

DIAGNOSIS, CHARACTERISTIC, LEGISLATION AND POLICIES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM IN INDIA

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Abstract

This paper reflects light on the understanding a child with autism. Raising a child with a disability like autism has a strong impact on the lives of parents. Having a child with a disability is in most cases, unexpected events for the parents. Autism was one of the most challenging disabilities for the family because of the behavioral characteristics parents of children with autism. Parents are usually the first to notice something is wrong. This paper tells about diagnosis, characteristic, legislation and policies for children with autism in India. By knowing their problems, respective reformers can be formed. This study will help to make awareness program for the early invention of children with autism in the society for better adjustment. This study will help to establish a society where autistic children can live harmoniously with all members of society.

Introduction

"The only disability in life is a bad attitude." –Scott Hamilton

Developmental disorders is a group of the order that originating in a childhood that involves serious impairment in different areas. These disorders consisted of language disorders, learning disorders motor disorder and autism spectrum disorders. The prevalence of autism spectrum disorder has been increased drastically in the last few decades. Current legislation and demands for education reforms in the field of special education focus on the education of the children with disability one of category focused is autism children.

Autism is a pervasive developmental disorder which is characterized by impairment in social interaction, restriction in behavior and lack in interest. The term autism spectrum disorder is a broader term or we can say which subsumes two disintegrative disorders and two less severe pervasive development disorders. Symptoms of autism are not homogeneous. Symptoms are heterogeneous and can range from severe impairment to mild delay.

"We are all God's children,

Our minds are stronger than diamond

We will win, win, and win with our mighty will"

Quoted by Abdul Kalam (2006) in a seminar on disabilities. This quotation is used to motivate the differently-able children including autistics to overcome their disabilities and explore their tremendous inner potential.

A disability is defined as "condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the used standard of an individual or a group". The term is used to refer to individuals functioning, including physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual impairment, mental illness and various types of chronic diseases. Under the federal law known as Individual with Disability Education Act (IDEA) million of children with disabilities receive special services designed to meet their unique needs. According to

IDEA states are responsible for meeting the special needs of eligible children with disability. To find out if a child is eligible for services, evaluation is done. Two purposes of the evaluation are:

To see if the child has a disability, as defined by IDEA; and

To learn in more detail what special education and related services he or she needs.

IDEA lists 13 different disability categories under which 3-through- 21 years olds may be eligible for services.

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual disability
- Multiple Disability
- Orthopedic Impairment.
- Other health Impairment.
- Specific Learning Impairment.
- Speech or Language Disability.
- Traumatic Brain Injury.
- Visual Impairment.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is neuro developmental disorder with persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction including impairment non verbal communicative behavior and developing maintaining and understanding relationships (American Psychiatric Association,2013). ASD is an extremely heterogeneous disorder then additionally displays restricted, repetitive behavior interested or activities and varies in society. At the present time higher education, institution are under prepared in indentifying these special education. One these of ASD is a lack of social awareness and how to go about finding resources. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and autism are both general terms for a group of complex disorder of a group development.

Autism: The “Autism” category was established in 1990 under the Individuals with Disability Education Act(IDEA). Autism mean a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non verbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affect a child’s educational performance. Other characteristic often associated with autism are engaged in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environment change or change in daily routines and unusual responsible to sensory experiences.

Diagnosis and Characteristics

There are many different causes and factors for an autism disorder, but there are just as many causes that are not yet determined. Most medical and researchers agreed that autism spectrum disorders are combination of genetic, biological, and environmental factors.

Because of the difference in causes and factors, individuals with an ASD can exhibit a wide range of strengths and weaknesses across intellectual abilities. Characteristics range from mild to severe, and can be different for each individual with autism. Most symptoms of autism start from before the age three years old and will last throughout a person's life.

Diagnosis of autism is of two types' clinical diagnosis and educational diagnosis. The primary difference between these two diagnosis that a child's impairment and behavior must affect his or her educational functioning. There for, it is possible for a high-functioning student clinically diagnosed with autism to not receive an educational diagnosis if he or she is performing at grade level, or for a student who has never been clinically diagnosed to be eligible for special education service under the autism category if the student fit the criteria (White et al.2007).

SIGN OF AUTISM/AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Autism spectrum disorders affect three different areas of a child's life:

1. Social Interactions
2. Communication both verbal and non-verbal
3. Behavior and interests.

Other symptoms of autism are given below

- Difficulty in interacting with other people.
- Has poor eye contact.
- Inability to initiate or sustain conversation.
- Fails to respond to his or her name.
- Extreme hyperactivity or unusual passivity.

LEGISLATION AND POLICIES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM IN INDIA

In India many legislation and Policies are made for the disabled persons. These are given below:-

KOTHARI COMMISSION (1964-66):- It stressed on a common school system open to all children irrespective of caste, creed, community, religion economic status, in 1968 the national education policy focused on the educational facilities for physically and mentally handicapped children (Mondal & Mete, 2013).

NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION 1986:- (section4.9) of the policy clearly focused on the needs of the children with disabilities special school with hostels will be provided to special children (Mondal & Mete, 2013).

INTEGRATED EDUCATION OF DISABLED CHILDREN (IEDC) 1982:- The centrally sponsored scheme of integrated education of the disabled children provider educational opportunities for the disabled children in common school (Mondal & Mete, 2013).

PLAN OF ACTION (POA) 1992:-The NPE was followed by POA. The POA focused on pragmatic principal for children with special needs. The disable children who can be educated in a general school should be educated in general school only and not in a special school (Mondal & Mete, 2013)..

REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA ACT (RCI-1992):- 1992 parliament of India enacted the RCI Act, subsequently amended in 2000, to established a statutory mechanism

for monitoring and standardizing course for the training of 16 categories of professionals required in the field of special educators and rehabilitations of persons with disability (Mondal & Mete, 2013).

PERSON WITH DISABILITIES(EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, PROTECTIONS OF RIGHTS, FULL PARTICIPATION) ACT 1995 :- The most land mark legislation in the history of special education in India In the persons with disabilities (Equal opportunities, protections of Rights, Full participation) Act1995. This Act covers seven disabilities named blindness, Low vision, hearing impaired, loco motor impaired, mental retardation, leprosy cured & mental illness (Mondal & Mete, 2013).

NATIONAL TRUST ACT (1999):- In 1999 the Indian parliament passed an act named National trust for the welfare of persons with Autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities (Mondal & Mete, 2013).

PROTECTION FOR INTEGRATED EDUCATION FOR THE DISABLED (PIED) :-In 1987 to fulfill the provision for disabled children in the NPE(1986) the government launched the project for integrated education for the disabled (PIED).It was joint venture of MHRD and UNICEF(Mondal & Mete,2013).

DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DPEP) :-The success of PIED led to the inclusion of the component of integrated education of the disabled (IED) in DPEP. At present IED in DPEP is going on in 242 districts of 18 states. Approximates 6.21 lakh children with special needs have been enrolled in regular schools with adequate support services (Mondal & Mete, 2013).

WORLD COMMITMENT ON EDUCATION AS A RIGHT:-The right of every child to education is proclaimed in the universal declaration of human rights (1948) and by the world declaration on education for all (1990). It focus on the education for every person and children with special needs (Mondal & Mete, 2013).

THE SALAMANCO STATEMENT AND FRAME WORK FOR ACTION ON DISABILITY EDUCATION 1994:-It emphasizes that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional linguistic or other conditions. It states those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child centered pedagogy capable of meeting those needs.

THE SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA) 2000-2001:-It focuses on education for all with any disability. All children are equal preferred for education.

THE RTE ACT 2009:- RTE ACT implies 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 education. As per Amendment in the RTE Act (2010), children with disabilities have been included in the definition of child belonging to disadvantaged group in the section 2(d) of the RTE Act.

RIGHTS OF PERSON WITH DISABILITY ACT 2016:- "The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill - 2016". The Bill will replace the existing PwD Act, 1995, which was enacted 21 years back. Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.

The types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21 and the Central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities. The 21 disabilities are given below:-

1. Blindness
2. Low-vision

3. Leprosy Cured persons
4. Hearing Impairment (deaf and hard of hearing)
5. Locomotors Disability
6. Dwarfism
7. Intellectual Disability
8. Mental Illness
9. Autism Spectrum Disorder
10. Cerebral Palsy
11. Muscular Dystrophy
12. Chronic Neurological conditions
13. Specific Learning Disabilities
14. Multiple Sclerosis
15. Speech and Language disability
16. Thalassemia
17. Hemophilia
18. Sickle Cell disease
19. Multiple Disabilities including deaf blindness
20. Acid Attack victim
21. Parkinson's disease

This law provides effective mechanism for ensuring their empowerment and true inclusion into the Society in a satisfactory manner.

Stastical Data of Children with Autism in India

- 10 million children likely to suffer from autism in India.
- 1-1.5% or 1 in 66 children between ages 2 and 9 are affected in India.
- Prevalence of Autism between 1 in 500(2/1000) to 1 in 166 children (6/1000) have an autism spectrum disorder (centre for disease control).
- Prevalence rate –approximate 1 in 500 or 0.20% or more than 2,160,000 people in India.
- Incidence rate-approximate 1 in 90,666 or 11,914 people in India.
- Incidence extrapolation for India for autism 11,914 per year, 250 per month, 57 per week, 8 per day, 1.4 per hour.
- Autism is four times more prevalent in boys than girls in the US (Autism society of America).

SUGGESTION

➤ For Teacher And Parents

Parents and teachers are backbone of the society. If parents are educated then society will be also educated. So start from the home and school leads to community a better home and environment to autistic children. Secondly teachers come in society from which the child takes education. This study also focus on the special teacher acceptance, methods, awareness about autism. Overall this study will help the family, people, community, teachers to establish a society where autistic children can live harmoniously with all other members and use of their rights.

➤ For Policy Making

- To establish a law for children with autism according to which they have right to education, right to work any place.
- To establish special schools with proper caring, therapy and treatment in each and every district.
- To provide financial assistance to the parents who have children with autism for treatment and education.
- To develop pre service training program for teachers, peoples who want to work with children with autism or their NGOs.
- To organize in service training program for teachers to update their knowledge and use of new techniques for their education and treatment.
- To help the government in organizing village level, community level, district level society about symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and early intervention of children with autism.
- To make special provision in regular schools with proper assistant for education.

Conclusion

Here, it can be concluded that this paper aimed at the early identification of children with autism. Having a child with a disability is in most cases, unexpected events for the parents. Autism was one of the most challenging disabilities for the family because of the behavioral characteristics of children with autism. Parents are usually the first to notice something is wrong. Researcher also indicated that more work has to be done in the field of autistic children about diagnosis criteria, education and awareness to parents about autism for early interventions. It has been seen that it is an important problem for a developing country India that how to educate, train children with autism. Autistic children are integral part of society. They cannot be separated from society. To establish a society where they can live harmoniously positive perception is necessary. So, this research study updates legislation and policies concerning students with autism in the field of special education.

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