlarge form. These blind students do not have any other impairment and if they have that is of so minor level that cannot affect their educational service. The second category is of those blind students who have some additional disability. They need modifications in existing curriculum and need special services along with the existing and adopted services and materials. Third category of blind students includes the children who have severe additional impairment and they cannot adopt the existing curriculum constructed for the sighted students. These student needs completely different curriculum from the curriculum of normal students and the main motive of this curriculum may be to enhance the development of these students rather than any other academic goal. Different educational settings have different effect on the education of visually impaired students.

As Castellano (2005) argued that the regular classes in the standard school proposes higher educational standards, additional and extracurricular activities; opportunity of social contact with normal sighted children, and an experience of a real world. But in normal settings it would be difficult, however, to obtain specialized materials on time and to find sufficient teaching time from a teacher of the visually impaired student. There can be obstacles to maintain social interaction with sighted class fellows and gain full social integration.

On the other hand special classes and special schools propose small classes and additional individual concentration. However, educational standards of these classes and schools may be

inferior to in the regular normal classroom. There may be obscurity receiving materials and sufficient training time from a teacher of the blind.

While special schools for the blind presents quick and sufficient approach to expert teachers and needed materials and commodities. They can also present opportunities in social context along with blind class fellows. However, academic facilities and opportunities may not be of the standard and on equivalence with regular schools. The settings of special schools also innately bound experience of normal life which blind students may get along in sighted world. In the case of attending special school, some handicapped children have to live away from their homes (Castellano, 2005).

The sociology of disability recognized the functional and material hurdles which create disability and is in resistance to inclusive education (Allan, 2010). Although now different countries are adopting the social model in their educational institutions to adopt inclusive education and to integrate disabled students in inclusive education.

There are still a large number of problems which students with disabilities have to face in inclusive education. There are some problems and barriers mentioned by earlier researchers which students with visually impairment are facing yet.

Bishop et al (2011) in his research and Owen-Hutchinson et al. (1998) in book *Breaking Down Barriers: Access to Further and Higher Education for Visually Impaired Students*, categorized the hurdles faced by visually impaired students into four categories: *Attitudinal, institutional, environmental and physical problems*.

According to Safir (1972) blindness bound a person to walk out freely and no control on own self and environment while interacting to it. This inability create a feeling of isolation and loneliness in blind people and create a sense of fear while going out without a assistance and that fear leads toward the psychological problems. There are a lot of other psychological problems which visually impaired people may face.

People with blindness may deny their disability or show strong resistance to accept their impairment. They indulge in resentment and harsh feelings of being the victim of the disease.

They develop inferiority complex while standing with the normal and healthy people in the society (Harrington, 1993). Social contact is also difficult to be maintained by the blind people whether inside or outside the institution.

Visually impaired people are often aware of the discomfort of sighted people in their company. Some times in the first meeting both face a little bit embarrassing situation like while shaking hand. As sighted person think whether he/she should extend his/her hand or not because blind is unable to see his/her extended hand. On the other hand the blind person is in chaos whether the sighted person has extended his/her hand to shake or not. Purposive efforts of sighted people to show extra care toward blinds in conversation may adverse the situation. Extra sympathy and artificial comfort might lead blind people to avoid social contact which result in the form of social isolation (Zaphyr, 2012). It is difficult for visually impaired to communicate properly and in flow.

As facial and body expression are much important and helpful in conversation. These expressions are an important element of conversation for sighted people as they express different kind of emotions like worry, joy, fear etc. But blind people are unable to use these expressions in their conversation because they are not socialized in this perception. This creates a barrier in normal conversation. More over due to their inability to see they do not follow the visual clues and indicators which might be use to show whom turn is to speak now. This situation may create unwanted and also unintended interruption and embarrassing long pauses in conversation (Michailakis, 1997).

Moreover blindisms further contribute as a hurdle in conversation and social contact. Congenitally blind people roll and blink their eyes more frequently; they show different rocking and rhythmic movements of their faces (Butterworth, 1972).

Disable people construct a minority groups. So as many others, they face discrimination, stereotype and negative attitude towards them from others. This attitude of others toward disabled particularly visually impaired is very important for them because it elaborates idea and description of the condition for them presented by common people (Altman, 1981).

The attitude of others play key role in building self-perception. According to C. Cooley and Meads the self is creation of social contact. Bishop et al. (2011) proposed that the most important barriers for visually impaired students in their attitudinal process are the attitude of key persons who directly interact with them. During educational time period the key persons are parents, teachers and peer group for students. The self-perception of disabled is affected in two ways; the direct effects of tag of disabled, the indirect effect of label which alter the attitude and behavior of others for disabled people (MacMillan, Bartel, & Guskin, 1974). The students with disabilities developed lower self-esteem.

Denhart (2008) recommended that students with impairment show no or less willingness to request for accommodation because they fear that they will be stigmatized for it. More over the negative perception and behavior of faculty and administration towards disabled students may lesser the self encouragement ability among them (Janco, 2002).

There is association between building the self-concept in handicapped students and perception of peer group. By improving and encouraging self-concepts of disabled students the incorporation of these students can be improved (Cambraa & Silvestrea, 2003) . Fichten (1988) suggested that behavior and attitude of faculty and administration could be valuable addition for students with disabilities in inclusive education institutes. It has main role in achievement of handicapped students.

The behavior of friends is significant arbitrator for class participation and assimilation in inclusive class. Pessimistic attitude of friends and peers for students who have any kind of disability is main obstacle in inclusive education (McDougall, et al, 2004) . While conducting research on *Disabled students and the quality of relationships within the class* Langher et al. (2010) established that the students with disabilities suffer loneliness and isolation in the class and they have modest acceptances in peers and in their classmates.

Researches indicate that the schools which have inclusive behavior toward blind and other disabled students successfully indicate the discriminatory behavior of communities and societies for their handicapped children. Inclusive education tells students at very early age that handicapped children have the same rights as normal children have and they are capable of doing

different jobs and achieving various goals as bodily healthy children can do or achieve (USAID Micronutrient & Child Blindness Project, 2007).

Bunch & Valeo (2004) recommended that inclusive educational setting may be developed in class and overall in the whole institution by developing friendship among normal students and disabled students. Blindness becomes an obstacle in adaptive behavior for effected students. While summarizing various studies Warren (1994) suggests that a lot of factors inspire the social adjustment of visually impaired children which follow both the child's environment and the visual impairment itself. According to Warren (1994), factors related to the visual impairment form the "status variables" which cannot be customized through interference. These variables involves the harshness and severances of the visual impairment, the age in which vision is loss, the existence of any remaining vision, the presence of supplementary disabilities, and presence of any possible cause of the visual impairment. Visually impaired students face adjustment problem in communication.

Previous researches indicates that visually impaired children have less chances to perform their language skills and abilities (Kekelis & Prinz, 1996), present difficulties in developing quality vocabulary (Webster & Roe, 1998), language of visually impaired people is mostly related more to their past practices than to the current actions of their fellows, these factors leads to unnecessary phases and collapse in communication (Kekelis, 1992).

Furthermore, students with visual impairments frequently use motions and body gestures without any communicational requirement for a long time than their sighted fellow do. These gestures were negatively associated with the severe condition of visual impairment, and they reduced in their use as the school grade of visually handicapped children increased (Frame, 2000). More over difficulties in adapting the daily living skills affect the adaptation level of visually impaired students.

There is little literature accessible regarding the living skills in daily life of children with visual impairments. Bishop (2004) suggested that sighted children are capable of learning various actions of daily life naturally and regularly during replication of others (e.g. dressing, washing, and eating). In order to carry out these behaviors, though, they have to acquire the necessary

coast skills. Consequently, children who have visual impairments and who have problems in observing and imitating the actions of others are likely to illustrate a hindrance in daily living skills.

Jan, Freeman, and Scott (1977) mentioned that children who are visually handicapped come across difficulties and problems in dressing, walking, washing and eating. Children who have low vision became sovereign in these areas more easily and earlier as compare to totally blind children. Following experiment may illustrate the concept.

Lewis and Iselin (2002) worked on the issue of autonomous living skills of twenty children (in which ten were visually impaired and ten were sighted), whom ages were under 6–9 years. They showed the results that the children who were visually impaired achieved autonomously only 44% out of the 101 activities of daily living, compared with 84% of their sighted fellows, even the intensity of competence was high for the sighted children then visually impaired children. People with visual impairment face problems in their studies and life due to low level of socialization.

Students with different kind of disabilities became more easy target to social isolation due to the lesser optimistic replies to their proposal for social contact and due to their own fewer efforts for engaging in social connections. Consequently, children who have disabilities express less concern in their class fellows, which leads toward the social segregation and isolation (Celeste & Grum, 2010). People who have with visual impairments show discrepancy in socialization (Celeste, 2006; Kekelis, 1992; Kekelis & Sacks, 1992; Kroksmark & Nordell, 2001; Leyser & Heinze, 2001; Lifshitz et al., 2007; Mulford, 1983; Pring, et al, 1998; Rosenblum, 1998; Sacks, 2006; Tinti, 2003).

In comparison to sighted children and the visually impaired children, research indicated that the visually impaired have restricted chances to learn social skills by the way then the sighted children who develop socially by observing relations in diverse backgrounds (Sacks, 2006). Social interaction to visually impaired people become weak because the most important factors of social interaction like eye contact, body gestures, facial expressions and background information influenced by effected vision of visually impaired and blind individuals (Kekelis, 1992).

According to Mulford (1983) visually impaired children may use such actions and means which are socially undesirable so they may get and uphold the attention of listeners; furthermore, they ask many questions, which may be inappropriate to the activities that take place in their surroundings and irritating to the people round them. Moreover, it is observed that blind children usually display more repetitive and socially non organized facial expressions than normal sighted children, perhaps because of the fewer control these children overly exercise their facial expressions in association to their sighted complements (Tinti, 2003).

According to Kekelis and Sacks (1992), a very few proportion of children with visual impairments attain social recognition or participation in social communications in regular educational environments. Webster and Roe (1998) argued that children who face visual impairments exhibit more introverted and calculated game than symbolic one in sport activities. Likewise, Celeste (2006) indicate that in social interactions visually impaired children have a preference for adults over their peers and fellows which surely effect the quality of their education.

Visually impaired students need special based needs and facilities in higher education. The obstacles associated to these needs and failure in provision of facilities is known as institutional barriers (Bishop & Rhind, 2011). The visually impaired students cannot avail normal curriculum followed by the sighted students. Developed countries like UK are following some special policies and laws and regulations to provide special services and facilities to the students with disabilities. The provisions are much helpful and supportive to eradicate the hurdles and obstacles in education. Different universities have special associations and centre for students with disabilities for their help and maintenance and required material for special needs is accessible for students.

The environmental problems are also faced by the students with visual impairment. Bishop & Rhind (2011) suggests that the environmental obstacles are allied to access to buildings, accommodation and classrooms. Visually impaired students face difficulty in free mobility in campus and in whole institution. As a result the students with disability cannot avail different facilities and opportunities easily at university. The facilities provided at different places and the mobility of students with visual disability is limited because the doors and passageways

constructed in the way that only sighted students may access them (Pivik, McComas, & Marc, 2002).

Fuller et al. (2004) conducted research on *Incorporating disabled students within an inclusive higher education environment* recognized that students with disabilities face the most frequent problems of information aforementioned, admission information and they are not guided about the process of university education at all. The students with different kind of disabilities especially visual impairment face difficulty in selecting university, choosing course and knowing the procedure of admission (Goode, 2007).

Madriaga (2007) establishes that without previous information about the course selection of course not only cause of unease and depression but it also leads the student's disability to leave the higher education. The other problems which may faced by visually impaired students are in access to information during classes like difficulty in taking notes, approach to class information and inability to note lectures in inclusive class (Fuller, Bradley, & Healey, 2004). Another major problem of visually impaired in getting higher education is low expectation by the family, community, classmates and teachers.

Carol Castellano (2005) studied the challenges of blinds in education and concluded that sighted people often grasp miserable ideas and behaviors about blindness and the capabilities and talent of blind people. They do not consider them as there competent, they do not imagine blinds as successful adults as there is a common perception that how anyone can attain good results without eyesight! Sometimes school administrators and teachers hold such discouraging attitudes for their visually impaired and other handicapped students. When this kind of situation occurs, blind children became more susceptible of being placed in lower level classes and follow the decisions and ideologies made by adults about them who have low prospect for their achievement on the behalf of visually impaired. In addition if school workforces have not sufficient training in how to make the education of the blind child purposeful and workable, the education process can easily be disrupted. Kenneth Jernigan further contributed into the concept of misunderstanding about the visually impaired and blind people

One out of number of factors which contribute to make it hard to alter the attitudes of public about blindness and blind people is that all of us need to feel higher, and the problem is combined with the fact that almost everyone feels a good deal of uncertainty and insufficiency deep inside. They feel doubt about their status and position. Most of the times people get embarrassed when they come to the door of a person for some charity work like heart fund or cancer research and they found that the person they were dealing with is blind. On this situation they comment the feeling of confusion and sorry. The insinuation is clear and should not be permitted to go unconcealed. That is the visually impaired are not able to contribute in usual community life, that they should not be projected to take any kind of responsibilities, which they may take but not fulfill as others sighted and normal people assumed to perform according to their abilities and skills (Jernigan, 1969).

School staff can turn this situation around and help create an atmosphere of opportunity for blind students by making contact with active, competent blind adults, adopting positive attitudes about blindness, acquiring good training, and encouraging independence and full participation on the part of blind students. Some times handicapped specifically visually impaired students may lost in education system currently working.

Visually impaired students need additional time for proper learning, reading and writing but the fact is that they do not get time even equalient to the normal or sighted students. There tutor and teachers visit them once or twice a week for two to three hours. In this short time period they cannot learn how to read and write well. More over in this little time teacher can teach the code only so visually impaired students remain deprive from the skills of daily life and behaviours of social contact. Visually impaired students needs premier information and knowledge at most because they cannot understand a new concept fully without previous knowledge about it. For example a blind children cannot understand the story of sailboat because he/she is not familiar with the concept of sail boat even (Rounds, 2002).

Various researchers suggest that the behavior and attitude of teachers toward disabled students cause problem in getting education and learning in inclusive class (Sharma, Forlin, Loreman, & Chris, 2006; Fuller, Bradley, & Healey, 2004; Carroll, Forlin, & Jobling, 2003). Due to lack of teacher training the teacher are not capable to accomplish the special needs of disable students

and integrate them in the inclusive education system. It is essential to coach teachers in pre-service in inclusive education. The pre-service coaching indicates optimistic approach toward students with disabilities (Sharma, Forlin, Loreman, & Chris, 2006).

There are many other problems faced by visually impaired students in their education like financial, accommodation, technological problems and problem in following the scientific process in any task (Fuller, Bradley, & Healey, 2004). Even the educational institutions have no or lack of financial support to fulfill the needs of special needed students. The visually impaired students are unable to gain benefit from library information, they cannot even use the facility of multimedia.

Hall et al. (2002) recognized that the fieldwork is also a major obstacle for visually impaired students in inclusive education. The students are bounded during fieldwork and activities regarding this context. Disabled students are also fully or partly excluded from class activities because they are unable to practice them at the standards of normal or sighted students (Coriale, Larson, & Robertson, 2012). Students with disability have to show resilience to overcome their problems and to continue their studies.

Resilience is basically the ability of coping and adaptation of an individual according to the circumstances. The ability or skill of coping is a behavioral instrument which may be used by individuals to balance or conquer difficulty, annoyance, or disability (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The ability or behavior of adaptation involves various skills for autonomously working in accordance of the environment. The opportunities and facilities provided to visually impaired and blind students are not often accessible.

Laura Beaudin argued that even the new and advanced opportunities are not flaw less. As most of the technology is a dependent on electricity, which is greater facility for sighted people but a hurdle for visually impaired person because it is limited the access to specially provided technologies where a possible electric connection is available. It remains impracticable for visually impaired to simply surf the books in a bookstore because the scanner is required to complete this process of accessing a book and that is too large to carry it for such a task.

Obiakora & Stileb (1990) conducted a research on *The Self-Concepts of Visually Impaired and Normally Sighted Middle School Children*. The result indicates that students with visual impairment gained higher score in self-perception than sighted students. Students with visual impairment show high level of school adaptiveness, self esteem and educational success.

There are various adaptive strategies which may be adapted by the students with visual impairment. These strategies contain six positive and five negative strategies.

The first positive adaptive strategy is acceptance of one's impairment. It includes acknowledgement of impairment, acceptance of the limitations caused by the disability and considering the possibilities that are still available. In acceptance the person rotates those areas of life which were much important before the impairment and try to invent new dimensions and interests which are not affected by the disability (Lindo, 1999).

The second adaptive behaviour is of trust. This trust is of many kind and on various factors like acceptance of special support provided by the society to the disabled people. Trust on any religious believe, trust on any divine power and trust on a specific philosophy of life which provide hope and comfort. Reliance on medical facilities and its advances also leads to the adaptability of disability as people with disabilities hope that they will find some cure for their desires (Nordholm, 1999).

The third positive adaptive strategy is avoiding one's disability in a positive way. That means the ability of the person not focusing on the bitter and problematic outcomes of their disability in this way they may get rid of the grief and anxiety. They may avoid it by meeting people, listening music, walking outside etc.

Next positive behaviour for adaptation of one's disability is minimization. That means conceptualizing one's disability as a relative term and thinking of the people who are at worse condition. So when disabled people will consider others problems, their own will seem less serious (Nordholm, 1999).

Fifth strategy of positively adopting one's disability is the sense of independence. It means that people with any kind of disability feel the responsibility of fulfill his needs and maintain a

standard of quality of life and take all the encountered difficulties as challenges to be overcome (Wood, 1985).

Sixth positive adaptation strategy for disability is control on the effect of loss of any ability by availing technical aids. People with disability make themselves aware of their impairment and its possible results and effects so he/she may be able to resolve the problems occurred by the disability. Planning and taking precautions for the possible results of any disability is the main focus of this theme. It is also named as problem focusing (Watson, 1988). There are also some negative adaptation strategies such as.

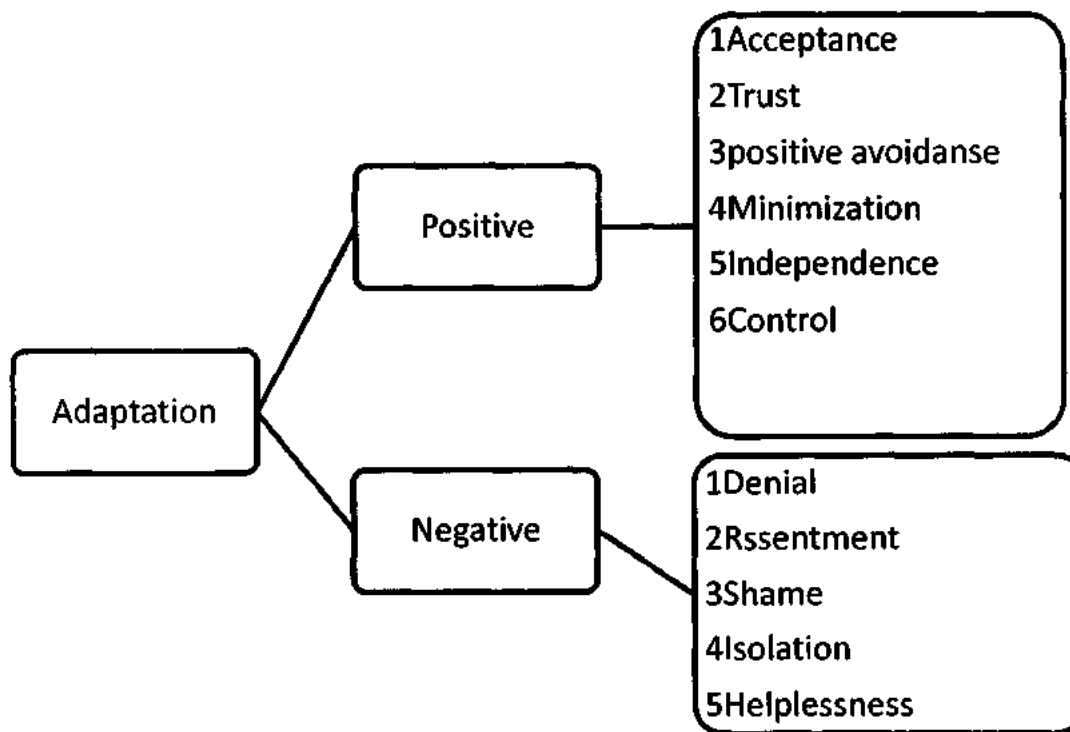
Denial of one's impairment. That means not accepting and acknowledging the disability. It may be shown in the form of impractical expectation of getting cure which seems nothing but only a daydream and romanticized idea to a realistic person.

Some disabled people negatively adopt the strategy of resentment about their disability. They think again and again about the bitterness of the feeling of being the victim of the disease. Such people with disability think that their now life is of no use they can not do what they want to and were used to do.

Third negative adaptation strategy is development of sense of shame. People with disability feel inferior in comparison with healthy people. Such people feel shame for being different from other people and from what he used to be.

Another negative adaptation behaviour is isolation. Isolation makes disabled people feel that they are outsiders for their society, people misunderstand them and do not want them to be with them. These kinds of feelings lead people with disabilities toward avoiding socializing.

Fifth negative adaptation strategy is sense of helplessness. People with disability create the feelings of self-pity and they think that they cannot cope with the challenges which they are facing (Tylor, 1992).



Students with disability require pre-rehabilitation to further healthy carticipation and intigration in higher education. This rehablitation involve intigrated use of edusational, social, medical and vocational sources to train the individuals with disability to the highest possiple level of functional ability. Following dimentions could be followed while rehablitation of disabled people.

First of all medical rehablitation could be followed in the rehablitation process. It involve early diagnosis of the visually impaired people and management of their madication and surgery if possible on early time. Following dimentions are important in medical rehablitation.

- Timely discovery and early medical and surgical management of glaucoma to stop its furhter development and protect remaining visual position.
- Provision of vitamin A supplement to prevent visual impairment in children.
- Privision of low vision aids is an important part of medical rehablitation provided to the people with visual impairment. It makes them able to get benefit from their remaining workable vision (Horowitz, 2006).

There are various devices which help visually impaired in their rehabilitation which are of two types. One is optical which includes magnifying devices, high power reading lenses, projection devices, microscopic lenses and telescopic lenses. On the other hand there are non-optical type of devices which includes large print books, type writer, typoscopes, special illumination devices, talking books etc (Wood & Litchman, 1985). Moreover social rehabilitation and training is also necessary to plough the soil of visually impaired people for higher education.

Visually impaired people especially students should be provided with mobility training. It includes the use of white cane. Use of white cane is still very helpful for visually impaired in our society. It is very helpful for the blind to find surfaces of various textures and thus he uses definite clues and landmarks while using cane for his autonomous travel. Blind people should be trained in a way that they can use the assistance of another person who offers his arm to hold and move ahead.

Training of use of electronic devices is also very helpful in mobility training of visually impaired. Sonic guides and laser canes are more frequently used devices by the blind in developed countries. Training of other senses is significant in studies of visually impaired.

Effective training of remaining senses of visually impaired people is necessary in his/her independent mobility at some level. Loss of vision could be compensated by training of other senses like touch, smell and hearing. These sensory stimuli act as hints that enable a blind person to adjust himself better to the environment and obtain a greater level of confidence in himself concerning his mobility (Dickey, 1992). Visually impaired students find the training of daily living skills very significant in their educational lives as well.

The very basic skills or survival skills include eating, dressing, shaving, cleaning the place, using toilet, maintaining the body hygiene, taking medicines etc. These are the major survival skills for anybody in life but visually impaired people cannot use these skills without special training due to their disability. Severe visual discrepancy occurring later in life considerably impairs spatial imagery capabilities to a great level than in case of congenital blindness (Watson, 1988). Visually impaired people need special social support to integrate in life especially in the educational sector.

Regarding the social support of visually impaired family, friends, relatives and community of the person play a significant role as a whole. Social support of blind students involves: there acceptance as a useful and important part of the society by removing the feelings of being exceptional. Same as encouraging their participation in social functioning and whole social actions as a normal member of the society.

Social support can be provided by managing proper guidance and advice for blinds. Providing physical coordination to them by sharing their work. By helping them in regaining their lost self confidence and assisting them to relieve their attitude of self-pity etc. All this assistance and help enable them to accept their impairment with all of dignity and help them to be socially amicable, psychologically adaptable and educationally resonance. There is well-established relationship between disability and depression. Researches indicates that vision rehabilitation significantly effect the physical and psychological functioning and underline the need for future, restricted research on rehabilitation service present the model which deal with mental health issues (Butterworth & Heinman, 2003). Educational rehabilitation is a milestone in further higher education of visually impaired people.

Educational rehabilitation involves provision of educational opportunities to the visually impaired in inhabited blind schools along with the facility of braille in education system for blinds. Invention of braille alphabet by Louis Braille's in 1832 tremendously contributed in the education of blinds students all over the world. School training fo visually impaired is much necessary for there further education of higher level.

As Indian first school was established by Christian Missionaries in 1886 in Amritsar. After that 300 more special schools were established which provide services to approximately 30000 school going visually impaired children. Children are being trained to intigrate in normal life by first getting education from these special schools and then enrolling in the regular schools in normal education system. This method of training and rehabilitation that frist studying at Brailles and special blind schools and after that in normal education system in the guidance of regular teachers along with a resource person is an attempt of integrated and coordinated system of education. This rehabilitation or training system intend to normalize the life fo visually impaired

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students and recover them for higher education as well. This will integrate them with the sighted children in least restrictive environment.

In a nut shell there is an ocean of problems and hurdles which visually impaired students have to overcome. A number of these problems and issues are addressed still many have to be identified. After reading the available literature on the subject matter, the major gaps are the issues like provision of and access to standard inclusive education, awareness of blinds and their families about the importance of education for visually handicapped etc which have yet to be addressed.

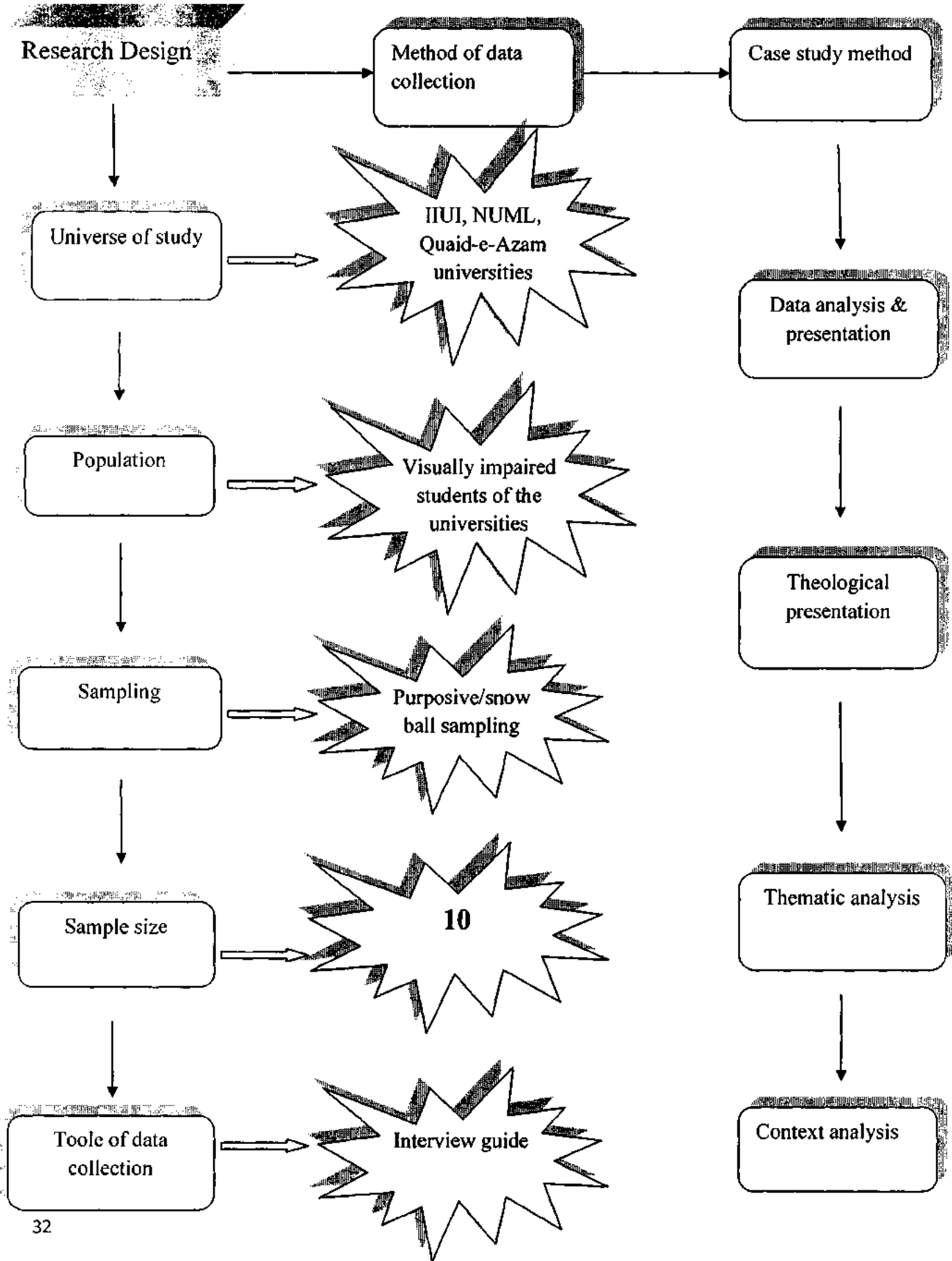
CHAPTRE NO 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The selection of methodology depends upon philosophical posture. It depends upon the nature of phenomenon and how it can be studied. It also relies upon the goals and objectives, characteristics of respondents and audience of research. The quantitative method is to study the factual reliable causal relationship between variables with broader generalization, although it is not appropriate to study the contextual behavior of individual. For contextual understanding of individual's behavior and understanding of social world, the qualitative research method is supportive (Lin, 1998; Steckler, McLeory, & Bird, 1992; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Research Design

The nature of this research was qualitative. The study was phenomenological analysis of experiences of visually impaired students in inclusive education. In this research the researcher wanted to know respondents' viewpoint about barriers faced in higher education. Consequently the qualitative research design was the appropriate method for this study.

The researcher wanted to know about barriers faced by visually impaired students in higher education at university level. It focused the public universities and took Islamabad universities as case. Therefore, qualitative research method is chosen. It provides in-depth understanding of experiences and perception of the respondents about specific phenomenon (De Vos et al. 2002).



Purposive sampling is time and cost effective. It is useful in selecting information case for research on certain issue.

There was no sample farm or information about students with visual impairment, snow ball sampling technique was supportive to identify more respondents in universities.

In this study sample of ten students in which six were female and four were male was taken from different departments and programs of different universities to cover the diversity of the population. It was useful for more generalization because it included more representative of population of study.

Method of data collection

The case study approach is chosen to investigate the barriers faced by students with visual impairment in inclusive education at university level. Case study as method is used in social science like sociology, political science and medical science (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The case study design is selected because it is suitable single unit and for small numbers of cases. In qualitative research it is used for intensive investigation of case (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In this research the unit of analysis is organizations. In this research the researcher explore the problems faced by visual impaired students in universities of Islamabad. Feagin and Orum (1991) argue that various researches using case study method gives understanding of social world by allowing deep analysis of social units and social institutions.

Research tool/Instrument

The primary data was collected by conducting in-depth interview with students with visual impairments. The design of data collection tool is most crucial stage. Prior design interview guide, some preliminary activities were done. The researcher reviewed relevant literature, interviewed with experts in area of research and potential respondents. These activities facilitated in developing interview guide. On basis of these groundwork activities the interview guide covers the experiences of visual impaired students at different stages. It includes pre-university admission process, during class and examination.

The interview guide is suitable for this study. It provides us in-depth understanding of any phenomenon. It is useful to know about the experiences, perceptions and knowledge. It provides more detail than questionnaire. The respondents can explain more rather answering “yes” or “no”. The interview is also supportive in contextual study.

The interview guide covered all information about family background. It also included the questions about

1. Pre-admission Experience and Problem
2. During Admission and early time period in university
3. Experiences in hostel
4. Class interaction
5. Problems in mobility
6. Coping abilities and strategies

The medium of interview guide was English but Urdu was also used during interview where it seemed to be convenient for the respondents. They may understand and answer easily. The interviews were conducted in the departments and hostels.

Before finalizing the pilot interviews were conducted. It was helpful to avoid problems and errors in final data collection. Three interviews were conducted in hostel. It also helped how to interact with special students.

Data Analysis

Theoretical presentation was use to present the data gathered from the interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data and context analysis method was used to prove it with the available literature. Pseudonyms were used in thematic analysis to maintain the confidentiality of

the original name and identity of the respondents and to make the analysis more realistic and force full.

CHAPTER NO 4 DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze data gathered by the researcher. The findings of the interviews from visual impaired students exposed problems and coping strategies faced and followed up by visual impaired students. This chapter is thematic and content analysis of interviews which highlights the major issues faced by visually impaired students.

The interviewed respondents were the students from different faculties and department of Islamic International University Islamabad, Quaid-e-Azam University and NUML University. Male and female students were interviewed proportion of population. The respondents were from different economic and resident backgrounds to capture the diversity of problems faced by students with visual impairment in inclusive education.

Problems faced regarding admission

The respondents faced various problems at the time of admission. These major problems were admissions procedure, admission policy and document required for admission. The admission policy includes the quota system for disabled candidates, because there are limited seats in university. It is difficult for them to compete with normal candidates in open merit. It is one of major problems which the students with disabilities especially visual impaired students faced in higher education.

The students reported that the admission procedure is time consuming and not transparent. The students with disabilities cannot attend classes from early days because of this lengthy process of assessment. It affects the performance of students in early semester. One of student expressed about admission process in this way;

“At that time I did not have any idea and I expected that the administrative staff will provide assistance but it was totally opposite. Then I had to fill forms with the help of my family members. I had to get admission on reserved seats and that is a long process. That was a bit irrational to us” (Arooba, 8, 5, 2014).

The admission staff is not trained to deal with disabled students in university level. At admission the student faces problems to fill the application form and to guide them. One of respondent reported this problem as;

“The main problem I faced was that they have no one to help you out in filling the forms, so if you don’t bring anyone along there is no one here to help you out” (Ali, 1, 5, 2014).

Fuller et al. (2004) also identified the students with disabilities do not guided at time of admission. The admission policy is not affective and supportive for students with visual impairment. Hameed (2008) stated that admission for disabled students marginalized and not transparent at university level.

However, some respondents did not face problems at time of admission because their friends and family members helped them in application procedure. Specifically the visually impaired students of Islamic international university did not need any special documentation to provide and any quota policy to follow which create more difficulties for visually impaired students and definitely marginalized their inclusion in higher education.

Attitude of Others

The students with visual impairment hesitated to disclose their impairment because they did not want sympathetic feelings from others. They internalized these feelings and being labeled as visually impaired. The class fellows wanted to know about their disability or impairment. They showed feeling of sympathy and care. One respondent expressed his feeling as following;

“I am not comfortable in disclosing my disability because then people start to show sympathies. I felt excluded from class activities because the teachers did not expect me to give any presentations, assignments” (Huzafa, 2, 5, 2014).

The teachers and instructors showed sympathy to students with impairment. In class discussion due to their impairment instructors did not include class activities with ordinary students.

Moreover the students were not assigned the presentation and assignment. The students with visual impairment felt marginalized in the class. Some of responses from respondents as;

1st respondent

“I have been excluded from class activities because of my disability. The CR of our class was not performing his duties, I was about to become the new CR but the authorities of the department refused” (Usama, 4, 5, 2014).

2nd respondent

“I felt excluded from class discussions; I felt that the teachers thought we did not know much so we requested the teachers to deal with us like they dealt with students without disability” (Faryal, 19, 5, 2014).

The behavior and attitude of other students and staff was disturbing for students with visual impairment. The sympathetic behavior revealed them their impairment. Sometime behavior of ordinary students marginalized them in class. However, they were helping them in the studies.

These responses are validated by the earlier researches. The integration of students with disabilities in inclusive education depends upon the attitude of others students, instructors and administration at university level (Fichten, 1988). The respondents reported that the attitude of others and faculty is sympathetic. The research validated the findings of Barga (1996) the students with disability avoid disclosing the impairment in institutes.

However, in early period this was common problem with visually impaired students. These students had developed good relationship with ordinary students. Later on they worked in group to do assignments and class projects.

Course Material

All respondent had major problems related to course material. The student with visual impairment cannot read the normal prints. The totally blind students have major problem to access the course material. Some responses are as following;

“No one has ever taken the responsibility of providing course material to a disabled person like me. Teachers do not facilitate and if I need recorded lectures I have to run behind a lot of people for that. Sometimes even two days before the exams I don't have complete lectures” (Iqra, 8, 5, 2014).

“No the department does not provide any course material in soft form. I have to get the books and scan them myself. No availability of course and other material for us so it's a big flaw and also time consuming, we spend all our efforts in collecting course material for us that in the end we are left with no energy to study” (Fazan, 4, 5, 2014).

These responses showed that no facility had provided from the university to the visually impaired student regarding the access to course material. They had to manage it all by themselves which sometimes became impossible for them.

However the partially visually impaired students managed notes in large print which they can easily read. Some of them got help from friends to record the lecture or write the notes in large print. One of respondent explained the problem in this way:

“Course material was not arranged for us like we wanted it so we had to ask our friends to either write it for us in big font or record it for us” (Ali, 1,5, 2014).

Consequently one of major problems is to access to course material. The students with impairment could not access the course material as normal students could do. Kugler & Andrews (1996) argued in support of this findings that the student with visual impairment had disadvantage to acces to course. However, on the basis of data from interview students acknowledged that the technology had make easier to acces to the course material. With assistive technology make it easier to use computers and other devices. This finding asserts the result of *Use of Computer Technology to Help Students with Special Needs* research conducted by Hasselbring and Glaser (2000) that the computer technology facilitated the students with visual impairment in inclusive education system as normal students have access to course material. The respondents had positive attitude to use of technology. It helped them to have use of internet, scan notes and ebooks access.

Examination

University has four modes of examination: by using computer, Braille, audio recording and with help of writer. Each format has problems. In computer type, most of students had no formal training or computer literacy. It is not possible for each student with visual impairment to take examination through computer.

“I appeared in examination with help of writer because I am not good user of computer. My typing speed is very slow” (Fazan, 4, 5, 2014).

In the universities there is no availability of Braille machine. The Teachers even students with visual impairment do not know to write with Braille machine. In audio recording is rare one mode of examination. It depends upon the teacher or instructors. The teachers excuse that they have no time to listen recording. The majority of students with visual impairment appeared in examination with help of writer. However there are many problems in this mode of examination. On the basis of analysis of interviews from respondents, time shortage and barrier in communication seem to be the major problems. It is difficult and time consuming for visually impaired students to describe answers to questions for the writer. And it is often difficult to make the writer understand the answer. It takes time for writer to write complete answer. There is no provision of time for students with visual impairment in examination. It is impossible to complete the paper in given time for students with visual impairment. Some responses from respondents as;

“The only problem that I faced was while giving exams because I found giving exams through a writer was too difficult. I felt one cannot communicate the whole answer to the writer properly as compared to when one writes the answer himself. So that becomes a little frustrating for me sometimes” (Halima, 11, 5, 2014).

“I appear for exams through a writer but I face a lot of problem in that because a lot of time is wasted when the writer reads out the paper to you and you dictate the answer so in the end a little time is left to write. I wish I could give oral exams” (Nadia, 7, 5, 2014).

Moreover, the availability of writer is also a problem for visual impaired students. The writers are friends or sometime it has to pay the writer. The writer is not provided by university examination cell.

“It is really problematic to find write. Sometimes even two days before the exam I am unable to find a writer. University itself does not provide a writer and above that it also requires you to get your writer approved” (Fiza, 10, 5, 2014).

Facilities at Campus (Library & Computer Laboratory)

Campus facilities include library and computer laboratory provided by institute at university. In university there is no special centre for students with disabilities.

The respondents reported that there is library facility. However, it is useless because they have no access to books. There is no staff training to scan book for them. No digital books for students. One of respondent reported in this way:

“Yes I know about library but there are no special facilities for students with a disability so if I have to use it, it is necessary that someone should help me” (Arooba, 8, 5, 2014).

Most of respondents said that there are assistive packages of software to use computer and internet facility that may be used to facilitate the special students but not even a single university is availing this facility and the computer laboratory staff is also not aware of these software packages. However, some of respondents had access to department computer laboratory. They had installed talking software on their own computers.

Technology

Technology includes computer, laptop, multimedia and assistive software. The students with visual impairment are positive about technology usage in education. However some students have problem with multimedia usage in class, because they cannot see images and diagrams at screen.

“Teachers use multimedia I could not watch things and diagram. However, technologically full aware. I prepare all this stuff on computer by scanning and typing from books and other sources” (Huzafa, 2, 5, 2014).

Although students think that the technology is helpful in education in different ways like soft copy of notes, e-books, speaking software and assistive software. The students having proper training of technology in pervious education institutions are able to use technology. They are using computer as medium for examination. With help of speaking software like JAWS they have access to e-books and notes and internet.

Technology usage is coping strategy adopted by students with visual impairment for class notes and examination.

However there is no training program for students with disabilities at university. The technology subjects create problems for students having no prior knowledge about technology. One of students expressed his experience as follow:

“At university level we were not trained for technology use and nor we have taken any course or classes from university or department. For example SPSS is also not compatible with JAWS etc. But we were not guided properly. Notes are not available in soft forms” (Usama, 4, 5, 2014).

Hostel

The six students were day scholar and four students were in hostel. The boarding students were two from Islamic International university and two were from Quaid-e-Azam university from which two were total blind one was partly blind and one had issue with his retina which create more problem at night. The majority of respondents reported that they face problems from allocation and currently. The data on basis of respondents’ interviews reported the staff behavior at time of hostel allocation. The administration was not cooperative and helpful with students with visual impairment.

“I faced difficulty in allocation of a hostel room. The hostel administrative staff was really disappointing and not at all helpful. I think that the procedure of hostel allocation wastes a lot of time because it is really lengthy. I also faced problems in adjusting to hostel life because the room had two doors” (Fiza, 10, 5, 2014).

The process is length process for allocation of hostel room. The students with disability face problems like in mobility and food. They manage with these difficulties with passage of time by making friends who could help them and by making adjustments with the environment and system.

Fuller, Bradley, & Healey (2004) recognized that the students with disability face the problems like other students have like financial and accommodation. This research asserted the result that students with visual problems face problems of finance due to limited amount of scholarship and job opportunities.

Mobility

The mobility is major problems reported in interview data. The students with visual impairment cannot move easily from one place to other. The respondents who were day scholars had their own pick and drop facility. However they had problems to move within department. They had limited option to go for outing or main library. One of the respondents expressed in this way:

“I love to move around the campus but due to visual impairment it is not possible for me to go main library or other department because there is no facility for students with disability to move freely” (Faryal, 19, 5, 2014).

University has its own transport facility for students. But the buses are full it is difficult to get seat. It is problematic for students with visual impairment to get into the bus. One of respondent reported as following:

“In the beginning it was really difficult because university buses are too rushed for a person like me so I should to travel by cab. Although in university buses it is

mentioned that seats are reserved for disabled but I could never find some space even to stand” (Halima, 11, 5, 2014).

In campus it is difficult to move new students with visual impairment. They cannot see or familiar with routes. It is hard to reach department from hostel. However with the passage of time they used to these routs and it is easy to move one department to hostel.

Employment Problems

The analysis of interview shows that the Majority of students with visual impairment are from middle class family in university. A fixed amount of scholarship is awarded to the students with disabilities by universities. This scholarship is not enough for students with disabilities. Respondent expressed his feelings as follow:

“I believe that a student from every university suffers from financial issue. I am financially dependent on my brothers, but they have their own families so it’s difficult for them to manage. The finances provided by university are not enough” (Fazan, 4, 5, 2014).

However the visually impaired students have problems related to finance because they need special technology assistive device for study purposes. They need printer for large print which partially visually impaired can read. Some of respondents also argue they also have financial problem because they cannot do part time job as other normal students do to meet their expenses. According to one respondent:

“.....but I have a stress regarding job that how will I manage my job with my visual impairment” (Nadia, 7, 5, 2014).

Social Group

The data shows that there is no effect of disability on social circle. The majority of respondents had friends from special community and ordinary students in hostel and department. At the beginning the respondents reported that they had limited social group but as time passed they had

friends. The students with visual impairment had peer group from both sighted and special community. This is evident from the following responses.

“In school times majority of my friends were from blind community but I also have friends in family, cousins etc and in university most of my friends are without disability” (Iqra, 8, 5, 2014).

“I always had normal friends more since school times. The reason is that I studied in normal institutions right from my first class” (Halima, 11, 5, 2014).

These responses showed that social group is not the matter of disability rather it is related to the communication and interaction with other. If visually impaired students had more interaction with sighted people their friends will be from normal people and if they interact with blinds more frequently they automatically had more friends from blind community.

The respondents pointed out they had strong social network and friend. There were only few who did not like to meet people. They did not feel alone. It depends upon the personality of individual. It contradicted the study by (Langher, Ricci, Reversi, & Citarelli, 2010) which showed that student with disability had fewer acceptances in the class and they felt alone in the class.

However the students with visual impairment due limited mobility they had a few friends in class which helped them in studies.

Training of Teacher and Staff

The findings of interviews of respondents showed that staff and teachers often create problems in class for the visually disabled students. The teachers or instructors did not know how to deal with students with disabilities. In class activities and assignments they did not know what to do with these students. However, students reported that if there was a student before their session then it is easy to deal with similar case in next class. The staff in computer laboratory did not assistive technology. One of the respondents said;

“...teachers let me provision for assignments and projects because they have no proper training to deal with me and sometimes it is difficult to make me understanding of things or course..... The staff at library does not know how to scan books and convert into different formats” (Ali, 1, 5, 2014).

Although teachers were much supportive in studies and over all experience at higher education institutes for their visually impaired students but due to lack of awareness and training they were unable to give their best and integrate visually impaired students in education and solve their problems fully.

The research mentioned below supports the results of data got from interviews conducted by the researcher. The teachers and staff training are very important to deal with visual impaired students. There is challenge for instructor to teach the students with visual impairment (Kugler & Andrews, 1996)

Resilience or Coping Abilities

The respondents were from different background. The coping ability varied from individual to individual throughout the data. However, the data showed that the fully blind students more resilience. They easily adjusted in hostel and campus. The students had their own strategy to deal with the problems during study. The use of assistive technology was more common in all students. For mobility they had defined the routes to move around in campus where they had little problem. One of respondent expressed his feelings as:

“I felt difficulty to move around campus even in department. But as time passed I defined the way I followed and now there is no problem to move around campus” (Iqra, 8, 5, 2014).

The one thing more researcher examined the problems throughout the educational session at higher inclusive education. It is tendency that the students with visual impairment had more problems at initial level.

Visually impaired students had a few friends. The respondents were at a new place. It was difficult to move around the campus. However they had developed coping strategy to deal with problem. But there were some problems up to last semester like examination and access to library. It was also noticed that fully blind students are having more coping abilities than the partially impaired students. The respondent also repeated as time passed they have more coping strategies. However, it depends upon the background of students. It affirmed the findings of study by (Jackson, Taylor, Palmatier, Elliott, & Elliott, 1998) which demonstrated there is relationship between hope and coping ability among visually impaired persons. The findings show the possible mediating role of sociable/ histrionic coping style on the hope-functional ability relation.

Discussion

The purpose of research was to examine different problems faced by students with visual impairment and the coping strategies to deal with these problems in higher inclusive education in Pakistan.

The researcher tried to compile and categorize the proposed problems that may be faced by visually impaired students by using the Tinto's theory. As the theory not only helped to interpret the data in presented parameters but it also second the results of the present research.

On basis of interviews the research identified some problems faced by visually impaired student at university level. The various aspects of these problems are discussed as follows.

The major problem faced by visually impaired and blind students in all three universities' setting was guidance at very first time. Students at this level need more guidance to integrate in educational setting but the situation was opposite and worse.

The policies of universities for admission were also different at every university and were not much supportive. Like in Islamic International University visually impaired students may inter on open merit without any special scholarship the reason told by the administration was because they don't have any written policy so they can't facilitate these students properly. And in Quaid-

e-Azam University they may appear on quota only once a year. Both systems limit and marginalize the inclusion and integration of visually impaired students in higher education.

The integration and performance of visually impaired students depends upon the behavior and performance of others. The fellow students, teachers and administration of the universities had different point of views and behaviors about the visually impaired students which effect their education. They show sympathies but at the same time their queries make them questions about the impairment of the visually handicapped students. They ask questions like how they get this disease? How they manage it? How will they study with it? All these kind of questions irritate the visually impaired students and strengthen the feelings of resentment in them. As a result they try to hide their disability as Barga (1996) stated that the students with disability avoid disclosing the impairment in institutes.

One of the core problems of visually impaired students is the access to the course material. Blind and low sighted students find it difficult to approach the course usually provided in the form of printed notes and books. More over it is provided in the form of multimedia presentations and through writing on board. All these mediums are supposed to be helpful only for sighted students. And visually impaired students have to manage it by themselves because not a single university is providing books and course material in soft copy or brail. Visually handicapped students coup up this situation with the help of technology. They use computer, scanner and talking software like jaws, dragin and talks etc which help them to access the course material.

Although the mode of examination is lenient and helping for visually impaired students as they can use the facility of writer. However it can be more convenient if the universities allow the handicapped students to use all the four modes of examination which include through writer, using computer, in brail and orally. This is because taking examination through writer creates problems some time.

Students with visual impairment have very limited access to the facilities provided at the department and university level as they cannot approach the library and computer lab by them. The library staff and administration are not aware and trained that who to make the use of these

facilities possible for visually impaired students which create problems for them and keep them behind the sighted students who can easily use these facilities.

Although the universities provide the facility of accommodation but students with visual impairment face a lot of problems in getting a seat in hostel room. Moreover the staff which allocates hostel is not cooperative and supportive with them. The staff is not sensitized properly how to deal with these students. Sometimes the problem of accommodation force the visually handicapped students to even leave the institution.

Teacher and staff training is the most concerned issue regarding the problems and hurdles of visually impaired in higher education. The responses of visually handicapped students showed that not even a single teacher was trained properly to understand and solve the educational problems of their special students. And this lack of training make it a challenge for teachers to teach visually handicapped students as Kugler & Andrews, 1996 said that it is a challenge for the teachers to teach visually impaired students.

Responses of visually impaired students showed that they had a strong social circle. Results of data shows that students who studied at normal schools and students who studied at special need schools had different ratio of normal and visually impaired friends students. Students who studied at normal schools had more normal and sighted friends and who studied at special schools for blinds had more blind friends. So it shows that social group is matter of frequent interaction and has no or little concern with their impairment. This finding is opposing the related literature as it was mentioned that students with visual impairment face loneliness in class and they had small social circle (Langher, Ricci, Reversi, & Citarelli, 2010). The main reason of this difference is that the previous literature belong to the western and non Muslim countries at most whom cultural and religious values does not emphasizes brotherhood, equality, sympathy and the sense that all are Allah's creature and being disable is not a men's fault. On the other hand Muslims and especially Asian civilizations are supposed to be more generous and sympathetic. They are taught the lesson of equality and friendship so they show friendly behavior towards their disable fellows. These religious and cultural values bond people to be gathered and to be united.

Most of the problems were of initial time period. As visually impaired students were new and were not familiar with the place, environment, policies, people and system. As they integrate in the institution they solve or manage most of problems like mobility issues, interaction and communication problems, behavior of teachers and class mates etc but there were still some problems which create hurdles for visually impaired students in their education. These problems include access to course material and appearing in the examination.

The data was analyzed through thematic and context analysis parameters. Data shows that the education at the university level is really inclusive. But it is only fulfilling the part of equality as it is giving admission to the visually impaired students in the higher education system but the part of equity is still to be fulfilled. The institutes of higher education have to provide facilities to integrate special students in the system and to make the higher education inclusive in all manners.

CHAPTER NO 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was conducted to investigate the problems faced by student with visual impairment at inclusive higher education as the case study of universities of Islamabad.

The main aim of the study was to explore the problems faced by visually impaired students in inclusive education at university level and their managing disability at university level.

The researcher used qualitative case study design to identify the problems from viewpoint of visually impaired students in university. For the purpose of data collection one to one in-depth interviews of university students with visual impairment was used. The snowball and purposive sampling technique were to collect data. The data was analyzed by using thematic and context analysis technique.

The data shows that one of the major problems is the admission process and policy. The behavior of admission staff is not facilitative and supportive. The attitude of others at university is very sympathetic except the administrative staff at university. The students with visual impairment have friends ordinary student and from their community as well. The access to course material is also a major problem at university level in inclusive education. The students have limited access to curriculum. The material is in normal print which students with impairment cannot read. However they adapt coping strategy by using assistive technology to make use of this stuff.

There are also some problems at examination faced by visually impaired students; lack of implication of all mode of examination, time shortage and availability of writer. The students with impairment has limited access to the department facilities like library and internet because of lack of staff training, scanning facility and no access to eBooks. The technology helped the students with impairment. With help of assistive technology and packages of software they had

access to the information and course material. With help of talking software they can use computer and other devices as well. However there is problem for those who have no proper training to use technology.

The mobility of student within campus is problematic they cannot move alone because of lack of special routes. The students also face difficulty within transport facility of university due to rush. The teachers and staff cannot deal with these students because lack of sensitization of needs of these students. Teachers or instructor have no formal training to deal with these students. The students with visual impairment face financial problems. They cannot do part time job as normal student do. The resilience or coping abilities among visually impaired varies from case to case depending upon nature of impairment and time of impairment. The fully blind students have more coping strategy than partially blind in education. The chunks of the findings may be presented as follow.

- i. The quota policy marginalized the students with disability. It is barrier at entry level of university in inclusive education. The procedure of admission is lengthy and assessment is not reliable at university level.
- ii. The students with visual impairment has supportive social circle. They have friends from their own community and ordinary students. The attitude of others is sympathetic with them.
- iii. The technology helps students with impairment. The assistive technology and packages of software used to access the course material.
- iv. Teacher training is major problems in inclusive education. The instructors have no formal training to integrate the students with special needs in inclusive education.
- v. The coping abilities and resilience students with visual impairment varies depending upon individual backgrounds and nature of impairment.

Conclusion

This dissertation investigated the problems faced by visually impaired students at inclusive education in university. This study has shown admission, attitude of others, course material modes of examination, campus facilities, technology, hostel, financial issue, social group and

training of teacher and staff as major problems at university level. The following conclusion can be drawn from present study.

University education is inclusive for visually impaired students but to maintain equity facilities have to be provided to maintain equity. Significance of this study cannot be denied. It provides prior information about the problems faced by students with impairment in inclusive education. It also important to device the policy regarding special student by university administration.

Recommendations

On the basis of literature and present study researcher has some recommendations as follows:

- i. It is needed that there must be written policy for students with disabilities by keeping in view their special needs.
- ii. The staff should know the special information related to disabled students. At admission time special stall or individual to deal with students with special needs.
- iii. The quota policy must be reviewed to increase the opportunity for students with disabled in higher education.
- iv. The procedure of admission is very lengthy. It must be clear and earlier because students miss first semester classes due to this process.
- v. The teachers and instructor training is very important to integrate the student with visual impairment in inclusive education. It is necessary to train the instructors and teachers who are teaching the students with special needs students.
- vi. The behavior and attitude of other people is very important for self-concept of individual. The ordinary students, staff and administration must have positive and supportive attitude towards the students with disabilities.
- vii. As research shows there is problem in mobility within campus due to structure. There must be disable friendly building they can move around easily. For transport facility the student with disabilities must be preferred and there should be reserved seats for them.
- viii. For financial support of these students job opportunity should be created at campus
- ix. The boarding facility must be quick and rooms are allocated at time of admission so that the students may not face any disturbance.

- x. Regarding course material the teacher are sensitized about special needs of students with impairment. Teacher must provide material to students.
- xi. The library should be equipped with special needs equipments for students with impairment. There must be training of staff at library how to deal with disable students. As the population of students with impairment is increasing each year. The main library must build special resource centre to make access the information for these students.
- xii. Training courses are needed for students with impairment to increase their abilities so that they can work independently
- xiii. The researcher and academician should conduct research like this to identify the problems at university level in different institutions.

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Interview Guide

I am going to investigate the experience of university students of Islamabad with a visual impairment. All of your responses will be entirely unspecified and you are allowed to depart from the research at any time.

Section 1 Background

What is your age?

Where are you from?

What is the name of institution you are studying/studied?

What is nature of visual impairment is?

Are you blind by-birth or late blind?

Would you like to tell us about family background?

Tell us about your peer group?

Where did you get pre-university education?

- Special education institute
- General education institute

What are the facilities provided during the earlier education?

What course are you studying?

What year of study are you currently in?

Section 2: Pre-University

Thinking back to before you decided to apply to university, what were your perceptions of higher education? Why?

Why did you apply to University?

Why did you choose to study (course title)?

What did you find difficult in choosing the course?

How this impairment is impacting your education?

Section 3: Initial time period at university

What were your perceptions of higher education after you gained a place but before you arrived at (name of university) university?

What helped you during the initial stage?

What did you find difficult during the transition stage?

How did you cope up/ manage these difficulties?

Section 4: Arriving at University

What were your experiences during earlier period of time?

What helped you during this time?

What did you find difficult during this time?

What did you find difficult in class?

What was behavior of teacher with you?

What were the problems regarding course material?

What did you face the problems in examination?

What were the problems did you face hostel life?

What were the problems regarding mobility within campus?

What was your social life at campus?

How did you cope up/ manage these difficulties?

What were the accommodations made to deal these difficulties?

Section 5: Your Current Experience

What is your current experience of studying at University?

What do you currently find helpful?

What do you currently find difficult?

How did you cope up/ manage these difficulties?

Is the university providing any special service to you regarding your disability?

What do you think you are getting inclusive education at university level?

Section 6: Final Thoughts

What changes would you make to improve the experiences of future students with a visual impairment?

Do you have any other comments?