

A Case Study on Expanding Access to Higher Education of Students with Hearing Impairment

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Abstract : Children with hearing impairment face several challenges in accessing primary and secondary education in general and higher education in particular in Pakistan. A large number of these children are excluded from formal education system through segregated special institutions. The enrollment rate of these children at school level is very low and it continues decreasing as they move on the ladder of education. Negligible number of students with hearing impairment gets any chance to be enrolled at tertiary or higher education institutes. The segregated system of education at primary and secondary level makes it even more difficult to adjust in an inclusive classroom at a higher level not only for students with hearing impairment but for their teachers and peers as well. A false belief of teachers and parents about low academic profile of students with hearing impairment is one of the major challenges to overcome for their participation at higher education. This case study was conducted to document an innovative step taken by the Department of Special Education Needs, University of Management & Technology, Lahore Pakistan. The prime objective of this study was to assess the satisfaction level of students with hearing impairment in BS 4 Years and MA Special Education programs at Lahore campus. Structured interviews were of 40 students with hearing impairment to assess the satisfaction on service delivery (admission process, classroom pedagogy, content, assessment/results, access to other services centers i.e. library, cafeteria, hostel, co-curricular activities) and campus life. Their peers without disabilities were also interviewed to assess their acceptance level. The findings of the study revealed positive results about their educational as well as social inclusion in the university. The students also shared their fears at the time of admission and how fear eventually faded out with the passage of time due to the proper academic support system. The findings of the study will be shared in detail with the audience during the presentation.

Keywords : students with hearing impairment, higher education, inclusive education, marginalization

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