



Problems Of Physically Challenged Children - A Parental Perspective

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ABSTRACT

A physical disability is a limitation on a person's physical functioning, mobility, dexterity or stamina. Family relationships maybe weakened by the added and unexpected physical, emotional and financial stress. Many factors influence the reaction of family including the emotional stability of each member, religious values and beliefs, socio economic status and the severity and the type of child's disability. In this context, it is proposed to study the perspectives of the parents towards their physically disabled children and the problems encountered by them in their course of life. The present study had examined the social profile of the parents of the physically challenged children in the selected study area and it analyzed the psychological perception of the parents of the physically challenged children towards their child's disability. The study had further analyzed the financial problems faced by the parents of the physically challenged children and it measured the health problems faced by the parents of the physically challenged children. The present research study adopts Descriptive Research Design. Both primary and secondary data were utilized for drawing conclusions from the study. Interview Schedule method was employed to extract the primary data from the selected sample respondents. The sampling area selected for the study was Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh. The sample size comprises 120 sample respondents. The nature of the sample was that of the parents of the physically challenged children. The study concludes that the parents of the physically challenged children are facing with social, psychological, financial and health problems and most of them are in the state of depression making them to rely upon medicines on day to day basis. The study further concludes that their financial position is average and they intend to seek financial help from the banking institutions.

Key Words: Parents of disabled children, Socio-economic, Psychological, Health Problems

INTRODUCTION

A physical disability is a limitation on a person's physical functioning, mobility, dexterity or stamina. Other physical disabilities include impairments which limit other facets of daily living, such as respiratory disorders, blindness, epilepsy and sleep disorders. When parents learn that their child has a disability, they begin a journey that takes them into a life that is often, filled with a strong emotion, difficult choices, interactions with many different professionals and specialists, and an ongoing need for information and services.

Initially, parents may feel isolated and alone, and not know where to begin their search for information, assistance, understanding and support. The impact of having a disabled child is strongly felt in the family. Although having a disabled child affects the whole family major brunt is faced by the parents. They suffer from various problems like psychological, financial, emotional, social, etc. The birth of a child with the significant disabilities has a profound impact on the family. The most immediate and predictable reaction to the birth of a child with a disability is a shock, characterized by feeling of confusion, anxiety, anger, etc. Fear, anger, guilt and resentment often interfere with couple capacity to communicate and seek realistic solution.

An infant with a disability may require more immediate and prolonged attention from mother for feeding, treatment and general care. Thus, her attention may become riveted on the life of the child with disability. The balance that once existed between being a mother and being a partner no longer exists. Day to day physical and psychological support provided by fathers is invaluable to mothers of children with disabilities.

The couple's time is especially important because there are a number of issues that need to be discussed and dealt with including the feelings of grief and disappointment that sometimes never get processed. A child with physical, intellectual or behavioural disabilities may sometimes hurl the family into crisis, resulting in major conflicts among its members.

Family relationships maybe weakened by the added and unexpected physical, emotional and financial stress. Many factors influence the reaction of family including the emotional stability of each member, religious values and beliefs, socio economic status and the severity and the type of child's disability. In this context, it is proposed to study the perspectives of the parents towards their physically disabled children and the problems encountered by them in their course of life.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Raina et al., (2015) in a study of the health and well-being of caregivers of children with cerebral palsy, behavioural issues and the degree of care giving burden had direct, negative effects on caregivers psychological and physical health.

Sen and Yurtsever (2017) carried a study on "difficulties experienced by families with disabled children. The main objective of this study was to determine the difficulties experienced by families with disabled children. The study was carried out in one public and two private rehabilitation centres. The result indicated that the families did not have enough knowledge about their child's condition. Mothers felt severe sadness and indicated that their social life, working life and family relationships were all affected after having a disabled child. Families also faced financial problems.

Tsai and Wang (2018) conducted a study on the relationship between caregiver's strains among mothers with school-aged intellectually disabled children in Taiwan. Data was collected through face to face interview combined with a structured questionnaire. Instruments employed were the caregiver Strain Index, Social support Scale and open ended questionnaire. In total, 127 mothers completed the questionnaire. Results showed that mothers with intellectually disabled children had a rather high level of strain and received inadequate social support. Social support and strain had a significant and negative status, social support and amount of time spent as a caregiver, as well as the intellectually disabled children's dependent degree of daily living activity, were major predictors of caregiver's strain.

Laskar et al., (2021) carried a study on "Psychological and economic burden on parents of children with locomotor disability" with objectives, to assess the social and financial burden of parents of these children. A cross sectional study was conducted in the Institute for Physically Handicapped (IPH) Delhi and a sample of 100 disabled children having locomotor problems in the age group 6 to 15 years was interviewed. In this study it was found that the parents of the disabled children were severely burdened in terms of financial burden and mental health.

Lakshmi and Anitha (2023) conducted a study on family cohesion and Adaptability among Couples with Differently abled kids in special schools. Study used simple random sampling to collect 50 respondents. Self-prepared questionnaires were used to collect the data constructed and family adaptability and cohesion evaluation scale was also administered to study the same. The results revealed that all

respondents were worried about their children's future. Half of the respondents were always burdened by their children. Half of the respondent's social life was not frequently limited, but to some extent they were relaxed. 100% of the respondents reported that their normal kid's social life was disturbed and they find hard to establish social relationship in a regular pattern. 100% respondents stated that the disabled kids arrived due to their karma and God's curse. Family cohesion revealed that 60% had good family cohesion and 40% of the respondents had poor family cohesion.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To examine the social profile of the parents of the physically challenged children in the selected study area
2. To analyze the psychological perception of the parents of the physically challenged children towards their child's disability
3. To analyze the financial problems faced by the parents of the physically challenged children
4. To measure the health problems faced by the parents of the physically challenged children

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research study adopts Descriptive Research Design. Both primary and secondary data were utilized for drawing conclusions from the study. Interview Schedule method was employed to extract the primary data from the selected sample respondents. The sampling area selected for the study was Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh. The sample size comprises 120 sample respondents. The nature of the sample was that of the parents of the physically challenged children.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table No. 1
Social profile of the Respondents

Type of birth	Frequency	Percentage
Normal	74	61.7
Caesarean	46	38.3
Total	120	100
Age of physically challenged child (in years)		
Below 10	34	28.3
10-15	66	55.0
Above 15	20	16.7
Total	120	100
Child's disability		
Congenital	107	89.2
Acquired	13	10.8
Total	120	100
Type of disability		
Physically handicapped	57	47.5
Mentally retarded	21	17.5
Speech problem	24	20.0
Hearing impairment	18	15.0
Total	120	100
History of disability in the family		
Yes	47	39.2
No	73	60.8
Total	120	100
Age at which child's disability was detected		
At birth	87	72.5
After birth	33	27.5
Total	120	100
Immediate measures taken		
Doctor consulted	98	81.7
Consulted Religious persons	22	18.3
Total	120	100

Feelings when came to know about child's disability		
Shock	106	88.3
Did not believed	14	11.7
Total	120	100
Reaction of family members		
Sympathetic	103	85.8
Normal	17	14.2
Total	120	100
Difficulty while sending the child to school or any institution		
Yes	115	95.8
No	5	4.2
Total	120	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no.1 shows the social profile of the respondents. It shows that 61.7 percent of the respondents had normal deliveries and 38.3 percent of the respondents had caesarean deliveries. The table further shows that 28.3 percent of the respondents physically challenged children were in the age group of below 10 years, 55.0 percent of the respondents are having their children in the age group of 10-15 years and 16.7 percent of the respondents are having their children above 15 years.

The table shows that 89.2 percent of the respondents had opined that their children had congenital disabilities and 10.8 percent of the respondents had opined that their children are having acquired disabilities. The table further shows that with regard to the type of disabilities, 47.5 percent of the respondents children are physically handicapped, 17.5 percent of the respondents children are mentally retarded, 20.0 percent of respondents children are having speech problem and 15 percent are hearing impairment.

The table further shows that 39.2 percent of the respondents had agreed that their family is having the history of physical disability and 60.8 percent of the respondents had disagreed. The table further shows that 72.5 percent of the respondents had revealed that they had detected their child's disability at the time of their birth itself whereas 27.5 percent of the respondents are detected after birth. The table reveals that 81.7 percent of the respondents had consulted doctors with regard to their child's disability and 18.3 percent of the respondents had consulted their religions persons.

The table shows that 88.3 percent of the respondents had felt shock when they came to know about their child's disability whereas 11.7 percent of the respondents did not believed. The table further shows that 85.8 percent of the respondents had opined that their family members were sympathetic towards their child's disability and 14.2 percent of the respondent families were normal. The table further reveals that 95.8 percent of the respondents had opined that they felt difficulty while sending their physically challenged children to school or any institution whereas 4.2 percent of the respondents had disagreed with this statement.

Table No.2
Psychological Perception of the Parents

Perception about your child's disability	Frequency	Percentage
God's will	73	60.8
Burden	25	20.8
Unfortunate	17	14.2
Others	5	4.2
Total	120	100
Ever felt lonely		
Frequently	82	68.3
Sometimes	12	10.0
Rarely	26	21.7
Total	120	100
Became aggressive after the birth of your child		
Frequently	89	74.2

Sometimes	12	10.0
Rarely	19	15.8
Total	120	100
Life changed after having a physically challenged child		
Normal	29	24.2
It became difficult	91	75.8
Total	120	100
Habit of crying easily		
Sometimes	85	70.8
Often	4	3.3
Rarely	11	9.2
Never	20	16.7
Total	120	100
Approach towards life		
Life is normal	18	15.0
Life is full of burden	102	85.0
Total	120	100
Difficult to control emotion after the birth of your physically challenged child		
Sometime	82	68.3
Rarely	31	25.8
Never	7	5.9
Total	120	100
Feel anxious and stressed		
Sometimes	92	76.7
Rarely	17	14.2
Never	11	9.1
Total	120	100
Get fatigued easily		
Sometimes	94	78.3
Rarely	8	6.7
Never	18	15.0
Total	120	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no.2 shows the psychological perception of the parents towards their child's disability. It shows that 60.8 percent of the respondents had opined that their child's disability was the will of the God, 68.3 percent of the respondents had opined that they felt lonely and 74.2 percent of the respondents became aggressive after the birth of their child with disability.

The table further shows that 75.8 percent of the respondents had opined that their life changed after having their physically challenged child and 70.8 percent of the respondents are having the habit of crying easily and 85 percent of the respondents had felt that their life became burdensome. The table further shows that 68.3 percent of the respondents had felt that sometimes it is difficult to control their emotion and 76.7 percent of the respondents are sometimes feeling anxious and stressed and 78.3 percent of the respondents had felt that some times they are getting fatigued easily.

Table No.3
Financial Problems of the Parents

Source of income	Frequency	Percentage
Husband	97	80.9
Wife	16	13.3
Relatives	7	5.8
Total	120	100
Sufficient for your need		
Yes	84	70.0
No	36	30.0
Total	120	100
Fair income		
Yes	88	73.3
No	32	26.7
Total	120	100
Taken help from any NGO / bank or any other		
Yes	17	14.2
No	103	85.8
Total	120	100
Need to seek financial help		
Sometimes	81	67.5
Rarely	27	22.5
Never	12	10.0
Total	120	100
Financial problem are due to the caring of physically challenged child		
Yes	98	81.7
No	22	18.3
Total	120	100
Need to cut down on expenses		
Sometimes	86	71.7
Never	22	18.3
Very Rarely	12	10.0
Total	120	100
Anxious about not able to meet child's requirements		
Often	11	9.2
Sometimes	93	77.5
Never	16	13.3
Total	120	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no.3 shows the financial problems of the parents of the physically challenged children. It shows that 80.9 percent of the respondents had opined that husband is the main source of income in the families of the disabled children and 70 percent of the respondents had agreed that their income is sufficient for their needs and 85.8 percent of the respondents did not approached any NGO or bank or any other sources for their help.

The table further shows that 67.5 percent of the respondents had felt that they need to seek financial help and 81.7 percent of the respondents had opined that their financial problems are due to the caring of their disabled children. The table further shows that 71.7 percent of the respondents had felt that there is a need for them to cut down their expenses and 77.5 percent of the respondents had felt that some times they are anxious about not able to meet their child's requirements.

Table No.4
Health Problems of the Parents

Suffering from any health problem	Frequency	Percentage
Hypertension	73	60.8
Diabetes	31	25.8
Cardio-vascular problems	13	10.8
None	3	2.6
Total	120	100
Since when suffering from these problems		
After marriage	26	21.7
After birth of children	94	78.3
Total	120	100
Rely on medicines		
Everyday	59	49.2
Once in week	26	21.7
Once in 15 days	6	5.0
Never	29	24.1
Total	120	100
Anti-depressant and anti-anxiety drugs		
Once in a week	64	53.3
Once in 15 days	22	18.3
Once in a month	34	28.4
Total	120	100
Suffer from sleeping disorder		
Often	17	14.2
Sometimes	92	76.6
Never	11	9.2
Total	120	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no.4 shows the health problems of the parents of the physically challenged children. It shows that 60.8 percent of the respondents are having the health problem of hypertension, 78.3 percent of the respondents are suffering with health problems after the birth of their physically challenged children and 49.2 percent of the respondents are relying on medicines everyday, 53.3 percent of the respondents are using anti-depressant and ant-anxiety and 76.6 percent of the respondents are suffering with sleeping disorder.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- The result shows that majority of the parents had undergone normal deliveries and most of the physically challenged children are in the age group of 10-15 years.
- The result reveals that majority of the respondents had their physically challenged children out of congenital disabilities and most of the children are physically handicapped.
- The result depicts that majority of the respondents had disagreed that their family is having the history of physical disability and it further shows that the parents had detected their child's disability at the time of their birth itself and majority of them had consulted the doctor with regard to their child's disability.
- The result shows that majority of the respondents had felt shock when they came to know about their child's disability and it further shows that majority of the respondents families are

sympathetic towards them and majority of the respondents are facing difficulties while sending their disable children to schools or other institutions.

- The result shows that majority of the respondents had opined that their child's disability was the will of the god and majority of them had felt loneliness and became aggressive after the birth of their disabled child
- The result depicts that majority of the respondents had opined that their life changed after having their physically challenged child and majority of them are having the habit of crying easily and they felt that their life became burdensome.
- The result shows that majority of the respondents had felt that sometimes it is difficult for them to control emotions and majority of them are feeling anxious and most of them are getting easily fatigued.
- The result shows that the husbands are the main source of the income in the families of the physically challenged children and the income incurred by them is sufficient for the needs of the family and majority of them did not approached any NGO or bank for any help
- The result revealed that majority of the respondents are in the need to seek financial help and most of their financial problems are due to the caring of their disabled children.
- The result shows that majority of the respondents are having the health problem of hypertension and sleeping disorders and most of them are having health problems after the birth of their physically challenged children and most of them are relying on medicines everyday.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The present study had examined the social profile of the parents of the physically challenged children in the selected study area and it analyzed the psychological perception of the parents of the physically challenged children towards their child's disability. The study had further analyzed the financial problems faced by the parents of the physically challenged children and it measured the health problems faced by the parents of the physically challenged children.

The study concludes that the parents of the physically challenged children are facing with social, psychological, financial and health problems and most of them are in the state of depression making them to rely upon medicines on day to day basis. The study further concludes that their financial position is average and they intend to seek financial help from the banking institutions.

It is suggested that the banking authorities and social welfare departments and NGOs shall extend their financial help for the parents of the physically challenged children in the society. Special concessions, travel allowances and rebates are to be given for the parents of the physically challenged children in order to uplift and empower them in terms of social, economic and health and moral aspects.

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