

STUDENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT: CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS AND PARENTS

By

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Abstract

Hearing, one of the most vital senses, is essential for preserving interpersonal relationships and connections. Hearing loss is a condition in which the ear does not function properly. Depending on one's age or stage of life, a lot of circumstances can influence one's hearing. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing have difficulty succeeding in school. They can interact with society since they have a face. Due to reduced class size and a lack of technological teaching aids, teachers face obstacles in the classroom. Due to the lack of professional training and similar lip movement, while teaching children, they have been struggled. The major issue for parents of children with hearing impairment is to embrace their child's abilities and provide adequate assistance. They also worried about their children's education and prospects. Provision of the appropriate remedies for overcoming their challenges will help every individual to succeed in their life.

Keywords: *children with hearing impairment, challenges, hard of hearing.*

Introduction

Humans have five senses which help them to understand what's happening around us. Senses send a message through receptor cells to our brain, using our nervous system to deliver that message. Hearing is one of the most important senses while some people are born with hearing

impairment and sometimes a hearing loss can occur because of some diseases, aging, injury. Hearing loss could be partially impaired type or fully impaired type. Hearing impairment is an disability which is invisible and is more prevalent around the world (Ziadat, 2020). World Health Organization (WHO) defines hearing impairment as hearing loss of 41-80 dB

(WHO, 2004). Due to exposure to noise in recreational settings, 1.1 billion young people (aged between 12-35 years) are at risk of hearing loss (WHO, 2021). Hearing impairment creates a lot of challenges for parents, teachers, and students.

Hearing impairment - The Concept

Information about the world is acquired through hearing. Anybody who hears nothing around him/her, no matter how loud the sound is, could be seen as having an ear problem. "Hearing impairment includes both the hard of hearing (partially hearing) and the deaf" (Nwadinobi, 2019). One who loses his hearing capacity after acquiring speech is known as hard of hearing. Those who are born with a loss of hearing capacity in childhood before acquiring the ability to speak are known as deaf. A hearing loss can happen when any part of the ear is not working in the usual way. Hearing impairment is a partial or total inability to hear. It is caused by many different factors namely noise, illness, chemicals, and physical trauma. Hearing loss may be mild, moderate, severe, or profound. A hearing loss above 90 dB is generally considered

deafness, which means that a hearing loss below 90 dB is classified as hearing impairment. Deafness is hearing impairment in which the child couldn't process linguistic information even with the help of hearing aids (Patel, 2017). Hearing impairment can be temporary or it can be permanent.

Hearing impairment - How to identify?

Children who suffer hard of hearing and the deaf can be generally termed as children with hearing-impairment. Hearing impairment is a handicapped condition that affects the normal functioning of the child. The observable signs by which the hearing impaired could be identified include the following, sometimes the child finds it difficult to write when dictating. The child might get confused or failed to respond to verbal directions. The child may have complaints of a buzzing or ringing sound in the ear. They may fail to respond when called from a distance. They may also complain about the discharge from the ears. Due to these complaints, they might speak abnormally in a low, high, or loud voice. They ask the speaker to repeat their sentences or words so they could

clearly understand. They are insensitive to sound. The child often screams to express their emotions like annoyance or need. These kinds of individuals also have frequent earaches and running ears. And also they sometimes give wrong answers to simple questions. The child often dodges situations that may require him to listen or talk to people (Nwadinobi, 2019).

Hearing Impairment - Spectrum

The ear is divided into three major parts – the outer, the middle, and the inner ear. The types of hearing impairments are abstracted below.

Conductive hearing impairment. It occurs when sound waves cannot travel through the external canal or the ossicular chain in the middle ear. It has no impact on the inner ear. In this situation, the infant hears if sound vibrations may be delivered directly to the inner ear without passing through the middle ear.

Sensorineural hearing impairment. It is prevalent among children. This is associated with the inner ear because it is damage to or degeneration of the sensory structure of the inner ear that causes it (Nwadinobi, 2019).

Central hearing impairment. It happens due to a problem with the central auditory system. The child may have difficulty with speech within a noisy environment, experience difficulties with auditory memory, auditory sequential memory, phonetics, and reading comprehension. But they could respond to various instructional strategies.

Mixed hearing impairment. It is the combination of both conductive and sensorineural hearing loss. It affects the child who already has a sensorineural loss and also leads to conductive hearing loss. It can be treated with surgical or medical treatment (Smith et al., 2012).

Obstacles for students with Hearing Impairment

There are various hindrances—academic, speech and social—for students with hearing impairment.

Academic: Children with hearing loss have difficulty with all areas of academic achievement, especially reading and mathematical concepts (Mpofu, 2013). Children with mild to moderate hearing loss, on average, achieve one to four grade levels lower than their peers with normal hearing,

unless appropriate management occurs. Children with severe to profound hearing loss usually achieve skills higher than the third or fourth-grade level unless appropriate educational intervention early. Deaf and hard-of-hearing students require full visual access during class discussions and lessons. For these students, the physical environment of the classroom is extremely important. The children with hearing impairment due to lack of auditory experience have their intellectual development defective when compared with the hearing children (Nwadinobi, 2019).

Speaking: Children with hearing loss may not hear their voices when they speak. They may speak too loudly or not loud enough. They may have a speaking pitch that is too high. They may sound like mumbling because of poor rate of speaking. Children with hearing loss frequently can't hear quiet speech sounds like "s," "sh," "f," "t," and "k," so they don't use them in their speech. Teachers who do not attempt to learn sign language to understand children with hearing impairment have lost interest in various courses (Mpofu, 2013). Children with hearing loss may not accurately convey their message or

thoughts, because of interruption in speaking.

Social problems: Sometimes, children with hearing impairment have not been accepted by society. That means job opportunities, and education, are not provided equally like other students. The social challenges facing hearing impairment are lack of engagement in social activity, fear to deal with others and the discrimination feels; and the education challenges are difficulty to understand science material, the need for a sign language translator, and lack of teachers' ability (Ziadet, 2020). They are unable to participate in conversation due to stigma, making them feel lonely, unexpressed, and socially marginalized.

Challenges of Teachers

Teaching is a scientific process, and its major components are content, communication, and feedback (Rajagobalan, 2019). Teaching is a set of events, outside the learners which are designed to support the internal process of learning (Sequeria, 2012). The main function of teaching is to make learning effective. Teachers act as guides and good philosophers. The

teacher needs to take special consideration when teaching children with hearing impairment because children with hearing impairment receive information in various ways—through an interpreter, through speech reading, through sign language, through an assistive listening device. During classroom teaching, both students and teachers may undergo many difficulties including students' lack of concentration which leads to difficulties in teaching. The teacher may not be able to make students understand the context.

Lack of teaching aids may also be another reason for difficult student teaching. Gaining the students' attention without calling their name also is a great challenge for the teachers. The study suggests that teachers expressed the need for reduced class sizes, modern teaching materials, motivations to teachers and additional support services from the government (Alexander, 2014). The study revealed teachers of English in schools with hearing impairment have low professional training as a result they are not able to use the right communication approaches for teaching English (Mathew, 2014).

Some teachers with hearing impairment face a shortage of essential resources for effective teaching. Students' disability to hear study material in the form of audio makes the teachers adapt the material and deliver through inappropriate ways with the right media.

Difficulties may arise in the children with hearing impairment classroom are, they use sign language if they take time to teach them. They use lip reading for communication. The children with hearing impairment may not be aware of all the words. It is very difficult to teach with electronic materials. They may lack general vocabulary and the basic mathematical concepts that are necessary to understand math concepts and processes. So it is difficult to teach mathematical concepts. During classroom teaching, the teacher could face the students and teachers. If they face the board and teach, children with hearing impairment find it difficult to understand.

Challenges of Parents

Parents of hearing impairment are facing a lot of struggles in their upbringing. One such is

communication. Parents face unique and long-term obstacles during early infancy, such as communication issues, greater medical or audio logical care, and educational difficulties (Lederberg, 2002). Meadow-Orlans (1994) suggested that parenting stress may increase as children grow and the communication gap between parents and their children becomes more apparent. They have to use sign languages to communicate with them. Their parents are not ready to accept their disability and give them treatment.

Parents could feel the pressure due to social stigma that stops them from accepting their child with disabilities. Many mothers express their concern about other people's negative attitudes. They have felt unable to have a positive outlook on the future of their wards because hearing loss is associated with negative images in society (Shamshiri, 2017). The main challenge for the parents is to completely accept their children's disability and provide them good support without being judgmental compared to other normal schools. Schools for children with hearing impairment are very less in number.

Parents are also troubled about their future. They compare with normal children and get disturbed in their mind and feel low. Financial strain is also another factor that makes the parents to feel difficult to offer treatment or provide hearing aids to their children. A study (Heiman, 2002) reveals that almost all of the parents (93.5%) used a combination of different kinds of supports and benefits, such as counselling services, support groups, social workers, and educational consultants, or support from nongovernmental organizations or the special education system. Some parents (23.1%) felt that the child's impairment caused new problems, conflicts, and frustration among the parents, resulting in a damaged interpersonal relation.

Educational Implications

Children with hearing impairment face a lot of troubles in conveying and receiving messages or information because they are not provided with sufficient hearing aids. So the government may provide them proper hearing aids which help them for communication. Society is not treating children with hearing impairment like

other normal children. The government should provide more educational and job opportunities to children with hearing impairment. Inadequate teaching aids are also one of the reasons for difficulties in teaching children with hearing impairment. So, the school should be provided with required teaching aids. The school should also be provided with professionally trained teachers to teach students more effectively. Parents of children with hearing

impairment are very much worried about their children because of the society they live in. So it is the responsibility of the society to treat the children with hearing-impairment like any other children without any discernment. So, their parents would be able to grow their children happily. The government and non-government agencies must provide funds to improve the school and to build new institutions for these kinds of children.

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