Inclusive Education-Perception of Parents of Students with Special Needs in Segregated Settings in Dubai

الدمج المدرسي- تصور أولياء أمور الطلبة ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة حول العزل المدرسي للطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في دبي

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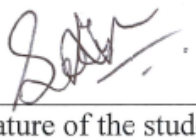

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Abstract

Inclusion and inclusive education is the order of the day. The government is trying its best to make UAE an inclusive society by coming up with laws and many other supporting developments. A large number of students with special needs study in private and government schools and rehabilitation centers. This study investigates the views and attitudes of parents of students studying in segregated settings in Dubai. It has been conducted on the parents of 3 well known special need centers in Dubai. The study has been done in order to take into account the perception of these parents about inclusive education and to look for best practices so that more students with special needs can be included in the main stream setting.

The data required for the research was collected through both quantitative and qualitative means. The methods used were survey and semi structured interview. Triangulation method was used to increase the validity and reliability of the study.

The study found that overall parents were in favour of the idea of inclusion but they had many concerns about their kids attending mainstream schools. Most of the concerns were regarding the lack of trained teachers and resources in these schools as compared to special needs schools.

إن الدمج المدرسي هو المطلوب اليوم. والحكومة تبذل قصارى جهدها للعمل على الدمج في مجتمع دولة الإمارات من خلال طرح القوانين بالاضافة إلى العديد من التطورات الداعمة الأخرى.
يدرس عدد كبير من الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المدارس الخاصة والحكومية ومراكز التأهيل. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء آراء ومواقف أولياء أمور الطلبة الذين يدرسون في مدارس منعزلة في دبي. وقد تم إجراؤها على أولياء أمور من ثلاثة مراكز معروفة لذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في دبي. وقد أجريت الدراسة لأخذ تصورهم حول الدمج المدرسي في عين الاعتبار والبحث عن أفضل الممارسات بحيث يتم إدراج المزيد من الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المدارس العادية.

Dedication

“Believe in your dreams, they were given to you for a reason”

Katrina Mayer

Dedicated to my parents

Lt col C.P.P Nair (Retd.) & Sumithra Nair

For being the kind of Parents they are

For teaching me but never imposing their beliefs on me

For letting me argue, be opinionated, and find my own way

For letting me make unconventional choices

Even when they were unsure of it

For always being there with unconditional love and support

Aknowledgement

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List of Abbreviations

SEN - Special Educational Needs

MOE – Ministry of Education

MOSA – Ministry of Social Affairs

UNESCO- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

ADEC – Abudhabi Education Council

KHDA – Knowledge and Human Development Authority

NGO – Non Government Organization

IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Act

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Background Information

Today Education is a fundamental right of each and every child. But if look at the history of education it is a completely different story. The journey of education and schooling has had its ups and downs throughout its development. If we look at what education means in the universal context, in a report presented by the International Commission on education for the 21st century titled 'Learning the Treasure Within', it is stated that:

> basic education is the first step in attempting to attenuate the enormous disparities affecting many groups, women, rural population, the urban poor, marginalized ethnic minorities and the millions of children not attending school…… and to broaden the magnitude of the right to education extending form initial or basic education to lifelong learning (Jacques Delors 1998, P.118).

1.1.1. History of Education

Education and the school system as we know it today is a very recent development considering its history. However from a historical perspective 'learning' on the other hand has been a part of human existence right from the beginning of time. The youngsters would learn how to hunt and gather food from their elders and were trained in other aspects of life as well by the elders. 'Learning' in the beginning was more skill based and knowledge based and customized to the area. As human started travelling and settling in different regions, learning became more specific to the climatic, agricultural or other needs of that specific region. Children were basically taught specific skills and characteristics like obedience and duty which would help them become better workers and

human beings. Then came a time where education was passed on through scriptures by the way of stories, songs, etc. usually by priests. The Egyptians started various writing system around 3500 BC called 'Hieroglyphics'. In the Indian subcontinent education started with the Vedas around 1500 BC which led to the 'gurukul' system of learning. In the earlier days education was not available to all the people. In all the cultures it was restricted and available only to people of high bearing which was a very small percentage of the total population. The modern system of education started in the middle ages where schools were mainly set up for religious teachings. In Europe it was made mandatory for all the children to go to school, thus creating the rudimentary version of the education system we see today (Peter Gray, 2008). Once the public education system developed, it moved away from religious teaching and children were taught reading, writing and arithmetic without any discrimination based on gender or sex. In the eighteenth century students with disability were mainly segregated and institutionalized. They were isolated from the society to be fixed. This continued till the mid twentieth century. Students with disability were not restricted from learning however there were many issues with respect access, content, etc. as well as the ridicule these students faced in the society. Excluding students with disability from public schools can be traced back in legal history to 1893, when Massachusetts Supreme Court upheld the expulsion of a student solely due to poor academic ability. This was the norm till the early 1970s (Barbara Dray 2008). In the 1950s and 1960s during the civil rights movement many support groups formed to advocate for the rights of children with disabilities. In 1972, two land mark cases started the movement of right to education for students with disability. In 1975 the US Congress passed the 'Education for all Handicapped Children Act' this was a historic achievement in the field of disability advocacy. The law has been amended numerous times and is now known as the 'Individuals with Disabilities Education Act(IDEA)

In the 1970s the momentum for deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities gathered force and the focus started shifting towards inclusion of students with disability. According to Derrick Armstrong “history of special education has at one and the same time been a history of inclusion and a history of exclusion” (Clough 1998, P.51)

1.1.2. History of Education & Inclusion in UAE

As with other places in the world, in the Arab world as well, structured education started with religious teaching. The scholars from the mosque would teach from the holy Quran, along with reading, writing and arithmetic. The first school in the region which would later come to be known as the UAE, was the Al Thaimiah Al Mahamoudiah School founded in 1907. It adopted portions of the Egyptian curriculum and was founded by Sheikh Ali Al Mahmoud. It had two segments, primary school for learning Quran, Sunnah, reading, writing, math, business and social study and the second segment was the study of Sharia. Till the formation of UAE in 1971, there were very few formal schools. After that the education system has grown by leaps and bounds. Though formal education was establish in 1953 by a Kuwaiti educational mission in Sharjah, it was only after the formation of UAE that the Ministry of Education was established which started handling the 47 schools that were run by the Kuwaiti Government. Al Hesbi, Pettaway, Waller (2015). Rehabilitation services first started in the early 80s. UAE is a melting pot of cultures which is very evident in the education sector as well. Apart from the national Arabic curriculum there are many international curriculums that cater to the needs of different nationalities namely, Americans, British, Indian, Philipino, French, etc. It has been observed that the British and American curriculums are much more accommodating and in tune with the needs of the students with disability. The reason could be that these countries have had much longer history with regard to the fight for the right of students with special needs. Special education in UAE has come

a long way from its early beginning in the 80s. Currently there are many special needs and rehabilitative centers (both private and public) which cater to the needs of students with different types of disabilities. Till about a decade ago there was a clear demarcation between mainstream and special need schools. In the late 80s a survey was conducted by the Ministry of Education(MOE) due to there were organized efforts by the Ministry to recognize the prevalence of students with SEN in mainstream schools. However the approach was very casual and mostly restricted to extracurricular activities. There were mainly students with speech and language disorders and learning difficulties (Gaad, 2010). It did not allow for the admission of students with disabilities. MOE initiated the process of formation of special need classes in main stream school premises. These students rarely met their typical peers and would be isolated in the school except may be during play time. This trend is in keeping with the trends in the developed parts of the world like west and Europe which also followed the exclusionary model of services (Lupart and Webber 2012).These services were only available in government schools which were limited to Emirati students. Private schools had still not caught up with trend. However in a few years private schools also got into the trend of having resource rooms to teach children with special needs thereby practicing covert inclusion or integration in the name of inclusive education According to UNESCO:

> The merit of such schools is not only that they are capable of providing quality education to all children; their establishment is a crucial step in helping to change discriminatory attitudes, in creating welcoming communities and in developing an inclusive society. A change in social perspective is imperative. For far too long, the problems of people with disabilities have been compounded by a disabling society that has focused upon their impairments rather than their potential (UNESCO 1994).

It was in 2006 that the UAE government passed Law No. 29 according to which no child can be denied admission to a school based on disability alone. The Federal Law 29 gives “the person with special needs access to equal opportunities of education within all educational institution”. This

open doors for many students with special needs to have regular education with their peers. However implementation of the law has not been an easy task. In spite of the right of every child with special needs to attend main stream school, schools were hesitant to take in the students and rightly so. Though the law was passed, the infrastructure of the schools did not support such a development. The teachers in mainstream schools hardly knew anything about disabilities and were clueless about techniques to train them. There was also the whole issue of the mindsets of parents and teachers. Hence started the mammoth task of training the teachers and the parents in order to develop best practices and make UAE an inclusive society. Inclusion works on lot of different levels and differs in historical, cultural and legal aspects. The society and the mindset of its people play a very important role in the development and progress of any scheme or plan. If the society is progressive so will be the country. UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1994) states that:

> Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, and children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups… This has led to the concept of the inclusive school" (UNESCO 1994).

As UAE is the signatory of the Salamanca statement, it is dedicated to the concept of making education inclusive for all. This can only be attained with the support and cooperation of the parents of children (both disabled and non-disabled).

1.2. Rationale for the study

UAE is one of the countries that is doing tremendous work as far as inclusive education is concerned. The government is very supportive of the cause and very updated with regards to the laws concerning students with special needs. One of the goals of the ministry of education as published in the general rules for the provision of special education programme (public and private schools) is to

> provide appropriate learning environment (least restricted based on an IEP, enhance and enrich learning opportunities through the advance learning plan……. collaborate with qualified professionals for all categories of special education so as to educate and meet all the needs of the students with special needs and gifts and talents in the public and private schools (MOE 2006, P.16).

This is the legal aspect however in the society the reality is very different. Till a few years ago the belief was that 'formal is for normal' and students with special needs were by default sent to special schools. There have been quite a few researches which have studied the perspective and attitudes of teachers from main stream schools in UAE. El Ghazo and Gaad (2004), Gaad and Khan L (2007), Bradshaw, Tanant, Lydiatt (2004), Aarif and Gaad 2008 being some of the researchers. Most of the researches show that the teachers are very open to teaching students with special needs along with their peers on the condition that the school provides proper infrastructure with regards to training and resources (both teaching aids and human resources). Cultural beliefs with respect to disability still revolve around the need to segregate students with disabilities in order to give them more specialised services, as a result children with disabilities are more likely to be stereotyped and stigmatized (El Ghazo & Gaad 2004; Arif & Gaad 2008; Bradshaw et al. 2004; Gaad 2004; Gaad 2011; Gaad & Khan 2007).l There is also some research done on the attitudes of parents of typical children about teaching children with special needs along with their peers. However, there is hardly any

research done with regards to the attitudes and perspectives of parents of special needs students in segregated settings. Parents of children with disability are without doubt important stake holders in the development of inclusive education. And very large percentage of students with disability attend special needs schools and rehabilitative services in segregated settings .Hence knowing the views and perspective of their parents would help a lot in making inclusive education more successful in the UAE. For many years special and schools and main stream schools have existed as two separate entities (special need centers come under MOSA while mainstream schools come under MOE). There has hardly been any give and take of knowledge and information. With inclusive education gaining so much importance in the development of the education sector as a whole, it is highly unlikely and very detrimental for the two to remain two distinct islands. Major percentage of the students with special needs study in segregated settings which are either private special needs centers or clinics. These centers and clinics hire highly qualified staff to train the students. The disadvantage of main stream school is that there is a lack of trained professionals to teach students with SEN. Hence there is no doubt that there needs to be more interaction between the two for optimal benefit and best inclusive practices. The main aim of Special educators working in special need centers is to try and generalize the student skills to ensure that they are able to function better in the community. Most special needs schools have inclusion as their major focus in order for the student to have a good quality of life. As parents are also important decision makers and advocates of students with disability, it is important to know their feelings and opinions with regards to inclusive education. Though there is no doubt that the inclusive education is the best way forward, we cannot assume that all parents of students with special needs want their child to attend main stream schools. These parents are an important part of the society. According to an article

published in Volume 51 in the Intellectual and developmental Disabilities journal:

> to fully understand social inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities from diverse communities, it is essential to understand them in context of their families and families in context of their varying communities". In terms of families there is little understanding and documentation of cross cultural expectations, desires and requirements regarding social inclusion (Novabak. A.A, Stanncliffe.J.R, Et. Al 2013 P.370).

During the years of experience working in special needs schools the researcher has come across a number of parents who prefer to send their kids to special needs schools in spite of the kids being capable of attending main stream schools. Hence if inclusion has to be successful and imbibed in the very texture of the society, it is extremely essential to know the perception of the parents of students studying in segregated settings. Without taking into account the views of these parents we will not get a fair and clear picture inclusive education in the country since these parents make up for a big percentage of the society.

1.3. Research Questions

"All progress is born of enquiries". Doubt is often better than over confidence" Hudson Maxim.

To study the perception of the parents of students with special needs with regards to inclusion and to understand the reasons behind these views the following research questions have been established.

1. From the parents point of view what are the benefits of inclusive education for a student with special needs?

2. What are the main factors that influence the views of parents on efficacy of inclusive education with reference to age, level of severity, child's need for socialization etc?

3. What could be recommended to support inclusive education for students with special needs in the segregated settings?

1.4. Limitations of the Study

The study had to be conducted during the academic sessions even though it was meant for the parents. It had to go through the school management in order to be distributed to the parents and getting permissions for the same was a very tedious and time consuming task. In spite of the letter from the university, there were a number of other formalities imposed by the schools. Initially the study was supposed to be done in two emirates but permission was not granted by those schools. Out of the 6 schools contacted only three gave the go ahead and all three were from the same emirate. So instead of two emirates the research was done in the emirate of Dubai only. The researcher is a Special Educator working in a segregated setting and the timing is similar to other main stream schools. Hence all the correspondence took place over email during out of school hours which took a lot of time. Also many holidays cropped up in between leading to more delays. One of the schools the permission was granted just on the day they went on term break and so the questionnaires were sent to the parents only when the school reopened after a week. Also the responses from the parents took up to two weeks for collection. There are large number of special needs schools as well as private clinical centers in UAE. 3 special needs centers is a very small representation of the community as a whole. Only three parents were interviewed and all were of different nationalities and had children with different levels of severity. This may have affected the validity of this particular survey as the views and perspective of the community of special need parents. Most of the parents who responded had children with special needs with ages that ranged from 8 to 15. There were very few parents who had younger kids (3 to 7 years). So the views of these parents cannot be generalized as the view of parents of very

young kids with special needs who are just starting of with schooling. Since this target group was selected randomly, the chosen schools did not have many students less than 7 years old. It would probably have made a difference if more parents of 3 to 7 year olds have responded to the survey. The percentage of filled in questionnaires that were collected was also pretty low. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed in the 3 selected schools, only 60 came back. 12 out of 50 from School A, 14 out of 50 from School B and 34 out of 100 from School C.

The above mentioned limitations would definitely have an effect on the overall result. A more in depth and detailed study including more parents especially of early learners with special needs may be needed to increase the validity of this research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

"The importance of theory is to help the investigator, summarize previous information and guide his future course of action"

Education of students with special needs has gone through considerable changes in the last few centuries starting from religious teaching to educational reforms delinking religious studies from subject studies. Going from education to only the elite class, to 'education for all' and later on to specialized educational centers for people who did not fit the norm and once again ending at 'education for all'. We now call it inclusive education which aims to providing the right kind of support to students who are at both ends of the norm.

2.1. Medical Model vs. Social Model

Initially the medical model of disability believed that people with disability were to be treated and fixed in order for them to be part of the society. The ideologies of the medical model lead to more segregation of people with disability. Supporters of the medical model believed that the individual was the problem and their inclusion would only be an inconvenience to the society. During this period many residential homes were built especially for the disabled where they would be treated and looked after. This was more on the lines of compassion and charity and getting the society to invest money to cure the issues. It promoted and very negative and weak idea of persons with disability. It portrayed them as helpless disempowered people who dependent of the pity and charity of the society to live their lives. Many people felt that this was unjust portrayal and supported the right of people with disability to live with dignity, which lead to a shift from the medical model to the social model. People started accommodating persons with disability and letting them

participate in the society instead of seeing them through the medical lens as something to be fixed or a victim of tragedy. They were seen as the victims of the society who were obsessed. Hence the agenda shifted from just the medical care, segregated education and charitable services to empowering them and removing barriers that prevented them leading a worthy and dignified life. However the social model also was criticized for rejecting the 'medicalisation' of persons with disability. Though this model remained influential even in the 21st century. People still put the onus on the society for the exclusion of people with disability. As Vic Finkelstein points out "in our view it is the society which disables…….. disability is something imposed on top of our main impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded full participation in the society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society" (Finkelstein 2004 P.14).

As years progressed the model of disability changed from a 'charity based' model to a right based model. People with disabilities themselves became the strongest advocates of their rights and along with the help of disability support groups made their voice heard loud and clear. This lead to the transition from the social model to the inclusive model that is prevalent today. Though legally most countries are on the same page as far as provision of rights of people with disability and inclusive education are concerned, each country is moving towards the same ideals at different pace.

2.2. Formation of MOE

There are various factors that come into play ranging from size of the country, wealth of the country and how developed it is socially and educationally. Apart from these factors a major factor is the dedication and passion of the governments to make inclusive education a priority and to make their society an inclusive one. Fortunately the government of UAE is very serious about making their country inclusive both socially and

educationally. Many bodies were set up by the government to ensure that the mission of the federal law 29 was achieved as soon as possible. Article 13 of the federal law states that the Ministry of Education (MOE) "shall be committed …… to secure the complete participation of students having special needs". Articles 12, 14 & 15 also focuses on the inclusion of persons with disability with regard to health, education and employment."(MOE 2006) The MOE responsible for all educational institutes and related issues (both public and private) in the emirates of Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Fujairah & Ras Al Khaimah. ADEC is responsible of education in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. With the formation of bodies like Department of Special Education, KHDA etc. both government and private schools were being constantly observed and trained in order to develop best inclusive practices. In 2010, the MOE launched 'schools for all'. In a document published by MOE in 2010 it identified SEN as students from 9 categories "who required special teaching approaches, equipments or instructions within or without or outside a regular class room (MOE 2010 P.58). In 2006 the Dubai government formed KHDA which was given the responsibility of improving the school education system including services associated with special educational needs in the emirate of Dubai. Though KHDA is concerned only with schools in Dubai, its establishment was considered a means to bringing about educational reform by decentralizing the arrangements of the government (Al Karam, Al Marri & Al Muhari). In an article published in the journal for research and special education in 2008 Arif & Gaad state that "duality in educational provision is mirrored in regard to SEN where rehabilitation/therapy, specialized centers are available for the local citizens while other nationalities can access specialized private therapy centers." Also the fact that private special needs centers fall under MOSA where as all private and government schools fall under MOE. So there is a disconnect between theory and practice. Getting a student with special needs into the main stream school and keeping them there is much easier

said than done. The students with mild disability might be accepted in main stream schools but children with more severe disabilities don't stand a chance. Though the laws have been in place for more than a decade now it is still the prerogative of the school whether they want to admit the child or not. As Gaad states:

> It is interesting to note that the MOE schools used to accept certain and less obvious categories of special needs……. other obvious categories of special needs such as learners with down syndrome or those with physical impairments are not accepted in the schools (Gaad, 2010, P.71)

On the basis of the numerous years spent teaching children in a segregated setting while trying to push for inclusive education, the researcher has observed that some parents are vary of sending their children to the main stream because it is an extremely cumbersome task in spite of the law. They are also hesitant because of the lack of proper resource and trained teachers. On the other hand there are also parents who somehow wants their children to attend any main stream schools whether the school has facilities or not in order to escape the social stigma. The government is in charge of making the laws and the schools are in charge of executing them however it is extremely essential to create awareness and debunk the myths that are prevalent in society about inclusion. Parents of SEN are already under a lot of pressure and under constant societal scrutiny. The amount of strain they have to go through for the advocacy of their child is not meager. Like all other parents, parents of children with special needs also want the best for their children. Sometimes there is a clash of views as to what the best for a child with special needs is. There are instances of parents of children with severe disabilities running from pillar to post to get their child admitted in a main stream school and in the profession as special educator the researcher has also come across many parents of children with mild disabilities who prefer their kids to attend special schools and private therapies as they believe it is safer and more beneficial for their child. There are cases that the researcher has come across where the parents were forced to keep their children at home because they could

not find a facility they were happy with. Out of the whole population a very small percentage of students with disabilities attend main stream schools in UAE. Though there is specific research data majority of the students with special needs attend government or private special needs and rehabilitation centers. It is a known fact that the UAE government is taking stringent measures to ensure inclusive education. In spite of all these measures the number of children with special needs being included in main stream schools is not as high as expected. In his forward to the government's green paper on special education, the secretary of state David Blunkett states 'good provision for SEN does not mean a sympathetic of low achievements. It means a tough minded determination to show that children with SEN are capable of excellence. Where schools respond in this way teachers sharpen their ability to set high standards for all pupils' (DfEE, 1997, P.4).

2.3. Views and Perceptions – Comparative Study

The studies that have been conducted reveal that teachers have a positive attitude towards inclusion but are skeptical due to the lack of resources and training given to the teachers. As stated by Arif & Gaad:

> More teaching and supplemental material specific to special needs education needs to be developed currently teachers are working with what is known as a para curriculum. It is based on the regular text book with chapters that are being simplified or removed. In the area of delivery more training would be beneficial (Arif & Gaad, 2008 P.109).

The above statement proves that in this case parents are not entirely wrong in having doubts about sending their children to main stream schools. Their fear that the child's educational needs will not be met in a mainstream school, is not unfounded. Parents also are important stake holders in this issue and it will be helpful to know their views. However there are hardly any studies done on the perception of parents of students with special needs in the segregated setting. The attitude of parents of students with special needs will definitely have an impact on the inclusive

educational scene as a whole. If majority of the parents have negative attitude and are skeptical about placing their children in the main stream school it is surely going to have an adverse effect on inclusive education in spite of all efforts by the government. Hence the positive attitude of parents is very important for the success of inclusive education. Since it is a very crucial variable as far as the effectiveness and development of best inclusive practices are concerned, it is important to study the views, perceptions and attitudes of parents of children with special needs in a segregated setting. A positive attitude will give insight into what are the things that being done right and need to be maintained where as a negative attitude will help us understand the concerns of the parents so as to work on these issues, be it on the parent's side (lack of awareness, social beliefs, etc) or on the school front (lack of trained teachers, supporting resources, etc.). There have been a few studies worldwide which have yielded both positive and negative results. Mylnek (1982) Green & Shin (1995) Abramson (1982) Hilbert (2014) found that majority of parents had a positive attitude towards inclusion. However they have been studies which produced not so positive results as well. In his study, Green found that only 14% believed their own children's academic performance could be improved in inclusive class room (Green et.al, 1995) Bennett and Gallagar (2013) did a study in Ontario Canada which showed a concern by the parents of special needs students with the availability of qualified staff, services and resources. Also in a study conducted by Leyser and Kirk |(2004) it was found that parents felt that their children would lose out on individualized instruction in a main stream setting as compared to a segregated setting. Stigmatization of their children by the teachers and the students of a main stream school was another concern as per the study. Some groups of parents however were in favour of 'partial inclusion' where the students with disability are taught in a special setting like a resource room for a part of the day and in a regular class room for the rest of the day. A study by Palmer and Nelson

shows that parents of children with severe disabilities had their own priorities and overall could be sorted into the following groups:

1) Parents who gave importance to socialization as an educational goal.

2) Parents who have students with higher cognitive skills and fewer behavior problems and characteristics requiring extra support.

3) Parents who have been sending their kids to main stream for long time.

Results indicated that the third group of parents has the most positive attitude towards inclusion. A few other studies have also shown a negative attitude towards inclusion by parents of children with severe disabilities (Palmer Fuller Arora Nelson, 2001). It is very evident that though on the whole most parents are inclined towards a positive attitude towards inclusion, the concerns they have are also real and proven in many studies, hence cannot be ignored. In 1994 a study done on attitudes of parents of children with and without children with disability by Fuch & Fuchs showed that though parents agreed in general inclusion was the positive educational practice they were not in favour of inclusion for moderate to severe disabilities, emotional and cognitive impairments. This study again surprisingly shows a division of opinions even within the same community which is parents. The only difference being some had children with disability some had children without disability. There have been a few studies to find out if the type of disability would make a difference in the attitude of parents. In their report Kasari Freeman Bauminger and Alkin stated that parent's perception changed depending upon the diagnosis of their child. Parents with children with down syndrome supported full time inclusion where as parents of students with autism supported part time inclusion. Parents have always been the vocal advocates for any cause. Since they feel very strongly about the issues at hand and are very aware of the problems and concerns they or other parents in a similar situation may face. If the roots of inclusive

education have to be strong the parent's advocacy groups must flourish. An aware spirited parents group could create a lot pressure among schools to deliver better services for students with disability. Literature review from around the world shows that most of the parents in spite of all their concerns support inclusion. However there is not much data available with regards to this issue in the UAE. Inclusion without doubt is the norm of the day. There could be a more effective way to hasten the process of inclusion if the views of the parents who are important stake holders in the whole process are taken into account. According to Gaad:

> A high official from the Ministry of Education revealed that the ministry supports and reinforces parents who stand for the inclusion of their children……. the parents position increases the success of the included kids. This resulted in the school year 2007 witnessing several cases of inclusion in government schools (Gaad 2011, P.77).

Hence it is crucial that the parents are aware of the inclusion. Gaad also states that in a rich country like UAE, instead of teaching their kids parents prefer to leave them in the care of a helper away from school. Gaad points out that "chances of inclusion and other forms of educational service for such children are affected by the construction of the society as well as traditional values and beliefs" (Gaad 2004, P.315).

In 2014, KHDA stated that the inspection reports of private schools would also include a judgment of the SEN effectiveness of the school.

Another milestone was achieved when the Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE HH Sheikh Mohammad issued law No-2 of 2014, that envisages cooperation among all authorities concerned in Dubai to provide health care services, therapeutic services, habilitation and rehabilitation for people with disabilities, in addition to providing educational opportunities that are equal to those provided to their peers at all stages (Khaleej Times, March, 2014)

The law aims to implement the vision of Sheikh Mohammed to make Dubai a role model in promoting the participation of people with disabilities by providing them with all necessary services to strengthen their position as an effective element in society.

“My Community….. a City for Everyone" aims at turning Dubai into a friendly city for people of determinations by the year 2020 through projects and initiatives that promote the participation and inclusion of people of determination in the community, eliminating all obstacles that may stand in the way of them positively engaging in their environments, as capable individuals of society.

Chapter 3

Methodology

"The methods section is the most important part of a research paper because it provides the information the reader needs to judge the study's validity" (Kallet 2004. P.1232).

This chapter gives insight into the whole process of research study with regards to how data was collected and analyzed. Selecting appropriate data collection techniques are extremely crucial. Researching a topic is complex process. It requires attention for details and organizational skills to put all the data collected during the process of many months into a format that make sense and justifies the study. It is very easy to get overwhelmed by bombarding of information and in the process of streamlining many crucial factors could be neglected. This leads to the researcher presenting a very diluted version of the findings. Its is extremely important to have clear focus while documenting all the information that has been collected so that they are presented efficiently in a crisp and clear manner to make the study most impactful. Whatever the proposed methodology is chosen it should bring out the validity and justification of the research. The selection of the research approach, data collection techniques and tools as well as information about the participant has been discussed in detail. The ethical considerations taken as well as the validity of the research are mentioned in order to support the research findings.

3.1. Approach and Strategy

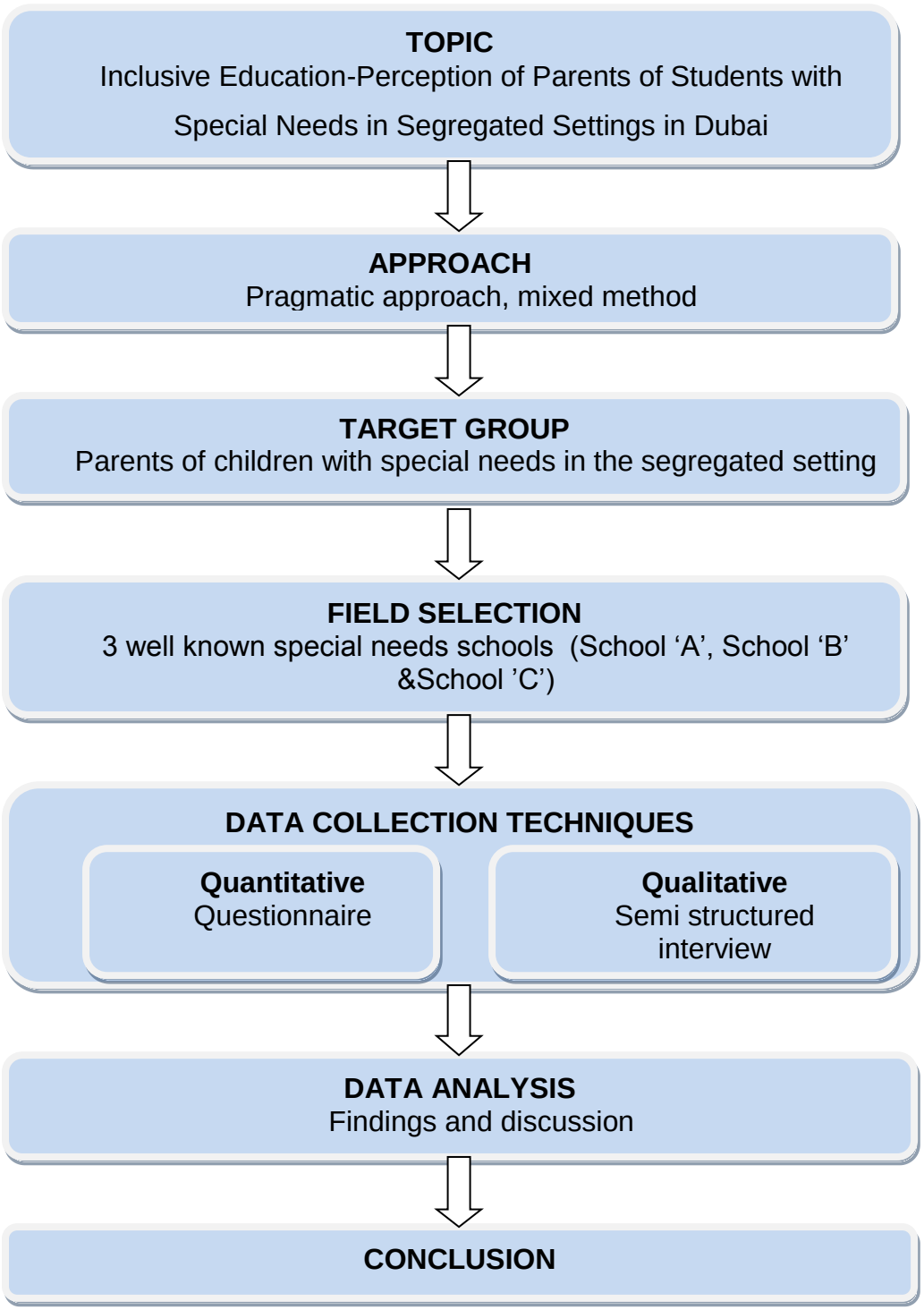
Inclusion is the complex topic with varied views and perceptions, be it of teachers, parents or other stake holders such as governments. Interpreting these are essential to bring about a positive change and to guide the developmental process. The research has been conceptualized

from ‘on field’ issues faced by the researcher within the segregated setting. The approach is pragmatically focused. In his book Cresswell points out that “Pragmatism as a world view arises out of actions, situations and consequences” (Cresswell, 2009 P.11). Quantitative methods give researcher that data to support or refute a certain hypothesis. Qualitative research on the other hand gives insight into the grey areas which don’t have a yes or no answer. Also in order to understand the psyche or the reasons for a particular selection further pro is needed. Mixed methods used both these techniques to substantiate their findings. a group of investigators called Pragmatists, represented inter alia by Newman, Benz, Sieber, Miller, and Fredericks, which advocate integrating methods within a single study. They claim that qualitative and quantitative methods have strengths and weaknesses, which should be utilized by the researcher in order to better understand the researched phenomenon (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2005). The research is based on real life situation faced by parents hence it was important to use the mixed method to support and validate the study. Quantitative approach was used in the form of surveys and qualitative approach in the form of interviews. The triangulation method which is one of the trusted mixed method has been used in order to keep the findings of the study as valid and authentic as possible. In her book Bell highlights laws observation that “the key to triangulation is to see the same thing from different perceptive and thus to be able to confirm or challenge the finding of one method with those of the other” (Bell, 2005, P.116).

3.2. The Methodology Road Map

The figure given below provides the snap shot view of the methods used and the developmental process of the research study.

Figure-1



3.3. Field Selection

The initial idea of the research was to conduct the study in two emirates of the UAE (Dubai & Sharjah). However the researcher was unable to get permission from the two schools which unfortunately belongs to the same emirate (Sharjah) so the research study has been conducted in 3 special needs school in Dubai. All the schools selected are known for their pro-inclusive stands.

All schools were sent formal emails by the researcher seeking approval to conduct a survey for the parents of their students. The idea was to distribute questionnaires to the parents through the management. One school gave permission without any delay (the very next day). The other school asked for an abstract stating the purpose of the study. The third school had a formal application which needed to be filled in for the process to be initiated. A letter stating the reason for the study also had to be provided.

Out of the three schools, one is specifically for students with autism where as the other two schools took in students with various disabilities. Two out of the three schools had students till the age of eighteen where as the third school had students over the age of eighteen as well.

The researcher is professionally associated with one of the schools, but was not an active participant in it since the research was meant for parents of students with special needs.

All three schools are very well known for the provision of quality special need services as well as rights advocacy. The schools are known for their campaigns and awareness drive for both social and educational inclusion of children. All the schools are private schools.

3.4. Target Group

The target group were parents of special needs students in 3 special needs school of Dubai. As a part of the survey, questionnaires were sent to the schools and school management distributed them to different classes. Though the researcher requested the management to give priority to parents of younger children, no assurance was given. The selection of classes were based on the school in charge's choice. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed amongst the three schools. The biggest school were given 100 questionnaires to distribute and other two schools were given 50 each. Interview was conducted with 3 parents. They were all students with autism belonging to the same school that the researcher was professionally associated with.

3.5. Date Collection Technique

In order to optimize validity and to better understand what influences the parents perspective a mixed method of data collection was used. The quantitative data was collected through a survey and qualitative date was obtained through interviews.

3.5.1. Survey

The survey was the chosen method for quantitative data collection. According to Cohen:

> Typically, surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining the relationship that exists between the specific events. (Cohen Manion, Morrison, 2011,p.256)

Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data. The research was about the perception of parents hence hard copies of questionnaires were distributed by the respective schools. It was sent across to the parents through the students along with a covering letter on the schools letter head. In the case of the school where the researcher works the teachers

were requested send a reminder in the student communication book after two days in order to maximize the number of responses. The questions in the questionnaires were derived based on different issues the researcher came across with regards to inclusion in the realm of her profession. The questions were also influenced by queries and statements made by the parents of students with special needs with whom the researcher was in contact with on a professional basis. Some of the questions also stemmed from the frustration of the parents which were confided to the researcher. The format was based on the chapter on designing and administering questionnaires in the book doing your research project by Judith Bell. The format also was based on the same as well as the many questionnaires the researcher has seen during the course of her studies and profession. All the three schools had students from Arabic speaking back ground. Since there was no Arabic version of the questionnaire extra care was taken to frame all the questions in very simple English and easy to understand sentences. A five point likert scale was used in the questionnaire for the parents to rate their view point. They arranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The same point was asked in different ways in order to make the questionnaire more reliable. Care was taken to avoid offensive, negative or judgmental statements. The questionnaire had 22 questions. Demographic data about their child was collected at the end of the questionnaire.

3.5.2. Interview

In his book Research Methods and Education, Cohen points out that:

> The interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi sensory channels to be used: verbal, nonverbal, spoken and heard. The order of the interview may be controlled while still giving space for spontaneity, and the interviewer can press not only for complete answers but for responses about complex and deep issues. (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2011, P.409)

Questionnaires give us a clear idea as to what the parents think and the percentage of parents who think the same way about different aspects of the research topic. It however does not give much insight into why they think what they think. Why they chose to agree with one question and disagree with other. An interview is the best way to understand the thought process that goes on in the minds of the people with regards to a certain topic or issue. Interviews are a very rich source of crucial information that cannot be collected as easily with any other method. They give reasoning to the quantitative data collected. A semi structured interview format was used and the parent responses were recorded with their permission using a voice recorder. This was done in order to avoid the hassles of constantly writing, asking again because a point was missed, etc. It also allowed for a smooth conversation with no distractions to reduce the effectiveness and flow of the interview.

3.6. Validity and Reliability

According to Bell “efforts should be made to cross check findings and in a more extensive study, to use more than one method of data collection. This multi method is known as triangulation” (Bell 2005, P.11). Researchers have always stressed on how triangulation is an important method to increase the validity and reliability of a research study. The method of triangulation have also been used in this particular research in order to get as close to the true picture as possible.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

“Ethical principles are not absolute, generally speaking…… but must be interpreted in the light of the research context and of other values at stake” (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2011, P.84). In order for any research study to come across as an honest and sincere piece of work some ethical consideration have to be followed. They are an integral part of any

research. This research study has been conducted keeping these consideration in mind.

All the participants were assured anonymity. They were also informed about the objective of the study before beginning the questionnaire and participation was on voluntary basis. The school management were provided with the University letter to assure them of the authenticity of the study. An abstract about the purpose of the study and its requirements was also provided to the schools. Parents were allowed to contact the researcher through mail in case any clarifications were needed. Before the interview parents were asked for permission to have their voice recorded. The reasons for doing so was also clearly mentioned. The parents were also assured access to the voice clip in case they wanted to listen to it.

Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

In this chapter the data collected from the survey and semi structured interview are presented, analyzed and interpreted. The findings of the survey are compared between all three schools and also compared based on the demographic data. All findings of the survey have been plotted as bar graph figures 2 to 5. The demographic data represented by pie chart. The survey of all 3 schools are plotted individually as well as school aggregate. Similar procedure was carried for the demographic data as well.

4.1. Survey Data

Q. 1. Do you think your child will benefit by being included in the mainstream school?

School ‘A’

- 58% of the parents Agree (3 strongly agree & 4 agree)
- 17% Neutral (2)
- 25% Disagree (2 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 35.7% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 3 agree)
- 7.2% Neutral (1)
- 57.1% Disagree (5 disagree & 3 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 38.24% of the parents Agree (9 strongly agree & 4 agree) `
- 41.18% Neutral (14)
- 20.58% Disagree (4 disagree & 3 strongly disagree)

School Aggregate

- 41.75% of the parents Agree (14 strongly agree & 11 agree)

- 28.39% Neutral (17)
- 30.06% Disagree (11 disagree & 7 strongly disagree)

Q. 2. Do you think your child's needs will be looked after better in a special needs school?

School 'A'

- 67% of the parents Agree (4 strongly agree & 4 agree)
- 25% Neutral (3)
- 8% Disagree (1 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School 'B'

- 85.7% of the parents Agree (11 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 7.15% Neutral (1)
- 7.15% Disagree (0 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School 'C'

- 88.24% of the parents Agree (18 strongly agree & 12 agree)
  `
- 11.76% Neutral (4)
- 0% Disagree (1 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School
Aggregate

- 83.50% of the parents Agree (33 strongly agree & 17 agree)
- 13.36% Neutral (8)
- 1.67% Disagree (1 disagree & 0 strongly disagree) .
- 1.67 Not Marked (1)

Q. 3. Have you tried to get your child admitted in a mainstream school?

School 'A'

- 33 % of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 3 agree)
- 0% Neutral (0)
- 67% Disagree (7 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 35.7% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 3 agree)
- 35.7% Neutral (5)
- 28.6% Disagree (1 disagree & 3 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 41.18% of the parents Agree (7 strongly agree & 7 agree)
- 14.71% Neutral (5)
- 41.18% Disagree (8 disagree & 6 strongly disagree)
- 2.93% Not Marked (1)

School

Aggregate

- 38.43% of the parents Agree (10 strongly agree & 13 agree)
- 16.67% Neutral (10)
- 43.43% Disagree (16 disagree & 10 strongly disagree)
- 1.67% Not Marked (1)

Q. 4. Do you think your child can adapt to the mainstream school?

School ‘A’

- 33% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 2 agree)
- 17% Neutral (2)
- 33% Disagree (1 disagree & 3 strongly disagree)
- 17% Not Marked (2)

School ‘B’

- 28.5% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 4 agree)
- 21.5% Neutral (3)
- 50% Disagree (4 disagree & 3 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 35.29% of the parents Agree (4 strongly agree & 8 agree)
- 23.53% Neutral (8)
- 38.23% Disagree (9 disagree & 4 strongly disagree)

- 2.95% Not Marked (1)

School

Aggregate

- 33.20% of the parents Agree (6 strongly agree & 14 agree)
- 21.70% Neutral (13)
- 40.08% Disagree (14 disagree & 10 strongly disagree)
- 5.02% Not Marked (3)

Q. 5. Do you think other students will have a problem with your child being in their class?

School ‘A’

- 42% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 4 agree)
- 33% Neutral (4)
- 25% Disagree (2 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 14.2% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 42.9% Neutral (6)
- 42.9% Disagree (5 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 38.23% of the parents Agree (3 strongly agree & 10 agree)
- 32.35% Neutral (11)
- 29.42% Disagree (6 disagree & 4 strongly disagree)

School

Aggregate

- 33.30% of the parents Agree (5 strongly agree & 15 agree)
- 35.07% Neutral (21)
- 31.63% Disagree (13 disagree & 6 strongly disagree)

Q. 6. Do you think other parents will have a problem with your child being in their class?

School ‘A’

- 17% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 0 agree)
- 50% Neutral (6)
- 33% Disagree (4 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 21.4% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 2 agree)
- 42.8% Neutral (6)
- 35.8% Disagree (3 disagree & 2 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 41.17% of the parents Agree (3 strongly agree & 11 agree)
- 32.35% Neutral (11)
- 26.48% Disagree (6 disagree & 3 strongly disagree)

School
Aggregate

- 31.60% of the parents Agree (6 strongly agree & 13 agree)
- 38.30% Neutral (23)
- 30.10% Disagree (13 disagree & 5 strongly disagree)

Q. 7. Do you think all students irrespective of disabilities should start with school in the mainstream school?

School ‘A’

- 33.33% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 2 agree)
- 33.33% Neutral (4)
- 33.33% Disagree (4 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 21.4% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 28.6% Neutral (4)
- 50% Disagree (7 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 44.12% of the parents Agree (5 strongly agree & 10 agree)
- 26.46% Neutral (9)
- 23.52% Disagree (6 disagree & 2 strongly disagree)
- 5.90% Not Marked (2)

School

Aggregate

- 36.64% of the parents Agree (9 strongly agree & 13 agree)
- 28.39% Neutral (17)
- 31.63% Disagree (17 disagree & 2 strongly disagree)
- 3.34% Not Marked (2)

Q. 8. Do you think only students who can do some academics should be in the mainstream schools?

School ‘A’

- 58% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 6 agree)
- 8% Neutral (1)
- 25% Disagree (2 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)
- 8% Not Marked (1)

School ‘B’

- 50% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 6 agree)
- 14.2% Neutral (2)
- 35.8% Disagree (4 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 52.94% of the parents Agree (5 strongly agree & 13 agree)
- 11.76% Neutral (4)

- 35.30 Disagree (8 disagree & 4 strongly disagree)

School
Aggregate

- 53.40% of the parents Agree (7 strongly agree & 25 agree)
- 11.60% Neutral (7)
- 33.40% Disagree (14 disagree & 6 strongly disagree)
- 1.60% Not Marked (1)

Q. 9. Would you admit your child in a mainstream school if given a choice?

School ‘A’

- 50% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 4 agree)
- 25% Neutral (3)
- 8% Disagree (0 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)
- 17% Not Marked (2)

School ‘B’

- 42.9% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 4 agree)
- 7.1% Neutral (1)
- 50% Disagree (6 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 64.68% of the parents Agree (13 strongly agree & 9 agree)
- 17.66% Neutral (6)
- 17.66% Disagree (4 disagree & 2 strongly disagree)

School
Aggregate

- 56.66% of the parents Agree (17 strongly agree & 17 agree)
- 16.66% Neutral (10)
- 23.38% Disagree (10 disagree & 4 strongly disagree)
- 3.30% Not Marked (2)

Q. 10. Do you think students with severe disability should be in the mainstream school?

School ‘A’

- 17% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 33% Neutral (4)
- 50% Disagree (4 disagree & 2 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 7.1% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 0 agree)
- 14.2% Neutral (2)
- 78.7% Disagree (6 disagree & 5 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 14.72% of the parents Agree (4 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 23.53% Neutral (8)
- 61.75% Disagree (9 disagree & 12 strongly disagree)

School
Aggregate

- 13.30% of the parents Agree (6 strongly agree & 2 agree)
- 23.30% Neutral (14)
- 63.40% Disagree (19 disagree & 19 strongly disagree)

Q. 11. Do you think it is ok to send children to mainstream school even if they don’t benefit from it?

School ‘A’

- 8% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 25% Neutral (3)
- 67% Disagree (6 disagree & 2 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 14.2% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 7.1% Neutral (1)

- 78.7% Disagree (4 disagree & 7 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 8.83% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 3 agree)
- 8.83% Neutral (3)
- 82.34% Disagree (13 disagree & 15 strongly disagree)

School Aggregate

- 10.00% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 5 agree)
- 11.60% Neutral (7)
- 78.40% Disagree (23 disagree & 24 strongly disagree)

Q. 12. Would you send your child to a mainstream school just to avoid the social stigma?

School ‘A’

- 17% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 2 agree)
- 8% Neutral (1)
- 75% Disagree (4 disagree & 5 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 7.1% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 7.1% Neutral (1)
- 85.8% Disagree (6 disagree & 6 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 2.94% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 11.78% Neutral (4)
- 85.28% Disagree (11 disagree & 18 strongly disagree)

School Aggregate

- 6.50% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 4 agree)
- 10.00% Neutral (6)
- 83.50% Disagree (21 disagree & 29 strongly disagree)

Q. 13. Would you send your child to a mainstream school where he is in a class with other special needs students the whole day?

School ‘A’

- 50% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 6 agree)
- 17% Neutral (2)
- 33% Disagree (3 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 50% of the parents Agree (3 strongly agree & 4 agree)
- 38.6% Neutral (4)
- 21.4% Disagree (3 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 52.94% of the parents Agree (3 strongly agree & 15 agree)
- 20.59% Neutral ?(7)
- 26.47% Disagree (4 disagree & 5 strongly disagree)

School
Aggregate

- 51.70 of the parents Agree (6 strongly agree & 25 agree)
- 21.60% Neutral (13)
- 26.70% Disagree (10 disagree & 6 strongly disagree)

Q. 14. Is it ok if your child is in the resource room the whole day and does not mingle with other students?

School ‘A’

- 8% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 17% Neutral (2)
- 67% Disagree (5 disagree & 3 strongly disagree)
- 8% Not Marked (1)

School ‘B’

- 14.2% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 2 agree)
- 7.1% Neutral (1)
- 78.7% Disagree (8 disagree & 3 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 2.94% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 8.83% Neutral (3)
- 88.23% Disagree (16 disagree & 14 strongly disagree)

School Aggregate

- 6.60% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 4 agree)
- 10.00 Neutral (6)
- 81.80% Disagree (29 disagree & 20 strongly disagree)
- 1.60% Not Marked (1)

Q. 15. Would you send your child to a mainstream school just for socialization?

School ‘A’

- 33.33% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 4 agree)
- 33.33% Neutral (4)
- 33.33% Disagree (3 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 14.2% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 2 agree)
- 14.2% Neutral (2)
- 71.6% Disagree (7 disagree & 3 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 35.29% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 10 agree)
- 14.72% Neutral (5)
- 49.99% Disagree (11 disagree & 6 strongly disagree)

School Aggregate

- 30.00% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 16 agree)
- 18.30% Neutral (11)
- 51.70% Disagree (21 disagree & 10 strongly disagree)

Q. 16. Do you think the teachers in mainstream schools are trained to deal with students with special needs?

School ‘A’

- 17% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 0 agree)
- 50% Neutral (6)
- 33% Disagree (2 disagree & 2 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 14.2% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 0 agree)
- 21.4% Neutral (3)
- 64.4% Disagree (4 disagree & 5 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 8.82% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 20.59% Neutral (7)
- 70.59% Disagree (9 disagree & 15 strongly disagree)

School
Aggregate

- 11.60% of the parents Agree (6 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 26.70% Neutral (16)
- 61.70% Disagree (15 disagree & 22 strongly disagree)

Q. 17. Do you think schools should hire more special educators?

School ‘A’

- 100% of the parents Agree (10 strongly agree & 2 agree)
- 0% Neutral (0)

- 0% Disagree (0 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 100% of the parents Agree (7 strongly agree & 7 agree)
- 0% Neutral (0)
- 0% Disagree (0 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 85.30% of the parents Agree (21 strongly agree & 8 agree)
- 11.76% Neutral (4)
- 2.94% Disagree (1 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School Aggregate

- 91.80% of the parents Agree (38 strongly agree & 17 agree)
- 6.60% Neutral (4)
- 1.60% Disagree (1 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

Q. 18. Do you think your child will have less behaviours if he is in the mainstream school?

School ‘A’

- 25% of the parents Agree (2 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 42% Neutral (5)
- 33% Disagree (3 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 21.4% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 2 agree)
- 35.7% Neutral (5)
- 42.9% Disagree (6 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 41.17% of the parents Agree (5 strongly agree & 9 agree)
- 29.40% Neutral (10)
- 26.50% Disagree (6 disagree & 3 strongly disagree)
- 2.93% Not Marked (1)

School

Aggregate

- 33.35% of the parents Agree (8 strongly agree & 12 agree)
- 33.35% Neutral (20)
- 31.70% Disagree (15 disagree & 4 strongly disagree)
- 1.60% Not Marked (1)

Q. 19. Do you think your child might pick up more behaviours from the mainstream classroom?

School ‘A’

- 58% of the parents Agree (4 strongly agree & 3 agree)
- 42% Neutral (5)
- 0% Disagree (0 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 14.2% of the parents Agree (0 strongly agree & 2 agree)
- 64.4% Neutral (9)
- 21.4% Disagree (3 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 35.29% of the parents Agree (5 strongly agree & 7 agree)
- 35.29% Neutral (12)
- 20.58% Disagree (6 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)
- 8.84% Not Marked (3)

School

Aggregate

- 35.00% of the parents Agree (9 strongly agree & 12 agree)
- 43.40% Neutral (26)
- 16.60% Disagree (9 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)
- 5.00% Not Marked (3)

Q. 20. Do you think it is important for your child to play, eat etc with other typical students?

School ‘A’

- 75% of the parents Agree (5 strongly agree & 4 agree)
- 17% Neutral (2)
- 8% Disagree (1 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 64.4% of the parents Agree (4 strongly agree & 5 agree)
- 21.4% Neutral (3)
- 14.2% Disagree (2 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 73.53% of the parents Agree (9 strongly agree & 16 agree)
- 14.70% Neutral (5)
- 8.83% Disagree (3 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)
- 2.94% Not Marked (1)

School
Aggregate

- 71.74% of the parents Agree (18 strongly agree & 25 agree)
- 16.60% Neutral (10)
- 10.00% Disagree (6 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)
- 1.66% Not Marked (1)

Q. 21. Do you think mainstream schools are better than special needs schools for your child?

School ‘A’

- 25% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 2 agree)
- 17% Neutral (2)
- 58% Disagree (6 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 14.2% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 1 agree)
- 7.1% Neutral (1)
- 78.7% Disagree (8 disagree & 3 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 17.66% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 5 agree)
- 26.42% Neutral (9)
- 55.92% Disagree (13 disagree & 6 strongly disagree)

School Aggregate

- 18.30% of the parents Agree (3 strongly agree & 8 agree)
- 20.00 Neutral (12)
- 61.70% Disagree (27 disagree & 10 strongly disagree)

Q. 22. Do you think schools should not have the right to deny admission to any child with disability?

School ‘A’

- 58% of the parents Agree (1 strongly agree & 6 agree)
- 25% Neutral (3)
- 17% Disagree (2 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘B’

- 42.8% of the parents Agree (4 strongly agree & 2 agree)
- 21.4% Neutral (3)
- 35.8% Disagree (5 disagree & 0 strongly disagree)

School ‘C’

- 64.70% of the parents Agree (12 strongly agree & 10 agree)
- 14.70% Neutral (5)
- 20.60% Disagree (6 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

School

Aggregate

- 58.40% of the parents Agree (17 strongly agree & 18 agree)
- 18.30% Neutral (11)
- 23.30% Disagree (13 disagree & 1 strongly disagree)

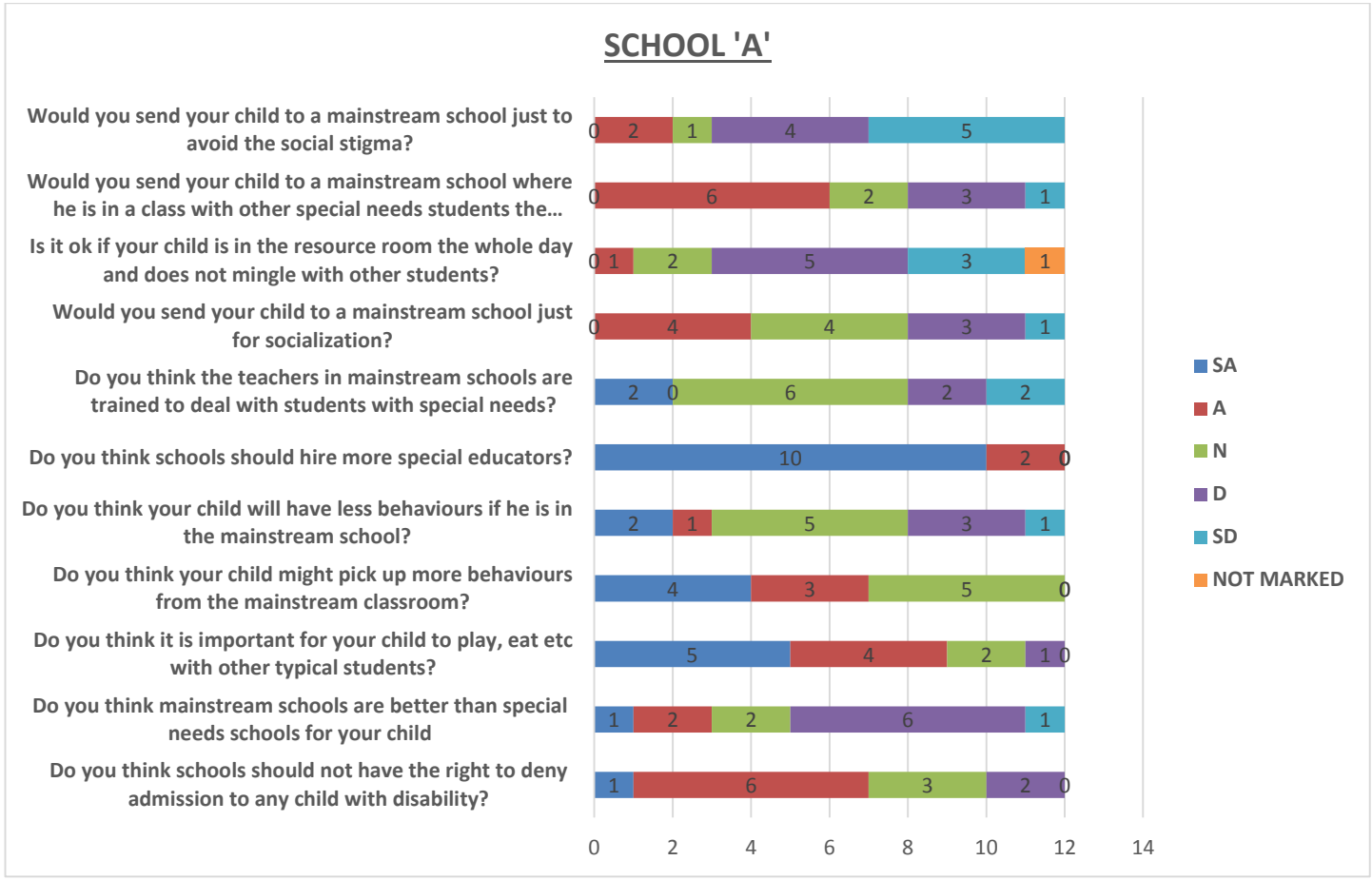


Figure-2A: Questionnaire of School A (Q1-11)

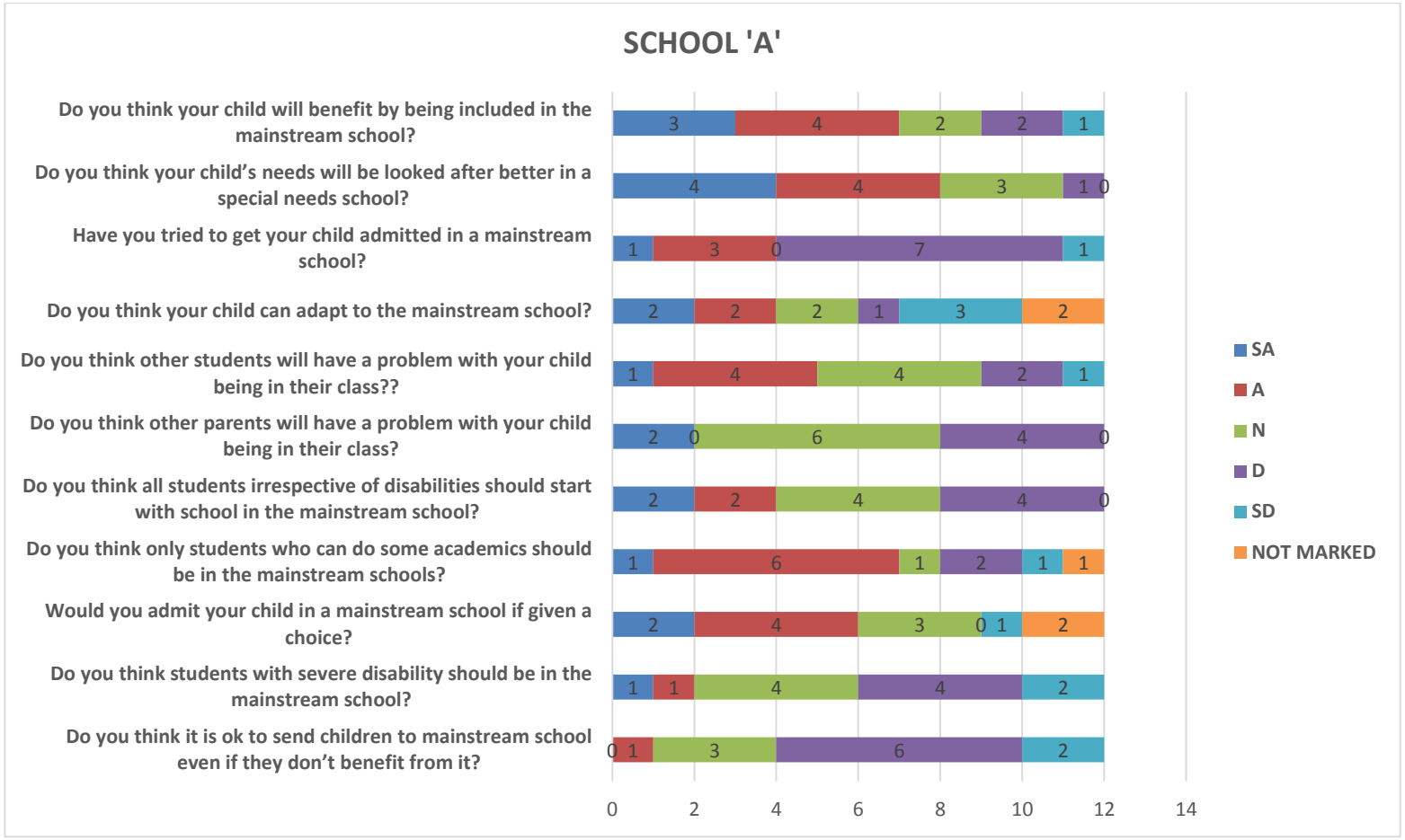


Figure-2B: Questionnaire of School A (Q12-22)

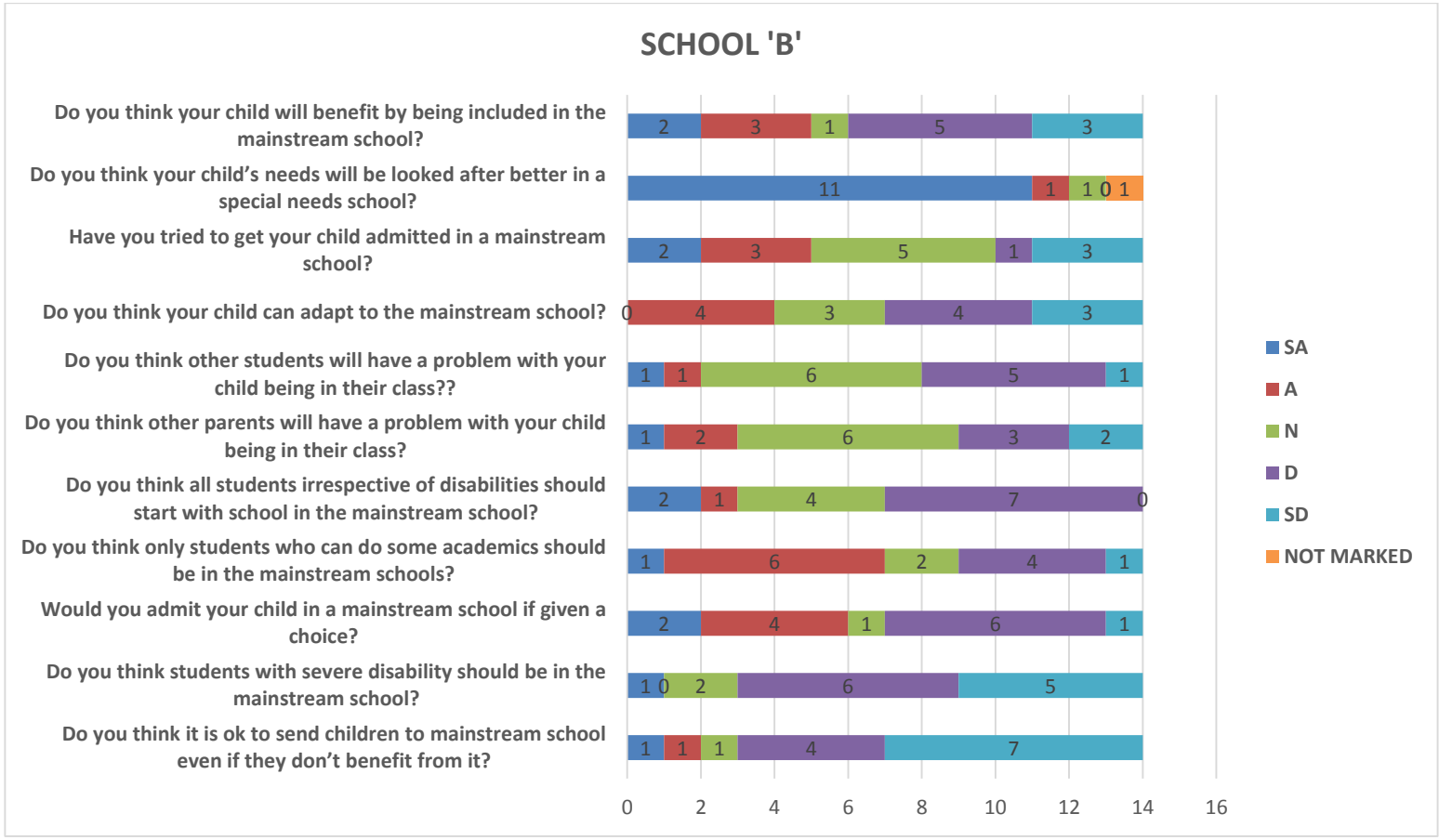


Figure-3A: Questionnaire of School B (Q1-11)

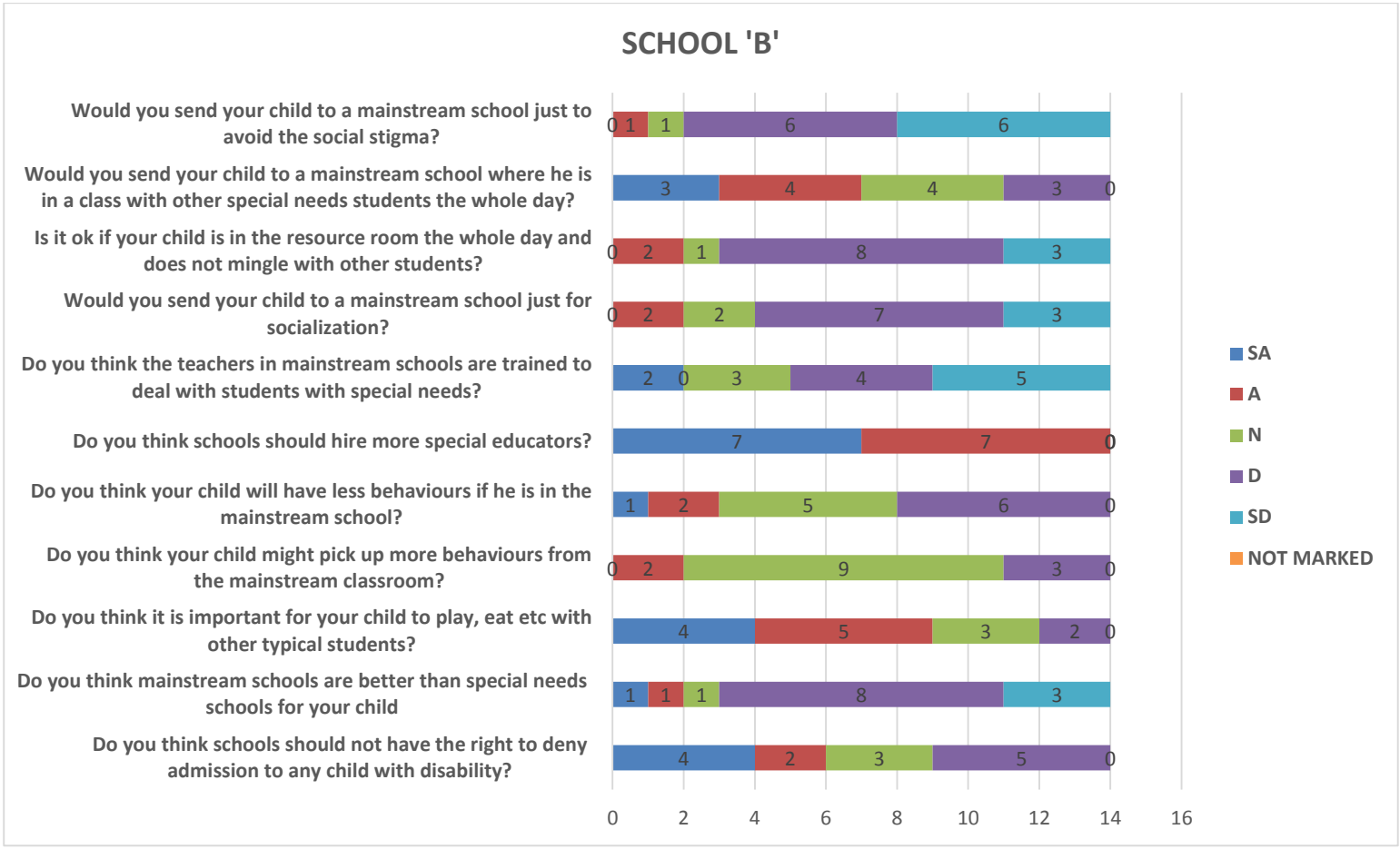


Figure-3B: Questionnaire of School B (Q12-22)

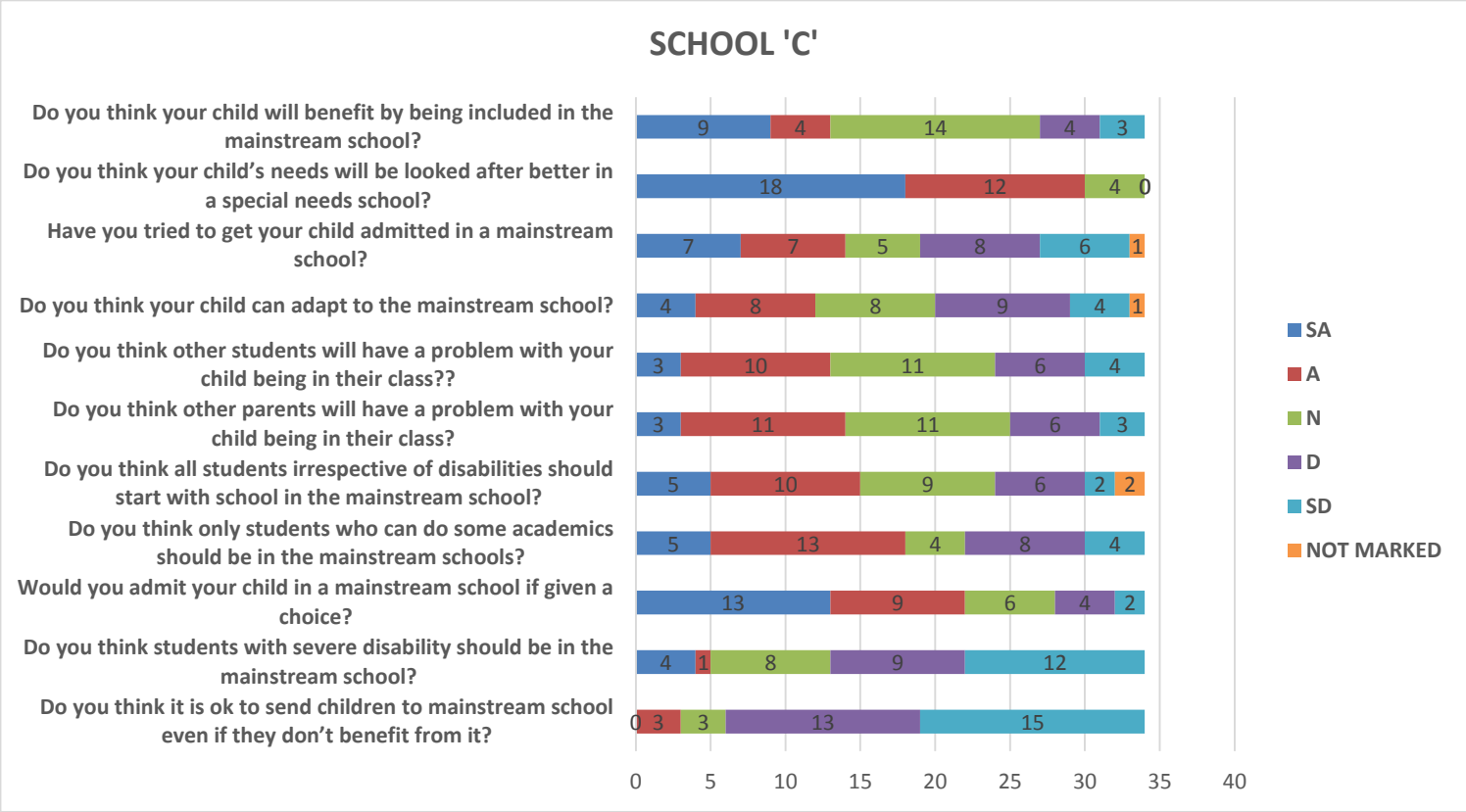


Figure-4A: Questionnaire of School C (Q1-11)

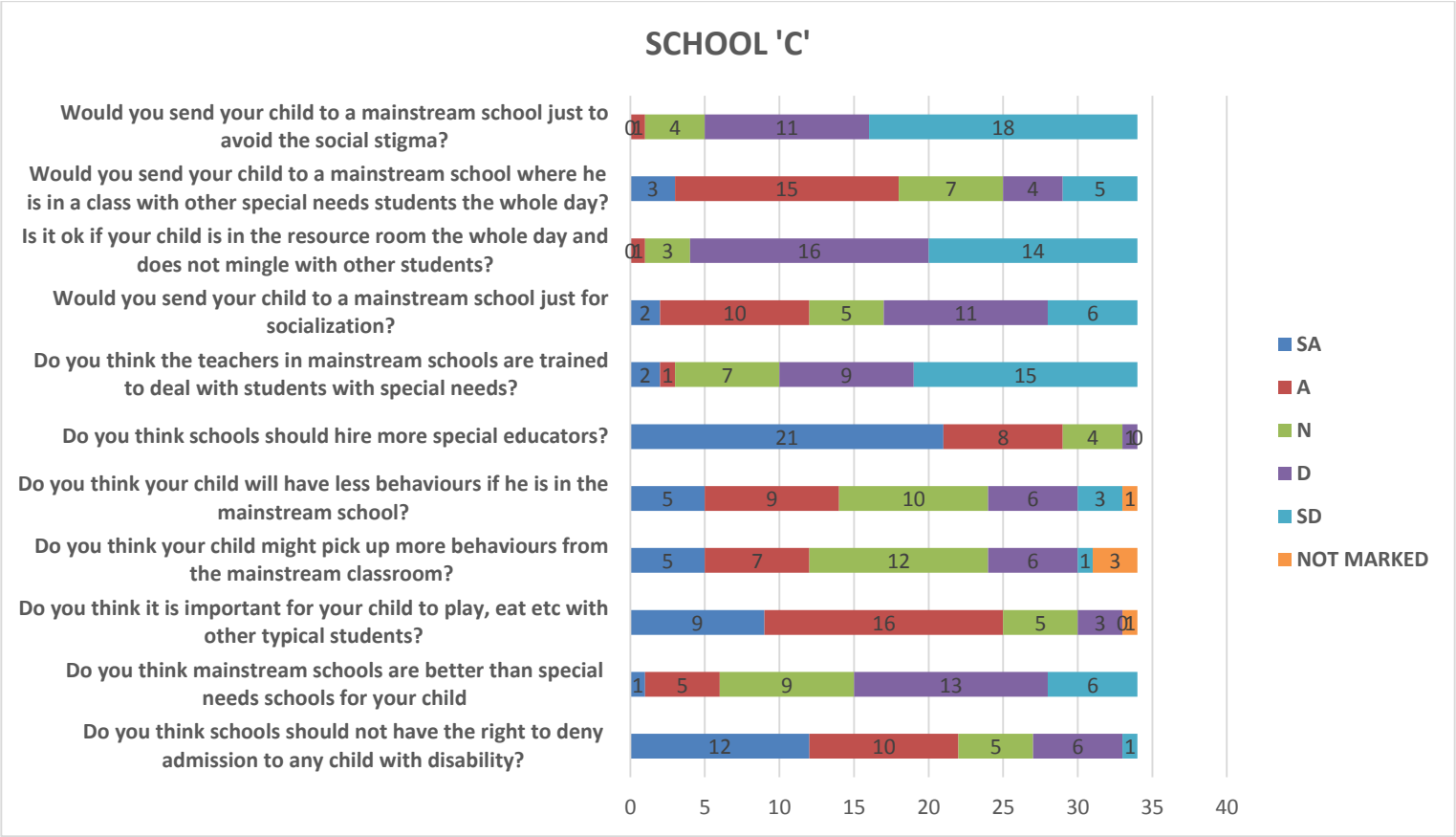


Figure-4B: Questionnaire of School C (Q12-22)

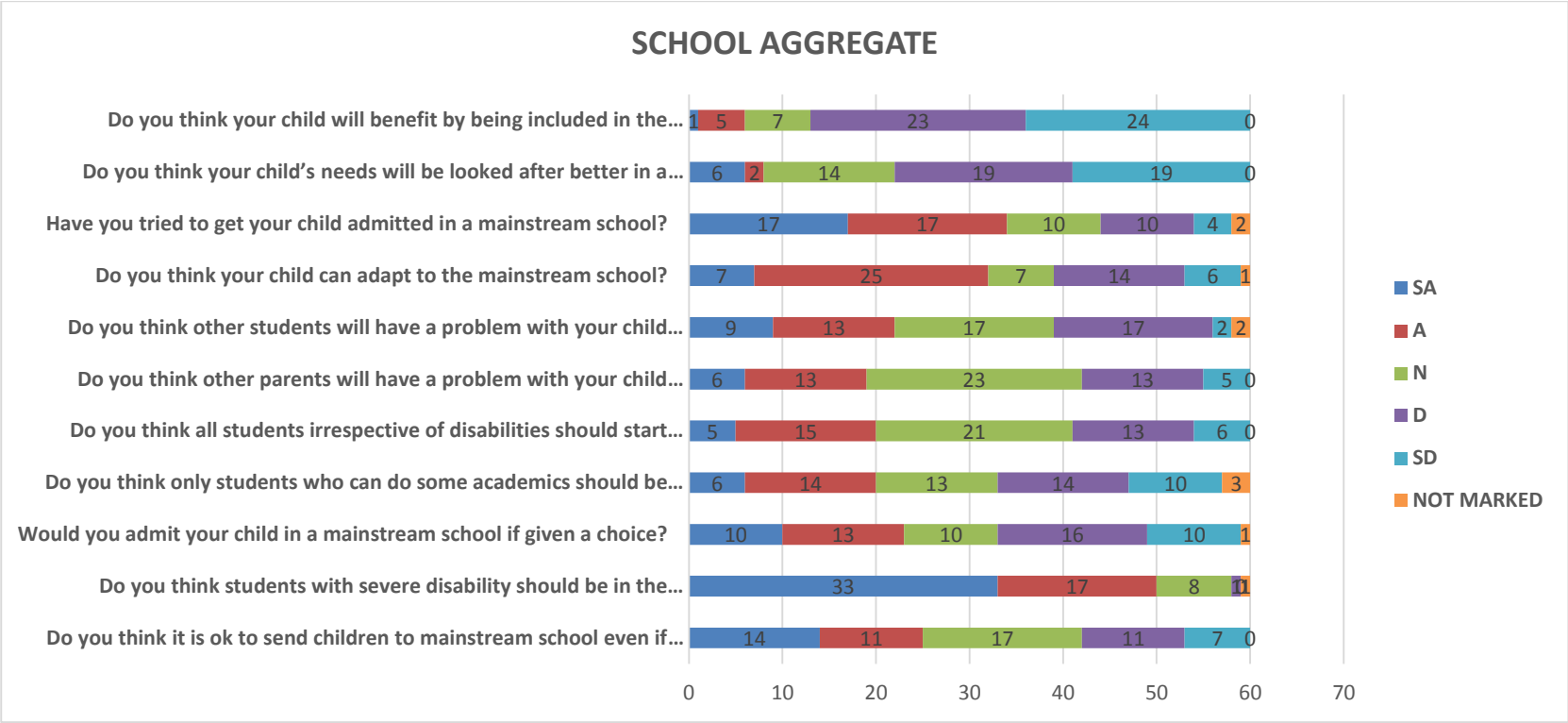


Figure-5A: Questionnaire of Schools A, B & C (Aggregate – Q1-11)

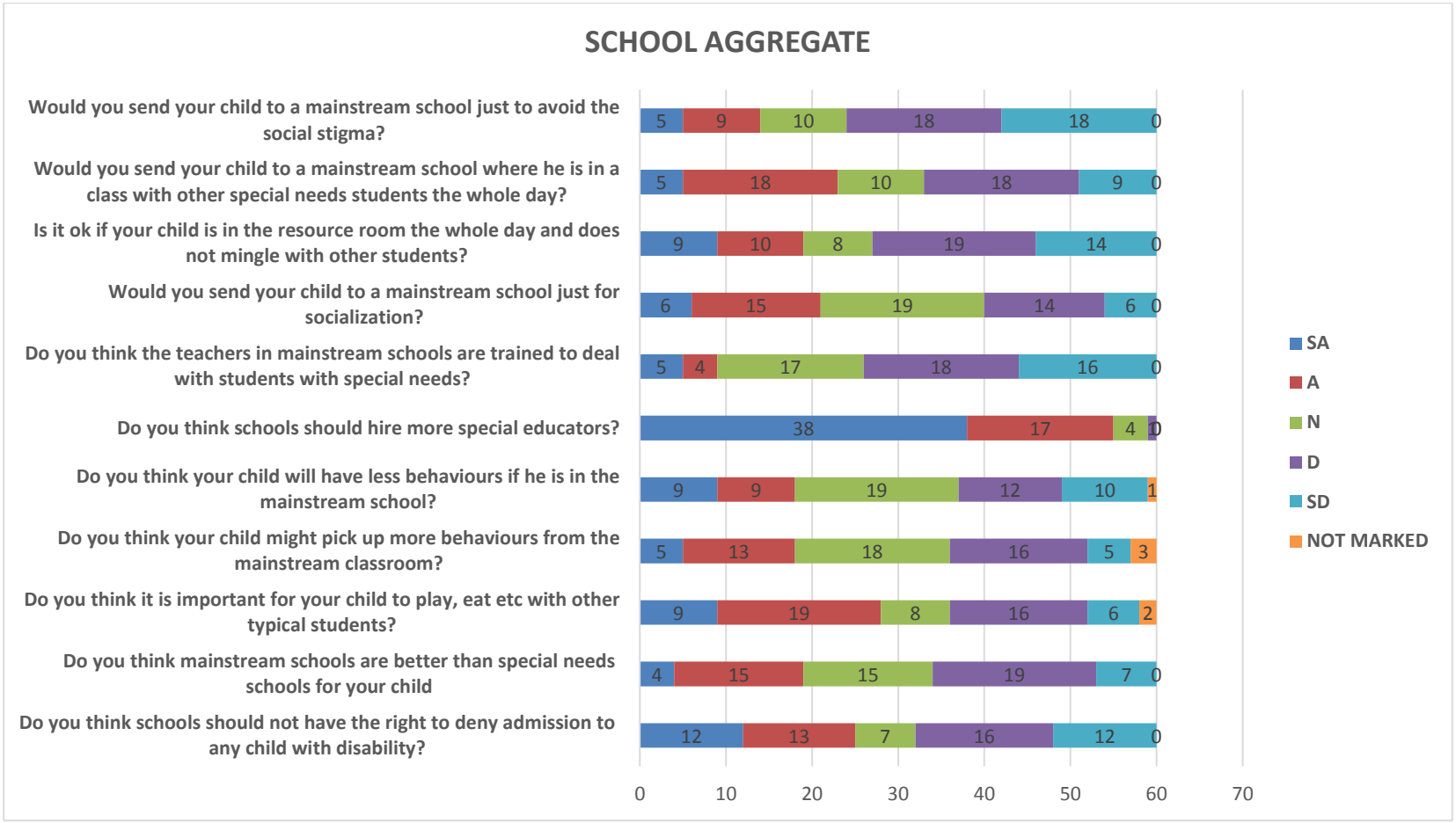


Figure-5B: Questionnaire of Schools A, B & C (Aggregate – Q12-22)

4.2. Demographic Characteristics

4.2.1. Age of the child

School ‘A’

- 16.66% - 5 or less (2)
- 25.00% - 6 to 7 (3)
- 33.34% - 8 to 10 (4)
- 25.00% - 11 to 15 (3)

School ‘B’

- 0% - 5 or less (0)
- 0% - 6 to 7 (0)
- 21.43% - 8 to 10 (3)
- 78.57% - 11 to 15 (11)

School ‘C’

- 0% - 5 or less (0)
- 5.88% - 6 to 7 (2)
- 26.47% - 8 to 10 (9)
- 67.65% - 11 to 15 (23)

School

Aggregate

- 3.33% - 5 or less (2)
- 8.33% - 6 to 7 (5)
- 26.67% - 8 to 10 (16)
- 61.67% - 11 to 15 (37)

AGE OF THE CHILD

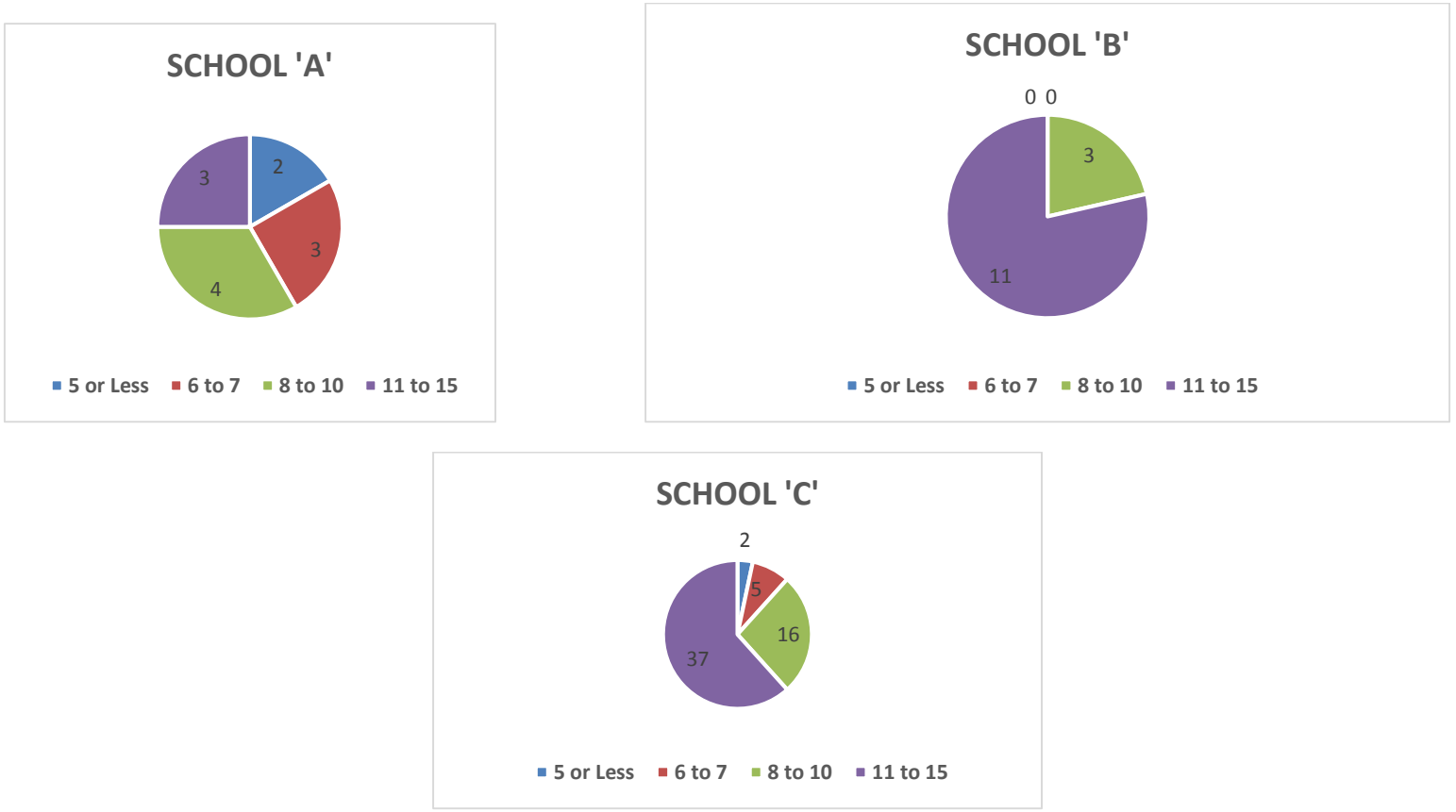


FIGURE-6A: Age range of the Child - Schools A, B & C

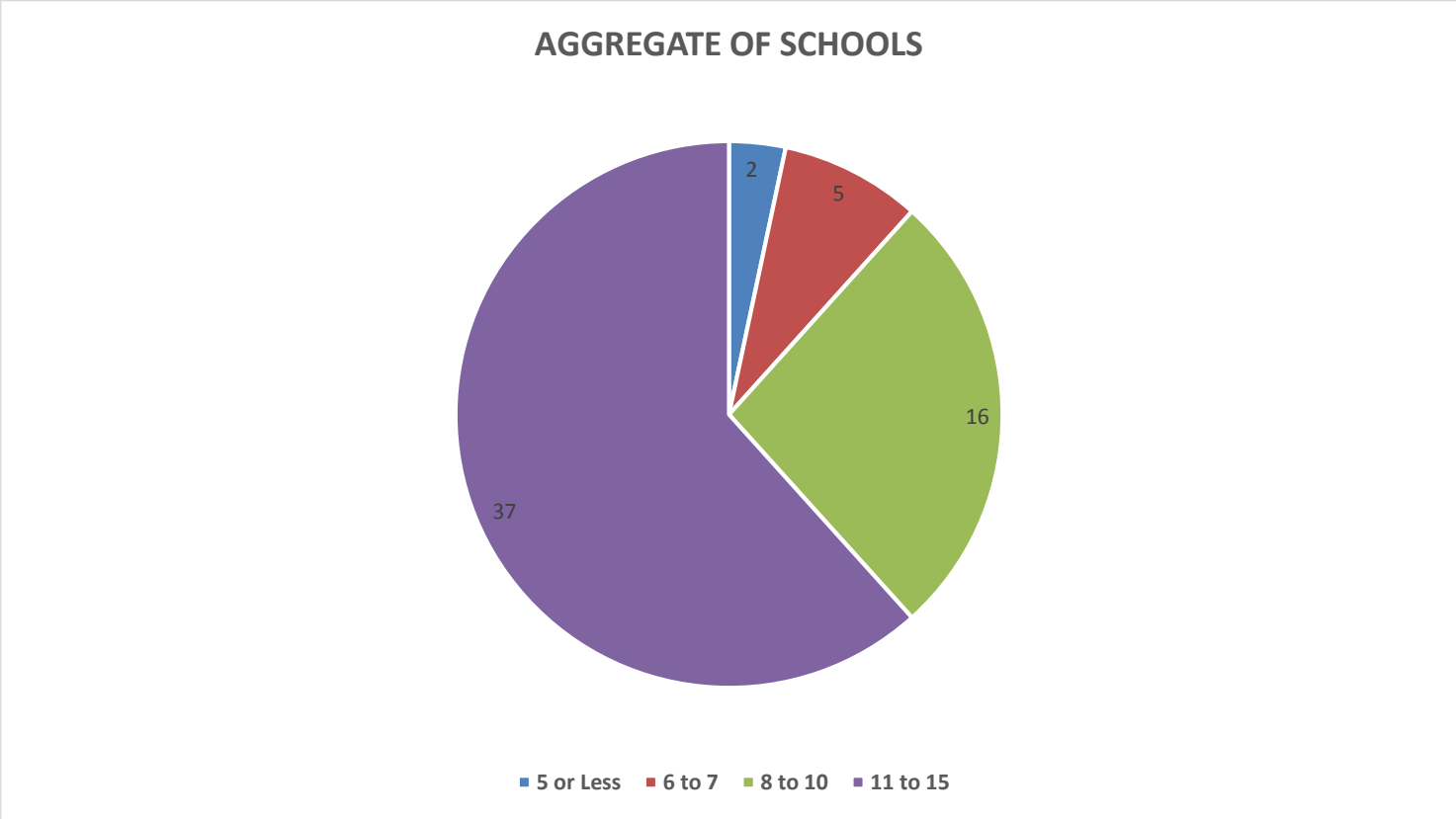


FIGURE-6B: Age range of the child- Aggregate of Schools

4.2.2. Gender of the child

School ‘A’

- 16.67% - Female (2)
- 83.33% - Male (10)

School ‘B’

- 28.57% - Female (4)
- 71.43% - Male (10)

School ‘C’

- 41.18% - Female (14)
- 58.82% - Male (20)

School

Aggregate

- 33.33% - Female (20)
- 66.67% - Male (40)

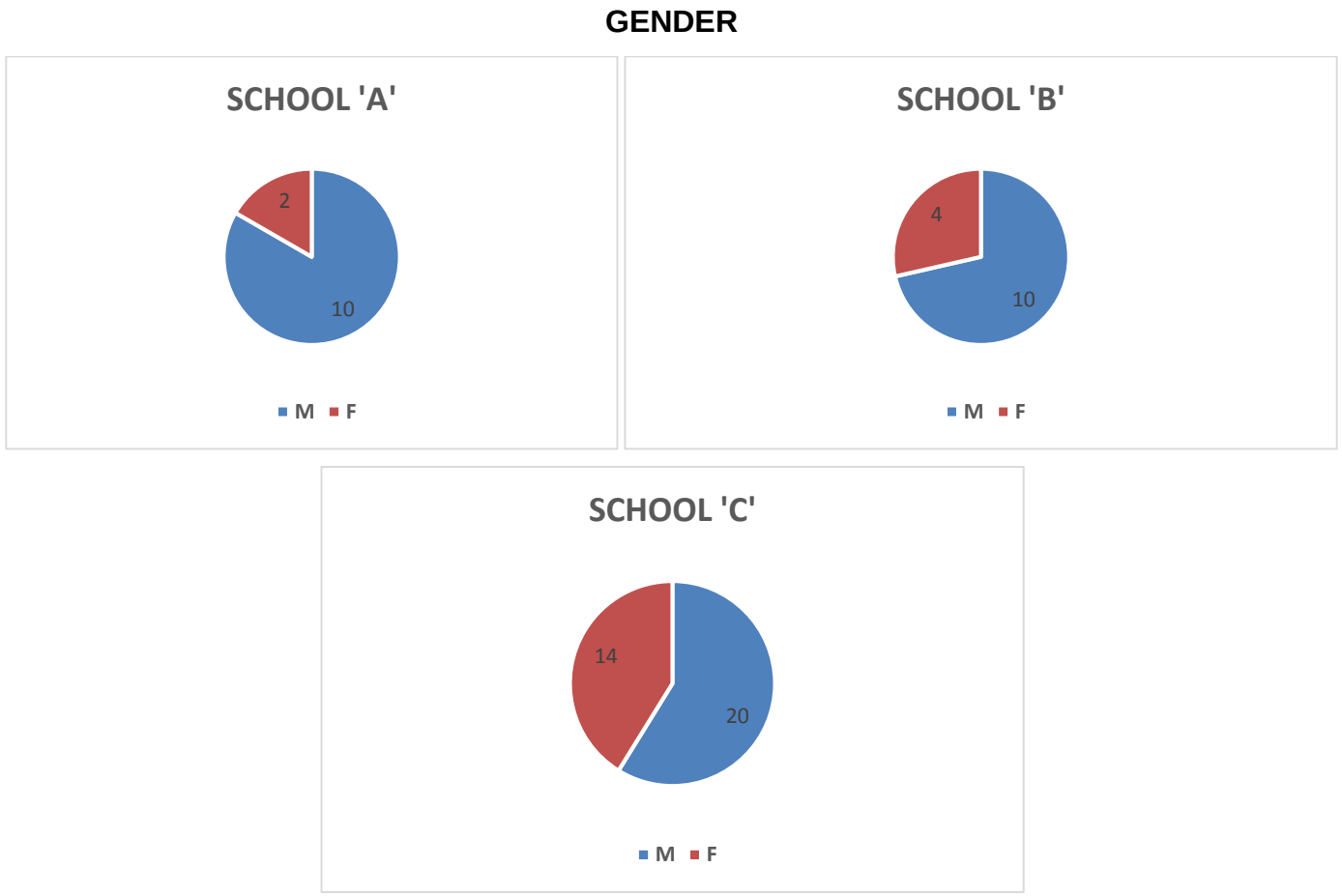


FIGURE-7A: Gender of the Child - Schools A, B & C

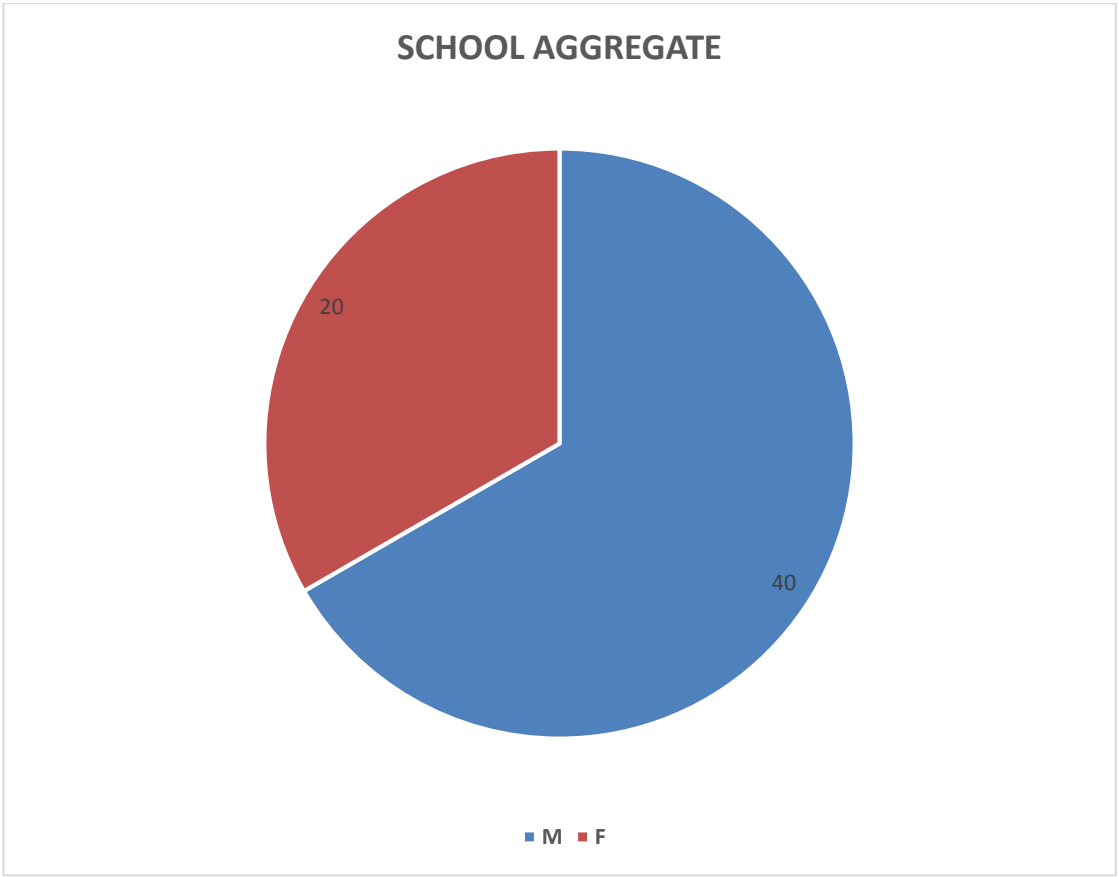


FIGURE-7B: Gender of the Child - Aggregate of Schools

4.2.3. Diagnosis of the child

School ‘A’

- 100% - Autism (12)

School ‘B’

- 7.14% - CP (1)
- 21.43% - Down Syndrome (3)
- 35.71% - Autism (5)
- 21.43% - Learning Disability (3)
- 14.29% - Others (2)

School ‘C’

- 29.40% - CP (10)
- 14.71% - Down Syndrome (5)
- 38.24% - Autism (13)
- 2.94% - Learning Disability (1)
- 14.71% - Others (5)

School
Aggregate

- 18.33% - CP (11)
- 13.33% - Down Syndrome (8)
- 50.00% - Autism (30)
- 6.67% - Learning Disability (4)
- 11.67% - Others (7)

DIAGNOSIS

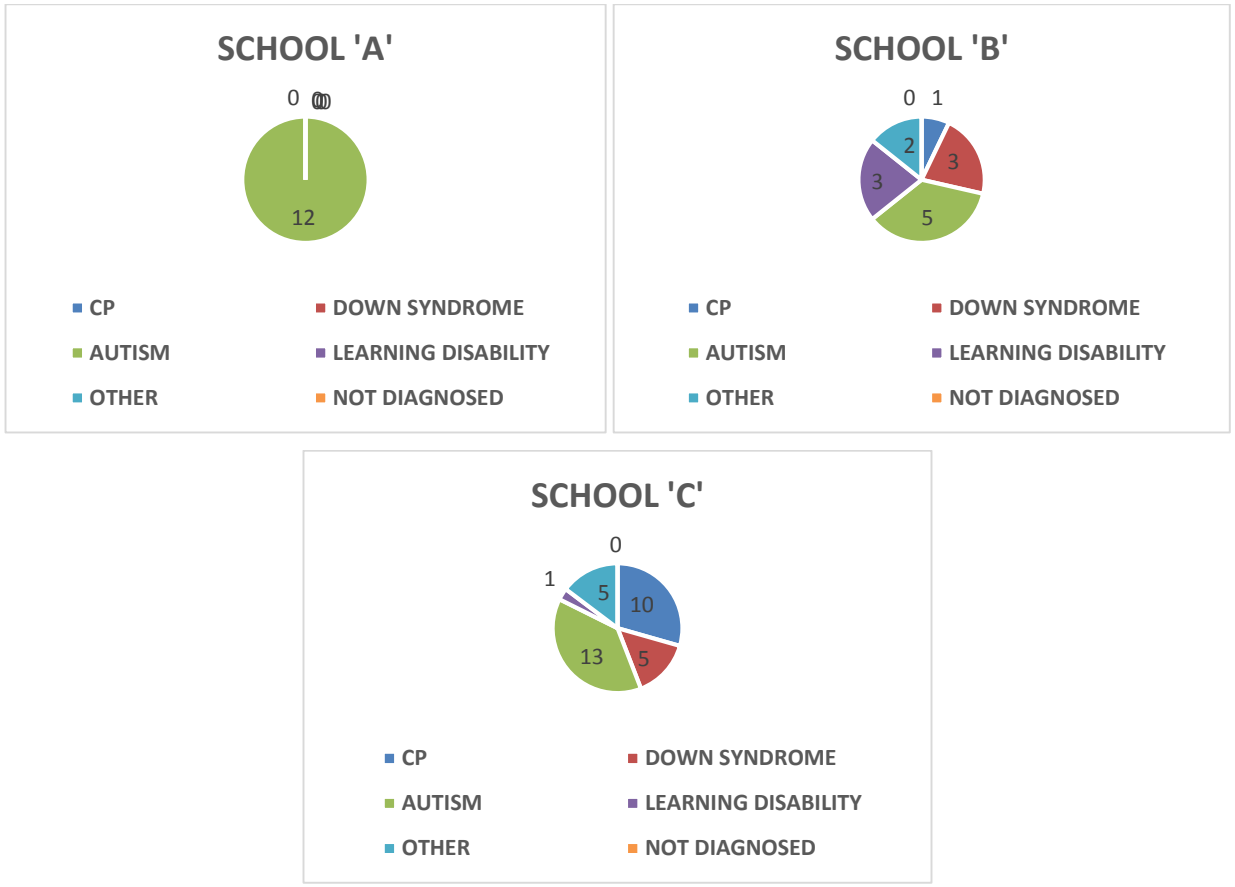


FIGURE-8A: Diagnosis of the Child - Schools A, B & C

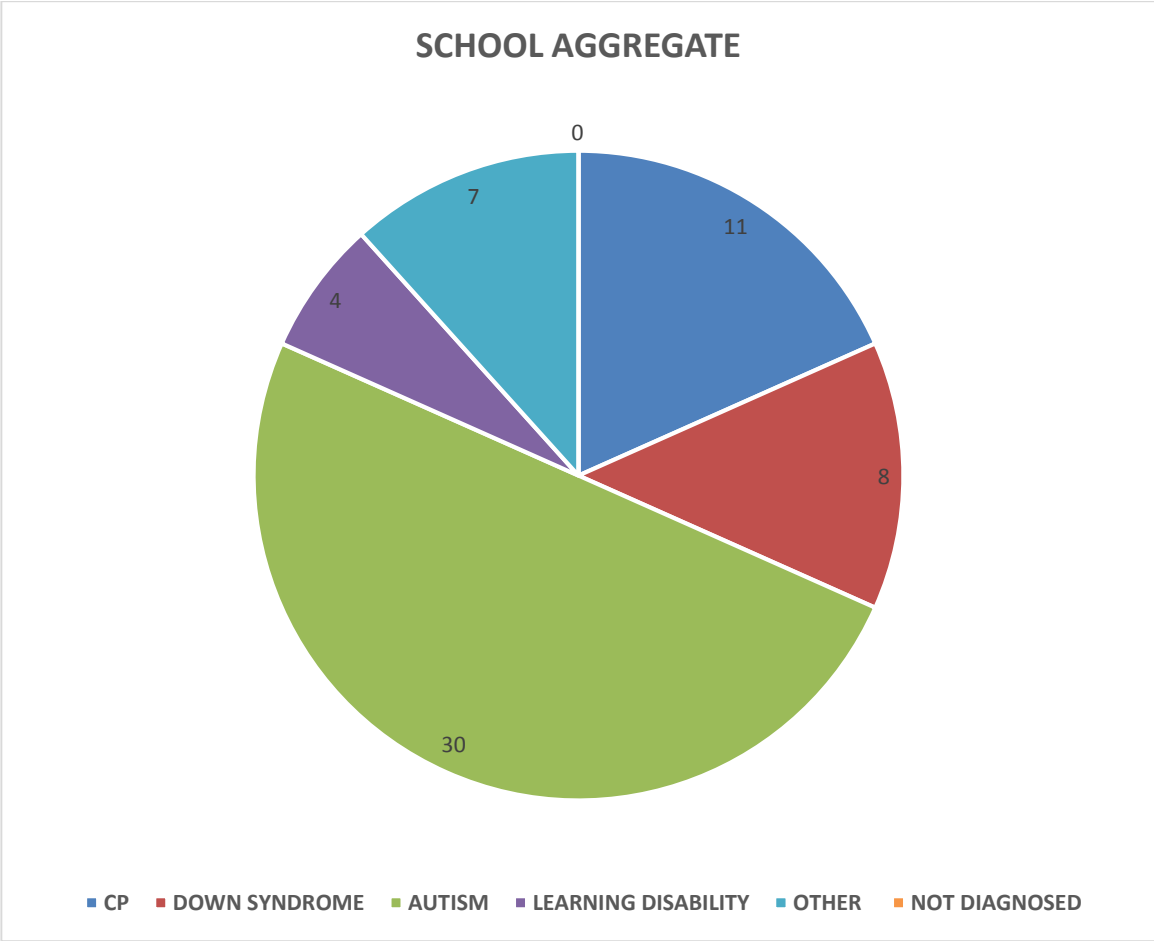


Figure-8B: Diagnosis of the Child - Aggregate of Schools

4.2.4. Level of Disability

School ‘A’

- 33.33% - Mild (4)
- 50.00% - Moderate (6)
- 16.67% - Severe (2)

School ‘B’

- 50.00% - Mild (7)
- 28.57% - Moderate (4)
- 21.43% - Severe (3)

School ‘C’

- 26.47% - Mild (9)
- 61.76% - Moderate (21)
- 11.77% - Severe (4)

School Aggregate

- 33.33% - Mild (20)
- 51.67% - Moderate (31)
- 15.00% - Severe (9)

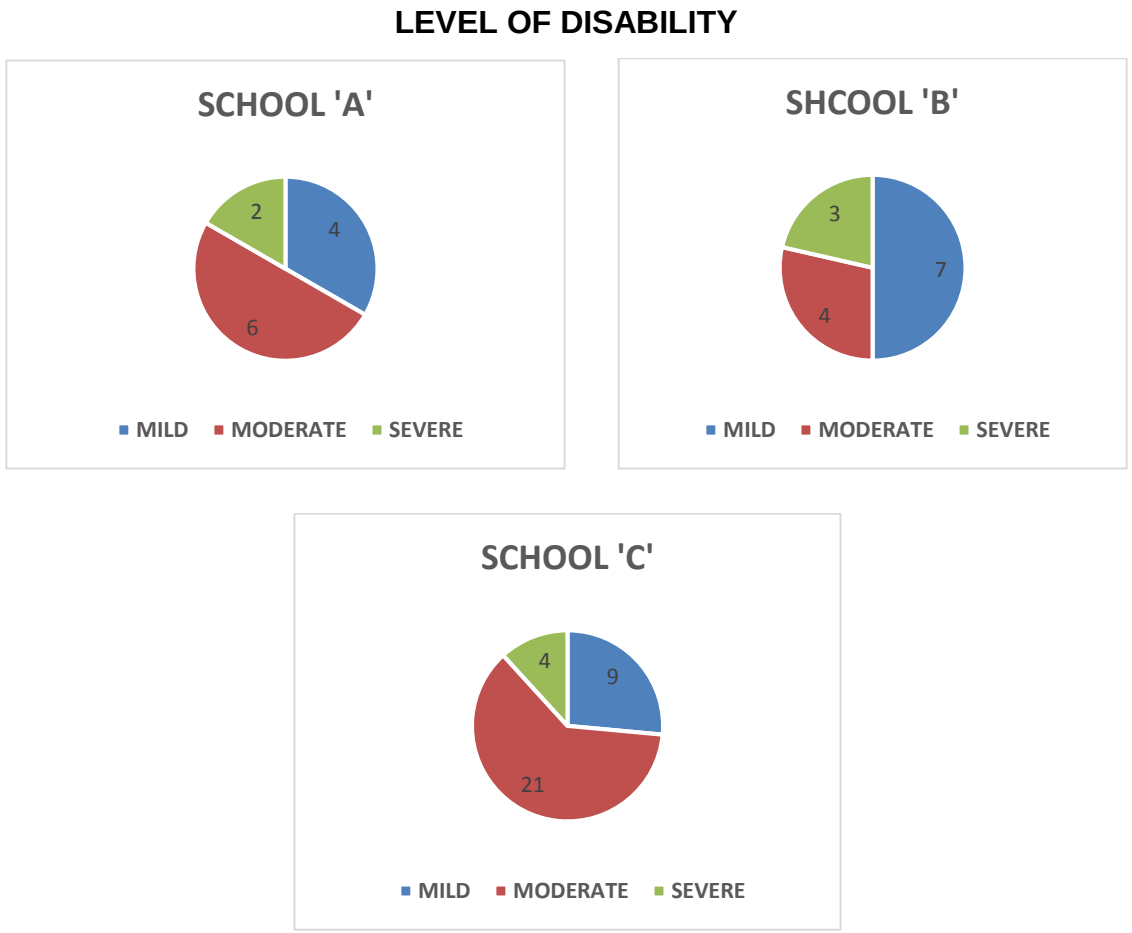


Figure-9A: Level of Disability of the Child - Schools A, B & C

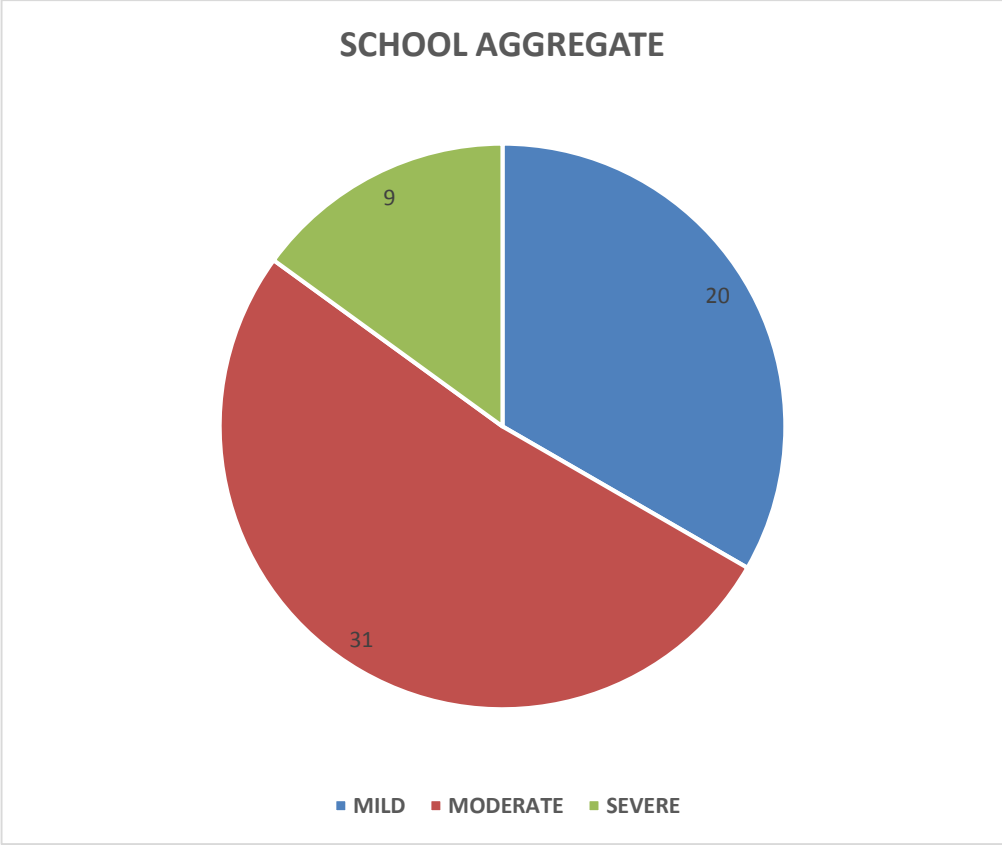


Figure-9B: Level of Disability of the Child - Aggregate of Schools

4.3. Discussion

Findings of Question 1: Overall (3 school aggregate) when the parents were asked if including their child in the mainstream would be beneficial 42% agreed and 30% disagreed, 28% were neutral. In school 'A' which has only students with Autism, 58% of the parents agreed that it would be helpful. It is interesting to note that the majority of parents i.e. 75% had children less than 10 years old. This result reiterate the previous findings and studies done by other researchers that age has an effect on the views of parents. Parents with younger kids have more positive view towards inclusion. However it contradicts the report of (Kasari, Freeman Baunminger and Alkin) which found that parents of children with downs supported full time inclusion whereas parents of students with autism supported part time inclusion.

Findings of Question 2: Though a large number of parents would agree that inclusion in mainstream would be beneficial a huge majority (83%) parents feel that their child's needs will be looked after better in a special need school. This could be attributed to the fact that school 'B' has 78% students above 10 and school 'C' has 94% students above 10. School 'A' which has 75% students below 10 had a more positive outlook. Only 67% parents agreed whereas 8% disagreed and 25% were neutral. This shows again that when kids are younger the parents are more positive and hopeful. In school 'C' 68% students are above 10 years. 83% of the parents agree that special schools will benefit their kids more than mainstream schools. This result again reveals that age has a strong connection with the views of the parents. The parents of younger children are still making up their mind about which kind of schooling is better for their child. This is shown in the percentage of parents who are neutral, 28% overall. These parents are not sure of how they feel about the particular question or are not yet aware of the process of inclusion and how it works. On the whole, there is only about less than 2% parents who

agree that the mainstream will benefit their child as compared to 8% in school ‘A’ which has 75% students below 10 years.

Findings of Question 3: There are a number of parents who have never attempted to put their children in mainstream schools (43%) and 38% of the parents have tried to include their kids in the mainstream at some stage. They have either being unsuccessful in getting admissions or have put their children into a mainstream school, but could not be sustained due to various reasons and these students are now in special need schools. This shows that for many parents of students with disability, once the child is diagnosed special needs schools are the first and only option. Many parents don’t think that regular schools are feasible options and they feel very insecure about putting their child in the mainstream environment. As one parent said in the interview conducted during the course of this study “my views on my child in the normal environment is a little scary because I know my child would not behave as any normal kid and there are chances that it’s not easy for everyone to be patient enough to accept him the way he is. I will just have to be more alert and strong and wait until my child is accepted and my child accepts the environment”. About 60% of the parents who responded either haven’t tried to mainstream their child or are not sure about the answer. This biggest majority is school ‘A’ where 67% of the parents have never tried to put their kids into mainstream. This is a matter of concern as most of the parents who responded to this question from this particular school (75%) have young kids less than 10 years old.

Findings of Question 4: On whether the child can adapt to the mainstream environment 33% parents agreed they can, whereas 40% of the parents think their children cannot adapt. 20% of the parents were neutral about it. This result reveals that about 60% of the parents who responded are either unsure about how their child would fare in a

mainstream environment or think that their child will not be able to cope in regular mainstream setting. This result brings into light the disconnect between mainstream school and special needs parent community and reveals their insecurity in this regard.

Findings of Question 5: On being asked if the other typical students would have an issue with their special needs child being in their same class 31% think it will not be a problem, 33% think other students will have a problem and 35% are neutral about it. This brings out the dichotomy of views which is because there is not much interaction between the two communities to either support or discard the notion. Most of the people are neutral about it probably because they have never tried it out hence have cannot speak from experience.

Findings of Question 6: A similar trend is seen on the views of parents who responded when asked if the parents of regular kids would have a problem with their children being in the class room. Against 31% agreed, 30% disagreed and most i.e. 38% were neutral. Which again shows that most parents are not sure thus have preferred to take neutral. 42% of school 'A' and 33% of parents of school 'C' think that other children would have a problem and 42% parents of school 'C' think the parents would have a problem. Both schools have a high percentage of students with autism; school 'A' 100% and school 'C' 38%. In school 'B' which also has 35% students with autism only 14% of the parents think the other children would have a problem with their child being in the same class. This difference in views could be accounted for the fact that about 50% of the students in school 'B' came under the mild category (as compared to 26% in school 'C' and 33% in school 'A'). This result provides evidence that the level of disability also has an influence on the views and perception of the parents of students with special needs. With regards to the question about the parents of regular students having a problem with students with

special needs studying in the same class 41% parents who responded from school ‘C’ felt they will have a problem as compared to 17% and 21% in school ‘A’ & ‘B’. School ‘A’ has only students with autism out of which 68% are moderate to severe. In spite of that only 17% parents think other parents would have a problem. The age factor again could have played an important role in the parents having this view as 75% of the students were below 10 years and it is a known fact that it is easier for younger children to adapt to new situations. On the other hand almost 79% of the parents from school ‘B’ had students over the age of 10 but 50% of the overall strength came under the mild category. Thus proving that the level of disability also influences the views of parents of special needs. The above examples prove that if the students are young and the level of disability is mild parents have a more positive views towards inclusion.

Findings of Question 7: To the question “should all children irrespective of disability start schooling in the main stream” 37% agreed 32% disagreed where as 28% were neutral and 3% did not respond.

Findings of Question 8: When asked if they felt only special need students who can do some academics should be mainstreamed, almost 54% agreed. 33% of the parents disagreed while 11% were neutral and 3% did not answer. Hence there is a definite impression that only students who can do some academics can join mainstream schools.

Findings of Question 9: A big majority of parents (57%) responded positively when asked if they would admit their child in mainstream if given a choice, 23% said they wouldn’t, this shows that most parents want to give their child an opportunity to be included in the mainstream setting.

Findings of Question 10: On the contrary when asked if students with severe disability should be in the mainstream school 63% of the parents felt that they should not be included in the regular school setting. Only a little more than13% parents were in favour of the idea. This supports the study by Fuchs & Fuch (2004). The study reveal that though parents were in favour of the idea of inclusion even the parent community of children with special needs did not support inclusion of children with moderate to severe disability.

Findings of Question 11: The main purpose of inclusion is to have all students irrespective of disability studying together in the mainstream school with their needs looked after by the way of modifications and accommodations. In order for all to progress to the best of their ability. When asked if the parents would send their children to school even if it was not beneficial to them 78% parents said they wouldn't, however a small percent (10%) of parents were in favour of sending their child to mainstream schools even if they did not benefit from it.

Findings of Question 12: Similarly when asked if they would send their kids to the mainstream to avoid stigma the majority of parents (83%) said they wouldn't. However a small percentage (6%) agreed that they would. This shows that the parental decision are also based on family and societal pressures.

Findings of Question 13: On their child being in a mainstream school where he was kept the whole day in a special need class with similar children, 52% parents were in favour of the idea, while 27% were not in favour. This is in line with study conducted by Leyser & Kirk (2004) which found that many parents were in favour of "partial inclusion".

Findings of Question 14: To a similar question if was okay for the child to be in a resource room without mingling with other students 82% of the parents who responded disagreed. Only 6% of the parents agreed their kids being isolated in a resource room. This finding shows that most parents value socialization as an important part of inclusion. As one parent said during the interview" I would prefer socialization first with the slow push of academics

Findings of Question 15: While majority of parents did not want their child isolated in a resource room only 30% of the parents who responded wanted to send their kids to mainstream school just for the sake of socialization.Most parents are not in favour of sending their child just for socialization During the interview a one parent said "In our child's case we would like to go with both equally".

Findings of Question 16: On the topic of training of main stream teachers, only 11% parents felt that teachers were trained to handle students with special needs. 62% of the parents felt that mainstream school teachers did not have the training to handle special needs kids, which reiterates the findings of Arif & Gaad (2008). According to them "currently teachers are working with what is known as a para curriculum …….. in the area of delivery more training would be beneficial" (Arif & Gaad, 2008 P.109)

Findings of Question 17: Most of the parents from all the special needs schools (92%) agreed that mainstream school should hire more special education teachers. Only 1% in the whole survey disagreed to this point. 100% of the parents of school 'A' & 'B' felt that special education teachers are needed in mainstream schools as one of the parents said " my child is special and he has different requirements and he would need more attention. Care, behavioural assistance and the presence of person whom he trusts all the time. This can be difficult for a teacher to provide

all these extras without distracting the other students. The regular school wouldn't be equipped properly for handling these proper requirements."

Findings of Question 18 & 19: There was no clear mandate on the views of the parents when asked if they felt putting their child in mainstream schools would reduce the behaviours that the child had. While 33% felt that the behaviours would reduce, 32% of the parents felt that it would not make a difference. 31% of the parents were neutral which could be because they have never tried it out to see if there would be a difference or not. On the other hand when asked if putting their child would increase their behaviours 35% agreed, 16% disagreed, while the rest were neutral or did not respond.

Findings of Question 20: 50% of the parents had disagreed to send their children to school just for socialization but most parents still think it is extremely important to play and eat with their typical peers. 72% parents were in favour of their children mingling with typical peers during play time and snack time. Only 10% thought it was not important. These findings reveal that though parents would not send their children just for socialization they think of it as an important aspect of inclusive education.

Findings of Question 21: When asked if given a choice they would send their kids to mainstream schools, 57% of parents responded positively. However 62% of the parents felt that special needs schools were better for their children as compared to mainstream schools. This result reveals that there are a few parents who would send their children to mainstream schools even if they felt special needs schools were better. This could be attributed to the fact that 6% of the parents were in favour of sending their kids to mainstream to avoid the stigma and 10% of them also agreed they would send their kids to mainstream school even if it was not beneficial. Though this is a small number in the case of this particular study, 4-6

parents out of the total 60 admitted to doing so. This shows that some parental views and perceptions are directly linked to the kind of society they lived in and the amount of societal pressure they undergo.

Findings of Question 22: When asked should schools not have a right to deny any child with disability more than half of the total parents who responded (59%) felt that the school should not have the right to deny admission. 23% felt that schools should have a right to deny any child with disability that they do not want to admit. However 18% of the parents who responded were neutral. This could be because they were not aware of the laws that have been put in place by the government to protect the right of students with disability. Article 12 of Federal law 29 says that "The country guarantees people with special needs equal opportunities in education within all educational, vocational training, adult education and continuing education institutions in regular classes or special classes with the availability of curriculum in sign language or Braille or and any other methods as appropriate."

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

The segregated setting which consists of special school as well as clinical settings for one to one sessions, caters to a large number of special needs students in the UAE. There are many children who come to these centers at a very early age and are on the waiting list for many years and some have to wait for as long as 3-4 years to get into these special needs centers. In the process many precious time is lost. There are also many children coming to these centers, who are either rejected by the mainstream schools or have been in mainstream schools but were unable to cope with the pressure. There are also students in the special needs settings who have been trying to get admission into mainstream schools for many years in spite of all the laws of special needs students. In order to maximize the inclusion of students with special needs it is very important to look at the views and attitudes of parents of children special needs in the segregated sector.

The aim of this small scale study is not taking place at the expected rate in spite of stringent laws being set. An attempt has been made to search for reasons and recommendations by analyzing the responses of the parents of the students in the segregated setting. Three reputed special schools were selected for this purpose. These schools have been known to do a lot of work in the areas of inclusion and awareness raising activities. The schools also boast of strong involvement from the parent community. The views of parents from these schools have been taken to analyze the positive inclusive practices which need to be maintained and also take into account what according to the parents are the factors that affect the process of inclusive education negatively.

Mixed methods approach was used for this particular study. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used for data collection purposes. The data collected was analyzed and compared to previous study and findings by other researchers. There have been similar studies done on the perspective of parents as well as teachers in the mainstream school setting. It was found that the findings of this particular study is similar to the finding of the previous research studies even though they were done on different target groups. The findings revealed that all the target groups (which included parents of children in segregated setting and mainstream setting, as well as teachers in mainstream setting) more or less had the same views and concerns as far as inclusive education was concerned. Majority of the parents of students in the segregated setting had a positive approach to inclusion just like the parents and teachers of mainstream school. During an interview one of the parents said "It's an education system which student with special needs spend time with student with non-special needs. The kind of education which I always wish for my daughter". However there were concerns among parents of special needs students that mainstream schools are not equipped enough to handle their kids, teachers did not have required training and schools did not have the appropriate resources as compared to special needs school. Eman Gaad 's study on the perspective of teachers about inclusion in mainstream schools also revealed the same concern.

5.2. Recommendations

From this research study it is evident that inclusive education is definitely what parents of special needs also want but they are not interested in sending their kids to regular school if it is not beneficial for them. Parents are aware that mainstream schools lacks the expertise and resources that

are required to include their children in a way that is beneficial for them. As Mittler categorically states that:

> Inclusion is not about placing children in mainstream schools. It is about changing schools to make them more responsive to the needs of all children. It is about helping teachers to accept the responsibility for the learning of all children in their school and preparing them to teach those children who are currently excluded from their school, for whatever reason. (Mittler, 2000, p.vii)

Parents are also aware that this would require a lot of expenditure on the part of the school. According to one of the parents “It would be an extra burden on the school to outfit all regular classes with all the equipments they need to serve the special needs The recommendations that are elicited from the findings can be linked to the research questions to make the study findings more valid.

1. Improving the infrastructure and training the teachers of mainstream schools in order to accommodate children with special needs and to help them perform to the best of their ability.
2. Hiring more special educators to train and guide the class and subject teachers with regards to adapting the class room, planning an IEP and making the required accommodations and modifications in the curriculum to suit the requirements of the child with special needs.
3. More interaction and collaboration between special needs and mainstream schools for exchange of information as well as a referral system for shifting children from special needs school to main stream schools.
4. Coming up with ways to start early intervention and ideas to prevent the loss of precious time which is wasted due to various reasons like lack of awareness on the parent side waiting too long to get into schools, etc.

However these recommendations are not easy to follow especially in the case of private for profits schools. The funds required for this purpose is

a big issue. Also there is a pressure of competition in private schools to gain high scores and be among rank schools in the country. These factors act as a deterrent in the intake of students with special needs. However difficult the task at hand is it is of at most importance and has to be achieved at any cost. In a report submitted to UNESCO, Jacques Delors, declares Education as a 'Necessary Utopia'

> The Commission does not see education as a miracle cure or a magic formula opening the door to a world in which all ideals will be attained, but as one of the principal means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war.(Delors,1998, P.11)

5.2. Future Research

This is a small scale research involving just 3 schools which is a very small percent of the total centers in segregated settings. Hence a research involving more schools could yield more substantial findings. Also further research based on age and level of severity is also recommended to increase the validity and reliability of the findings as well as to give evidence of the factors that influence the perception of parents with special needs in the segregated study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix-1: University Letter

الجامعة البريطانية في دبي
The British University in Dubai
www.buid.ac.ae

17 May 2017

To Whom It May Concern

This is to certify that Ms Seema Ganesh with ID number 2014201085 is a registered student on the Master of Education (following the pathway in Special and Inclusive Education) programme in The British University in Dubai, from September 2015.

Ms Ganesh is currently working on her dissertation as part of the programme requirements. She is required to gather data by conducting questionnaire surveys, and interviews. Your permission to conduct her research in your organisation is hereby requested. Further support provided to her in this regard will be highly appreciated.

This letter is issued on Ms Ganesh's request.

Yours sincerely,

Amer Alaya
Head of Student Administration

الجامعة البريطانية في دبي
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Appendix-2: Undertaking

UNDERTAKING

I,_Seema Ganesh, holder of passport number J2059858 undertake to comply with the following during and after my period of research with Al Noor Centre for Children with Special Needs:

1. All information pertaining to students will be kept confidential. No students will be identified by name or any other distinguishing mark in any publication or presentation without prior permission.
2. I will comply with all the policies, procedures and rules of the Centre. I understand that my internship may be discontinued if I fail to follow the policies, procedures and rules of the Centre.
3. I will obtain prior permission from the management of the Centre for any write-up/exposure in the media.
4. I will acknowledge the Centre in any thesis/publication during or after the period of my internship.

Name: Seema Ganesh
Signature:
Date: 20/05/17

Appendix-3: Questionnaire

Inclusive Education-Perception of Parents of students with special needs in segregated setting in Dubai and Sharjah

Seema Ganesh
Prof Eman Gaad
The British University in Dubai
2014201085@student.buid.ac.ae

- This questionnaire is designed as a part of a Research study to try and understand the Perspectives of parents of children with special needs about Inclusive Education.
- Please answer the questions based on your experience and perspectives.
- It will take only about 10 minutes to fill the questionnaire
- Your participation is voluntary however it will greatly help in understanding the perspective of special needs parents about inclusive education
- All information will be confidential and will only use for study purposes
- The participants are assured complete anonymity

Likert Scale

SA-Strongly Agree	**A**-Agree	**N**-Neutral	**D**-Disagree	**SD**-Strongly Disagree

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and I am willing to take part in the Research study.

Participants Signature Date

Instruction: Please circle the appropriate response based on your experiences and perspectives

1.	Do you think your child will benefit by being included in the mainstream school?	SA	A	N	D	SD
2.	Do you think your child's needs will be looked after better in a special needs school?	SA	A	N	D	SD
3.	Have you tried to get your child admitted in a mainstream school?	SA	A	N	D	SD
4.	Do you think your child can adapt to the mainstream school?	SA	A	N	D	SD
5.	Do you think other students will have a problem with your child being in their class??	SA	A	N	D	SD
6.	Do you think other parents will have a problem with your child being in their class?	SA	A	N	D	SD
7.	Do you think all students irrespective of disabilities should start with school in the mainstream school?	SA	A	N	D	SD
8.	Do you think only students who can do some academics should be in the mainstream schools?	SA	A	N	D	SD
9.	Would you admit your child in a mainstream school if given a choice?	SA	A	N	D	SD
10.	Do you think students with severe disability should be in the mainstream school?	SA	A	N	D	SD
11.	Do you think it is ok to send children to mainstream school even if they don't benefit from it?	SA	A	N	D	SD
12.	Would you send your child to a mainstream school just to avoid the social stigma?	SA	A	N	D	SD
13.	Would you send your child to a mainstream school where he is in a class with other special needs students the whole day?	SA	A	N	D	SD
14.	Is it ok if your child is in the resource room the whole day and does not mingle with other students?	SA	A	N	D	SD
15.	Would you send your child to a mainstream school just for socialization?	SA	A	N	D	SD

16.	Do you think the teachers in mainstream schools are trained to deal with students with special needs?	SA	A	N	D	SD
17.	Do you think schools should hire more special educators?	SA	A	N	D	SD
18.	Do you think your child will have less behaviours if he is in the mainstream school?	SA	A	N	D	SD
19.	Do you think your child might pick up more behaviours from the mainstream classroom?	SA	A	N	D	SD
20.	Do you think it is important for your child to play, eat etc with other typical students?	SA	A	N	D	SD
21.	Do you think mainstream schools are better than special needs schools for your child	SA	A	N	D	SD
22.	Do you think schools should not have the right to deny admission to any child with disability?	SA	A	N	D	SD

Please fill-in/tick the appropriate boxes:

Age of the child: ☐ **Gender:** ☐ M ☐ F

Diagnosis: ☐ CP ☐ Down Syndrome ☐ Autism ☐ Learning Disability

☐ Other ☐ Not diagnosed

Severity: ☐ Mild ☐ Moderate ☐ Severe

Appendix-4: Interview of Parents:

1. What do you understand by the term inclusive education?

Parent-1:

Inclusive education for me is giving opportunities to individuals with special educational needs to learn alongside their non disabled peers under one roof.

Parent-2

It's an education system which student with special needs spend time with student with non-special needs. The kind of education which I always wish for my daughter.

Parent-3

In inclusive education every individual or student with or without disabilities get equal chance to learn together in same atmosphere.

2. What are your views on inclusion in general?

Parent-1

By including special needs kids along with the normal developing kids has its pros and cons. Normal kids would develop empathy towards the special kids and understand that all are important even if they are just like them and our special needs kids will develop trust and feel secure to be in the outside world because they have the acceptance by their age group or peers or for that matter any one.

Parent-2

This is the best way to improve the skills of children with special needs and the only way to let the special need children feel that they are not different from the others and we care more about their feelings.

Parent-3

Inclusion helps community to accept, embrace and promote equal opportunity for all the people or students irrespective of their disabilities or any other characteristics to learn together alongside their peers.

3. What are your views on inclusion with regards to your child?

Parent-1

My views on my child in normal school environment is little scary because I know that my child would not behave as any normal child and there are chances that its not easy for everyone to be patient enough and accept him the way he is. I will just need to be more alert and strong & wait until my child is ready accepted and also that my child accepts the environment.

Parent-2

I think my daughter will be better if she will be in this kind of education because here autism level is very low and she can adjust with them but it has to be with the assistance of a specialist.

Parent-3

It would help him to learn more social skills, be expressive and vocal in a proper manner with peers, get equal chance to learn and participate in academics

4. Why do you think it will or will not benefit your child?

Parent-1

Benefits for my child - it would give him a real world experience because my son would learned to be with people who are not different like him. Inclusion would help him accept the real world. Non benefits – my child is special and he has different requirements and he would need more attention. Care, behavioural assistance and the presence of person whom he trusts all the time. This can be difficult for a teacher to provide all these extras without distracting the other students. The regular school wouldn't be equipped properly for handling these proper requirements.

Parent-2

My daughter will benefit because she will learn lot of things from other normal students as she is very good in copying people. Also she is perfect with her daily routine.

Parent-3

Its definitely going to benefit my child as per above mentioned points (answer 3). If inclusion programs are set or designed effectively according to my child's requirement.

5. Have you ever child to get your child admitted in a mainstream school? Why? Why not?

Parent-1

No, I haven't for the reasons mentioned earlier.

Parent-2

Yes, in the beginning because both me and her mother were still not believing that our daughter is an autistic and the gradually she was rejected by several schools we went to a special need school. And also there is no such rule which forces normal school to accept the special needs and be prepared for them.

Parent-3

Yes, we tried and got rejected.

6. If your child goes to a mainstream school, what will be your priority? Academic or Socialization? Why?

Parent-1

I know my child is special and I also know that educating him and giving him the opportunity to prove his excellence in academic is more than I can ask for. But I would prefer socialization first with the slow push of academics.

Parent-2

Increasing her ability to make friends and share things with friends and ask for things she want and also to react to rejections without throwing a tantrum.

Parent-3

In our child's case we would like to go with both equally. He lacks in both academic and socialization.

7. Do you think mainstream schools equipped to handle children with special needs? Why? Why not?

Parent-1

Regular education school is not often equipped for handling the diverse needs of special education programs. It would be an extra burden on the school to outfit all regular classes with all the equipments they need to serve the special needs. A teacher in regular class may not be fully trained as a special educator. Some schools may provide the facility of paring a regular teacher with a special educator. But it is not always an option as it requires to finance the salaries of two teachers for one class.

Parent-2

At the meantime no, even normal student at school are not ready to accept special need student in their classes. The school needs to have specialists with experience to handle the students with special needs, also the cost of this kind of study.

Parent-3

According to our experience, no they are not. Lack of proper support system, lack of trained staff to deal with special kids they are not equipped to provide nourishing, effective and supportive help in academics and socialization.

8. What should schools do in order to increase the number of children with special needs in mainstream schools?

Parent-1

The mainstream schools needs to segregate the kids as per their requirement. It's not necessary to include the special kids in all the classes or sessions but include them together when both the kids have common interests like art, music or sports for that matter. Or include both the categories only twice a week just for the kids to mingle and get to know each other.

Parent-2

They have to hire therapists and experts from special needs centers all over the city or country. Also they can be teachers for both kinds of students but they must have high salary which

encourages them to accept this kind of pressure. Also the idea of having two teachers for each class can be good but it's better to be one because I think special needs students feel better.

Parent-3

First and foremost well trained staff along with teachers they should hire professionals such as special educators. They must make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disability while maintaining students learning needs.

9. Do you think all children irrespective of disability should start their education in mainstream schools?

Parent-1

No, all kids cannot start education in mainstream. They need to be moulded and be prepared to face the reality before entering the mainstream.

Parent-2

No, there has to be evaluation and divide the student according to their level then see which one of them can exist with normal students. What I mean to say is there must be a system where even if special need students doesn't start their first or second year of their study at the normal school but at the end they will join normal school. There are some children with special needs who can't be in mainstream schools unfortunately, they may need their parent support more.

Parent-3

No, although every disabled child should get a chance at least once to attend mainstream school.

10. All children should be given a chance to be included in mainstream schools, do you agree or disagree?

Parent-1

Yes it gives an opportunity for the special kids to be more social and confident and face the real world.

Parent-2

All children with special needs are not the same. Each one must be evaluated by experts then decide if they can mainstream or not, but they should join at least once or twice a week.

Parent-3

Yes, I agree.