



AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AMONG CHILDREN: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

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Autism is a developmental disorder that appears in the first three years of life and affects the brain's normal development of social and communication skills. Present paper analysis the intensity of autism in children and throws light on its characteristics. The author made an attempt to discuss the Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in Indian context. Types of ASD, its identification, difficulties faced by autistic children, causes of Autism are also discussed in this paper, at length. The author highlighted the problems encountered due to autism. Finally, the author has opined that an early intensive, appropriate treatment program will greatly improve the outlook for most of the children. With autism. According to him the best treatment play may be a combination of techniques of variety of therapies to deal with the problems of Autism. Autism is a developmental disorder that appears in the first three years of life and affects the brain's normal development of social and communication skills. Autism is a physical condition linked to abnormal biology and chemistry in the brains. it is a neuro development illness nor caused by trauma. These signs all begin before a child is three years old. Autism affects information processing in the brain by altering how nerve cells and their synapses connected and organize, how this occurs is not well understood. It is one of them recognized disorders in the Autism Spectrum disorders (ASDs). The other two being Asperger syndrome which lacks delays in cognitive development and language, and pervasive development disorder which is diagnosed when the full set of criteria for autism or Asperger syndrome are not met.

Autism has a strong genetic basis, although the genetics of autism are complex and it is unclear whether ASD is explained more by rare mutations, or by rare conservation of common genetic variants. In rare case autism is strongly associated with genetics that cause birth defects. Controversies surround other proposed environmental causes such as heavy metals pesticides or childhood vaccines. The vaccine hypotheses are biologically implausible and lack convincing scientific evidence. The prevalence of autism is about 1 to 2 per 1000 people worldwide, however, the centres for disease control and prevention (CDC) reports,

approximately 9 per 1000 children in the United States are diagnosed with ASD. The number of people diagnosed with autism has increased dramatically since the 1980s, partly due to changes in diagnostics practice., the question of whether actual prevalence has increased is unneased is unresolved.

Parents usually noticed autism signs in the first two years of their child's life. The signs usually develop gradually, but some autistic children first develop more normally and then regress. Early behavioural or cognitive interventions can help autistic children gain self care, social and communication skills. Not many children with autism live independently after reaching adulthood. Though some because successful. An autistic culture has developed with some individuals seeking a cure and others believing autism should be accepted as difference and not treated as a disorder.

Characteristics of Autism

Autism is a highly variable neurodevelopment disorder that first appears during infancy or children and generally follows a steady course without remission. Over symptoms gradually being after the age six months., becomes established by age two to three years tend to continue through adulthood, although often in more muted form. It is distinguished not by a single symptom, but a characteristics triad of symptom; impairments in a social interaction; impairment in a communication; and restricted inserts and respective behaviour. Other aspects, such as typical eating are also common but are not essential for diagnosis. Autism's individual symptoms occur in the general population and appear not to associate highly, without a sharp line separating pathologically severe from common traits.

a) Social Development

Social defects distinguish autism and the related autism spectrum disorders. People with autism have social impairment and often lack the institution about others that many people take granted. Unusual social development becomes apparent early in unusual social development becomes apparent early in childhood. Autistics infants show less attention to social statute, smile and look at others less often and respond less to their own name. Autistic toddlers differ more strikingly from social norms for example, movements to express the selves, such as the deficiency to point at things. Three to five years old autistic children are likely to exhibit social understanding, approach others spontaneously, initiate and respond to emotions, communicate non-verbally and take turn with others. However, they do form attachments to their primary care givers. Most autistic children display moderately less attachment security than non-autistic children.

b) Communication

Approximately a third to a half of individuals with autism develop enough natural speech to meet their daily communication needs. Differences in communication may be present from the first year of life, and may include delayed onset of babbling, unusual gestures, diminished responsive and vocal patterns that are not synchronized with the caregiver. In the second and third years., autistic children have less frequent and less diverse babbling, consonants, words and word combinations; their gestures are less often integrated with words. Autistic children are less likely to make requests or share experiences, and are more likely to simply repeat other or reverse pronouns.

c) Respective behaviour

Autistic children display many forms of repetitive or restricted behaviour which the Respective Behaviour Scale- Revise (RBS-R) categorizes as follows.

- Compulsive behaviour is intended and appears to follow rules, such as arranging objects in stacks or lines.
- Restricted behaviour is limited in focus, interest or activity, such as preoccupation within a single television programme, toy or game.
- Stereotypy is reptile movement, such as hand flapping making sounds, head rolling or body rocking.
- Sameness is resistance to change; for example, insisting that the furniture not be moved or refusing to be interrupted.
- Ritualistic behaviour involves an unvarying pattern of daily activities such as an unchanging menu or a dressing ritual. This is closely associated with sameness and an independent validation has suggested combining the two factors.

d) Other Symptoms

Autistic individuals/children may have symptom that are independent of the diagnosis but that can affect the individual or the family. Many individuals with ASD show superior skills in perception and attention, sensory abnormalities are found in over 90 percent and are considered core features by some. Some children with autism also have gastrointestinal (GI). Parent of children with ASD have higher level of stress. Siblings of children with ASD reports greater administration of and less conflict with the affected sibling than sibling of unaffected children

or those with down syndrome; sibling of individuals with ASD have greater risk negative well being not poorer sibling relationships as adults.

Autism Spectrum Disorder: the Indian Scenario

Autistic spectrum disorder represents a continuum of cognitive neurobehaviourally disorders including autism, The prevalence of autistic spectrum disorder is estimated to be 1-6 per 1000. At India's current population, this means there are an estimated 2 million autistic persons in the country, assuming that there are no significant variations in this rate, worldwide. However, no empirical studies have been done in India to establish these figures as yet. While the disorder is not rare, a majority of children with autism, even in urban India. Have not been diagnosed and do not receive the services they need. This problems occurs in many countries, but is especially true in India. Where there is a tremendous lack of awareness and misunderstanding about autism among the medical professionals. Who may either misdiagnose or under diagnose the condition.

Daley reflects on the fact that lack of research in the Indian context may reflect the fact, that some researchers have assumed that autism is rare in non-western countries, or an illness of modern civilization. In addition to recognition, the meaning attributed to a particular symptoms is likely to vary. For example, a study of psychiatric disorders among children in south Indian found that parents did not initially report concerns about their children never occurred to most parents that their children troublesome ways were anything other than an accepted part of family life. Until a researcher came along.

Currently, the needs of children with autism in India are not being met in either the regular or special education systems. Children with autism are frequently reused admission on these special schools because officials protest that they are not equipped to handle these children.

It is important to keep in mind that until 2003 , no formal training for autism specific techniques was available in India Since then, Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) has established 4 training centres across India. Who will annually train approximately sixty to eight professionals adequately skilled in working with children with autism. Although, this is a drop in the ocean, it is a significant beginning.

India being a developing country, the situation is even more dismal in the rural areas. With a significant part of the population lying below the poverty line. The focus for the families is understanding ably on meeting the needs for daily sustenance. With autism have a normal life span and many will require supervision after their parents death. These is thus an urgent need

to begin planning vocational centres and residential homes for these children in preparation for the time when they become adults.

Even within this frame work , most of the work being in autism focus on the child and facilities the improvement in the child. How ever , parent can cope with them most effectively. Even less is known about the levels of parental involvement in the whole process. An individual with autism and their families respected as individuals are respected as individuals and as human beings. In a country like India. Where the awareness about autism is still emerging and the availability of services is in rather short supply, the role of the service provider would best be described as multifaceted an information giver, a leader, a supporter, and a guide, and sometime an advocate against a system which often seems to work against the individuals with autism. These is a great need to develop effective service providers willing to deal with the individual the family and society in general and as a whole.

Types of Autistic spectrum disorder

There are four sub- types of Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) such as a) Autism b) Asperger syndrome c) Childhood Disintegrative and d) Pervasive Development Disorder, Rett syndrome is no longer considered to be a sub-ty type of Autism Although individual with Rett syndrome may display autistic like symptoms.

The term Autism is sometimes used interchange iterative with the term Autism spectrum disorder to mean any or all of the different from of ASD. Autism is a from of Autism spectrum disorder. Asperger syndrome is a from of autism spectrum disorder. Each person with assert syndrome is a unique individual, with his or her own strengths and weakness. Some people with Asperger syndrome extremely good memories at playing attention to detail. And many have average or above average intelligence. However, most people with Asperger syndrome also find it difficult to talk to other people or to make friends. They also tend to have poor coordination and concentration and they usually have a limited range of interests. And they may do thing or things over and over again. They may also find it difficult to find a job or to get by without some help from other people. Upton now there is no specific cure for Asperger syndrome, but the are some treatment and therapies (intervention) which can help solve some of the problems, faced by people with Asperger syndrome and their families.

Childhood Disintegrative Disorder is an extremely rare from of autism Spectrum Disorder. It is also known as CDD, dementia infantile, disintegrative psychosis of Heller's syndrome children with CDD, appear to develop normally until the age, of two years. After that they go backwards, losing many of the skills they had before, such as the ability to walk or talk. They

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also share some of the syndromes of people with autism. For example, they may have difficulty with social interactions, communication, repetitive behaviours or interests.

Pervasive Developmental Disorder (Not otherwise specified) is a form of Autism spectrum Disorder, It is also known as PDD (NOS) or atypical autism. It is used to describe people who don't fit neatly in to one of the specific kinds of autism spectrum disorder, such as autism or Asperger syndrome. Individuals with this condition are more likely to have other conditions such as epilepsy.

Identification

At eighteen months autism child does language development seen slowly . Autism varies widely in its severity and symptoms and many go unrecognized, especially in mildly affected children or when it is masked by more debilitating handicaps. Doctors rely on a core group of behaviours to alert them to the possibility of a diagnosis of autism. These behaviours are:

- Impaired ability to make friends with peers
- Impaired ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others
- Absence or impairment of imaginative and social play
- Stereotyped repetitive, or unusual use of language
- Restricted patterns of interest that is abnormal in intensity or focus
- Preoccupation with certain objects or subjects
- Inflexible adherence to specific routines or rituals.

The knowledge of specific difficulties experienced by individual with autism is helpful in planning intervention programme for them. The association of head teachers of autistic children and adults (1985). Has described the specific difficulties of children with autism in detail.

- Difficulties in Autism Children
- Lack of self-image
- Difficulty relating to other people
- Difficulty perception of meaningful relationship
- Difficulty relating to outside stimuli
- Deficiency in adaptive behaviours
- Impairment in language and communication skills (cognitive skills)
- Deficiency in perceptual skills.

As mentioned earlier the conceptualization has been shifted from the psychosocial to biological perspective. The abnormal development has been a common finding in many people with Autistic spectrum disorder. Although, no single cause is identified. Genetic linkage has been

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established in many student's neuro anatomical model explains the condition occurring due to pathological changes like maturation problems, hypo plasma and reduced demotic branching in areas like cerebellum and limbic system. This explains the cardinal features of autism like clumsiness, emotional and social problems. Many persons with autism present arrange of immunological abnormalities, but they are found to be clinically insignificant. There is no evidence that immune system abnormalities play a role in establishing the autistic syndromes. Recent research report and over whelming evidence suggest that autism is a neurological rather than a psychological disability. Yet traditionality lack of interaction with cold and unresponsive parents and certain biological factors in genetics pregnancy, birth , neurological and biological development is speculated to lead to autism.

- a) Lack of integration with cold and unresponsive parents
- b) Biological factors such as those related to pregnancy and birth, genetic neurology and biochemistry.
 - Neurochemical imbalance
 - Pre-postnatal disorders
 - Chromosomal disorders
 - Auditory impairments
 - Central nervous system dysfunction

Autism is a physical condition linked to abnormal biology and chemistry in the brain. The exact causes of these abnormalities remain unknown but this is very active area of research. There are probably a combination of factors that lead to autism.

Genetic factors seem to be important. For example, identical twist is must likely than fraternal twists or siblings to both have autism. Similarly, language abnormality are more common in relatives of autism children. Chromosomal abnormalities and other nervous system problems are also more common in families with autism. A number of other possible causes have been suspected but not proven. They involve, Diet: Digestive tract charges. Mercury poisoning: The body's inability to property uses vitamin and minerals, Vaccine sensitivity.

How many children have Autism?

The exact number of children with autism is not known. A report related by the US Centre for Disease control prevention (CDC) suggests that autism and related disorder are more common than previously thought. I is unclear whether this is due to an increasing rate of the illness or an increase ability to diagnose the illness. Autism effects boys 3-4 times more often than girls. Family income, education, and lifestyle do not affect the risk of autism.

Some doctors believe the increased incidence in autism is due to newer definitions of autism. The term autism now includes a wider spectrum of children. For example, a child who is diagnosed with high-functioning autism today may have been thought to simply be odd or strange 30 years ago.

Symptoms

Most parents of autistic children suspect that something is wrong by the time the child is 18 months old and seek help by the time the child is age 2. Children with autism typically have difficulties in.

- Pretend play
- Social interaction
- Verbal and non-verbal communication

Some children with autism appear normal before age 1 or 2 and then suddenly regress and lose language or social skills they had previously gained. This is called the regressive type of autism.

Children with autism may:

- ❖ Be overly sensitive in sight, hearing, touch, smell, or taste (for example, they may refuse to wear itchy clothes and become distressed if they are forced to wear the clothes).
- ❖ Have unusual distress when routines are changed.
- ❖ Perform repeated body movements
- ❖ Show unusual attachments to objects
- ❖ The symptoms may vary from moderated to severe.

Communication Problem may include:

- Cannot start or maintain a social conversation
- Communicates with gestures instead of words
- Develops language slowly or not at all
- Does not adjust gaze to look at objects that others are looking at
- Repeats words or memorized passages, such as commercials

Social interaction

- Does not make friends
- Does not play interactive games
- May not respond to eye contact or smiles, or may avoid eye contact
- May treat others as if they are objects
- Prefers to spend time alone, rather than with others

Response to sensory information

- Does not startle at loud noises
- Has high or low sense of sight, hearing, touch, smell, or taste
- May find normal noises painful and hold hands over ears
- Rubs surfaces, mouths or licks objects

Behaviour

- Acts up with intense tantrums
- Gets stuck on a single topic or task (perseveration)
- Has very narrow interests
- Is overactive or very passive
- Show a strong need for sameness
- Uses repetitive body movements

Signs and tests

All children school have routine developmental exams done by their paediatrician. Further testing may be needed if the doctor or parents are concerned. This is particularly true if a child fails to meet any of the following language milestones:

- Babbling by 12 months
- Gesturing (pointing, waving bye-bye) by 18 months
- Saying single words by 16 months
- Losing any language or social skills at any age

These children might receive a hearing evaluation. Blood lead test, and screening and screening test for autism (such as the checklist for autism in toddlers.[CHAT] OR THE Autism screening Questionnaire). A health care provider experienced in diagnosing and treating autism is usually needed to make the actual diagnosis. Because there is no biological test for autism, the diagnosis will often be based on very specific criteria from a book called the diagnostic and statistical manual IV.

An evaluation of autism will often include a complete physical and nervous system examination. It may also include a specific screening tool, such as:

- Autism Diagnostic Interview -Revised (ADI-R)
- Autism Diagnostic observation Schedule (ADOS)
- Childhood Autism rating scale (CARS)
- Gillian Autism Rating Scale
- Pervasive Developmental Disorders Screening Test -Stage 3

Children with known or suspected autism will often have genetic testing and may have metabolic testing.

Autism includes a broad spectrum of symptoms. There a single, brief, evaluation cannot predict a child true abilities. Ideally, a team of different specialists will evaluate the child. They might evaluate.

- Communication
- Language
- Motor Skills
- Speech
- Success at school
- Thinking abilities

Treatment

An early, intensive, appropriate program will greatly improve the outlook for most young children with autism. Mos programs will build on the interests of the child in a highly structure schedule of constructive activities. Visual aids are often helpful. Treatment is most successful when it is geared toward the child particular needs. An experienced specialist or team should design the program for the individual child. A variety of therapies are available, including:

- Applied behaviour analysis (ABA)
- Medications
- Occupational
- Physical therapy
- Speech language therapy

Sensory integration and vision therapy are also common, but there is little research supporting their effectiveness. The best treatment plan may use a combination of techniques.

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

This program is for younger child with an autism spectrum disorder. It can be effective in some case. ABA uses a one -on-one teaching approach that reinforces the practice of various skills. Th goal is to get child close to normal development functioning ABA programs are usually done a child's home under the supervision of a behavioural pathologist. These programs can be very expensive and have not been widely adopted by school systems.

Parents often must seek funding and staffing from other sources, which can be hard to find in many communities.

Another program is called the Treatment and education of autistic and related communication. Handicapped children (TEACCH) were developed as a state-wide program in North Carolina. It uses picture schedules and other visual cues that help the child work independently and organize and structure their environment. Though TEACCH tries to improve a child's adaptation and skills, it also accepted the problems

Associated with autism spectrum and barley. Casein is found in milk, cheese, and other dairy products, not all experts agree that dietary changes will make a difference, and not all studies of the method have shown positive result.

Other Approaches

Beware that there are widely publicized treatment for autism that do not have scientific support, and reports of miracle cure that do not live up to expectations. If your child has autism. It may be helpful to talk with other parents of children with autism specialists. Follow the progress of research in this area, which is rapidly developing. At one time, there was enormous excitement about using secret-in infusions. Now, after many studies have been conducted in many laboratories. It's possible that secret in is not effective after all. However, research continues.

Expectations (prognosis)

Autism remains a challenging condition for children and their families, but the outlook today is much better than it was a generation ago. At that time, most people with autism were placed in institutions. Today, with the right therapy, many of the symptoms of autism can be improved. Though most people will have some symptoms throughout their lives. Most people with autism are able to live with their families or in the community. The outlook depends on the severity of the autism and the level of therapy the person receives. Autism can be associated with other disorders that affect the brain, such as:

- ❖ Fragile X syndrome
- ❖ Mental retardation
- ❖ Tuberous sclerosis

The stresses of dealing with autism can lead to social and emotional complications for family and caregivers, as well as the person with autism. Parents usually suspect that there is a developmental problem long before a diagnosis is made. Call your health care provider with any concerns about autism or if you think that your child is not developing normally.

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