

A SURVEY OF THE HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN REGARDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN NORMAL SCHOOLS.*

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Introduction

The education of the aurally handicapped has been among the earliest of the Special Educational problems to receive organized attention. Still systematic research is needed in the field and this has been frequently mentioned by the pioneers in this field. Also approaches in the education of the aurally handicapped change from day to day.

According to Bentzen (1962), every handicapped child must be treated as a normal child and it is good for the normal society to realise and accept that a part of it is handicapped. He also emphasises the need for placing the hearing handicapped children with the teachers who are trained to teach normal children in a normal situation. The same thing is repeatedly emphasized in India also by N. Rathna (1970, 1972, 1975), J. Bharathraj (1975), S. Nikam (1975) and others. The situation in India, to-day is such that one should willingly experiment with this approach. If we find that this method can be applied in India, it would be of great help (N. Rathna, 1970).

Aim of the Study-

To verify this, children are being recommended now in normal schools and a number of hearing impaired children are attending the normal schools in various parts of Mysore city.

The present study was designed to study the problems of these hearing impaired students, their parents and their teachers, regarding their scholastic achievements in normal schools.

The study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Do the students who wear the hearing aid for a longer duration in a day achieve better scholastic achievements than those using the hearing aid for a shorter duration in a day?
2. Do the students, receiving parental help in doing their school home works, achieve better scholastic achievements?
3. Is attending Speech Therapy a must for good scholastic achievement for these students?

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4. Is bilingualism or multilingualism a factor in better scholastic achievements of these students?
5. Does regular consultation with the professionals like Speech Pathologist, Audiologist, etc., improve the scholastic achievement in these students?
6. What are the other problems faced by the parents and teachers of these students regarding their scholastic achievements?
7. Is it advisable to recommend the hearing impaired students in normal schools?
8. Is the scholastic achievement of the hearing impaired students in normal schools same as other normal students?

Definitions of Some Terms Used

1. *Hearing Impaired children:* are those who are born impaired or who have suffered the loss early in infancy before the speech and language patterns are acquired (Streng, 1958).

2. *Normal schools:* are those where there are no special education classes and the teachers have received no special training for teaching the handicapped (S. Nikam, 1975).

Methodology

Selection of subjects

For the selection of subjects for this study, the following criteria have been considered:

1. Severe sensory neural loss, both congenital and acquired before the development of speech and language.
2. Average intelligence or above (I.Q. of 90 and above is considered to be average.)
3. Complete hearing evaluation and a suitable hearing aid recommendation by a professional.
4. Admission to a normal school in Mysore City.
5. They should be free from any other handicap.

It was found that only thirty students satisfied all the above criteria and so they were selected as subjects. These thirty subjects comprised of fifteen males, of age range from 3 years to 13 years (Mean age, 8.26 years) and fifteen females of age range from 6 years to 20 years (Mean age, 12.47 years).

Selection of schools

It was found that the thirty subjects selected were enrolled in seventeen schools in the City. These seventeen schools included:

Nursery schools	3
Primary schools	11
High schools	3

Out of these schools, it was found that there were eleven Kannada medium schools, five English medium schools and one Urdu medium school. It was also found that all the seventeen schools were co-educational.

Formation of questionnaires

Separate questionnaires were framed for the parents and class teachers of the subjects. The questionnaires for the parents consisted of fifty one questions and that for the teachers consisted of forty-four questions. The questionnaires thus prepared were administered individually to both teachers and parents in their leisure time with previous appointment.

Results and Discussion

From the analysis of data collected from both parents and teachers, the problems were studied under the following categories:

1. General information.
2. Knowledge about hearing loss and hearing aids.
3. Communication.
4. Speech stimulation and home training.
5. Problems in teaching.
6. Consultation with professionals.
7. Problems of Bilingualism and Multilingualism.
8. Scholastic achievements.
9. Problems in games and sports.
10. Social problems.
11. Opinion of teachers regarding normal school admission.
12. Parental ambitions.

Results were analysed and discussed. The following were the findings of this study:

1. It was found that twenty-four subjects were using the hearing aids throughout the day and the remaining six were not. Twenty-four subjects who were using the hearing aid throughout the day, were found to be good in scholastic achievements. And the remaining were found to be poor in scholastic achievement.
2. Parental help in doing these students school home work, was found to be associated with the better scholastic achievement.

3. It was found that the subjects, who were regular in attending speech therapy, were better in scholastic achievements than these who were not attending regularly.

4. Students with bilingualism or multilingualism background were found to be lagging behind in scholastic achievements when compared with students with monolingualism background.

5. Regular consultation with professionals like Speech Pathologist, Audiologist, Otolaryngologist, etc., was found to be an important variable in the Scholastic achievement.

6. The following problems were found to be faced by the parents and teachers:

- (a) A majority of teachers did not have sufficient information about hearing impairment.
- (b) They did not know even the basic facts about the hearing aids.
- (c) Few parents were unaware of the facts about the care of hearing aids, periodic change of batteries, regular cleaning of ear mould, etc.
- (d) Few parents and teachers were using signs to communicate with these students.
- (e) Parents of one subject were unaware of the importance of the insistence of speech to these students.

7. According to Teachers' reports, these students were comparable to any other normal students in scholastic achievements and so the results of this study strongly supported the admission of hearing impaired children in normal schools.

8. This study supported the view that these students were comparable within the scholastic achievements and thus the last question was answered.

Conclusion

The results of this study proved the success of integration of the hearing impaired children in normal schools. Also the results of this study will enable the speech and hearing specialists to confidently recommend the enrolment of hearing impaired children in normal schools as against the conventional placement in deaf schools.

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