

Social Behaviour of Sensory Challenged Children in an Inclusive Education Environment

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Abstract- Social behaviour is the core component of psychosocial development. The social behaviour of Sensory Challenged Children (SCC) can be fostered through awareness, exposure, encouragement, motivation, and practice. An attempt has been made in the present study to foster and enhance social behaviour among SCC attending inclusive schools in Bangalore city. The sample consisted of 100 SCC, in the age group of 10-15 years, they were divided into two groups (Experimental group comprising of 50 SCC and control group comprising of 50 SCC). Purposive sampling method was used to select the samples. Self-structured rating scale was used to assess social behaviour of SCC. The research design for the present study included a pre and post-test with an intervention programme. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that the intervention programme had positive influence on social behaviour of SCC. The result of the present study highlights the need for emphasizing and fostering the interpersonal behaviour, communication behaviour, self-related behaviour and assertive behaviour among sensory challenged children.

Index Terms- Sensory challenged Children (SCC), Inclusive Education Environment (IEE), Social Behaviour (SB).

I. INTRODUCTION

An individual with disabilities such as blindness, deafness, deaf-blind, visually impaired and hearing impaired are referred to as sensory challenged children. Because of their impairment they cannot be deprived of their education as education is a fundamental right of every child and there is no child who 'cannot learn'. It is a powerful instrument for social change which initiates upward trend in the social structure by bridging the gap under the umbrella of 'inclusive education' between sensory challenged and non-disabled children. Loreman, Deppler and Harvey (2006), define inclusion of children with different abilities in all aspects of schooling that other children are able to access and enjoy. School is socializing agencies where in children learn a particular pattern of behaviour and norms that is prevalent in the society. For achieving this goal, inclusive schools has to adapt certain teaching strategies, social and instructional needs and demands of all children in classroom and must prepare sensory challenged children to adapt and learn appropriate social behaviour.

Social behaviour involves more than one individual with the primary function of establishing, maintaining, or changing a

relationship between individuals, or in a group or society (Roger Abrantes, 2012). Children are social beings but very few are socially adaptable from their childhood years. Sensory challenged children struggle to be socially adaptable in an inclusive education environment due to the challenges and limitations to learn and become accustomed to appropriate social behaviour. The limitations and challenges of sensory challenged children leads to limited interpersonal relationship, develop ignorance and also find it difficult to get along with their peers and teachers. Therefore in order to adapt socially appropriate behaviours, sensory challenged children should be allowed to establish and maintain positive relationship through interaction (verbal as well as non-verbal) at school.

Inclusive education environment plays a very important role among sensory challenged children to learn, get along with others, and become competent to their peers academically. Tolan, Gorman-Smith and Henry (2001), also highlighted that teachers and school plays a large role in how students develop academically and behaviourally. It is place where sensory challenged children are their peers are well equipped to manage individual differences consistently. According to Barbour, et.al., (2014) peers have an ability to influence a child's social behaviour as they spend less time at home and more time at school. Therefore, school-based social behaviour is a better way of improving the behaviour of both sensory challenged as well as non-disabled children. This will enable them to develop appropriate behavior within and outside the classroom, make them more diligent and aware of their social rights, rules and regulations. These behaviours can be established and enhanced through interaction, which can be either verbal or non verbal, depending on their capabilities, impairments and limitations. Thus, the social traits like sharing, cooperating, being empathetic, and taking turns while interacting with their peers enhances their social behaviour in an inclusive school (Graydon Gordian, 2012).

Through constant exposure, encouragement, motivation, reinforcement and practice, sensory challenged children can be helped to enhance their social behaviour.

Hence emphasis has been made in the present research to study the social behaviour of sensory challenged children in an inclusive education which in turn enables them to learn, develop and participate without creating a barrier and hindering their development.

II. METHOD

Objective: The study aimed to assess the social behaviour of sensory challenged children in an inclusive education environment.

Methodology: The present study comprised of the pre-test and post-test method with an intervention program. The intervention program was planned to foster positive and appropriate social behaviour among sensory challenged children in an inclusive education environment.

Sampling: Purposive sampling procedure was used to identify the sample. Further inclusive schools catering to the educational needs of sensory challenged children in Bangalore city, were identified for the study. One hundred sensory challenged children aged between 10-15 years were selected for the present study. They were subdivided into experimental group and control group [Experimental group comprising of 50 sensory challenged children and Control group comprising of 50 sensory challenged children]. Intervention programme for experimental group was conducted for 50 sensory challenged children.

Tools Used: A self-structured rating scale was developed and standardized by the investigator was used to assess social behaviour of sensory challenged children. The scale consisted of basic profile and information related to interpersonal behaviours, communication skills, self-related behaviour and assertive behaviour. A five point ratings of Always, Frequently, Sometimes, Rarely and Never was used. The positive items were given a score of 5 -1 and a score of 1-5 was given for negative items.

Method of data collection:

Rapport building: Rapport building is only an element which paves way for data collection in a conducive environment. Hence a personal rapport was established with school authorities with letter of permission so as to receive total co-operation at the time of the study. Further a rapport was also established with sensory challenged children so as to create a comfort zone in order to elicit accurate information for the study.

Pre – test: was conducted to both experimental and control group to assess the existing social behaviour of sensory challenged children.

Intervention programme: was conducted for sensory challenged children. Appropriate activities for intervention programme were designed to suit the needs of sensory

challenged children so as to improve the dimensions of social behaviour. The intervention programme was carried out 3 days a week through the use of different techniques such as puzzles, projects, origami, physical activities etc. Each session of the intervention programme was made interactive for sensory challenged children to participate actively. The subjects were provided with incentives like school supplies in order to encourage and motivate them in activities.

Post test: was conducted to sensory challenged children for both control group and experimental group to assess the social behaviour after the implementation of the intervention programme. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyze the data on the objective formulated.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basic profile of the respondents

The respondents for the present study were divided into two groups the experimental group and control group. Both the experimental group and control groups consisted of 76% of visually impaired children and 24% of hearing impaired. Majority of sensory challenged children from both experimental and control group (60%) were males. 100% of sensory challenged children from experimental group and 44% of sensory challenged children from control group were in the age bracket of 14-15 years.

With regard to family profile of the respondents majority of respondents from both experimental (92%) and control group (94%) belong to nuclear family. 56% of sensory challenged children's father had an educational qualification up to high school whereas, majority (42%) of sensory challenged children's fathers from control group had an educational qualification up to 10th standard. Whereas, majority of the respondent's mothers' from both experimental (48%) and control group (58%) had an educational qualification up to high school. With regard parents employment 92% of fathers from both experimental group and control group were employed whereas equal percentage of mothers (70%) from both experimental group and control group were employed. In the area of family income majority of respondents from experimental group (48%) and control group (70%) had a monthly income of Rs 5000 to Rs 10,000.

Social behaviour of sensory challenged children in an inclusive education environment of experimental group and control group

Dimensions of Social Behaviour	Experimental Group					Control Group				
	Pre-test		Post-test		Significance of t value	Pre-test		Post-test		Significance of t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Interpersonal Behaviour	20.86	6.75	46.54	3.45	23.9552**	22.00	6.91	19.20	7.51	1.9401 ^{NS}
Communicative Skills	24.20	4.91	36.50	2.71	15.5087**	24.88	5.37	22.94	6.29	1.6586 ^{NS}
Self related Behaviour	25.54	2.92	24.06	1.55	3.1657**	29.16	4.02	28.76	3.90	0.5050 ^{NS}
Assertive Behaviour	20.06	6.36	40.36	2.43	21.0843**	23.88	3.86	20.10	6.42	3.5683**

** Significant at 1% level, NS - Not significant

Personality development of the child is influenced by his/her social behaviour. The data of the above table depicts the mean score of both pre and post- test. The data reveals at the time of post -test in the dimension of *interpersonal behaviour* there is an enhancement and improvement among sensory challenged children which is found to be strongly significant with the 't' value being 23.9552. The findings of the present study is also supported by the study carried out by Geisthardt & Munsch(1996), who highlighted that learners with disabilities report greater levels of loneliness, isolation and interpersonal conflict at school. They rely less on peers for social support when dealing with an academic or interpersonal problem than learners without disabilities.

In the aspect of *communication skills* there is an improvement among sensory challenged children. This could be attributed to the fact that sensory challenged children are more associated, encouraged and refined to communicate his or her needs effectively. The intervention programme designed in the present study through exposure, awareness and co-operation had positive patterns of behaviour which in turn, has influenced their communicative skills. The findings of the study is in concordance with the study carried out by Stockely (1994), highlighting that often social communication skills are delayed and immature in some visually impaired adolescents and young adults, and whilst behaviour within the peer group may be apparently normal, social interactions with adults and with unfamiliar peers may be inhibited or inappropriate. But there appears to be increasing recognition that some children with a visual impairment develop slower than others and may follow a different sequence of development, with usual behaviours being learnt in a different order.

In the dimension of *Self-related behavior* the data reveals that there is a decline in the post-test scores of sensory challenged children with the 't' value being strongly significant (3.1657). This signifies that sensory challenged children understood the importance of developing appropriate interpersonal behaviour, which made sensory challenged children not to exhibit their self-related behaviour so as to maintain a cordial relationship with their peers.

Assertive behavior is a behavior in which a child stands up for his/her rights though being sensory challenged in such a way that the rights too are not violated. It commands respect for that child's behavior. Assertive behavior is an honest, direct and appropriate expression of one's feelings, beliefs, and opinions. The data reveals that that there is an enhancement and improvement among sensory challenged children which is found to be strongly significant with the 't' value being 21.0843. According to Child Magazine (2004, 2010) assertiveness improves self -confidence as well as ability to make choices. It will also help to withstand peer pressure which in turn will help children to develop the concept of compromise and to take others feeling's into account.

Thus, it can be inferred from the present study that with the influence of intervention programme and providing exposure to

interact with their peers, proved to be very beneficial to sensory challenged children in shaping their behaviour.

IV. CONCLUSION

Social behaviour is a very important aspect which contributes to the development among sensory challenged children in an inclusive education environment. It provides a foundation for sensory challenged children to understand the practical implication of social behaviour. It also enables them to behave in a socially appropriate behaviour which influences their future life in the society. Therefore the social behaviour of sensory challenged children in an inclusive education environment should be enhanced through constant interaction with their peers, encouragement, reinforcement and practices. Results in the present study also indicated that intervention programme has influenced the dimensions of social behaviour. Thus it can be inferred that from the time of enrolment, sensory challenged children should be provided with an intervention to enhance their social behaviour.

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