

**“A STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS
OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM”**



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Abstract

This study is about the investigation of educational problems of the children with autism. For this purpose the researcher collected data from 13 administrators, 25 teachers and 15 parents of students with autism in the 9 schools of Lahore city through convenient sampling. It was a descriptive study and was conducted with the help of questionnaire and inventories. The questionnaire and inventories were developed by the researcher. The main objectives of the study were to investigate about already provided teaching training and support according to ASD's educational needs, identification of the educational needs of children with autism, identify the social and psychological problems of the children with autism, and identify the problems related to educational accessibilities. The data of questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed by the help of SPSS. The data of inventories were collected through open ended questions. The researcher

converted the responses on inventories into description and percentages. The results were concluded that the children with autism have lots of social and psychological problems that effect on their education. The relationship between demographic variables and the educational problems of children with autism was also analyzed. Cronbach's alpha value reflected that the scale was highly correlated. The results show that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of the respondents about the educational problems of the children with autism on the basis of institutions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School going children face many problems like teachers behavior, correct assessment and conduct of class fellows. When it comes to disable children the problems are different and vary from disability to disability. The topic under research covers the educational problems of children with Autism. Autism is a type of disability that grows with age. There are many types of children those are affected by disability. These disabilities start appearing from the age of three. Autism is such disability which affects a child communicates, understanding of language, play and relate to other social factors.

According to American Psychiatric Associations Diagnostic Manual autistic disorder is known as pervasive developmental disorder. Autistic disorder restricts of three major areas; in social interaction, communication and in repetitive behavior. Autistic disorder is diagnosis when a person exhibits 6 or more out of 12 symptoms in these areas. Children with autistic disorder as spouse have right to receive special education and related services according to Individuals with

disabilities Educational act (IDEA). IDEA defines this disorder as "a developmental disability notably affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, usually apparent before age 3 that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, conflict to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences." DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 1994)

No single method in teaching students with autism is successful for all students. Students also need change over the time.

Autism is a spectrum disorder. Behavioral symptoms or characteristics for autism can be found from mild to severe. We often hear terms or labels used to describe our loved ones, like autistic, autistic-like high-functioning or low functioning.

The important point to remember is our loved ones with autism can learn, make progress and may grow up to function effectively with an appropriate education, benefits, supports and services.

A person with autism usually faces problems in communication, such as, may not speak at all, severely language delayed, he or she may have unusual or abnormal speech patterns (for example repeat words, and phrases heard by others, i.e. TV or videos, may be unable to initiate or engage in a conversation or may be unable to use their imagination during play i.e. image a banana as a telephone).

An individual with autism may show restricted, repetitive, or conversational behaviors, interests and activities: for example: may be inattentive with a fine range of interest (i.e. dinosaurs, astronomy, trains or roller coasters), may preserve sameness (i.e. prefer certain

clothing or eating only certain foods, may line up their toys and objects), may flap their hands, or make odd hand and body gestures, may spin or like to spin objects, may be they have self injurious behavior (i.e. head banging), may anger easily or show aggression, conflict to change, may become angry or upset if their daily routine changes in any way, and may focus on only a small part of a toy or object.

All of above are the barriers and factors that affect the smooth education of autistic children.

Retrieved on 4-6-2011 kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/brain/autism.html

According to Autism Society of America (1994)

Autism cause issues in critical areas of development such that are following:

- Verbal and non verbal communication
- Social interaction
- Imaginative or creative play
- Sensory processing

Children with autism may trouble in understanding and communicating their needs with their teachers and fellow students. They can have difficulty in understanding classroom directions and instructions, along with fine vocal facial cues of teachers. Inappropriate social interaction can lead to challenge in their behavior, (such as physical aggression, verbal aggression, self injury, property destruction, sexual harassment and avoidance). In some situations they may have difficulties with imaginative play for example basket interactions with other children: so we can say many teaching strategies will not be effective for them. These children also have some sensory issues (such as repetitive behaviors, spinning, head banging or

flapping of hands, poor coordination and handwriting, poor eye contact, short attention span, avoidance or overreaction to touch, difficulty identifying objects by touch, clumsiness and lack of balance, repetitive or slow speech, fear and anxiety in situation) that mean an autistic student may not manage with noisy environments, once may not like being touched by others or unable in making eye contact with others.

Above inabilities make sense of the world around them, but often makes their education also stressful.

Teachers often report that they find it difficult to meet the needs of the students on the autism disorder.

Teachers should need to be aware of a student's disorder. They should have specifically trained in autism education, so that they teachers help their students and give their best in fort of their students out of their classroom experience.

Following are the some basic classroom strategies for the children with autism:

Some students may learn more effectively with visual aids as they are better able to understand material presented visually. Through this many teachers can create "visual schedules" for their autistic students. This may allow students to concretely see what is going throughout the day, so they can know what to prepare for and what activity they will be doing next. Some autistic children have trouble going one activity to the next, so this visual schedule can help them to reduce stress.

Students with autism usually don not cope with confused and unpredictable environment. Teachers can provide support, by providing the child with timetables and structural steps for the activities.

Working in pairs may be beneficial in teaching autistic children. These students have

problems not only with language and communication, but also with socialization as well. By facilitating peer interaction, teachers can help these students to make friends. This can help them to become more included into the main/stream environment of the classroom and also can help them to manage problems.

A teacher's aid can also be helpful for autistic students. The aid will give more detailed directions to autistic students in relation to their activity, interaction and behavioral conduct. The teacher may have no time to explain to the autistic child and can help the child to stay at an equal level to the rest of the class through the special one-on-one instruction. However, some argue that students with one-on-one aids may become overly dependent on the help, thus leading to difficulty with independence later on.

There are many different techniques that teachers can use to assist their students. A teacher needs to become familiar with the child's disorder to know what would be work best with that particular child. Every child would be different and teachers have to adjust with each of them.

Retrieved on 27-8-2011 <http://www.autism-help.org/autism-education-school-effects.htm>

Students with autism sometimes have high levels of anxiety and stress, particularly, in social environments like school. If a student exhibits aggressive or unstable behavior then it is important for educational teams to recognize the impact of stress and anxiety and prepare students for new situation in the classroom. For example through writing social stories one can lower anxiety in autistic students also teaching social and emotional concepts while using systematic teaching approaches'. For example the incredible 5 point scale or other cognitive behavior strategies can increase a student ability to control excessive behavioral reactions.

Retrieved on 27-8-2011 <http://www.autism-help.org/autism-education-school-effects.htm>

Choosing the appropriate school for children with autism is very necessary. As with many disabilities, in the past students on the autism spectrum was kept separate from ‘normal’ children as much as possible. However, from the past few decades we have seen a trend to integrate these students into the regular system as much as possible. Debate exists on whether this is the best option given the specific needs of children with autism spectrum disorders (Shaddock 2003). Some teachers in both the specialized and regular education systems believe that integration in to regular schooling is often let down by insufficient training, support and resources (Danne, Beirne-Smith & Latham 2000).

The choices for special education system may be limited. Parents may live in a country or rural area, where nothing exists, other than the regular school system. Parents may choose for home-based schooling if they have the time, commitment and willingness to learn all strategies which to teach effectively. Costs can also be a major factor if specialized schools or support need to be paid for.

In some cases, a child on the autism spectrum can be taught partially in both a special education program and the regular classroom. This is an example of a mixing model where the student has specialized or home-based education but is increasingly included in regular schools as the child who can manage.

These mixing models are based on a growing trend to provide a “variety of care” model, where individualized support narrows off, as child learns the skills which he or she needed to study in regular schools. Ideally, there is a range of specific schools for autistic students and then special classes in the regular system. Support the regular system for example teacher’s aid and tutoring.

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Statement of the problem

With reference to the above information the statement of the problem was to study educational problems of the children with autism.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

- Investigate about already provided teaching training and support according to ASD's educational needs.
- Identify the educational needs of children with autism.
- Identify the social and psychological problems of the children with Autism.
- Identify the problems related to educational accessibility.

Questions of the study

The questions of the study were:

- What were the educational needs of children with autism?
- What educational problems were faced by the school aged children with autism?
- How teacher training and support is helpful for children with autism?
- What were the educational problems in home based setting for the children with autism?

- What educational problems in special schools were faced by the children with autism?

Significance of the study

After the completion of the study the study will be significant in following way:

- After having educational need analysis class teacher will able to develop realistic objectives for the IEP.
- The school administrators will try to facilitate the students with autism according to their needs.
- Parents would get complete guidance and help regarding their child's educational problems.

Limitations of the study

The data were collected from 13 administrators, 25 teachers and 15 parents of children with autism in special schools.

The procedure of the study

In start the topic was introduced and the problem was stated. In the light of introduction and problem statement the researcher stated her objectives of the study. Then some relevant questions were raised and significance of the study was analyzed. The study to be conducted was descriptive type of research. The research populations of the study were administrative, teachers and parents of student with autism from different special schools of Lahore city. The instruments of the study were Questionnaire and inventories. Both were developed on the basis of major characteristics and already identified educational barriers of children with autism. Quantitative

and qualitative data were gathered, analyzed and interpreted. Finally the conclusions were drawn and on the basis of those conclusions the recommendations were given.