

Perception of Parental Behavior and its Impact on Academic Performance of Sensory and Mobility Impaired Students

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Abstract:

In today's competitive world education is necessity for man after food, clothing, and shelter. Children with impairments are among the most disadvantaged in terms of access to schooling and completion of elementary education. The present research paper is associated with one of the most indispensable issues related to special education and disability rehabilitation. The aim of this paper was to study the parental attitude towards the academic performance of their children especially sensory and mobility impaired at the primary level in Amravati Division of Maharashtra. Survey method was adopted and the data were collected by means of an interview schedule and check list. The study reveals that most of the parents are not aware of the strengths and limitations of their children and they do not put full efforts for academic progress of their children with disabilities. Some parents are illiterate, some are busy in earning to survive and some parents are over assured on their wards.

Introduction:

Education is one the fundamental rights of every individual, irrespective of their age, sex, caste, religion and their ability or disability. Though the Government of India has taken various initiatives to accelerate the process of educational mainstreaming of the persons with differential abilities, it is still in its infancy in the State of Maharashtra. World Health Organization (1978) proposes the assumption of three-tier classification system including impairment, functional limitations and disability. Impairment leads to functional limitations and functional limitations leads to disability. Disability is the consequence of an impairment that may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, developmental, or some combination of these. A disability may be present from birth, or occur during a person's lifetime. A disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus, disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives.

An individual is considered as disabled if he or she has any impairment in the past or is seen as disabled based on a personal or group standard or norm. Such impairments may include physical, sensory and cognitive or developmental disabilities. Mental disorders (also known as psychiatric or psychological disabilities) and various types of chronic disease may also qualify as disability.

Sensory Disability:

Students with sensory disabilities such as those who are visually impaired, deaf, or hearing impaired often bring auxiliary aids and adaptive equipment to the classroom.

- **Visual Impairment:**

Visual impairment is the functional and transitory loss that occurs at the external or tissue level, which primarily causes due to ocular, general diseases, and injuries. Visual impairment can lead to visual disability or visual handicap depending upon the degree of impairment and societal reaction. Blindness refers to a condition where a person suffers from any of the conditions: (i) total absence of sight. (ii) visual acuity not exceeding 6/60 or 20/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with correcting lenses; or (iii) limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of 20 degrees or worse. A person with low vision is one who has impairment of visual functioning even after treatment and/or standard refractive correction, and has a visual acuity of less than 6/18 to light perception, or a visual field of less than 10 degrees from the point of fixation, but who uses, or is potentially able to use, vision for planning and/or execution of a task.

- **Hearing Impairment:**

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing rely upon visual input rather than auditory input when communicating. Using visual aspects of communication (body language, gestures, and facial expression) often feels awkward to people who are accustomed to the auditory; however, it is essential that faculty learn to effectively communicate with students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Hearing loss is also described according to the site of damage to the auditory system: viz. conductive hearing loss, sensory-neural hearing loss or mixed hearing loss.

- **Mobility Impairment:**

Mobility impairments cover a great number of disabilities or conditions in this broad category. People become paraplegics or quadriplegics through accidents most often but mobility impairment could also be due to a person having cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, polio, paralysis, leprosy cured, and muscular dystrophy. Cerebral palsy (CP) is considered a neurological disorder caused by a non-progressive brain injury or malformation that occurs while the child's brain is under development. Cerebral palsy primarily affects body movement and muscle coordination.

Reviews of Related Literature:

In this section the investigator has attempted to note down some points which are relevant to the study on previous literature and a theoretical overview of the study.

Latha, K., (1983) conducted a study on 'Impact of parental attitude on social, emotional and educational adjustment of normal and handicapped students'. He found that the attitude of fathers and mothers of normal and handicapped students did not differ significantly for boys and girls; normal boys and handicapped girl showed better emotional adjustment than normal girls and handicapped boys; and the attitude of parents affected significantly the adjustment of handicapped girls but did not affect the adjustment of handicapped boys. Gwen Nagel and Karent Stobbs (2003) conducted a study on 'A parent perspective on new directions for Blind and Low Vision education services.' They found that, even families (12 parent participants) had more than one child who was blind or low vision. It was noted that one learner at primary level is in a total maori immersion setting, and a further maori learner was withdrawn from Kuru Kaupapa, because of a lack of resources and expertise to support his blindness education needs. Nayak, J. (2008) examined the 'attitude of both parents and teachers towards inclusive education'. Results of the study reported that teachers look forward to teaching in an inclusive environment and are ready to face the challenges. Result of the study also showed significant difference in the opinions of teachers of normal school.

Stephen Turner et al. (2008) conducted a study on 'School and parental factors that influence the academic progress of children with disabilities'. Stephen Turner and colleagues identified both school and parental factors that influence the academic progress of children with disabilities. Topor, D. R. et al. (2010) conducted a study on 'Parent involvement and student academic performance: A multiple meditational analysis.' Results indicated a statistically significant association between parent involvement and a child's academic performance, over and above the impact of the child's intelligence. The quality of the student-teacher relationship fully mediated the relation between parent involvement and teacher ratings of the child's classroom academic performance. Ukeli, Victor T. And Akem, Isaiah A. (2013) conducted a study on Parental Role in Mathematics Achievement of Visually Impaired. They found that parental role at school was positively associated with Mathematics achievement for students who began the study in primary school, and parental role at home was negatively associated with Mathematics achievement for students without a cognitive disability.

An Overview of the Related Literature:

From the of the above related reviews, different research studies reported till date, most of the studies are related to the educational problems of children with learning disabilities. Data over the last 30 years shows that there has been significant progress in preventing and curing visual impairment in many countries. Over the last decade, Brazil has been providing eye care services through the national social security system. Oman has completely integrated eye care service provision in the primary health care framework over the last decade and since 1995 India has made available funds for eye care service provision for the poorest at district level. But no researcher has studied the issue of sensory and mobility

disabilities in primary schools' students and their academic achievements. Similarly, there is no research carried out in Amravati Division of Maharashtra by any researcher considering the said issue especially the students with sensory and mobility impairments and their academic achievement in relation to attitude of their parents. Hence the investigator claims that this present study is unique one.

Research Questions:

From these brief reviews of related literature, following questions were raised for an empirical study on the academic achievement and educational problems of the primary schools' students with sensory and mobility impaired in Amravati Division of Maharashtra.

- i) Is the backwardness and lack of awareness of the family members responsible for education of those students with disabilities, especially the sensory and mobility impaired?
- ii) Is the attitude of the parents of those children influence negatively on education of those students with disabilities?
- iii) What is the level of the academic achievements of students with disabilities especially the sensory and mobility impaired?
- iv) Are the misconceptions of the parents responsible for academic development of children with disabilities?

Although, huge amounts are being spent for the noble cause of education and rehabilitation of students with sensory and mobility impairments, those students are still deprived, deficient and deviated from the mainstream of educational and social race. An attempt was being made to study the problem '**Perception of Parental Behavior and its Impact on Academic Performance of Sensory and Mobility Impaired Students**'

Significance of the Study:

Researches in the past frequently reported that the children with disabilities often displayed low educational aspirations in comparison with their normal counterparts. However, these findings were not always consistent. The present research is associated with one of the most indispensable issues related to special education and disability rehabilitation. Its finding will be helpful for the educational planners, professionals, specially the policy makers, and the multipurpose rehabilitation workers working for educational rehabilitation of the persons with sensory as well as mobility impairments. It will provide preliminary insight to the parents, teachers, head of the institutions, administrators and significant others for academic achievements and implications of their disability in learning. By which, the education of those disabled students, especially the sensory and mobility impaired students will be turned well. Thus, this study will have an immense significance in meeting the educational needs and in alleviating the problems of students with disabilities especially sensory and mobility impaired.

Objectives of the STUDY:

The study was undertaken with the following objectives in view:

- i. To identify students with disabilities especially the sensory and mobility impaired in the primary schools.
- ii. To find out the problems faced by the students especially the sensory and mobility impaired.
- iii. To know the parental attitude towards academic achievement of the children with disabilities especially the sensory and mobility impaired.

Limitation of the Study:

This study was delimited to the disabled students especially the sensory impaired (especially the visually and hearing impaired) and mobility impaired (especially the *Cerebral Palsied* and the Polio affected) students at primary level in the Amravati division of Maharashtra and their parents. Also, this study was limited to local language, culture and availability of parents during data collection.

Methodology of the Study:

Survey method was used for this study. Amravati division is one of the major administrative divisions of Maharashtra included five districts Akola, Amravati, Buldana, Yavatmal and Washim. As per the report of Sarwa Shiksha Abhiyan, the total number of sensory disabled students is 28,033 and mobility disabled students is 14,423 in Amravati division. This was the population of the study. In this study 200 Government aided primary schools were selected randomly, 40 each from five districts and 127 parents of students especially sensory and mobility impaired purposefully were considered. The techniques like participants observation technique, conversational analysis, description and interpretative techniques were used. In order to know about the role of the parents, the investigator developed an interview schedule for the parents of children especially with the sensory and mobility impaired.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

Analysis of data is a process of systematically applying statistical and logical techniques to describe, illustrate and interpret the obtained data. One of the objectives of the present research project is to study the parental attitude towards academic achievement of the children with disabilities especially the sensory and mobility impaired. Parents of children with physical challenges play a major role in their adjustment to handicap. Parental attitude are responsible for emotional climate of home in which a child with physical challenges grows. A total number of 127 parents were interviewed to know their responses about education of their children. The analysis and interpretation of an interview schedule has been logically presented in table 01 to 04 as follows:

Q. Is there any difficulty confronted by your disabled child in school? If yes which?

Table 01

Opinion of parents that, whether there is any difficulty confronted by their disabled child in the school

Variable Gender	Responses		Variable Area	Responses	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Male Parents	60%	40%	Rural	75%	25%
Female Parents	70%	30%	Urban	76%	24%

R Ref: The facts and figures in the above table are based on the collected field data during 2013-14

From the above table, it is revealed that 60% of male parents and 70% of female parents, 75% of parents residing in rural and 76% of parents residing in urban areas stated that, their children with disabilities confronted difficulties in their respective schools. On the other hand, it is found that 40% of male parents and 30% of female parents, 25% of parents residing in rural and 24% of parents residing in urban areas stated that, their children with disabilities do not confront any difficulty in their respective schools.

Observations: It is observed that, although the parents of the children have placed their wards in any of the formal educational set-up, all of them are not aware of the rights and provision of equal opportunity of their children with physical challenges. Most of the schools in rural and slum areas are not fully equipped with properly trained manpower and assistive devices. Some employees of the schools exhibit negative attitude towards those children and they do not pay proper attentions towards needs of those children with disabilities.

Q. Does your disabled ward receive various government educational concessions and facilities applicable for children with disabilities? (Even if placed in a special school)

Table 02

Views of parents that whether their disabled ward receive various government educational concessions and facilities applicable for children or not

Variable Gender	Responses		Variable Area	Responses	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Male Parents	46%	54%	Rural	40%	60%
Female Parents	78%	22%	Urban	54%	46%

Ref: The facts and figures in the above table are based on the collected field data during 2013-14

From the above table it is revealed that 46% of male parents and 78% of female parents, 40% of parents residing in rural and 54% of parents residing in urban areas stated that, their wards with disabilities receive various government educational concessions and facilities applicable for children with disabilities. On the other hand, it is found that 54% of male parents and 22% of female parents, 60% of parents residing in rural and 46% of parent residing in urban areas, stated that their wards with disabilities do not receive various government educational concessions and facilities applicable for children with disabilities.

Observations: It is observed that most of the parents are not aware of the rights and provision various concessions and facilities for their children with physical challenges. Even some parents do not know about disability certification. They do not know the way of making avail various government educational concessions and facilities applicable for children with disabilities. On the other hand, some parents don't have abundant time to put efforts for obtaining the same for their children due to struggle for their livelihood.

Q. Do you put full efforts for academic progress of your disabled child? (Even if placed in a special school) If no, give reasons.

Table 03

Outlook of parents that whether they put full efforts for academic progress of their disabled children or not

Variable Gender	Responses		Variable Area	Responses	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Male Parents	80%	20%	Rural	82%	18%
Female Parents	78%	22%	Urban	86%	14%

Ref: The facts and figures in the above table are based on the collected field data during 2013-14

From the above table it is revealed that, 80% of male parents and 78% of female parents, 82% of parents residing in rural and 86% parents residing in urban civil areas stated that, they put full efforts for academic progress of their children with disabilities. On the other hand, it is found that 20% of male parents and 22% of female parents, 18% of parents residing in rural and 14% of parent residing in urban civil areas stated that, they do not put full efforts for academic progress of their children with disabilities.

Observations: It is observed that, most of the parents have placed their wards with disabilities in any of the formal educational set-up. But all of them are not aware of the strengths and limitations of their children with physical challenges. They do not put full efforts for academic progress of their children with disabilities. Some parents are illiterate, some are busy in earning to survive and some parents are over assured on their wards.

Q. Do you participate in parents meetings organised by the school of your disabled ward? If yes, how many times?

Table 04

Showing whether they attend and participate in parents meetings organised by the school of their wards with disabilities or not.

Variable Gender	Responses		Variable Area	Responses	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Male Parents	80%	20%	Rural	88%	12%
Female Parents	90%	10%	Urban	80%	20%

Ref: The facts and figures in the above table are based on the collected field data during 2013-14

From the above table it is revealed that 80% of male parents and 90% of female parents, 88% of parents residing in rural and 80% of parents residing in urban civil areas stated that, they attend and participate in parents meetings organised by the school of their wards with disabilities. On the other hand, it is found that 20% of male parents and 10% of female parents, 12% of parents residing in rural and 20% of parent residing in urban areas stated that, they do not attend and participate in parents meetings organised by the school of their wards with disabilities.

Observations: It is observed that, most of the parents do not go to the schools of their children with disabilities regularly or do not attend and participate in parents meetings organized by the school of their wards with disabilities. Sometimes the school authorities do not invite the parents of children with disabilities. On the other hand, parents meetings of the schools commenced on pen and paper only, as the school authorities do not prefer interference of parents. It may be their apprehension that the parents may complaint about things, which are not appropriate for their children with disabilities.

Conclusions:

On the basis of analysis and interpretation of the field data, the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. Most of the parents are not aware of the strengths and limitations of their children and they do not put full efforts for academic progress of their children with disabilities. Some parents are illiterate, some are busy in earning to survive and some parents are over assured on their wards.
2. Almost 80% of male parents and 90% of female parents stated that, they always express concern about problems of their children with disabilities. It is observed that, all the parents of the children with physical challenges are neither equally educated, nor belong to similar socio-economic background. Some of them demonstrate negative attitudes e.g. denial, rejection or overprotection. Some parents have misconceptions as result of some traditional or religious beliefs and superstitions. On the other hand, some parents don't have copious time to spare much more for those children due to struggle for their livelihood.
3. Nearly 90% of male parents and 86% of female parents stated that, they put their full efforts in developing social relations of their children with disabilities. It is observed that, all the parents of the children with physical challenges are neither equally educated, nor belong to similar socio-economic background. Some of them demonstrate negative attitudes e.g. denial, rejection or overprotection. Some parents have misconceptions as result of some traditional or religious beliefs and superstitions. Those parents hesitate taking their wards with disabilities with them, whenever they go away from home.
4. It is revealed that the parents have following expectations in the context of academic progress of disabled child:
 - a) Some parents opined that their children with disabilities must be educated alike their normal peers. They should go to school regularly, able to read and write all the things of the syllabi of their scholastic grades. They must be able earn for their livelihood and independent in their future lives. Some opined that, there must be age according growth and development (i.e. physical, social, psychological, social etc. in their children alike other children of their neighbourhoods.
 - b) In the same way some of them emphasized the role of teachers in making their children average academic achievers. Some of them stressed that government must provide all the facilities to those children beneficial for them and need to monitor the execution of all plans and provisions made for them.
 - c) A few parents opined that sometimes the teachers are not paying appropriate attention towards progress of those children. They need to pay more attention towards academic aspects of children with disabilities and, as they need special attention and commitment from the teachers end. If the schools of their children and their teachers will help them according to their needs, those children will be able to live happy lives.

d) Some parents who have accepted the disabilities of their children opined that, their children with disabilities need to be compensated from his limitations up to a possible extent. Teachers and staff members of the schools should look at their strengths instead of their limitations. Let them learn what they can do their best and guide them suitably to be a worthy citizen.

e) On the other hand, a few parents who have not accepted the disability of their children expect the growth and development of their children with disabilities must be similar to other normal children of their neighbourhoods. Those parents anticipate that, their children should be educated alike other children and need to be in good jobs in future and earn better to live comfortable lives.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS:

Parents play major roles in declining the limitations and in education of children with disabilities. In this context, the investigator made the following recommendations for the parents of disabled children:

- Parents should not disparage their children with disabilities at any situation and need to encourage participating children with disabilities in different games, social activities with their normal peers of the community.
- Parents must not bestow any sort of punishment on their children with physical challenges; especially children with visual impairments and mobility disabilities or show rejection towards them, by which their social, emotional and educational development will be effected adversely.
- Every child has its own inbuilt potentials. So parent should not have certain expectations from their children with physical challenges; especially children with visual impairments and mobility disabilities.
- They must put their best efforts to help their child with disabilities to develop his or her innate qualities.
- Parents should accept their children with physical challenges; especially children with visual impairments and mobility openly, and should never possess any sort of negative attitude.
- Parents should be sympathetic towards them. Parents need to recognize their special role in supporting the well-being of their children with disabilities.

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