



Social Behaviour of Sensory Challenged and Non-disabled Children attending Inclusive Schools

Asha S.C and Venkat Lakshmi H

Department of Human Development and Research Centre, Smt. V.H.D. Central Institute of Home Science, Seshadri Road, Bangalore 560 001, Karnataka, INDIA

Available online at: www.isca.in

Received 5th January 2014, revised 20th January 2014, accepted 13th February 2014

Abstract

School is a central place where children learn, grow, and refine their social skills as well as their behaviour. It is a place where children can shape and mold their behaviours. Hence an inclusive setup too should provide children with opportunities for social interaction which can facilitate both disabled and non-disabled children in their interpersonal relationship. Hence in the present study an attempt has been made to assess the social behaviour of sensory challenged and non-disabled children attending inclusive schools. The investigator developed a self structured rating scale to assess the social behaviour of sensory challenged and non-disabled children. 10 sensory challenged children and 10 non-disabled children in the age group of 10-15 years were identified for the purpose of pilot study in Bangalore city, by using purposeful sampling technique. The study included a pre and post method with an intervention programme. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of the data revealed that the intervention programme had positive influence on social behaviour of sensory challenged and non-disabled children in inclusive schools. The result of the study also highlights the need for emphasizing, fostering and developing social behaviour of both sensory challenged and non-disabled children in an inclusive school.

Keywords: Sensory Challenged Children (SCC), Inclusive Education, Social Behaviour (SB).

Introduction

Sensory Challenged Children (SCC) are defined as those “who are Blind or Visually Impaired, Deaf or Hearing Impaired and Deaf-Blind¹. Sensory challenged children are typically considered as low-incidence disability because they do not occur in many children². Vision and hearing play a very important role in the field of education and earlier education for sensory challenged children was given by classroom teacher without meeting the diversified needs and the challenges, as such the sensory challenged children were at the distinct disadvantage in both academic as well as non-academic setting. Therefore, the growth of educational facilities for sensory challenged children was not constructively sufficient as the individual child’s needs were over looked. Therefore Human Rights provided both inspirational foundation for the movement towards “Inclusion of all Children” with disabilities by recognizing all the children including sensory challenged children as contributing members of society and thereby respecting their rights, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, language, poverty or impairment. Donna Lene³ defines inclusive education as a process wherein the school systems, strategic plans, and policies adapt and change to include teaching strategies for a wider and more diverse range of children and their families. It means to identify a child’s learning style and adapt the classroom and teaching strategies to ensure high quality learning outcomes for all members of the class.

Therefore inclusive schools should not only focus on learning needs but should also act as an agent of change in children's behaviour. Thus inclusive school is an imperative community which acts as a socializing agency wherein children learn the patterns of behaviour and norms prevalent in the community, which leaves a lasting impression and an ethical power on the minds of the children.

Social behavior involves more than one individual with the primary function of establishing, maintaining, or changing a relationship between individuals, or in a group (society) Roger Abrantes⁴. No Child is born with learned social behaviors but rather the child begins to learn, what is acceptable and non-acceptable social behavior through interaction with the influence of parental figures and when they enter into the school they are more associated with their peers and teachers. It is here where inclusive schools play a vital role in providing an exposure and preparing both sensory challenged and non-disabled children to understand and adapt to the social roles. Further is helps them to acquire and master both verbal and non-verbal social interactions according to their capability. These behaviours can be established through sharing, cooperating, empathy, and taking turns when interacting with their peers in an inclusive school⁵. According to Bronfenbrenner,⁶ children observe behaviors of others, looking at what they can do or become, learning tolerance, cooperation, and compassion. School-based social behaviour is a better way to improve the

behaviour of both sensory challenged as well as non-disabled children in order to develop appropriate behavior in a classroom, to make them more diligent, aware of his/her social rights, rules and regulations. Therefore through constant exposure, encouragement, motivation, reinforcement and practice both sensory challenged and non-disabled children can be helped to enhance their social behaviour. This in turn helps to pave way for a better understanding of one another and adjust in an inclusive education environment. Hence an attempt has been made in the present research to study the social behaviour of sensory challenged and non-disabled children attending inclusive schools.

Material and Methods

Aim: The study aims to assess the social behaviour of sensory challenged and non-disabled children attending inclusive schools.

Sample: The subjects for the present study consisted of 20 girls (10 sensory challenged girls and 10 non-disabled girls) in the age bracket of 10-15 years from Seva Ashram High School from Bangalore city catering to inclusive educational needs of both sensory challenged and non-disabled girls. The subjects were identified as sensory challenged based on the medical certificate issued by ophthalmologist and audiologist at the time of admission.

Tools: A self-structured rating scale formulated and standardized by the investigator was used for the present study. The scale consisted of basic profile and information related to social behavioral aspects based on four dimensions specifically Interpersonal behaviour (11 items), Communicative skills (10 items), Self-related behaviour (9 items) and Assertive behaviour (10 items). A five point ratings of Always, Frequently, Sometimes, Rarely and Never was used. The positive items were given a score of 5 -1 and a score of 1-5 was given for negative items.

Procedure: The subjects were introduced to the intervention programme with a pre- and post-test method. The investigator established a rapport with the subjects so as to get acquainted to them through informal interaction. Both sensory challenged and non-disabled girls identified for the preliminary study were interviewed with the help of social behaviour rating scale developed.

Appropriate activities for intervention programme were designed to suit the needs of both sensory challenged and non-disabled so as to improve the dimensions of social behaviour. The intervention programme was carried out 3 days a week through the use of different techniques such as puzzles, projects, origami, physical activities etc. Each session of the intervention programme was made interactive wherein both sensory challenged and non-disabled girls participated actively. The subjects were provided with incentives like school supplies in

order to encourage and motivate them in activities. Further it also focused on bringing about desirable change in their social behaviour.

Results and Discussion

Respondents basic profile: 100% of respondents of both sensory challenged and non-disabled were in the age bracket of 14-15 years and nearly 80% of the sensory challenged were visually impaired. Majority of sensory challenged respondents (40%) had 3 siblings and 30% of non-disabled respondents had 2 and 4 siblings. In the aspect of ordinal position of the respondents 60% of respondents under sensory challenged and 30% of respondents under non-disabled group were second born. With respect to the family profile of the respondents 90% of sensory challenged and 70% of non-disabled respondents were from nuclear family. 80% of fathers and 90% of mothers from sensory challenged group and 90% of fathers and 100% of mothers from non-disabled group had an educational qualification up to 7th standard. With regard to the parents occupation majority (100%) of fathers from both the group were working whereas 70% of mothers from sensory challenged group and 100% of mothers from non-disabled group were working. In the area of family income majority 70% of respondents from sensory challenged and 60% of respondent's family had income of less than Rs.5000.

Table 1 depicts the mean score of both pre and post- test. The data reveals at the time of post -test in the dimension of *interpersonal behaviour* there is an enhancement and improvement among both sensory challenged and non-disabled children which is found to be strongly significant among both the groups ($P < .0001^{**}$ among sensory challenged and $P = 0.006414^{**}$ among non-disabled children). The study is also supported by Aviles, Anderson and Davila⁷ which highlighted the fact that social-emotional competences not only has a positive impact on interpersonal skills and the quality of interactions learners establish, but also on their academic achievement. Further Ytterhus and Tssebro⁸ suggested that, among young children, processes linked to 'situation dynamics' and to 'interaction rules' might be more important than attitudes and preconceptions among non-disabled children. Further Vandell and George⁹ have also reported consistent social competence by children with hearing impairments in their interactions with non -disabled children. They were persistent initiators of interactions and, in the absence of language, developed alternate communication strategies. Hearing children did not do as well in modifying their communication strategies (i.e., they still used verbal modes), but their social interactions were positive.

In the dimension of *Self-related behaviour* the data reveals that there is a moderate significance ($P = 0.051003$) among sensory challenged children. This signifies that the module developed for intervention by using various techniques such as games,

puzzle, activity and projects helped the respondents to learn the concepts better.

Assertive behavior is a behavior in which a child stands up for his/her rights in such a way that the rights of others are not violated. It communicates respect for that child's behavior. Assertive behavior is an honest, direct and appropriate expression of one's feelings, beliefs, and opinions. The data reveals that there is an enhancement and improvement among both sensory challenged and non-disabled children which is found to be strongly significant among both the groups ($P < .0001^{**}$). According to Child Magazine¹⁰ assertiveness improves self-confidence as well as ability to make choices. It will also help to withstand peer pressure which in turn will help children to develop the concept of compromise and to take others feeling's into account.

Thus it can be inferred that with the influence of early intervention programme and providing the non-disabled children with an exposure to interact with the sensory

challenged children will prove to be very beneficial to both in enhancing their personality and shaping their behaviour.

Communication skills are essential in all spheres of life¹¹. In the aspect of communication skills there is an improvement among both sensory challenged and non-disabled children. But in case of non-disabled children it is found to be strongly significant ($P < .0001$). This could be attributed to the fact that non-disabled children are more associated and refined with positive patterns of social interaction which in turn has influenced their communicative skills towards their disabled counter parts. Communication usually involves one or more of these methods: touching, flickering the lights, and using waving motions, all to get someone's attention. Deaf children will also bang on tables or objects to feel the vibrations that come as a result¹². Correspondingly in an article on "Effects of Inclusion on Children with Special Needs and their Peers"¹³ it is suggested that disabled students learn important social skills, appropriate communication and their peers learn valuable life skills such as accepting others, patience, and respect.

Table-1
Social Behaviour between the Sensory challenged and Non-disabled children

Social Behaviour	Test	Sensory Challenged Children	Non-Disabled Children	P value
Interpersonal Behaviour	Pre test	39.60 ± 2.88	36.00 ± 4.57	0.052228
	Post test	56.60 ± 3.89	49.80 ± 8.69	0.043342
	Δ	17.00	13.80	-
	P Value	<.0001**	0.006414**	-
Self-related Behaviour	Pre test	27.90 ± 2.47	26.80 ± 3.49	0.158239
	Post test	30.30 ± 3.02	27.90 ± 2.40	0.297851
	Δ	2.40	0.60	-
	P Value	0.051003*	0.649535	-
Assertive Behaviour	Pre test	27.50 ± 3.84	23.50 ± 4.40	0.044002
	Post test	38.60 ± 4.45	40.40 ± 2.99	0.304233
	Δ	11.10	16.90	-
	P Value	<.0001**	<.0001**	-

**Strongly Significant (P value: $P \leq 0.01$, *Moderately significant (P value: $P \leq 0.05$)

Table-2
Comparison of Communication Skills between the Sensory challenged and non-disabled children

Social Behaviour	Test	Sensory Challenged Children	Non-Disabled Children	P value
Communication Skills	Pre test	28.10 ± 6.06	25.10 ± 2.38	0.005113
	Post test	33.90 ± 3.60	34.30 ± 2.79	0.784744
	Δ	5.80	9.20	-
	P Value	0.013140	<.0001**	-

**Strongly Significant (P value: $P \leq 0.01$)

Conclusion

Social behavior is a term used to describe the general social conduct of individuals within a society. These social behaviors are mainly portrayed through interpersonal behaviour, self-related behaviour, assertive behaviour, and through communicative skills. Children begin to learn his/her acceptable behavior through interaction with their immediate environment such as parents, teachers, peers and neighbours through positive and emotional reinforcement. Consequently social behaviors in inclusive schools are the actions that are directed towards society. Therefore through constant exposure, encouragement, motivation, reinforcement and practice both sensory challenged and non-disabled children can be helped to enhance their social behaviour in inclusive school. Results in the present study also indicated that intervention programme has influenced the dimensions of social behaviour such as interpersonal behaviour, communicative skills, self-related behavior and assertive behaviour. From this it can be inferred that if intervention is given in the early years, it will facilitate both sensory challenged and non-disabled children to enable them to enhance better social behaviour.

References

1. Carrie Renea., Sensory Impairment, (2010), <http://www.slideshare.net/CarrieRenea/sensory-impairments>
2. Smith T.E.C., Polloway E.A., Patton J.R. and Dowdy C.A., *Teaching students with Special Needs in Inclusive Settings* (New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited), 317 (2011)
3. Donna Lene., SENESE Inclusive Education, (2012) <http://www.seneseinclusive-edu.ws/definition-of-inclusive-education>
4. Roger Abrantes., Social Behavior (2012) <http://rogerabrantes.wordpress.com/tag/social-behavior/>
5. Graydon Gordian., The Meaning and Importance of Pro-Social Behavior, (2012), <http://www.sesameworkshop.org/our-blog/2012/02/21/the-meaning-and-importance-of-pro-social-behavior/>
6. Bronfenbrenner U., *Influences on Human Development*. Hinsdale, Illinois: Dryden Press, (1975)
7. Aviles A.M., Anderson T.R. and Davila E.R., Child and adolescent social-emotional development within the context of school, *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 11(1), 32-39 (2006)
8. Ytterhus B. and Tssebro J., Physical integration and social marginalization in Norwegian nursery schools: attitudes, rank-ordering or situation dynamics?, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 14(2), 158-170 (1999)
9. Vandell and George., Social and Emotional Development in Children with Sensory Impairments, (1981), <http://www.education.com/reference/article/social-emotional-development-sensory-impairments/?page=2>
10. Child Magazine., Ways to Encourage Assertive Behaviour, (2004, 2010), <http://www.childmag.co.za/content/ways-encourage-behaviour#.Ul6tCdJmg68> (2010)
11. Ramakanta Sarma C., Essay on Importance of good communication skills for employability, (2012), <http://www.publishyourarticles.net/knowledge-hub/articles/communication-skills.html>
12. Harris L.K. and Vanzandt C.E., Counseling needs of students who are deaf and hard of hearing. *School Counselor*, 44, 271 (1997)
13. Effects of Inclusion on Children with Special Needs and their Peers. <http://www4.uwsp.edu/education/pshaw/Portfolios/Heather%20Dorn/BlockI205/inclusion.htm> (2013)