

**PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE PARENTS OF
HEARING IMPAIRED STUDENTS:
A CASE STUDY APPROACH**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article to understand the impact of hearing impairment of children on their parents and to study the psycho-social problems faced by the parents of hearing impaired students in their daily life activities. The Sample collected from the parents often hearing impaired students from deaf and dumb School from Ludhiana district and the data is collected from the parents of the students of senior secondary school of Ludhiana District with the help of a self developed questionnaire was used by the researcher in which the questions were asked to the parents of hearing impaired students to assess their psychosocial problems. Findings of the study 'The importance of family support for the growth and development of children and the role it plays as a determinant of whether children will receive health care or not, cannot be overemphasized.

Keyword: Hearing impairment children , Psycho-Social problems.

INTRODUCTION

Education provides us the opportunity for holistic growth and development. It is an activity as well as a process which modifies the behaviour of a person from instinctive behaviour to human behaviour. It transforms our raw personality into refined personality. We start acting rationally instead of impulsively. It develops our thinking and reasoning power. It is responsible for the supply of good citizens who can

contribute to the growth of the country. In all the stages of education right from nursery to university education, the senior secondary stage, is the most important stage, because, this stage provides the base for further education. In fact future depends on this stage. Healthy parental attitudes results in acceptance of the child`s disability and facilitates therapeutic progress. Attitudes of society, families and people with Disability themselves contribute to converting Impairments into disabilities. The attitudes of specific societies are critical in assessing both the intensity of a disability and assessing areas where collective action is likely to fail the disabled community, and hence public action is desirable. In addition to the attitudes of the general society, the attitudes of persons with disabilities and their families are important. At the same time, different sets of attitudes clearly interact, so that negative views about people with disability in the broader community are likely to be internalized in many cases by people with disabilities and their household members. Disability is perceived either as a punishment for the misdeeds in the past lives of the person with a disability or the wrong doings of the parents. The parents struggle to cope with their own emotions and the reactions of others. Their attitudes towards their child change resulting in changes in responses towards the child. These attitudinal changes in turn may have an adverse effect on the child. The parents may start developing negative attitudes towards the child and the behaviour patterns too might change. It is against this background that the researcher sought to investigate the parent`s psychosocial problems towards their children with hearing impairments.

Jesper Dammeyera, AnjaToft Hansen, Kathryn Crowe and Marc Marschark (2019) Studies the impact of having a child with hearing loss on the lives of parents and families have shown divergent results. Where some studies have reported that childhood hearing loss is associated with parental mental health problems, such as depression and stress, other studies report no impact on parental mental health and/or wellbeing.

Srishti Puri and Prashant Srivastava (2016) explored the significant positive concerns and challenges were noticed by parents of hearing impaired children. The parents were found to be happy with the education provided to their children with

hearing impairment. They got to know about some institution through neighborhood or colleagues and their only concern being, the future of the kid in terms of employability, marriage and health.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the impact of hearing impairment of children on their parents.
2. To study the psycho social problems faced by the parents of hearing impaired students in their daily life activities.
3. To suggest the remedial measures and coping strategies to reduce psychosocial problems among parents of hearing impaired students.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant impact of hearing impairment of children on their parents.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was delimited to case study of the parents of hearing impaired students. It will be further delimited to psychosocial problems of parents of hearing impaired students only.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

For the conduct of the present study “Psychosocial problems of parents of Hearing Impaired Students –A case Study. The investigator had selected case study method. Case study is a research methodology, typically seen in social and life sciences. There is no one definition of case study research. However, very simply... ‘a case study can be defined as an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units’. In the present study, to ascertain the psychosocial problems of parents of hearing impaired students case study method is adopted by the investigator for the collection of data. The study adopted a qualitative case study design. Ten secondary school students from school for the deaf and dumb were purposively selected from Ludhiana district.

SAMPLING

The sample includes parents of hearing impaired students from deaf and dumb School from Ludhiana district. The data is collected from the parents of the students of senior secondary school of Ludhiana District.

TOOLS USED

A self-developed questionnaire was used by the researcher in which the questions were asked to the parents of hearing impaired students to assess their psychosocial problems.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Language use

The parents were aware that hearing impaired pupils have a problem of understanding their views through the use of language. These students find it hard to develop the language since they hardly hear when other people are communicating. Most hearing impaired students found were very difficult to express themselves. Most of them have not developed their vocabulary. The Unavailability of sign language interpreters was causing frustrations in parents as well as students with hearing impairment.

It is well recognized that hearing is important to speech and language progress, communication, and knowledge. Children with listening difficulties due to hearing loss or auditory processing problems carry on to be an under identified and underserved population. The earlier hearing loss occurs in a child's life, the more serious the effects on the child's development. Similarly, the earlier the problem is identified and intervention begun, the less serious the ultimate impact. Some of the students fall under this group but they learn in the same class as those with a partial hearing loss. What is serious is for parents to identify such students and as far as possible individualize their learning. There are four major ways in which hearing loss affects children. It causes delay in the development of approachable and meaningful communication skills (speech and language).The language insufficiency causes learning problems that resulted in reduced academic achievement. This was highlighted by parents who stated that it was difficult to encourage their children. There is a tendency for them to leave

and not contribute in any activity. Communication difficulties often lead to social isolation and poor self-concept.

Vocabulary development

Vocabulary develops more slowly in children who have hearing loss. Children with hearing loss learn real words like cat, jump, five, and red more easily than abstract words like before, after, equal to, and jealous. The gap between the vocabulary of children with normal hearing and those with hearing loss widens with age. Children with hearing loss do not catch up without interference. Children with hearing loss have trouble understanding words with various meanings.

In the light of the above challenges parents were aware of these problems so that they find ways of helping these pupils. The only way that parents can do in order to help these students is to individualize their learning by using visuals to those who cannot learn much through auditory means.

Speaking

Children with hearing loss may not hear their own voices when they speak. They may speak too loudly or not loud enough. They may have a speaking pitch that is too high. They may sound like they are mumbling because of poor stress, poor inflection, or poor rate of speaking.

Academic Achievement

Parents of such children have difficulty with all areas of academic achievement, especially reading and mathematical concepts. The gap in academic achievement between children with normal hearing and those with hearing loss usually widens as they progress through school. The level of achievement is related to parental participation and the quantity, quality, and timing of the support services children receive.

Social Functioning

Parents of such students face problems in social interactions. They feel inferior, neglected and suppressed. They also feel isolated, without friends, and unhappy in such

situations, particularly when their socialization with other people is limited. In the light of the above observations there was need for parents to integrate themselves in some activities so that they tackle the problem as a group. Sometimes such an approach will help to develop friendship among other people.

Education Level

Having parents with a low educational level is believed to be a risk factor for more mental health problems. The prevalence of parents having a low educational level is found to be higher amongst deaf and hard of hearing children than among their hearing peers. Family composition might also affect the development of problems.

Affective symptoms

Depressive symptoms in the parents of these children and adolescents possibly result from the experience of having a handicap, being bullied in the society, lack of important communication abilities and of opportunities to express and discuss their concerns and feelings, being physically disciplined, having peer problems, lack of social affiliation and having a complex challenge in life, compared to their hearing peers.

Isolation

Hearing loss can originally lead to serious emotional isolation and a sense of loss and loneliness, especially as peers and even family members step back as a result of being unable to communicate.

Loss of Identity

Parents sometimes felt loss of individuality as a result of loneliness. They felt frustrated at many times when they had to encounter their personal relationships.

Psychological and emotional challenges

It included being worried by helpful tasks and having worries about the present and future life of their children. They had feelings of depression, and inner pain or anger due to the troubling actions of the children. They also practiced some communication

troubles with their children due to their incapability to speak. Social challenges were insufficient social services for their children, stigma, burden of caring task, lack of public awareness of mental illness, lack of social support, and problems with social life. The economic challenges were poverty, child care interfering with various income generating activities in the family, and additional expenses associated with the child's illness.

Parents were also disturbed by the complexity of caring responsibilities that demanded a lot of work and being available most of time to meet the daily needs of the child. The issues about how to handle the child and ensure security if the parent died was expressed by one father of a child with hearing impairment.

Living with a hearing impaired child was described as emotionally distressful by parents. Varying degrees of emotional distress were experienced which included having feelings of sadness and inner pain or bitterness. Parents experienced these negative emotions due to disturbing behavior of the children, extra care-giving responsibilities, family and social problems caused by the child, and people's perception about families having a hearing impaired child.

Parents described living with or having a hearing impaired child as a disturbing and yet unavoidable situation. They had to believe it since they had no other choice. They viewed their caring duty for the child as very difficult and upsetting.

Psychological and emotional pain

The inability of the child to express needs was another source of psychological and emotional pain associated with living with hearing impaired children. This caused parents to be unable to understand the child especially when he/she had problems. Sometimes when the child went out, he/she was mistreated by other people and returned home crying. When he/she was asked by the parent to explain what happened he/she couldn't explain, as spoken by a father of a child with hearing impairment.

Social challenges

Caring for a child with hearing impairment was found to be associated with many

social challenges. Social services, stigma and caring everyday jobs were areas which posed major concerns for parents. Other important issues included a lack of public awareness, social support, and social life.

Inadequate social services for children with hearing impairment were the most tough issue for parents. They were worried about education for the child and to a lesser degree hospital care. The most upsetting aspect was inability of the child to get education due to an insufficient number of schools. Parents spent a lot of time looking for schools that could accommodate the child as explained by a mother of a child with hearing impairment.

Parents whose children were blessed to be recruited in the special schools were experiencing other problems. Their children could not understand anything that was taught at school as explained by the mother of one of the child.

Living with hearing impairment child was found to be associated with stigma. Parents were troubled by hearing impairment child being neglected, discriminated against and segregated in the society. Sometimes the child was told words that made him/her feel bad. Parents were laughed at and told terrible things about the child.

The child was mistreated by people in various ways. Sometimes he/she was labeled and made fun of at school, thought to be useless and even discarded by the parent because of the disability. A mother of a child with hearing impairment explained

Parents were sometimes held responsible for the child's behavior. They were thought to be spoiling the child by not being strict enough when the child was behaving strangely. Furthermore, some parents were told they had caused the child to become mentally ill as a means of getting rich and becoming successful in life (it is common to see disabled children with their parents in the streets begging). A father of a child with ADHD and mental retardation explained with sadness:

The burden of caring for the hearing impaired was found to be mainly borne by the mother. Mothers complained about the role that fathers played in everyday care of the child. They expressed that some fathers were only supporting the child financially and

others did not care at all.

Parents in this study expressed their concern about not receiving the needed support from neighbours and people in the society. Some people could not even give help when they found the child in a critical condition like having seizures. One mother of a child with hearing impairment complained that people sitting in the commuter bus would not help her by giving her a seat when she was standing with the child on her back.

The social life of parents was found to be disrupted by the presence of a mentally ill child in the family. Sometimes parents avoided going with the child to social gatherings such of the child's disturbing behaviour. Parents also experienced conflicts in the community and sometimes were even accused when the child damaged somebody's property. This created tension and resulted in lack of peace especially with people like neighbours.

Economic challenges

Three major themes emerged that explained how living with a hearing impaired child interfered with economic activities of the families. These were: existing poverty, intervention with various income generating activities, and extra expenditure due to the illness.

Poverty was revealed by parents as being responsible for their inability to meet certain important needs of their child. Some parents were house wives who did not have any means of earning income and depended solely on their partners; those who did not have partners expected to get help from other people, especially relatives. This was a problem if they could not get the help they needed. They (including fathers) could not manage buying medicine for their children when they did not receive them at the hospital.

Daily life and activities of parents in this study were very much affected by the presence a hearing impaired child. Much time was spent looking after the child and as a result they were not able to do other important activities such as business. Income generation in the family was affected and these further raise family poverty as

explained by a mother of a child with hearing impairment.

The psychological and emotional challenges experienced by parents in this study where mothers had concerns about the future of their children due to the child's special needs, irregular or worsening of behaviour, and long term consequences. Emotional experience of grief, and inner pain or anger associated with having a hearing impaired child was expressed by mothers as having fears, frustrations, and guilt in dealing with the child's behaviour and attitude.

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the extent of psychosocial problems of parents of hearing impaired higher secondary school students. The data for the study was collected from parents of a hearing impaired students from special school for the deaf at higher secondary level. For the collection of the data, a self-developed questionnaire was employed. The responses obtained from the parents were examined carefully. The collected data were consolidated, analyzed and interpreted for the understanding of the objectives of the study which are restated below:

- To understand the impact of hearing impairment of children on their parents.
- To study the psycho social problems faced by the parents of hearing impaired students in their daily life activities.
- To suggest the remedial measures and coping strategies to reduce psychosocial problems among parents of hearing impaired students.

1. To understand the impact of hearing impairment of children on their parents.

Parents recalled that their first reaction to the diagnosis was one of "surprise" or of being "stunned", which was mentioned by the parents. Other linked emotions included puzzlement, heartache, rejection, doubt, and unhappiness. Parents reported strong levels of grief (including "shocked" or "heartbroken") suggesting the significant and remarkable emotional impact that diagnosis can have on families at the time.

Parents spoken about the difficulties when their child was supposed to be falling short of normal language outcomes for their age, and a number also commented on ongoing concerns in relation to school enrolment or attendance.

Parents' memorize of diagnosis explained, lack of awareness of the realistic impact of hearing loss and an overestimation regarding the likely usefulness of psychotherapy options.

2. To study the psycho social problems faced by the parents of hearing impaired students in their daily life activities.

Wang (2005) A newborn child is a miracle, a tiny, perfect new life; virtually all parents, looking at their infants for the first time, vow to protect them from harm, to give them only the best. Educating and training their children to be independent and productive members of society is a decides long responsibility at the very least. But if a child has physical or other challenges, the responsibility may never end.

Easter (2011)In every single category of children with disabilities parents express concern for specifics such as health and employment, as well as intangibles such as quality of life. Parents are also concerned about the cost of caring for their children with a disability for it usually have a negative impact on the ability to save for emergencies, retirements and simple luxuries such as eating in a restaurant. Frequently they have to deny their other children their basic needs if they will have to take care of the children with disability. Majority of parents with children with disabilities have multiple fears for their children after their death. They worry about their children's living situation, the emotional stability and the quality of life. They also worry about their finances and the ability to support themselves and the feeling of unpreparedness for the future. The study therefore investigated the problems of theparents who go through in taking care of their children with hearing impairment.

3. To suggest the remedial measures and coping strategies to reduce psychosocial problems among parents of hearing impaired students

Role of the parents: No one is prepared to be the parent of a handicapped child. The parent(s) primarily learn about their child through an experience of family living, and the professionals working with these parents must focus on their experiences which are unique in every individual case. Although parents may share common problems and reactions; the combinations of possible reactions, the intensity of the reactions, and the

duration of the reactions are some factors that necessitate that each family be considered individually. Parental adjustment may consist of any or all the following stages:

- Understanding the problem
- Identification of the problem
- Look for a cause
- Search for a treatment, and
- Acceptance of the child

The parents should bear the following in mind: Foster feelings of self-esteem in your child. · Do not judge the performance of their child with other siblings. All children have strengths and competencies, and these strengths must be recognized and reinforced. Parents who express trust provide a major strength in helping children triumph over difficulty and become flexible. Parents can help children develop a sense of dependability and involvement in their family, and the ward in general. Parents can provide opportunities for their child to make choices and decisions, and encourage self-discipline. Parents can help the children deal efficiently with their mistakes and failures. If possible, parents should attend guidance programmers along with the society.

Conclusion

Our society has urbanized at a faster rate. But the general approach towards the special children needs to be altered.

They are not to be sympathized; protected, ridiculed rather they need to be helped in growing and developing within their strengths and limitations. Their education or training should begin at home, thereafter special schools and institutions may be involved for their education and training. The society and the state, then should take responsibility for their rehabilitation and adjustment.

Parents and guardians play a most important role in serving children grow and widen to their full potential. As children grow in the families they most significantly depend on

their parents or guardians for basic needs support such as food, shelter, education, protection and care at all times but especially during life difficulties and times of crisis. Disability in early days and teenage years can be endless and very disturbing, requiring suitable awareness, help and support from caregivers. Thus, parents or guardians and relatives living with children with hearing impairment have extra responsibilities and roles to care for them as they do for other healthy children. In this study ‘children’ means any male or female persons not more than twelve years of age, and a ‘parent’ is a biological mother or father or anybody who assumes that role. The importance of family support for the growth and development of children and the role it plays as a determinant of whether children will receive health care or not, cannot be overemphasized.

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