

Stress level of parents of hearing impaired children

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Abstract

The study attempted to determine the effects upon the family system of having a child diagnosed with deafness or hearing impairment. The specific variables are the rating of father stress, rating of mother stress. If any difference exist between maternal and paternal level of stress variables. The intent of this study is to better define the stress of parents due to disability of their children. The researcher used the translated version of standardized questionnaire on resources and stress short form (QRS-F) was used developed by William friedrich (1989). It constituted of 35 items. The sample consisted of 350 parents comprises(175 fathers and 175 mothers) of hearing impaired children who were studying in 1-5 grade at government special education schools and centers in Gujranwala district.

Key words: stress, hearing impaired, deafness, paternal stress, maternal stress

1. INTRODUCTION

The ways of deaf education has been rapidly changing with the initiation of worldwide infant hearing screening and early identification.

After birth several children are identified just a day after. It has altered the concept and newborn screening helpful for parents to manage the hearing impairment and emotional disturbance (Luterman, 2003). The diagnosis of deafness of the child has the crucial moments for the family and the parents. For the parents and the family the diagnosis of hearing impairment is very crucial and seriously concerned issue. The mother is usually first person who get the news of hearing loss (disability) about her child. So the father acceptance about child disability usually delayed than the mother (Sahli, 2011).

The huge assortment of feelings and stress faced by parents has a shock on the child make a diagnosis with hearing losses. Very essential aspect is that educationalist and interventionist are responsive of the repercussion of parents stress, not only during the child's childhood, but also the child's throughout life (Meadow, 1990).

The consequences of tragedy appear the stress in personality; some people experience stress throughout their life it become the part of their personality. For the management of the stress required time and intervention services for both parents and their children (globach, 2002).

The family who provided the healthy environment and strong relationship atmosphere are helpful for their children to become the successful members of the society. Their personality and demographic features of the child may have an effect on the attitude of mothers and fathers forward this child concern. For the best possible development of the child in aspects of social and moral it is required that the parents have the qualities of patience, tolerance, competency and understand the child development issues and needs.

One of the previous studies is shows that stress of father due to the financial conditions, while the other study indicates the parental stress on account of denial behavior. All the previous studies are based on the single factor causing stress (Nolta, 2011). The study reported that the child characteristics included the child age his hearing impairment these factors enhance the mothers stress level. The normal parents experience more stress due to the child hearing impairment, his type and degree of hearing loss and identification age of the child. In addition, other factors participate to increase the stress level such as the any other disability with addition of hearing impairment, family socio economic status, parenting responsibilities. The societal positive support play positive role and depressing support play negative impact on whole family unit.(Pipp-Siegel, 2002).

Deaf and hard of hearing children are getting negative impact due to their parental stress. Hintermair (2006) explicate that the extremely stressed parents children face more emotional, social and economical problems. L. G. Anthony, (2005) reported that the several factors that have the impact on the child social and emotional

development. They find out the relationship between the stressed parents and the hearing impaired child social development his competency his behavior and performance in the educational setup. This study point out the issues that face by the hearing impaired preschoolers without the support of parents. The strong relationship exists between social development of deaf preschooler and parental stress. The finding of this study the parents who have the high stress level show less encouraging behavior, motivation and poor performance.

The study attempted to determine the effects upon the family system of having a child diagnosed with deafness or hearing impairment. The specific variables are the rating of father stress, rating of mother stress. If any difference exist between maternal and paternal level of stress variables. The intent of this study is to better define the stress of parents due to disability of their children.

2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

All people experienced stress in the course of a lifetime. Pipp-Siegel, Sedey, & Yoshinaga-Itano (2002) defined stress as “a physiological, cognitive, emotional strain or tension.”

2.1. Stress of Parents

Stress is a multifaceted emotion so as to be influenced by several aspect, thus several domains are used to analyze it. One kind of stress that can happen to long-term arises as a consequence of child’s parenting. Stress is serious to comprehend because of the connection among unenthusiastic parent and child product that can consequence (Pipp-Siege & Yoshinaga-Itano, 2002).

Stresses can analysis as having several different areas. Abidin (1995), viewed these areas include aspect inborn within the child, aspect inborn into the parent, and aspect related to the parent-child contact. The partition of these aspects draws awareness to the reality to children and parents are persons inclined by diverse variables.

Some factors that included to enhance the parental stress many aspects are under consideration. The aspects that increase the stress may include the emotional disturbance, child abilities, child disabilities, anxiety these factors can stem for stress. The parents have the vital role to improve the performance of the children. Due to these stressful factors parental role may affect negatively. (Lederberg & Golbach, 2002).some aspects that related to the child stress have bad impact on his behavior. Stress affect the child performance such as the lack of acquiescence, persistence, wait for turn etc. (Pipp-Siege & Yoshinaga-Itano, 2002). The socio-emotional issues may exhibit themselves inside a child’s emotions and behavior. In a parent-child contact stress is characterize by a sprain in the contact that influence affection (Abidin, 1995).

2.2. Children with Hearing Loss and Stress of Parents

The stress of parents depressingly influences development of the child as well as the associations parents have fir their kids (Hintermair, 2006; Lederberg & Golbach, 2002; Quittner & Glueckauf, R.L., 1990). It is very assential to promote the awareness about stress causes and control stratigies for those who experience and practice the stress due to any reason. It is Various aspects in a parent’s life can apprehension their stress levels. Disability of child is one of those factors. The study showed that the normal mothers of children with hearing loss face increased stress level than the hearing impaired mothers of children with hearing impairment that normal mothers of deaf or children with hearing impairment did not report stress levels that were increased than mothers of normal children (Jackson, Glueckauf, & Quittner, ,1990). The study depicted that parents having children with hearing impairment not report the increase level of stress than the parents having normal children. In some families the cause of parental stress only the child hearing impairment and language deficiency (Koester & Meadow-Orlans, 1990)

2.3. Factors Enhancing Parental Stress

Various factors that are contribute for enhancing the parental stress. Many studies did for exploring those factors. It is very necessary to explore those enhancing factors that increase the stress level of parents. These studies will helpful for professionals for understanding and overcoming these issues. Professionals provide the appropriate intervention accordingly. One study showed the characteristics of the child and the perception level of mother especially related to the hearing impairment contribute to enhance the stress level of parents. The characteristics such as the child age, type and degree of hearing loss, and age of identification enhance the stress level of hearing parents. Such other factors additionally influence the parental stress such as additional disability, source of income, financial issues, and family support negatively affect the parental stress. (Pipp-Siegel & Yoshinaga-Itanol 2002).

The parents of younger children face less stress than the parents of adult children.the study when consider other variables they found that there is no strong connection between the age of the children and the parental stress (Pipp-Siegel & Yoshinaga-Itanol, 2002). Lederberg (2002) found that in their research that age plays a vital role to increase the stress in mothers, mothers feel greater amount of stress as their children grown-up. But, the results furthermore accomplished that age of the child did not influence the quantity of mothers that she

experienced due to the hearing loss of her children it continue with her during the childhood of kids. while it is also observe that this study considered some other variables for the increase of the stress is not directly related to only age. The age of the child can be supposed that the central factor of the high parental stress. Expert counselors must have the knowledge about the parents concerns about their children who have hearing impairment.

It states that parental stress may be correlated to what they recognize educational support. This educational support includes intervention services (Lederberg & Golbach ,2002). The study findings are the intervention service plays a important role in the compensate of the parental stress that faced due to the disability of their children or hearing impairment. When evaluated about the family income, it was found that mothers with lower income practiced more stress level as compare to mothers of high income families (Pipp-Siegel & Yoshinaga-Itanol, 2002).

Societal supportive behavior plays a significant function in parental aptitude to handle with hearing impairment. The research illustrates societal possessions as the hold normal parents of children having hearing impaired children consider from their normal and artificial system. Normal methods are consisting of parents, children, partners, connections, friends, and relatives. Non-natural systems pass on to innovative relations with other parents in an analogous circumstance for example parents within a parent group, make contact with hearing Impaired adults, and specialized. The writer states that the accessibility of individual and societal assets significantly influences the parents' manage procedure (Hintermair, 2006).

3. The Impact of Parental Stress on the Family

Research makes clear that the detection of a child is a exceedingly stressful experience for families. The distress this identification has on the family is extensively dependent in what way they handle with the information (Koester & Meadow-Orlans, 1990). Families may act in response a new way because of previous practice of the hearing loss. The reaction of the family to the diagnosis is alike to that of what was depicting for a parent.

The study depicts that social factors, familial issues and psychological can contact how a family deal with the stress that procession the diagnosis of a hearing impairment. Expert have to make a distinction that entire family are influence due to diagnosis of a hearing impairment. hold up services must be assembly accessible to not only the parents but other members of the family. (Koester & Meadow-Orlans, 1990).

Both parents have permanent jobs outside of the home (Scarr, Phillips, & McCartney, 1990).

This gender resemblance in altitude of parental stress increases the remarkable prospect that, in any family, it is hard to forecast whether the father or the mother will be additional or fewer stressed as compare to the other. Researches that have calculated parental stress in both parents have revealed that partners' ranks of parental stress are interrelated (Deater-Deckard & Scarr, 1996). Consequently, even though there may possibly not be gender disparity in the level of parental stress in a people, fathers and mothers are to some extent alike in their levels of parental stress in every family.

An essential limitation is that whether the father or mother has additional parenting stress may possibly depend on who you ask. In single study of parenting-related concern (Deater-Deckard et al., 1994), fathers' opinion of their partners' anxieties were powerfully connected with observation of their personal anxieties. In accumulation, these fathers consistently rank their partners as being added concerned than them, a signify disparity that was not begin in their partners' self-reported anxieties.

This increases the prospect to gender difference in the stage and connect of parental stress appear only within definite family background, for example, in those family unit where there is constant stress and hardship. That is, the co-variation of parents stress, activities, and child performance might diverge for diverse kind of families, parents, , and children. There is some facts for this support on research on gender effects and matrimonial delight. Due to the value of the matrimonial affiliation is of vital consequence to the psychological healthiness of marital women and men (Goldberg, 1993). There is a signal that sorrowfully wedded men possibly will remove or develop into additional cruel and unconstructive, such that the relations between parents stress and behavior, and in result child behavior problems, are greater than before. In compare, sorrowful wedding for women may suppose a recompense procedure, whereby the relations between parents stress and depressing parenting become pathetic (Deater-Deckard & Scarr, 1996; Gable, Belsky, & Crnic, 1992).

4. Methodology

4.1. Design of the study

The study was descriptive as it describes the stress level of parents of hearing impaired children. Survey method was used to collect the information on stress level of parents of hearing impaired children.

4.2. Population

The population of the study comprised both parents of 496 students studying at seven special education schools and centers for hearing impaired children in Gujranwala district.

4.3. Sample

The sample consisted of 350 parents comprises (175 fathers and 175 mothers) of hearing impaired children who were studying in 1-5 grade at government special education schools and centers in Gujranwala district. The sample size is 35% population was selected as sample of the study.

4.4. Selection of Sample

There were 496 students studying at 7 special education schools and centers at Gujranwala district. 35% of population (175) hearing impaired children (boys and girls) were selected randomly by systematic random sampling technique. 175 hearing impaired children (boys & girls) were selected at the ratio of 60% boys (105) and 40% girls (70) from all seven schools. 25 students per school. (15 boys and 10 girls) and 5 students per class (3 boys and 2 girls) were selected as sample by systematic random sampling technique.

4.4.1. Procedure of selection of sample

Researcher visited each class from grade 1-5 of the selected schools and from the roll call register of each class no of total present students in each class were divided by the required no students to get the Kth value and then selected the students accordingly.

4.5. Tool of the Research

The researcher used the translated version of standardized questionnaire on resources and stress short form (QRS-F) (Appendix C). It constituted of 35 items. As questionnaire consisted of two point rating scale, following scale value was assigned to each of two responses:

- True : 1
- False : 2

The scale assessed the parental perceptions about parents and family problems, pessimism, child's characteristics and physical incapacity.

4.5.1. Expert's Opinion on the Tool (Content Validity)

Instrument was validated from the experts of the field of hearing impairment. 6 experts of the field were selected to conduct the content validity. In order to conduct the content validity the questionnaire was distributed to the all selected experts. In the light of expert's opinion items that had 70% rating of the experts were included and seven items were excluded that had less rating of experts. After the deletion of seven items 35 items remained thus Questionnaire on Resources and Stress Short Form was validated for the current research.

4.6. Pilot Testing

The sample consisted of 2 parents of hearing impaired children who belonged to primary level.

The Questionnaire on resources and stress short form (QRS-F) was given to the 2 parents of Hearing Impaired Children who were selected as sample of pilot study.

The reliability of the tool was measured by Cronbach Alpha. The reliability of questionnaire was found to be .75. Hence the instrument was found as a reliable instrument for collection of data.

4.7. Testing of hypothesis

The null hypothesis of the study was tested independent t-test was applied to observe the significant difference of means. The analysis is shown in following table 4.2.1.

Table: 1 Statistics of t-test on stress level of Parents

	N	Mean	SE _M	SD
Parents	350	1.50	.027	.501

Table 1 reveals the means, standard deviations and standard error of the means of a one group sample. The mean of the sample was found 1.50. The standard deviation was .501. The standard error of the mean was found .027.

4.8. HYPOTHESIS # 1

There is no significant difference between the stress level of fathers and mothers of hearing impaired children.

5. ANALYSIS OF PROBLEM

1. $H_0 : \mu_1 = \mu_2$
2. $H_1 : \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$
3. $\alpha = 0.05$ with $df = 349$
4. DECISION RULE Reject H_0 if $t > 1.96$

Table: 2 Significance of difference on Stress level of Parents

	N	Mean	T	P
Parents	350	1.50	18.682	.000

$df = 349$

t at $0.05 = 1.96$

The above table 4.2.2 indicates the t score 18.682***. It was found highly significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it was concluded that there was significant difference between the stress level of fathers and mothers of hearing impaired children and the null hypothesis that states "There is no significant difference between the stress level of fathers and mothers of hearing impaired children" was rejected as the difference was significant.

5.1 Summary

The purpose of present study was to assess the stress level of parents of hearing impaired children. Comparison of stress level of fathers and mothers was carried out.

The population of the study comprised both parents of 496 students studying at seven special education schools and centers for hearing impaired children in Gujranwala district.

Total no of boys students studying in seven special education schools and centers was 297 which constituted 60% of the total population, while total no of girls students was 199 which constituted 40% of the total population..

The sample consisted of 350 parents comprises(175 fathers and 175 mothers) of hearing impaired children who were studying in 1-5 grade at government special education schools and centers in Gujranwala district. The sample size is 35% population was selected as sample of the study.

Researcher visited each class from grade 1-5 of the selected schools and from the roll call register of each class no of total present students in each class were divided by the required no students to get the kth value and then selected the students accordingly.

The researcher used the translated version of standardized questionnaire on resources and stress short form (QRS-F) was used developed by William friedrich (1989). It constituted of 35 items. As questionnaire consisted of two point rating scale. The scale assessed the parental perceptions about parents and family problems, pessimism, child's characteristics and physical incapacity.

After the data collection through questionnaire the data was tabulated and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics on SPSS version 16. Independent sample t-test was used for comparison and interpreted to achieve the objectives of the study.

Results and findings were drawn and the recommendations were proposed for further studies.

5.2 FINDINGS

Following were the findings of the study.

1. 69.7% fathers and 76% mothers were of the opinion that their children could not develop communication with the other normal children of their age group.
2. 69.7% fathers and 69.1% mothers said that there children develops mutual understanding in the family about the matters related to their child.
3. 80%of the father and 80%of the mothers held the opinions that they got worried when they thought what will happened to their children when they will not be able to take care of their child.
4. 81.7% fathers 80.6% mothers thought that the available means of earning livelihood for their child were limited.
5. 73.1% fathers and 74.3% mothers thought that they had transformed their life to facilitate their hearing impaired child.
6. 84.6% fathers and 84% mothers said that their hearing impaired child had good social contacts with the family members.
7. 68% fathers and 70.3% mothers remarks that they did not avoid to take their hearing impaired child out.

8. 78.3% of the fathers and 81.3% mothers held the opinion that it bothers them the disability of their child will last for the whole life.
9. 68.6% fathers and 64% mothers said that they did not feel tension to take their child in the public places.
10. 75.4% fathers and 67.4% mothers thought that their child was not a hindrance in the way of their contacts with friends and to visit their friends whenever they wanted.
11. 78.3% of the fathers and 78.9% of the mothers and said that their child was not a matter of concern during the holidays.
12. 53.1% fathers and 53.7% mothers were of the view that their hearing impaired child knew the telephone number and address of his/her own residence.
13. 56% fathers and 58.9% mothers held the opinion that the present conditions in which they were living there life makes them depressed.
14. 70.3% fathers and 72% mothers said that their children were not a source of embarrassment for them.
15. 68% fathers and 66.3% mothers held opinion that their hearing impaired children could not utilize their mental and physical capabilities the best possible extent.
16. 73.1% fathers and 71.4% mothers were of the opinion that they felt difficulty in communicating their ideas and feeling with the children because they could not understand properly what was being communicated to them.
17. 92% fathers and 87.4% mothers were of the opinion that where they could enjoy themselves as a family with their hearing impaired children.
18. 80.6% of the fathers and 85.7% mothers were of the opinion that their attitudes towards their special children were over protected.
19. 74.9% fathers and 77.7% mothers said that they became disappointed about the fact that their children were not able to lead a normal life.
20. 54.9% fathers and 50.9% mothers reflected that their hearing impaired children could not utilize their leisure time productively.
21. 62.9% fathers and 60% mothers opinion that the attention span of their children was very short their children could not concentrate for a long period of time.
22. 84% fathers and 85.1% mothers had serious concern about what will happen to their children when they will grow young.
23. 57.1% fathers and 55.4% mothers stated that most of the time their concerns about their child press them heavily which causes tension for them and thus they could not enjoy their life.
24. 66.3% fathers and 72% mothers were of the opinion that they were satisfied with the confidence level of their children and they were satisfied with it.
25. 61.1% fathers and 62.9% mothers were of the opinion that there was a great deal of anger and resentment among family members for having a hearing impaired.
26. 58.3% fathers and 54.9% mothers stated that they spend major part of their financial resources and income for to meet the special needs of hearing impaired children which was a hindrance in the development of the family.
27. 64% of the fathers and 63.4% mothers held the opinion that their hearing impaired children had developed a sense of self realization and a great degree of self confidence in themselves.
28. 76.6% fathers and 86.3% mothers were of the view that they became sad when they meditate over the disability life and future of their hearing impaired children.
29. 74.9% fathers and 72% mothers thought that there was a great communication gap among their children.
30. 61.1% of the fathers and 53.1% mothers said that the issues about the care of their children created stress in them.
31. 71.4% fathers and 74.3% mothers thought that hearing impairment had not brought a great deal of change in their family setup their family did the same kinds of things as the others families having normal children.
32. 58.9% of fathers and 54.3% mother's outlook reflected that their child was going to be a kind of permanent problem for them and their families.
33. 66.9% fathers and 65.7% mothers held the opinion that their hearing impaired children were able to express their feelings to others in a best possible.

34. 60% of the fathers and 66% mothers held the opinion that they often became gloomy. 52.6% of the fathers and 57.1% mothers were of the opinion that they remain worried most of the time due to the hearing impairment of their child.

35. There is significance difference between the stress level of fathers and mothers of hearing impaired children.

6. Conclusions

Following were the conclusions of the study:

1. Parents were worried about the communication gap which was existing among hearing impaired children and other family members.
2. Parents worried that what will happen when they will not take care of the child any more.
3. Parents have transformed their life to facilitate their hearing impaired children.
4. Parents agreed that their hearing impaired child was a burden for the family which resulted in slow progress rate of their family.
5. Parents had serious concerns about the availability of earning resources for their hearing impaired children.
6. Parents worried about the short attention span and improper utilization of the capabilities of their hearing impaired children.
7. Parents felt depression due to the inability of expression of feelings of their hearing impaired children.

7. Recommendations

1. Teachers should play their role as counselor both for the students with hearing impairment and their parents.
2. Seminars and workshops should be conducted to create the awareness in parents about the acceptance in the way that it could be helpful in the positive development of children.
3. Different programs should be organized to create awareness about the hearing impairment its implications and requirements.
4. The counseling session for the parents of hearing impaired students should be conducted to guide them to overcome the communication gap between hearing impaired children and their family members.
5. Government should take solid steps to financially support the poor parents who have hearing impaired children.
6. Opportunities for the vocational training of the hearing impaired children should be increased and for better results parents of the hearing impaired children should also be involved in the vocational training.
7. Early intervention programmers should be developed to increase the attention span of the hearing impaired children.

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