

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 physically handicapped children and also the perception of the physically handicapped children about their family support towards their parents. Sample of the study included 30 children, both male and female equally, and 30 parents. 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, ascertained 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 physically handicapped child. The scores of both the scales were inversely correlated with each other. These findings suggest that, the parents 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.

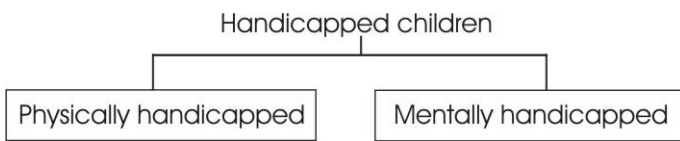
Introduction: Individuals are usually considered physically at normal stage according to their health issue when they do work in daily routine and having

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).

This serious discussion is used most often by the professionals and also by a common person. It refers to the lack of function or loss of, or a capacity. In a sense it is a limitation imposed by a disease, accident or by, birth. According to Isabelle & Taylor (1977) the term handicapped is 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 by an accident and become blind, deaf, paralyze 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 (Zeith, 1969). A person who is handicapped feels less adequate than others

do, either in general or in specific situation (Goldenson, 1978).



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). 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).

Disability: The Pakistani Context

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 exceptionality can be enfolded to provide

support-for such needs as financial management, child care and emotional support (Farida, 1988). Families with these resources may not have such great need for formal community services (Miles, 1983). 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 (Hafiz, 1992). As we all know the handicaps 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.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis, which were formulated

1. Parents will have favorable attitude towards their physically handicapped children.
2. There exists relationship between parental attitude and perceived family support of children.
3. Mothers will have more positive attitude towards their physically handicapped children compared to the fathers of physically handicapped children.
4. 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:

1. To study the parental attitude towards physically handicapped children.
2. To measure the difference in parents' attitude towards physically handicapped children.

3. The other purpose is to study the impact of children gender and age with perceived social support.
4. To study the male and female parents' attitude towards physically handicapped children.

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 explores 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 father are less concerned and less involved in child-rearing activities. It was being implicit or expected their physically handicapped children, while father have more practical and realistic approach towards their children. But it does not mean that father do not have love for their physically handicapped children. So, this can be misconception for the role of fathers in our society. On 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 physically handicapped children. However, the results are non-significant and our hypothesis is not accepted. According to the study of Khan (1980), the social

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 used in this study. Basically, this scale was developed by BUTT (1991) and used in an earlier study. It comprises 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.

The data of PAS and FSS was put to statistical analysis. 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 physically handicapped children and scores of physically handicapped children on family support scale.

Discussion & Conclusion: The present study originally aimed at studying the influence of parental attitudes towards their physically handicapped

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 parents' 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 physically handicapped 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 physically handicapped 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 belongs to middle class more positive attitude towards their physically handicapped children.

While conducting this study people and children seem to be very operative, however, some parents were non co-operative it might be possible because they do not want to share their feelings about their disabled 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 physically handicapped children, media is playing very important role. It is helping in the awareness that the handicapped

children are the part of our society. So, they need our attention and care. It becomes more strengthen 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. Parents' attitude towards their physically handicapped children is an important factor in the formation of child self-esteem and self-concept. If the physically handicapped 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 (Miles, 1981).

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