

Attitude of Parents towards Their Physically Handicapped Children and Perceived Family Support in These Children

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ABSTRACT: *The research was designed to study the parental attitude towards their crippled children and also the perception of the crippled children about their family support towards their parents. The sample of 30 special need children was drawn at random from such institutes of handicapped children of Islamabad and Rawalpindi such as Al-Farabi, G-8/4 Islamabad and Al-Ghazali Rawalpindi. It comprised of a sample of 15 physically handicapped boys and 15 physically handicapped girls. The age range of the sample was between 5 to 16 years. Another sample of 30 parents (15 couples) of those crippled children was also included in study. The ages of the parents were between 25-55 years old. The educational levels of parents were between illiterate to professionals. They belonging to upper, middle, and lower socio-economic status. A five-point Likert type Parent Attitude Scale developed by Butt (1991) was used to measure the parental attitude towards their physically handicapped children. For children a four-point Family Support Scale developed by Naz (2001) was used to measure the perceived family support of the children separately devised questionnaires, as certain information for different demographic variables such as age, gender, education and socio-economic status of parents. Responses were statistically analyzed by the means, standard deviations, t-tests, correlations and alpha reliability coefficient and ANOVA were also calculated to check the reliability of the instruments. Research finding showed the high reliability estimates of both scales. Results also indicated that family support was a crucial factor in the improvement of the perception of crippled child. The scores of both the scales were inversely correlated with each other. These findings suggest that, the parent's over guardedness and concern generally lowers perceived family support of such child. They perhaps want to gain more autonomy. The amount of care and over protectiveness may lead to low self-esteem and developed the learned helplessness in such children. The study tried to stress the need for further research in the field of physically handicapped children and their parents' psychology in order to promote better relationships among them. The suggestion was also mentioned.*

KEYWORDS: *Physically handicapped, Self-determining, Mentally handicapped*

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization WHO, disability has three dimensions basically. Impairment in a person's body structure or function, or it could be mental functioning; examples of impairments include loss of a limb, loss of vision or memory loss. Activity limitation, such as that could be difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking, or problem solving.

Individuals are usually considered physically at normal stage according to their health issue when they do work in daily routine and having no unusual concern related to children, which need attention to fulfill the any kind of task. Fundamental proficiencies are required at vast level to

strive for maximum mass in routine activities, so in social aspect such qualities are considerable which enhance the self-determining as dominate factor in personality. Infirmity introduced when they failed to get biological adaptability in the way compared to other people, such kind of deficiency is called disability. Such aspects introduced deficiencies to the individual differently. However, few individuals who are prevented from acquiring this natural versatility because of a defect result in a disability. So, this disability usually leads to handicap when it retards, distorts or adversely affects the normal development and adjustment to life (Hunzai, 1993).

According to the term cripple or disabilities however, quite difficult to describe. It is elaborate in different ways: (1) there is a psychological or physiological abnormality. Thus, handicapped are those who do not have their limb or lost any part of the nervous system, through surgery or

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by an accident and become blind, deaf, paralyzed or got physical damage. (2) Chronic clinical conditions altering normal physiological/psychological processes such as arthritis, tuberculosis, epilepsy, etc. (3) there are functional limitations of ordinary activity, whether it is carried out singularly or in the combined manners. When an individual is unable or find it difficult to walk around, to wash and to dress himself. Different Biological factors are there which effect on the child, which possess certain conditions with social psychological implications (Kolin, 1971). A person who is handicapped feels less adequate than others do, either in general or in specific situation (Goldenson, 1978).

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN:

- Physically handicapped
- Mentally handicapped

The expression of an individual which distinguish him to the normality from any kind of abnormality is all his or her sentiments which he tries to expose to his or her surrounding in which his family friends, relatives and each concern person is attached, plays a vital role. We are exposed to both direct and indirect stimuli, which can teach us to hold particular attitudes towards an attitudinal object. Parents, other family members, media peers and teachers all provide attitudinal socialization experiences by which people come to learn appropriate attitudes and behavior. Children learn to develop positive attitudes towards certain people or objects and hold negative attitudes towards other people and things through social learning. By the time, these may modify or change, but the process of acquisition and development of attitudes continues. Similarly attitudes are verbally or non-verbally reinforced by others (Feldman, 1985).

ATTITUDE OF PARENTS TOWARDS THEIR PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Parental behavior has been a major thrust of investigation, Psychologists over past several years. Parents vary in their techniques of rearing have made innumerable attempts to find out relationship between parent behavior and development of personality.

Society has its own reflection. There are some kind of factors, which influence the family support and social helping hand. Even it is also matters that the disabled child is male or female, the family standards and status, either poor or rich, everything is considerable.

There is a huge difference in the attitude, which a family has for their children with the other family having same issue. Such variations are infect the base of the society to determining the capabilities and power of any nation in productivity.

So, the family, which is well established or rich, will facilitate their child at their maximum level with all assistance he or

she will need. While on the other hand, a needy family who doesn't have enough resources to run their home to their family can't afford such child and ultimately such anxiety will lead to stress and depression, and will result severe in future. Such conflicts lead inferiority factor and hopelessness in that special need child. The ratio will be high in the well standard families to accept such bodily or psychologically illness of child rather than a family who is poor enough.

Parenting style may lead to the diversity in crippled children

Emotional and physical distress, depression, grief and anger are often the types of parental reactions manifested in response to their child's handicap or disability. Parents of the physically handicap child have the most difficult role to perform, that is training their children for the world in which they have to survive. This responsibility becomes more complex and difficult when the child has multiple handicaps. Parental attitude and outlook helps to solve this problem to a great extent only if it is positive and pragmatic.

Everything is challenging when a child is born in a family with physically abnormality, because a family is expecting the healthy baby, then it is a big task for them to clear with patience. The initial reactions of parents may be one of disbelief, and the degree of disbelief is related to the degree of the visibility of the handicap.

Sometimes newborn baby is not in condition to survive with his or her physically or psychologically illness, then that is the point of grief and helplessness in parents.

It's very true that the adjustment is very much important factor in case of settlement of a physically handicapped child. Relatives, society, peer group and siblings all are those who can value that handicapped child or to ignore from all social interaction. It becomes hard for a child to grow up in normal society where people give him or her title of abnormal individual. Basically this is what a physically handicapped child feels different what he perceived in social context while he consider himself as a compatible. He needs chance, he needs an opportunity, he needs time and attention to move on. A Handicapped child is not a symbol of grief, stress, or anxiety, but society makes him. So collectively such aspects in a handicapped child make his sense complicated (Abdullah, 1981).

DYSFUNCTION: THE PAKISTANI CONTEXT

Different Biological factors are there which effect on the child. It possess certain conditions with social psychological implications (Kolin, 1971). A person who have special needs feels less adequate than others do, either in general or in specific situation (Goldenson, 1978).

One needs to know the family dynamics in order to see the perceived role of fathers and mothers will reference to the child with special needs. We also need to reflect how mothers and fathers specifically experience certain negative

emotions and how they react subsequently. Family system is explicitly organized and developed on cognitive models of social structures around kin categories and rules of marriage (Heider, 1958). Families in Pakistan tend to have strong kin networks into which a child or adult with an exceptional ability can be enfolded to provide support for such needs as financial management, child care and emotional support. Families with these resources may not have such great need for formal community services. Father is the head of the house and administrator of the joint property. Such joint family includes parents, children, grandchildren, and their descendants and various collateral on the male side (Hafeez, 1990). As we all know the crippled in the family is in many cases is not predicted earlier. So, the initial shock or trauma is experienced with the birth of such child. The attitude of the parents is in general denial, difficulty in accepting the hard reality and ultimately the social disapproval all makes the parents feel the child as a burden. A family with high income lives in comfort mandatory for a healthy living, whereas low-income families are denied the access even to basic necessities of life. Motivation, perception, sense of achievement, confidence and concept of a dignified self for future role of its members depends on these factors (Hamner 1990).

PERCEIVED FAMILY SUPPORT OF THE CHILDREN

The element of pride or self-worth of a child all depends on how the family is kind to the special child. And the way by which a child is observed to his or her parent's facilitation with them. The more the parents are caring the more the self-confidence of a child will raise. Helping hands are needed for special child from both side, from mother and from father. Sometimes children observe that one parent either Mother or father is paying attention rather than both. This factor leads to the child towards factor of inferiority. Child perceives this major difference from social aspect, from his educational institute in teacher-parent meeting or other activities. So parents are the inspiration induced in a child to build a strong, mature and confident child. Conflicts in some research are there to explore the parent-child studies (Karna 1999).

HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis, which were formulated

- Parents will have favorable attitude towards their physically handicapped children.
- There exists relationship between parental attitude and perceived family support of children.
- Mothers will have more positive attitude towards their physically handicapped children compared to the fathers of physically handicapped children.
- Elderly parents will have more positive attitude towards their physically handicapped children than the parents of younger age.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY: This study carried out the following objectives:

- To study the parental attitude towards physically handicapped children.
- To measure the difference in parent's attitude towards physically handicapped children.
- The other purpose is to study the impact of children gender and age with perceived social support.
- To study the male and female parent's attitude towards physically handicapped children.
- The study also purports to measure the psychometric properties of the instrument of the study.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY: The rationale of the study was to ascertain the relationship of parents' towards their special need children and perceived social support. The research study will be advantageous to the parental guide and for positive social attitude towards those handicapped children. This study will help in those approaches and strategies that integrate the parental attitude. Side by side present study will establish and be helpful to overcome all those social factors, which discourage the crippled children to enhance the child performance and learning capabilities. Findings of study will act as catalyst for parents and society to integrate the handicapper's needs for improvement and development of physically handicapped children (Allport, 1933).

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY: Due to limited accessibility of resources and constriction of time of researcher, the data was collected only from Rehabilitation centers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Furthermore; the study was delimited to twin cities rehabilitation centers.

METHODS

The nature of the study was descriptive

POPULATION: The study population from which the sample was drawn for study consists of all physically handicapped children and their parents, male and female from rehabilitation centers in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

SAMPLE: For this research, random sampling technique was used. A random sample of 30 children and 30 parents was collected from two rehabilitation institutes, such institutes of handicapped children of Islamabad and Rawalpindi such as Al-Farabi, G-8/4 Islamabad and Al-Ghazali Rawalpindi.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: The nature of the study is descriptive so in order to collect data for the study, questionnaire and instruments were used in the study

- Parental attitude scale for the Physically Handicapped Children.
- Family support scale for Physically Handicapped Children.

Table 1.
Alpha Reliability Coefficient of PAS (Parent Attitude Scale) (N=200).

Scale	No. Of Items	Alpha Coefficient
PAS	38	86***

P***<.001

PARENTAL ATTITUDE SCALE FOR THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN (PAS):

For the purpose of the assessment of the attitudes of parents towards their special need children the scale of the parental attitude was used in this study. Basically this scale was developed by BUTT (1991) and used in an earlier study. It comprise on total 38 items. High scores of Parental attitude scale is indicative of high favorable attitudes of parents towards their children. The subjects were asked to respond on 5-point Likert type rating scale. Scoring of 1-5 was used, score 1 refers to the response category of strongly disagree, score 2 refers to the response category of disagree, score 3 refers to the response category of undecided, score 4 refers to agree and the score whereas, 5 refers to strongly agree.

Half of the statements of PAS are negative (3,4,7,9,11,12,13,14,18,19,21,26,30,31,32,34,36,38) therefore; we used reverse scoring for statements. All statements in the scale represent different aspects of attitude of parents towards their handicapped children. There were simple statement and parents need to rate themselves that how much they agree or disagree with the statements.

DATA COLLECTION: The data was collected through questionnaire filled by dysfunction children and their parents as for social support, through personal visit of the rehabilitation institute.

DATA ANALYSIS: After Collection of Data was performed with use of appropriate statistical techniques according to the designed objectives of the study in order to reach the conclusion. The outcomes of each variable were presented in the form of tables. The statistical measures related to the research were consisting of the following test:

- Mean and Standard Deviation
- Coefficient of relation
- Anova (Analysis of Variance)
- SPSS (statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used for Data Analysis

DEFINITION OF VARIABLES: Following variables were used in present study

- Attitude
- Family support
- Physically handicapped children

ANALYSIS RESULTS: For the purpose of the assessment of the attitudes of parents towards their physically handicapped children, the scale of the parental attitude was

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The data of PAS and FSS was put to statistical analysis in Table 1. Basic exercise was to calculate psychometric properties of the scales used in the study. For this purpose, Alpha Reliability Coefficient of both scales was calculated. Items total correlation was also calculated for PAS. Major psychometric exercise was conducted to calculate the percentile ranks of the scores of PAS and FSS in order to determine the cut off scores. Means, standard deviation and t-values were also calculated to make comparisons between the scores of mothers and fathers of special needs children according to the demographic variables such as age, gender, education and socio-economic status on Attitude scales and scores of physically handicapped children on family support scale.

DISCUSSION

The present study originally aimed at studying the influence of parental attitudes towards their dysfunction children and also the perception of such children towards family support that how children perceived it. The role of parents is very important, all depends on them that how they treat their child. Life will be smooth, calm and at ease level when parents will cooperate with their child to facilitate them suitably their needs, on the contrary the result are in dejection, blues and anxiety when parents don't meet the child's requirements. Early childhood learns from his/her parents, siblings and from the people around him/her. So, child perceives the attitudes of family either positive or negative. Disability of the child, which is congenital, cannot be corrected but by the trainings, guidance and counseling the parents of physically handicapped children make the life smooth and calm of a child. After all the main part of parents in the role of training

of a child and problems of such children, and also the most important influence on the development of the personality of physically handicapped children.

The present study aimed at exploring the areas in which people interact with physically handicapped children and provide good direction and help to them. It was specifically conducted to measure the attitudes of people as an effect of gender, age, and education. Besides the perception of such children about their family support was also explored one of the hypotheses of the study that those individuals who are disabled bodily are more attached with their mothers as mothers have same response too. Generally, there is a common societal concept that mothers are more caring, loving and concerned about the child and his or her problems and it seems that fathers are less concerned and less involved in child-rearing activities. It was being implicit or expected their physically handicapped children, while fathers have more practical and realistic approach towards their children. But it does not mean that fathers do not have love for their special need children. So, this can be a misconception for the role of fathers in our society. On the other side, the other hypothesis, was that the highly educated parents and parents belonging to high socio-economic status have more favorable attitudes towards their crippled children. However, the results are non-significant and our hypothesis is not accepted. According to the study of the social status implies that a higher socio-economic status may also have resources, which could meet the demands of such children. The results showed that parents belonging to different socio-economic status have similar kind of care, love and affection towards their physically handicapped children. Also, the finding showed that the parent's education i.e., illiteracy and education do not have significant effect on the behavior of parents towards their physically handicapped children.

The non-significant difference shows that the attitude of parents towards their special need children is not related to the level of income and education. One explanation could be that it is more of an innate process that does not rely on income or education. People with low income can also have positive attitude towards their crippled children. It is in the explanation of different age groups of parents. The effects of education on the attitude of people were though non-significant. However, the mean score of educated (above matric) is higher than the matric and uneducated group which shows that educated people have relatively more positive attitude towards their physically handicapped children. The mean of socio-economic status, which shows that parents belong to middle class more positive attitude towards their crippled children.

CONCLUSION

While conducting this study people and children seem to be very cooperative, however, some parents were non-cooperative it might be possible because they do not want to share their feelings about their special need children.

Most of the perceptions of the children about their family support are significant. The survey of children had inverse correlation with the scores of parents on PAS. It suggests that when parents showed highly favorable and positive attitude towards their child than the child might feel more dependent on their parents, which are obviously not good prognostic signs for the child as well as for the parents. As the disabled children are more sensitive and conscious about their disability and they may perceive it negatively. For the positive attitude of parents and society towards special need children, media is playing a very important role. It is helping in the awareness that the crippled children are the part of our society. So, they need our attention and care. It becomes more strengthened of the attitude of parents are corrected more towards favorability. Nowadays availability of psychologists decreases the worries of the parents of disabled children. Parents must enable them to make their own contributions and be seen to participate as whole and equally worthy members of the community. Parent's attitude towards their physically crippled is an important factor in the formation of child self-esteem and self-concept. If the special need individual feels rejected, he may try to pretend as if he is physically normal and healthy individual. If he develops feelings of helplessness, he may exaggerate his dependency need. On the other hand, if such individuals are encouraged to cope with their limitation by developing a realistic attitude, they can live as independent and productive members of the society.

DECLARATIONS

The author declares no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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