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“CHALLENGES FACED BY PARENTS IN PARENTING HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN”

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Abstract:

Parenting to a hearing impaired is of great responsibility where they should listen, spend time playing and talking with them, should not forget daily routines that will help him to hear and experience repetitive talk, games, songs and rhymes also should make sure that they check their child's hearing aids/Cochlear implants every day and should also know where to go for help and the more important is to respond to the hearing impaired child with talk and smiles. Given the importance of the parent-child relationship, a better understanding of the challenges experienced by parents parenting children with a hearing loss is needed. Exploring some of the challenges that shape these parents' parenting experiences is a valuable step in the process of building knowledge. The present study explores the challenges faced by parents in parenting hearing-impaired children, aiming to understand the emotional, social, educational, and communication-related difficulties encountered in their day-to-day lives. Hearing sounds and words helps children learn to talk and understand. A child with hearing loss misses out on these sounds. This can cause problems with speaking, reading, school success, and social skills. It is important to have your child tested if you think they have trouble hearing. Data was collected from 60 parents of hearing-impaired children using the survey method by employing a structured questionnaire to gather relevant insights. Objectives of the study highlights about the problems faced by parents having hearing impaired child, their family history, importance of hearing aid, methods of communication used during conversation and also to analyse the support given by the school. The responses were subjected to

percentage analysis, and the results were carefully interpreted to identify common patterns and significant concerns. The findings highlight various challenges including communication barriers, lack of access to resources, emotional stress, and societal stigma.

Keywords: hearing impairment, parents, parenting, problems, communication....

Introduction:

How childhood disability impacts family life is an area in which greater understanding is emerging, but much research is needed to fully conceptualize how disability influences parents and families. This is the case for a broad range of disability types, including children with hearing loss and their families, the focus of this paper. Considerable evidence suggests that parenting stress affects parent-child relationships and important child outcomes. Higher levels of parenting stress have been related to poorer social and emotional development and higher rates of behaviour problems in both deaf and hearing children (Crnic & Low, 2002; Hintermair, 2006; Lederberg & Everhart, 2000). Early childhood hearing impairment presents unique and long-term challenges for parents, including communication difficulties, increased medical/audiological care, and educational challenges (Lederberg & Golbach, 2002). One of the most emotional taxing yet gratifying parts of raising a deaf child is that the mother is typically the one member of the family most capable of communicating with the deaf child. She becomes not only a mother, but an educator, social guidance counsellor, communication specialist, interpreter, and audiologist consultant. We are blessed to be able to hear the beauty of the world's melodies. Some are not so lucky. Deaf or hearing-impaired have an everyday struggle of communication or interactions. The deaf children who are born deaf and raised deaf have a struggle that the hearing cannot understand. The deaf must learn a language that involves communication through movement of the hands. It is not miming! The children must be able to communicate to each other, but never hearing speech makes everything very difficult for young deaf kids learning their language. The children can communicate through Sign Language, or some deaf even get hearing aids or a cochlear implant, which enables them to hear a little. Hearing impaired is one of the most common congenital disorders that occurs without outward symptoms. The best time to diagnose the hearing disorder is from the birth to 6 month that is concerned by the parents. This is done by the audiologist. It is clear that the reduction of child's hearing can affect his speech growth, social personality, and education, especially when this disorder occurs in utero due to genetic causes. That is why the age of diagnosis of hearing loss is before 3 months of age and the onset of rehabilitation (before 6

months) is an important factor in improving speech and language in hearing impaired children. Today, by the hearing technologies, the deaf children or the children who suffer the hearing disorder are learning the solutions for hearing and speaking by the methods that were impossible many years ago. This teaching goes beyond speaking, and the deaf and dumb children are able to read stories, sing, tell a joke, create art, enjoy the music, and know about their around world the same as the health. There are no limitations for the deaf children. It is adequate that the parents provide something they need to understand the issues and use the method that is suitable for their children.

Review of related literature

Davids, Ronel & Roman, Nicolette & Schenck, Rinie. (2021) conducted a study to explore the challenges experienced by hearing parents when parenting a child with hearing loss. Using a qualitative purposive sampling design, interviews were conducted with 13 parents (9 mothers, 4 fathers) residing in Cape Town, South Africa. Four salient themes emerged, namely: communication is difficult, hard, and frustrating, lack of knowledge and information about hearing loss makes it difficult to parent, little or no support makes for a lonely journey, and support identified by parents for parents. The findings of the study have important implications for collaboration and partnerships between parents and health and family practitioners within South Africa for the design and development of supportive interventions for parents parenting a child with hearing loss.

Hamzah, Nur Fatimah Ainun & Umat, Cila & Harithasan, Deepashini & Goh, Bee See. (2021) conducted a study aimed to identify the challenges faced by parents in seeking a diagnosis of hearing loss for their children. The study utilized a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions to obtain information about parents' experiences during the diagnosis period and their challenges when going through that process. In this research, a total of 16 parents of children who were diagnosed with moderate to profound sensorineural hearing loss and received intervention within three years at the time of the study participated. Ten of the children were cochlear implant users, and six were hearing aid users. Thematic analysis was used to analyse themes generated from data according to the objective. Four main themes and 17 subthemes were identified from this study. The four main themes were parents emotion, parental knowledge, others' professional services. Challenges that parents faced often include emotional behaviours such as

feeling guilty and devastated during the diagnosis, lack of information sharing from healthcare givers, lack of knowledge on childhood hearing loss among parents, support from families, seek for a second opinion, worry about other's acceptance, longer time for diagnosis to confirm, late referral to related professional and no priority for the appointment.

Gharashi, Karim. (2015) conducted a study to analyse the challenges of deaf and hearing-impaired children. Hearing disorder and hearing-impaired have many causes and many consequences. But children are more vulnerable than adults. Parents' reactions and social reactions are the challenges that the deaf and hearing-impaired children are dealt with. The parents' reaction and their emotions to their children due to their disabilities. These emotions are sometimes like the extreme care and support or sometimes are like the children's rejection, discouragement of care, and transferring them to the rest home, etc. Social reaction and attitude of the society towards these children, and emotions such as compassion and pity or blame provide a difficult to the deaf children and cause the disorders in children's mood and behaviour. In this research first, we study the causes of hearing impairment and hearing impaired, and the challenges that these children are faced with them.

Hearing Impairment

Hearing impairment is the inability of an individual to hear sounds adequately. This may be due to improper development, damage or disease to any part of the hearing mechanism. Hearing is a prerequisite for the development of normal speech & language. A child learns to speak by hearing the speech of others in the family and surroundings. Hearing impairment is an invisible impairment. Keen observation is necessary in order to identify a deaf child/individual. Hearing impairment at birth or in early childhood has disastrous effects on the child's overall development. These effects vary depending upon the age of onset, nature and degree of hearing impairment.

Aims and Objectives

- To analyse the problems faced by the parents having hearing impaired child.
- To understand the family history for the cause of hearing impairment among the child.
- To know the importance of hearing aids.
- To analyse the method of communication used during conversation.
- To know the support given by the school.

Methodology

In order to get an understanding of the challenges faced by parents in parenting hearing impaired children, the researcher conducted the study in two folds. The researcher collected data through primary and secondary methods of data collection. For Primary data, the researcher applied the survey method wherein the researcher gathered data from parents having hearing impaired children across the city of Bangalore. A total of 60 parents with hearing impaired children were part of the survey. The researcher also gathered data from secondary sources such as academic journals, as well as research articles. Collected data was analysed using percentage analysis and interpretation was done accordingly.

Data Analysis

The purpose of the study was to “the challenges faced by parents in parenting hearing impaired children,” with various variables. The collected data is analyzed and the results obtained are interpreted systematically. To find out the impact of “the challenges faced by parents in parenting hearing impaired children,” the researcher used a self-developed questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered on 60 parents with hearing impaired children of Bangalore City. The collected data was scored and tabulated accordingly.

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Table-1

Sl. No.	Variable	Groups	Number	Percentage
1.	Presence of hearing impairment	By birth	41	68.4
		Occurred later	19	31.6
2.	Family history of hearing impairment	Yes	38	63.2
		No	22	36.8
		Sometimes	00	00
3.	Does the child use hearing aid	Yes	38	63.2
		No	16	26.3
		Sometimes	06	10.1
4.	Use of hearing aid	Always	19	31.6
		Frequently	16	26.3
		Sometimes	03	5.3
		Rarely	16	26.3
		Never	06	10.5

5.	Benefits of hearing aid	Yes	44	73.7
		No	13	21.1
		Sometimes	03	5.3
6.	Parents will be able to understand what their child speaks	Yes	44	73.7
		No	13	21.1
		Sometimes	03	5.3
7.	Communication hurdles between hearing impaired child and their parents	Yes	41	31.6
		No	19	68.4
8.	Communication hurdles faced	Always	10	15.8
		Frequently	13	21.1
		Sometimes	03	5.3
		Rarely	31	52.6
		Never	03	5.3
9.	Feeling Stressed while communicating	Always	03	5.3
		Frequently	06	10.5
		Sometimes	16	26.3
		Rarely	19	31.6
		Never	16	26.3
10.	Way of communication	Lip reading	06	10.5
		Sign Language	32	52.6
		Gesture	22	36.8
		Written communication	00	00
11.	Feeling embarrassed at social gathering	Yes	35	31.6
		No	19	57.9
		Sometimes	06	10.5
12.	Child's ease of communication with other children	Yes	41	68.4
		No	16	26.3
		Sometimes	03	5.3
13.	School the child is enrolled in	Special School	25	42.1
		Normal School	16	26.3
		Integrated School	19	31.6
14.		Always	00	00

	Difficulty faced while helping your child in Academics	Frequently	10	15.8
		Sometimes	16	26.3
		Rarely	25	42.1
		Never	09	15.8
15.	Support from educational institution	Always	32	52.6
		Frequently	06	10.5
		Sometimes	06	10.5
		Rarely	13	21.1
		Never	03	5.3
16.	Support from the faculty of the education Institution	Class teacher	29	47.4
		Subject teacher	03	5.3
		Principal	16	26.3
		Peer group	06	10.5
		Counsellor	06	10.5
17.	Preferred assistance at educational institution	Yes	54	89.5
		No	06	10.5

- From the gathered data 41 (68.4 %) respondents suggested that hearing impairment of the child occurred since birth, while 19 (31.6%) suggested that hearing impairment occurred later.

According to the above table 38 (63.2%) respondents agreed that there was a family history of hearing impairment while 22 (36.8%) respondents disagreed with family history of hearing impairment.

On gathering information about the usage of hearing aid by the child it was seen that 38 (63.2%) respondent suggested that their child uses hearing aid, 16 (26.3%) did not use hearing aid and 6 (10.1%) of the respondents used hearing aid sometimes.

As per data collected it is clear that 19 (31.6%) respondents responded that their child always used hearing aid, 16 (26.3%) respondents responded that their children used hearing aid frequently and rarely respectively, while 3 (5.3%) respondents indicated that their child uses hearing aid sometimes and 6 (10.5%) respondents responded that their child never used the hearing aid.

The above table shows that 44 (73.3%) respondents agreed that their child benefitted from the use of hearing aid, 13 (21.1%) respondents disagreed that their child was not benefitted from the use of hearing aid and 3 (5.3%) respondents responded that their children were sometimes benefitted from hearing aids.

It is clear from the table that 44 (73.3%) respondents were able to understand what their children spoke and 13 (21.1%) respondents were not able to understand what their children spoke and also 3 (5.3%) respondents responded that they were able to understand sometimes what their child spoke.

Above table proves that 41 (68.4%) respondents faced communication hurdles with their child and 19 (31.6%) respondents did not face communication hurdles with their child.

According to the above table it is clear that 10 (15.8%) respondents always faced communication hurdles with their hearing impaired children, 13 (21.1%) respondents frequently faced communication hurdles and 31 (52.6%) respondents rarely face communication hurdles with their children. Also 3 (5.3%) respondents faced communication hurdles sometimes, never respectively.

The above table discusses about the stress faced by the parents while communicating with hearing impaired children. 3 (5.3%) respondents always experienced stress, 6 (10.5%) frequently experienced stress, 19 (31.6%) respondents rarely experienced stress and 16 (26.3%) respondents sometimes and never experienced stress.

Table also shows the different modes of communication with children having hearing impairment. 32 (52.6%) respondents used sign language, 22 (36.8%) respondents used gestures, 6 (10.5%) respondents used lip reading for communication with their children and it was clear that no respondents communicated using written communication.

It is clear that 35 (57.9%) respondents felt embarrassed at social gatherings and 19 (31.6%) respondents did not feel embarrassed at social gatherings, it is also clear that 6 (10.5%) respondents sometimes felt embarrassed at social gatherings.

Discussing the child's ease of communication with other children 41 (68.4%) agreed that their child communicated easily while 16 (26.3%) did not communicated easily and 3 (5.3%) respondents responded that their child sometimes responded easily.

According to the gathered data 25 (42.1%) respondents enrolled their children to special schools, 16 (26.3%) respondents enrolled their children in their normal schools and 19 (31.6%) respondents enrolled their children in integrated schools.

Above table discusses the academic difficulties faced by parents, 10 (15.8%) respondents frequently faced academic difficulties, 16 (26.3%) respondents sometimes faced academic difficulties, 25 (42.1%) respondents rarely faced academic difficulties and 9(15.8%) never faced academic difficulties.

It is clear from the above table that 32 (52.6%) respondents always received support from the educational institution, 6 (10.5%) respondents frequently and sometimes received support from the educational institution respectively, 13 (21.1%) rarely received support from the educational institution and 3 (5.3%) never received support from the educational institution.

As per the above table it is clear that 29 (47.4%) respondents were supported by class teachers, 03 (5.3%) respondents were supported by subject teachers, 16 (26.3%) respondents were supported by principal, 6 (10.5%) were supported by peer group and counsellors.

Finally it is clear from the table that 54 (89.5%) respondents preferred assistance at educational institutions and 6 (10.5%) respondents never preferred assistance at educational institutions.

Conclusion

Emotion is identified as the biggest challenge faced by parents in the process of diagnosis for their children with hearing loss. Hence, management of parental emotion need to be emphasized by health professional as it influences the acceptance of parents toward the child's diagnosis. Parents of deaf or hard of hearing children should be assisted in every way possible to create a learning-rich environment and to communicate as much as possible with their children. In this regard, parents should communicate with their child as richly as possible, to the best of your ability. For most children, early intervention is necessary to develop age appropriate language skills. In this regards, Parents need to rely on healthcare professionals and need to team up with them to provide better care for their child. Thus, the support from these professionals is considered a coping strategy for the parents. The other coping strategies included were better access to services, comprehensive services, and counselling. It is important to encourage your child to wear the hearing aid for all his/her waking hours, the child should be exposed to only one language until s/he develops his/her basic language skills (a second language can be introduced at the appropriate time). More than these parents should face your child while speaking. Then should also talk to the child all the time in a natural manner and give him/her adequate time and opportunity to express himself/herself. Parents should know not to avoid talking to the child assuming that s/he will not understand.

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