

**CULTURAL BELIEFS CAUSING SOCIAL DEFICIT AMONG  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITY: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL  
STUDY OF TWIN CITIES-RAWALPINDI AND ISLAMABAD**

**BSS-ANTHROPOLOGY**



**ARFAH ZIA**

**SUPERVISED BY**

**DR. WAHEED RANA**

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**BAHRIA UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD**

**2020**

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.1	Sample size	15
3.1	Complaints by Sex	76
3.2	Complaints by Age	76
3.3	Structural Interview	77
3.4	Women with Disabilities	82



## ABSTRACT

Disability is considered as a physical or mental condition that limits a person's activities that are otherwise considered normal by the society. It has many social and cultural dimensions. In Pakistan, disability has been overly treated under the centuries old religious and cultural beliefs as opposed to physical and mental condition.

The subject investigated in the research is disability, its impact and societies response. Since it is an Anthropological research, the parameters of discipline including methodology, treatment and analysis are chosen accordingly, following the research boundaries defined for such work. The primary focus is to examine the condition of disabled people in Pakistan and the impact of societal response hampering their social and economic growth, and development.

The research was conducted in twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, and a number of target groups were identified, which include disabled people, their families, psychologists, teachers, opinion leaders and general population. Additionally six case studies were prepared which were strictly categorized into different socio-cultural and professional groups, so that a comprehensive and representative picture emerges. Participant observation technique was used to record responses under two broader categories; a) structured questionnaires for general population, disabled persons and stakeholders and, b) informal in-depth interviews for case studies and specific issues discussed with selected people.

As a result of detailed study based on data gathered through primary and secondary sources, a dismal picture of social understanding of this very fragile part of the society emerges. It was reported by respondents through structured questions that society lacks basic understanding about disability and its consequences. They consider that it is either due to displeasure by God on somebody's sins, faults and disobedience or a symbol of divine blessing. Some consider it a result of black magic, evil eye or some environmental factors such as birth at the time of earthquake and sun and moon eclipse. A very few people reported that disability is a cause of malnutrition, some biological reason, blood related diseases transmitted through parents, inheritance and in-breeding through cousin marriages.

In case studies and in-depth interviews a similar picture emerged. Both type of data complimented each other. Through case studies it was observed that disabled persons have a number of problems



with the society, which include parental attitude, teacher's attitude, family behavior, peer group experiences and teachers unfriendly treatment. Case studies were conducted with males and females both, covering a set of socio-economic classes and professions. All have peculiar experiences, but the consensus suggests that the family, society and the state are equally non-receptive towards their problems.

Those who could manage to create space in the society through their extreme struggle and extraordinary talent suggested, that if social and educational environment is improved, society can be sensitized through better communication techniques and persons with disability will have a better life. It was also reported that persons with disability contribute positively in the development of society if supported and encouraged by the institutions he frequently interacts with, such as family, school, mosque and peer groups. It was also observed that level of literacy has very low impact on these beliefs. Sensitization emerged as a primary need.

The main reasons enlisted as a result of study for the plight of disabled people are lack of education, absence of strong message by the community and opinion leaders, media, educational institutions (teachers), the government's indifferent attitude, superstition, wrongly dovetailing the superstitions and devilish practices with religion. Based on this the following is suggested; use of electronic media forcefully and educational institutions from the very tertiary levels to spread the message of respect and care towards persons with disability. Enhanced roles of NGOs in this effort, inclusion of disability in curricula as a subject, well thought out policy formulation by the government at federal level which should be a binding on provinces to follow, creation of more jobs in addition to existing quotas for persons with disability and a very active involvement of religious scholars and *paish-imaams* in mosques and *madrisa*.

**Keywords:** Persons with Disability, Cultural Beliefs, Religious Beliefs, Superstitions, Attitudes.



**CULTURAL BELIEFS CAUSING SOCIAL DEFICIT AMONG PERSONS WITH  
DISABILITY: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF TWIN CITIES-RAWALPINDI  
AND ISLAMABAD**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	1
STATEMENT OF PROBLEM .....	6
SIGNIFICANCE.....	6
OBJECTIVES .....	7
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	8
HYPOTHESIS .....	9
OUTCOME OF STUDY .....	9
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	9
AREA PROFILE.....	10
INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE .....	11
METHODOLOGY .....	13
SAMPLE DESCRIPTION .....	13
PRIMARY DATA .....	13
SECONDARY DATA .....	13
TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION .....	14
STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS.....	14
INDEPTH INFORMAL INTERVIEWS .....	14
METHOD .....	14
CASE STUDIES.....	15
VARIABLES.....	16
POST TESTING .....	16
IMPACT OF CORONA PANDEMIC ON RESEARCH PLAN .....	16
METHODOLOGICAL SHIFT .....	17
<b>CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>18</b>
STIGMA AND SHAME .....	24
HIDDEN AND FORGOTTEN .....	25



POWER OF LANGUAGE.....	25
MARIAGE CHALLENGES.....	26
MANAGEMENT.....	26
NEGATIVE ATTITUDE AND MISCONCIEVED PERCEPTION.....	27
TREATMENT OR MISTREATMENT?.....	28
THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF DISABILITIES.....	30
PAST VS CONTEMPORARY ISSUES.....	30
<b>CHAPTER III: MAIN FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>33</b>
DATA ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONAIRES.....	33
INTERVIEW GUIDE OF DISABELED PEOPLE.....	52
STURCTURAL INTERVIEWS.....	78
CASE STUDIES.....	86
<b>CHAPTER IV: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>113</b>
DISABILITIES AND ITS IMPACT.....	113
DISSCUSSIONS.....	114
CONCLUSION.....	123
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>126</b>