



Physical rehabilitation of functionally impaired children (10-15 years)

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to explore the physical and mental adjustment of functionally impaired institutionalized children and providing physical rehabilitation at a special children education institution of Gurugram. The study was exploratory in nature and case profiles were prepared based on the individual interviews, observations and rating scales. The data presented below shows the analysis of these tests on 10 adolescents (10-15 years) individually. The results revealed that the most of the children were in the category of well-adjusted in school environment. Physical and mental analysis revealed that most of the children had positive relationship with their peers, but there were few who needed assistance in doing physical activities, as they remained functionally dependent. With the help of physiotherapist and Orthotist, various physical and neurological approaches were being used in order to bring them back to their normal day to day activities.

Keywords: physical rehabilitation, functionally impaired, children

Introduction

“Disability is a matter of perception. If you can do just one thing well, you’re needed by someone.” -Martina Navratilova

According to the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (World Health Organization), any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in a manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

Functionally Impaired individuals are those who have reduction in the physical or mental levels is insufficient to interfere with managing day-to-day tasks. Parents were more likely to report significant impairments in home and school functioning than children. However, few systematic gender or age effects were noted.

The physical challenge is a relatively visible challenge and it becomes more so by the societies prejudices for a disfigured body. The person who doesn't appear normal is an applied label, which makes his adjustment difficult. Though the society has modernized enough to accept the disability and work out ways to face these challenges, yet these facilities have not reached everywhere.

School is one of the mechanisms of adjustment for the physically challenged, because they usually have normal functioning brains. It is only in their physical stature that problems are there and there are various orthotic and prosthetic devices to aid their adjustment to environment. The teachers training curriculum too prepares the teachers for teaching special children in regular classrooms.

According to Ottaway's view, “The school may be regarded as a social invention to serve society for the specialized teaching of young”.

Healthy environment in school can help them in better adjustment and fighting with the clichéd beliefs. They may

require a little more efforts on the part of the teachers and the students to help them in better adjustment. A teacher or educator should be less interested in the physical aspects of disability and should be more concerned with the manner in which it affect his functioning in a learning situation (Panda, 1994)^[5].

Along with the self and the teacher, it is the peer group too which helps in proper adjustment in every field. Hardman (1990)^[3] suggests that the classroom can be a useful place to discuss disabilities and to encourage understanding and acceptance of the child with a physical or health impairment. He says that classmates should learn to use appropriate terminology and to offer the correct kind of assistance when needed.

Some adjustments are also required in the structure of the school building, but may not be possible in the improvised government schools, which usually cater to the needs of these children, in India. So it is the children only who have to make major adjustments in a society still marked with prejudices and lack of planning especially in the educational sector.

Methodology

The study was exploratory in nature hence in-depth data was collected from 10 physically challenged institutionalized children in the age group of 10-15 years. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Tools used for the collection of data were: School Adjustment Checklist – is a 45 item checklist, yielding scores in 7 different dimensions of the school adjustment - general characteristics, frustration reactions, school adjustment, social adjustment, large group relationship, behavior related class assignment, and annoying behavior; Sociometry – was administered on individual child to know the preference of his/her peers regarding different activities as with- whom does the child like to sit, class

representative, liking for sharing things, like to play with, share lunch with, like to talk, cracking jokes and best friend. After the collection of data, both qualitative as well as quantitative analysis were done. For quantitative analysis, statistical measures were used. Mean and standard deviation were calculated to know the level of children’s adjustment as measured on school adjustment checklist. With the help of physiotherapist and Orthotist, various physical and neurological approaches were being used in order to bring them back to their normal day to day activities.

Results and discussions

The sample of the study consists of 10 physically challenged children both males and females. Results revealed that majority of the respondents were females in the age group of 10-15 years, were 1st born and the age of onset of disability in most of these children was after birth.

Table 1 reveals the mean educational qualification of the respondents was 7th class and was from nuclear families. Mean age of joining the institution was 7 years; visits made to home by children were yearly whereas visits made by parents to the institution were weekly.

Table 1: Background information

Variables	Mean
Studying in class	7 th
Type of family	Nuclear
Age of joining the institution	7 years
Visits made to home by children	Yearly
Visits made to institution by parents	Weekly

Table 3: Showing the Peer Interaction of Children

Choser	Meera	Mamta	Mohit	Bharti	Anuj	Dipika	Kartik	Jyoti	Saloni	Pardeep
Meera	--	--	2	--	1	--	--	3	--	--
Mamta	--	--	--	--	1	--	2	3	--	--
Mohit	1	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3
Bharti	--	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	1
Anuj	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	3
Dipika	--	1	2	--	--	--	--	--	3	--
Kartik	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	2
Jyoti	--	1	2	--	--	--	--	--	3	--
Saloni	--	1	2	--	3	--	--	--	--	--
Pardeep	--	2	1	--	--	--	--	--	3	--
1 st choice	2	4	1	--	2	--	--	--	--	1
2 nd choice	--	2	4	--	--	--	1	1	1	1
3 rd choice	--	1	--	--	1	--	--	2	4	2
Total	2	7	5	--	3	--	1	3	5	4

Analysis of Sociometry

The most popular and widely used form of Sociometric evaluation is the sociogram. In this approach, all children were given the opportunity to answer the specific questions, which were designed to know what they feel about each other.

In this sociogram, Mamta received most of the points so she is the star in the sociogram. She has been chosen many times by her peer group. It was inferred that she was the most familiar child in the group.

Those who have emerged as co-stars are Mohit, Saloni and Pardeep, they received maximum number of points but they were not the most familiar children in the group.

Table 2 reveals that majority of the children were well adjusted to average adjusted in School Adjustment Checklist.

Table 2: School adjustment checklist

Categories	Well adjusted	Average adjusted
School environment	5	5
General category	1	9
Frustration reaction category	6	4
School adjustment category	9	3
Social adjustment category	3	7
Large group relationship*	2	7
Behaviour related	6	4
Annoying behaviour	8	2

* Child was poorly adjusted in the large group category

Table 2 reveals that 50% of the total children were well adjusted in School Adjustment Checklist whereas 50% of them were average adjusted; 90% of them average adjusted in the School Adjustment Checklist; 70% of them are average adjusted in social adjustment category and large group relationship; however, majority of them are well adjusted in behaviour related stuff and annoying behaviour category.

Teachers gave high rate to all their students in Teachers Rating Scale (TRS); where as it is inferred that majority of the children rated their teachers in the category of high on the Teacher Student Interaction Checklist. Peer Student Interaction Checklist (Sociometry) analysis reveals that most of the children have positive relationship with their peers, but there are few who are isolates and need guidance in this direction.

Those who have emerged as co-stars are Mohit, Saloni and Pardeep, they have received large number of points but the group less preferred them. They were as popular as Mamta in the group.

Neglecters are Meera, Anuj, Kartik and Jyoti. Although they were not totally rejected by their peers, but still were not viewed as desirable. They were not familiar within the group.

Bharti and Dipika have been identified as isolates in the sociogram. Bharti and Dipika were those children who received no points at all in the matrices format. They were seen totally rejected by their peers.

After the analysis, physiotherapist and Orthotist visited the

institute, various physical and neurological approaches were being used by her in order to bring them back to their normal routine at max. Also counselling session was held by the Counsellor to make them comfortable with their present environment and to build healthy relationship with one another.

Suggestions

- 1) *For Parents:* The Immunization of a child should be done in time for a child from early infancy till the age of vaccination to prevent the chances of related infections leading to impairments causing physical disabilities. Precautions should be taken during pregnancy in relation to medicines, general health, and hygiene to avoid being the carrier of unwanted infections to be transmitted to the newborn; Accountability of the Family history should be taken care of at the time of conception to prevent the genetic disorders. Children with disability should not be neglected in the family and should be dealt with the utmost care.
- 2) *For Teachers:* Teachers should not be biased; should not lay stress on academics only should encourage children even in their small achievements; games and sports should be included in the curriculum of these children.
- 3) *For Institutions:* Vocational training in computer education and other fields should be given to these children, as these are needed in the modern world. Also life skill education should be imparted to them.
- 4) *For Community:* Community members should have positive attitude towards these children and should give them some time.
- 5) *For Government:* Government should see the proper functioning of the dispensaries in the far flung areas especially hilly areas to which these children mostly belong and should organize seminar and camps on courses, prevention, cure, adequacy of rights and rehabilitation provided to such children.
- 6) *For NGO's:* These Non-governmental bodies meet the demands of the functionally impaired people or the families with challenged people in order to provide early intervention of the disorder they are fighting with, opened several schools where all the related services are offered under one roof, collect funds to help in related surgeries and health treatments. These bodies not only give assistance in health recovery, they equally support for employment for physically impaired in various institutes, local companies for their financial independence. Even these days, in transportation special services, places are reserved for the disabled in need.
- 7) *Physiotherapy based Rehabilitation:* The physical rehabilitation of the students can be done with the utmost care. District Disability Rehabilitation Centers and other institutes are treating these physical disabilities depending on the level of their injury and severity. These students can use various assistive devices like sticks, elbow crutches, wheelchairs to let them perform their physical tasks of reaching different places and making them physically able to continue with their schools on regular basis. These students are evaluated pre/post rehabilitation and were given counselling for the approach to be used for their

recovery along with their families to help a children live a functionally independent life.

- 8) *Special Educational Institutes:* These institutes should put efforts by calling counsellors at least once in a month so that the children can come out with their problems and get solutions for the same

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