



## **IMPACT OF FAMILY, TEACHERS & PEERS ATTITUDE ON BEHAVIOUR OF DISABLED CHILD-A CASE STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

*Education is the right of every child because it equips him to meet the challenges of life. The children with disabilities need this all the more, to supplement their differential talents so that they can prepare themselves for a happy productive and useful life. Efforts to educate children with disabilities began soon after independence in India. An attempt has been made to examine the policies and legislations for educating the children with disabilities in India after post- constitution era. There is no doubt that the dream for discrimination free and equal right for the disabled children may require a comprehensive change in the institutional arrangements and legal provisions but the most important change has to come in the minds of all the members of the society, their thinking and attitude towards the disabled. The present research was focused on the study of impact of family, teachers and peers on behaviour of the disabled girl child.*



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### **Introduction:**

India is the largest democracy in the world. There are about 120 million people with disabilities in India. Education is the right of every child because it equips him to meet the challenges of life. The disabled children need to supplement their differential talents so that they can prepare themselves for a happy productive and useful life. Efforts to educate children with disabilities began soon after independence in India.

Before the eighteenth century, persons with disabilities were viewed as a burden, useless and having nothing to contribute to the welfare of the society. (Gearheart *et al.*, 1984). Until the 1970's, children with special needs in the world received little or no education because of the common belief that they were uneducable (Winzer, 1993). However, the situation is gradually and positively changing throughout the world towards accepting, integrating, caring and paying attention to persons with disabilities in order to help them in self-actualization and adjustment to life.

After the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca in 1990s, inclusion became the magic word in the educational field. Inclusive education refers to all learners, young people – with or without disabilities being able to learn together in ordinary pre-school provisions, schools and community educational settings with appropriate network of support services. Inclusive Education Scheme (MHRD, 2003), addresses the needs of learners with disabilities, focuses on the following categories of disability: visual disabilities (blind and low vision), speech and hearing disabilities, locomotor disabilities, and neuromusculoskeletal and neuro-developmental disorders, including cerebral palsy, autism, mental retardation, multiple disability, and learning disabilities. In India RTE act 2009 tries to safeguard the rights of the children belonging to the disadvantaged groups and the weaker sections, protect them from any kind of discrimination and ensure their completion of elementary education. In India, disability is still viewed in terms of tragedy with a better dead than disabled approach, the idea being that it is not possible for persons with disabilities to be happy or enjoy a good quality life. Cultural beliefs about disability play an important role in determining the way in which the family perceives disability and the kind of measures it takes for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. Studies report that parental expectations from their learners with disabilities are mostly negative and unrealistic. Dalal and Pande (1999) investigated cultural beliefs and attitudes towards physical disability. The results revealed fatalistic attitudes and external dependence in families with learners with disabilities. Most of the respondents felt that the disabled member in a family could not do anything and just needed help and sympathy.

Parents are expected to play a crucial role in the education of their learners with disabilities by first and foremost accepting their conditions. They have to help the child to learn to be humane, to love, to build his/her unique personality, develop his/her self-concept/image and relate with and to the changing society of which he/she is born (Okot, Eron&Kutosi, 2000). Parents are key source of vital information about their children because they have firsthand knowledge of their children's physical, social emotional and cognitive traits (Hedrick, 1997). Treatment, care, education and rehabilitation of learners with disabilities require direct participation of parents and much time (Elena, 2005). Some parents of learners with disabilities are rejected by relatives and friends due to the fear that they too may share the stigma (Shea and Baver, 1991). The problems facing parents with learners with disabilities including poverty, are negatively affecting on the attitude of the disable. Even in Pune city there is less number of special teachers. In Pune Municipal Corporation area, there are over 19, 700 students with special needs studying in various schools, including private schools. Of

these, 4,428 students study in schools run by PMC. But for these 4428 students, the PMC has only 15 special educators.

The female child in India is often deprived from her right of an education. The female child's status is the product of general societal attitude towards women at large in India. Girls in India face higher risks of malnutrition, disease, disability, and retardation of growth and development. There is ample evidence that girls with disabilities experience major psychosocial problems, including depression, stress, lowered self-esteem, and social isolation, which remain largely neglected (Nosek and Hughes, 2003). In educational and social scene, discrimination on account of gender has been reported in many studies. However, girls with disabilities have remained invisible both from the writings on gender and on disability. Therefore, the needs of girls with disabilities may be more special and have to be addressed in all spheres.

As the children with disability are emotionally vulnerable and have behavioral difficulties. The researcher felt it necessary to study on this particular issue. The study was conducted in Wanawadi area of Pune city where there is a special school for handicapped students since 1985. There are various other special schools available in this area still the acceptance of the disabled girl child by her family members took a long time.

**Statement of the Research Problem:**

To Study the Impact of Family, Teachers and Peers attitude on the Behaviour of Disabled Child

**Objectives of the study:**

1. To determine the attitude of family, teachers & peers towards disabled child
2. To determine the impact of attitude of family, teachers and peers on behaviour of the disabled child
3. To determine whether the gender of disabled influence the attitude of family, teachers & peers

**Research Questions:**

The study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What is the attitude of family, teachers & peers towards disabled child?
2. Does the gender of a disabled child influence her families, teachers & peers attitude towards her?
3. What is the impact of parents, teachers & peers attitude on behaviour of the disabled child?

**Purpose of the study:**

Indian government has established various recommendations and actions plans for the better education of the disabled children. Despite of these efforts there is needed to change social mentality towards disabled. However, little information exists on the actual impact of parents and peers behavior on the psychological development of disabled girl child. This study seeks to evaluate the impact of attitude of the family, teachers & peers on behaviour of disabled girl child in Pune city.

The researcher has purposely selected disabled girl child for the study. This will provide information of the attitudes portrayed by parents, teachers and peers how it makes great impact on the psychological development of the disabled girl child. This study will help to know the needs to acknowledge and bring necessary changes in the attitude of the family, teachers and peers in order to enhance the self-concept and self-esteem of the disabled child. This study will also help to know about the thinking of the parents, teachers and peers towards disabled girl child in perspective of gender equality.

**Significance of Study:**

In order to address the challenges faced by the disabled child due to different attitudes of family members, teachers & peers towards them, detailed study is needed to evaluate the factors those are directly effect on psychology of the child. This is a crucial understanding the extent to which they accept the child and the challenges they have to face while dealing with the child as well as the society. Such a study will helpfully help in understanding the challenges face by the family members, teachers & peers while dealing with disabled child. Also this study will help to understand the strategies to bring about necessary changes in attitude of family members, teachers & peers towards disabled child by understanding the impact of their attitude on the psychology of the child.

**Assumptions of the study:**

This study was based on the following assumptions:-

- (i) Learners with disabilities face a number of challenges in accessing education.
- (ii) The attitude of learners with disabilities and their parents plays a significant role in determining access of the children to education.

**Operational Definitions of the terms:**

In this section, operational definitions are presented as used within the context of this study.

- **Disabled:** A person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limit the person in some major life activity and in effective interaction with the environment.

They include physically impaired (PI), hearing impaired (HI), visually impaired (VI) and mentally challenged (MC).

- **Handicap:** A limitation imposed on an individual by the environment and their person's capacity to cope with that limitation
- **Attitudes:** Refers to positive or negative predispositions to think, feel, perceive and behave in a certain way towards a given situation.
- **Family:** Refers to parents and the Members at home
- **Peers:** Refers to sister and brother as well as the friends in schools and neighbors of same age group
- **Behaviour:** Refers to the response shown by a child in various situations

### **Scope & limitation:**

The study was focused on evaluating the impact of family, teachers and peers attitude on psychological development of disabled child in Pune City. The girl child was chosen for the study because the challenges and problems faced by the disabled child in normal families located in Pune city are still more. This study will definitely help to know about the impact of family member's attitude on the behavior of the child.

The study was limited to study of psychological aspects of disabled girl child and impact of attitude of family members, teachers and her friends on her behavior. The study was conducted in Pune city only.

### **Research Design:**

The research was based on qualitative technique. Case study on Disable Girl Child was done.

### **Sampling Procedure & Sample:**

Disabled girl child was selected as a sample & the sampling was "Purposive sampling"

### **Tools of data Collection:**

- Questionnaire for family members, teachers and peers
- Interview of parents & Teachers
- Observation

### **Analysis of data:**

#### **1. Questionnaire**

The data collected through questionnaire for family members, teachers and peers was based on the questions asked:

For Family members: The questions asked were related to the initial reaction on disability, the treatment taken, response by the child, various problems faced by family members while

dealing with the child from initial stage to current situation, acceptance of her disability, acceptance by the society, education and her adjustment to cope up with the situation etc.

For Teachers: Problems faced by the teacher in teaching-learning issues, daily classroom activities, working in integrated class, acceptance by the peers of the child, etc.

For peers: regarding their opinion about the disabled, their initial reaction, understanding the special child in their group, Group acceptance etc.

## **2. Interview of parents**

The interview conducted by the researcher with the parents was based on their emotional, psychological, financial and social aspect while coping with the disabled girl child and their views and opinion about the child.

## **3. Observation**

The researcher has collected data by observing the behavior of the sample at home, in school and with friends

### **Interpretation of the data:**

It was observed that there was significant impact of family, teachers and peers attitude on the behaviour of the disabled girl child. The attitude of parents was still shown a negative & bias approach towards education of disabled girl child. It is also observed that the disabled girl child shows significant changes in behaving with the family members, teachers and peers.

### **Conclusion:**

India is a largest democratic country. It gives stress on equality and liberty to all, but still it is observed that the disabled children in our country are facing various problems and these problems should not be overlooked. There should be necessary provisions made by the government and the huge support of society for solving the issue.

It is suggested by the researcher that though tremendous changes are observed in the society towards the disabled but still more efforts needs to change the attitude & acceptance of disabled child as an individual. They should be treated equally as the other children in the society. They should get proper love, protection and care from family members, teachers as well as by the society. The teachers should provide necessary training and knowledge to deal with the special child in the integrated class. There should be increase in number of teachers in the schools.

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