

A Survey of Parental Attitudes towards Their Hard of Hearing Children *

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The present investigation was undertaken with the purpose of studying parental attitudes towards their hard of hearing children.

For this, a questionnaire consisting of 62 questions, in total, was constructed under 5 categories—Affectionate, Hostile-dominant, Over-protective and Guilt-feelings. Also, a list of 30 behavioural problems which are commonly seen in children with hearing loss was prepared. The questionnaire was administered to the parents in a confidential interview set-up. This questionnaire was read out to the subjects and any clarifications, if needed, were also given. The answers 'yes' or 'no' were the responses received for this forced-choice type questions. The presence or absence of these behavioural problems were also noted.

A pre-trial of the questionnaire and the check-list of behavioural problems with 10 parents convinced the author of the suitability of their use. This was administered to 120 parents of mild, moderate and severe sensori-neural hearing loss children, 68 boys and 52 girls. These parents were later divided into different socio-economic groups.

Since attitudes are subjected to change, this can be achieved through proper counsel-

ling. This is the primary reason for this detailed study of parental attitudes. This study would be greatly beneficial in spontaneously increasing the health-values in the home atmosphere and in helping the parents to bring up their children in a better fashion, most suitable for the healthy development of the child

As far as the statistical measures are concerned, the percentages, means and standard deviations were calculated for each group. The groups were then tested for their significance of difference.

Altogether, 7 hypotheses were stated. The conclusions drawn from these were as follows :

(1) Significant differences exist in parental attitudes between the lower and upper socio-economic groups, with the upper socio-economic parents showing more number of positive attitudes. These results go to confirm the expectations that the lower socio-economic group parents are not likely to bring up their children in a more healthy way, by virtue of their low educational and occupational background.

(2) There are no significant differences in parental attitudes between the lower and middle socio-economic groups. But the middle socio-economic group parents showed more favourable attitudes than the mild socio-economic group parents.

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(3) There are no significant differences in parental attitudes between the middle and upper socio-economic groups, but more number of positive attitudes were shown by upper socio-economic group parents.

(4) Between the mild and severe hearing loss groups, significant differences were found as far as the positive attitude of parents are concerned. This goes in parallel with the expectations that, in the Indian culture set-up, parents are more likely to show more sympathetic, positive and beneficial attitudes towards their severely handicapped children than towards the mild handicapped children.

(5) No significant differences in parental attitudes were there, between the mild and moderate hearing loss groups.

(6) There are no significant differences in parental attitudes between the moderate and severe hearing loss groups.

(7) No significant differences exist between the parents of boys and girls, as far as their positive attitudes towards their children are concerned.

(8) Majority of parents were over-protective towards their hearing loss children and a small number of parents were hostile towards their hearing loss children.

(9) The upper socio-economic group parents were found to be more affectionate and the lower socio-economic group parents were found to be more dominant towards their hard of hearing children, comparatively.

(10) The parents of severe hearing loss children were more affectionate and over-

protective than the parents of mild or moderate hearing loss children.

As far as the behavioural problems presented by these children are concerned, the following were the conclusions drawn :

(1) The children from lower socio-economic group showed maximum number of behavioural problems, and the upper socio-economic group children showed the least.

(2) The severe hearing loss children showed more number of behavioural problems than the mild or moderate hearing loss children.

(3) More number of behavioural problems were found to be presented by boys, as compared to girls.

(4) Children with an age-range of 6 years to 9 years showed maximum number of behavioural problems.

(5) The hearing loss children of over-protective parents showed more number of behavioural problems, comparatively.

Limitations of the Study

(1) A comparison between the clinical and normal groups could not be done, since a control group was not employed in this study.

(2) Questions could not be standardized because of the scarcity of time. However, most of the chosen items in the questions were from the standard studies reported by R. B. Cattell and therefore they are taken to be reliable and valid.

- (3) Scope of the study has been normal and exploratory. The number of parents included under each category were limited. Therefore, the conclusions drawn therefrom would have limitations applicable to small samples.
- (4) Limitations of any other typical survey-research may be applicable to this study also.
- (5) The questionnaire used did not make provision for inclusion of lie-items, reflective of the dependability of the responses.

Suggestions for the Further Studies

- (1) Under ideal circumstances, a control group of parents are to have been used, so that comparison would have been possible between the clinical

and normal groups. A future study on this line should include a control group also.

- (2) The questionnaire used did not make provision for inclusion of lie-items, reflective of the dependability of the responses. A comprehensive questionnaire which would include lie-items also could be used, so that more dependable information can be obtained.
- (3) The inclusion of large number of parents under each category would enhance the reliability of findings.
- (4) For each item measured, under each category, a rating scale should be used like 5-point rating scale or 7-point rating scale and thereby the quantification of scores would be better.