

INNER DESIRES IN PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED INSTITUTIONALIZED CHILDREN (5-13YEARS)

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ABSTRACT

The present research was undertaken to find out the inner desires in physically challenged institutionalized children (5-13years). The sample of study was 10 physically challenged institutionalized children, most of whom belong to low socio-economic status families. Interview Schedule and Children Apperception Test (CAT) were used for data collection. The study reveals that most of the children have good family relations. The results obtained from the Children Apperception Test reveals that most of the children show a high degree of attachment with their parents and grandparents. Majority of the children used simple language and depicted their daily routine in the stories. Most of them have loving and respectful attitude towards their parents.

INTRODUCTION

Physically handicapped individuals are those who have non-sensory physical limitations i.e. not because of sense organs like eyes or ears, but because of other organs like limbs, bones, joints or muscles. It is not surprising that the physically challenged fight two battles: the battle to overcome the limitations imposed by their physical condition and the battle to be accepted by others. Physical disability in itself may not be as bad physical experience as the social one, especially in those cases where the handicap is visible. It is only recently that the '*Disability*' has been termed as a '*Challenge*', impediment for an individual. The bias against disability is revealed in the terminologies locally used for referring to these individuals, which are often derogatory and limiting. Such individuals grow up with a very negative self-image resulting in low motivation and aspiration. They grow up they '*cannot do*' where as when the disability is offered as a '*challenge*' their outlook towards life changes.

Physical disability is a common experience of everyday life. According to World Health Organizations (1980) disability means any restriction or lack of ability to perform any activity in the manner within the range considered normal for a normal being. Physically handicapped children are defined as those whose non-sensory physical limitation or health problems interfere with the school attendance or learning to such an extent that special services, training equipment, materials or facilities are required (Hallahan and Kauffman, 1978).

But the modern attitude and outlook is still not prevalent and thus these children still have a tough challenge to face. Today's fast competing and changing scenario of society has forced the individuals to concentrate their efforts on different dimensions of life. It is a matter of great concern that the abilities and potentials of disabled persons have not yet been fully

explored and tackled but practically it is a great loss of human resources, which, if discovered, matured, appropriately channelized and utilized could add a new force to the progression of the society. In such an atmosphere of least concern rather neglect, it becomes a moral duty, rather a religious, to identify the handicapped people and to explore their potentials and weakness in scientific ways (Gajendragadkar, 1983). Even in these days, where science and technology has done so much to make disability – ‘*a challenge*’, the local people go only for charity and not for giving a personal ‘touch’ and always isolate these children. These children, who are attending a specialized residential facility, need to be brought into the normalized circles, where they understand the society they will have to face after leaving the institution and the ‘*challenges*’ that they have to encounter and live up to. Exposure to other people with the same handicap is no doubt generally an important experience with a variable effect. To generalize, children tend to find it reassuring that there are other children who have the same problems and that they are not unique. People in the position of becoming handicapped in later life generally report that interaction is easier with new acquaintances than with those who were known previous to the handicap.

METHODOLOGY

The present research was conducted to find out the inner desires in physically challenged institutionalized children (5-13 years). The institution is situated in Jammu (J&K State) has been selected for the study as it is the only institution meant for the welfare of the physically handicapped children in this part of the state. Children from different parts of the state reside in the institution to attain education so that they can become self-reliant and self-dependent.

Sample Size:

The sample consists of 10 institutionalized physically challenged children.

Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample from a residential institution, as home-based sample could not be obtained even after door-to-door survey.

Criteria for Sample Selection

For selecting the sample following criteria were taken into consideration:

Institutionalization

Only those children were selected who resided in the institution for physically challenged children.

Age Group

Children should be in the age group of 5-13 years.

Tools Used For Collecting The Data:

Interview Schedule and Children's Apperception Test (CAT) By- *D.Leopold Bellak*. (1959) were used for data collection.

Procedure Of Data Collection

Rapport Establishing

Permission from the head of the institution was taken in order to visit the institution. For rapport establishing, the investigators visited to the institution many times. The investigators interacted with children and their care takers in the institution. The purpose and features of the study were explained to them, mean while informal observations were recorded.

Data Collection

Initial rapport was established and participatory approach was used to collect the information from the institution about physically challenged children. The requisite data was collected with the help of tools, which were employed during fieldwork. The children were assured that the information and data will not be disclosed and will only be used for research purpose. They were given all the 10 cards and asked to respond; as it was a mixed group CAT was used as the purpose was to know their familial relationships.

Data Analysis

Both qualitative analysis and statistical measures were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background Information:

Table no1: Showing Background Information of the Respondents

Variables	— X *
Age of the Respondents	11-15 years
Educational Qualification	3 rd
Father's Educational Qualification	Illiterate
Father's Occupation	Farmer
Ordinal Position	2 nd
Onset of Disability	3-5 years
Age at joining the Institution	3-6 years
Schooling before joining the Institution	Yes
Visits made by Parents in the Institution	Weekly
Visits made by children at the Home	Yearly
*Median value used.	

Table no 1 reveals that the median age of the respondents was 11-15 years and the educational qualification was 3rd standard. Median educational qualification of the father was illiterate and median occupation, farmer. Results show that all the mothers were illiterate and were housewives. All the children belong to the nuclear families. The median ordinal position

of the children was 2nd and median onset of disability was in the age group of 3-5 years. Median age at joining the institution was 3-6 years. All the children received treatment before joining the institution. Median visits made by parents in the institution were weekly whereas children visit their homes yearly.

Children Apperception Test (CAT)

Hero Of The Stories

Table 2.1 Showing Hero of the Stories

*Hero of the Stories	n=10	%
Animal Figures	10	77
Human Figures	3	23
* Multiple Responses		

Table no 2.1 shows that all the children identified animal figure as hero. Only 23% children considered human figure as hero.

Theme Of The Stories

Table 2.2 Showing Theme of the Stories

*Themes of the stories	n=10	%
Children love their parents and family members	5	39
Children like to play	3	23
Mother cooks food	2	15
Old people are helpless	2	15
Effects of terrorism is bad	1	8
* Multiple Responses		

Table no. 2.2 indicates that 39% of the children based their stories on the theme of “Children’s love their parents and family members”. 23% on “Children love to play”. 15% each on “mother’s do household chores and helplessness of older people” respectively. Only 8% children based the stories on “Effect of terrorism is bad”. This might be because the child’s life has been affected by terrorism.

End of the Stories

Table 2.3 Showing End of the Stories

*End of the stories	n=10	%
Happy	8	73
Sad	3	27
*Multiple Responses		

It was found that majority of the stories constructed by 73% of the children had happy endings. Only 27% of the children constructed stories with sad endings. Sadness in the stories might be due to the problem faced by these children.

Attitude Towards Parental Figures

Table 2.4 Showing Attitude Towards Parental Figures

*Attitude towards parental figures	n=10	%
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Loving	7	47
Respectful	4	27
Caring	3	20
Attachment	1	6
* Multiple Responses		

Table no 2.4 reveals that more than half of the children (74%) had loving and respectful attitude towards parental figures. Less than half of the children (20%) had caring kind of attitude towards parental figures. Only 6% children had show attachment with parental figures. So it is found that most of the children love and respect their parents.

Other Supplementary Knowledge

Table 2.5 Showing other Supplementary Knowledge

*Supplementary knowledge	n=10	%
Daily routine	10	27
Simple language	10	27
Attachment with grandparents, parents, peers	10	27
Very much involved in constructing the story	4	11
Afraid of loneliness	3	8
* Multiple Responses		

Table no 2.5 shows that all the children (100%) in their stories depicted their daily routine, used simple language, and showed attachment with their grandparents, parents, and peers. 11% children constructed the stories very enthusiastically. Only 8% children are afraid of loneliness.

In the overall findings it is concluded that majority of the children used simple language and depicted their daily routine in the stories. Most of the children show a high degree of attachment with their parents and grandparents. Most of them have loving and respectful attitude towards their parents Cottrell (1992), Bharti (2002) and Sharma, Arora, and Bharti (2004) also found that the strength of attachments to parents was associated with young people's positive feelings about themselves. But a study conducted by Streit (1996) is in contradictory with the present study. According to the Streit's study, teachers had amore positive attitude towards physically handicapped children as compared to their parents. In present study majority of the stories constructed by the children had happy endings and very positive attitude towards their life. But a previous study conducted by Fitchen et. al (1991) concluded that physically disabled individuals everyday social encounters, normal individuals, thoughts and feelings were more negative.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The stories constructed by children revealed that their life was too much based on routine work. There is an absence of physical activity that the children enjoy. There are many activities these children can be involved in.
 - a) Games and sports - *Handball, badminton, cricket, etc.*
 - b) Creative activities - *Drama, dance, debates, discussions, etc.*

This will help in channelizing their energies, development of positive self-concept, self-worth and self-esteem.

2. The need was felt for imparting some life-skill education to these children. Life-skill education is concerned with learning about living, family and social relationship and personal development. It also aims to assist people in developing the ability to understand

themselves and society in which they learn to think independently, to work out and clarify their values and to evaluate and use information effectively in making responsible decision about their lives.

3. Although the institution provides vocational training like knitting, tailoring and music but it is not sufficient in today's world to earn his or her living so institute should go in for computer education, technical education and provide more avenues to children. Community can help by giving free seats to these students in courses related to the above. This will motivate these students to go in for higher education, as they belong to low-income families and parents were not in position to help their children in studies.
4. *Social involvement*: Physically challenged institutionalized children's social involvement was very low. Institutions should provide outdoor activities like picnics, educational trips, camps and some creative activities like paper folding, pasting, collage making etc., so that these children will share their creative knowledge and their things with other children, which in turn will develop a sharing and cooperative attitude and simultaneously they improve their social interactions among them. Adequate steps should be taken to enhance the social interactions of these children with their parents or community members through awareness programs, seminars, camps etc.

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