An Exploratory Study to Identify the Behavioural Problems and their Determinants among 6-12 Years Government School Going Children of Ludhiana District, Punjab

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ABSTRACT

The recent study was conducted to identify the behavioural problems and their determinants with their demographic variables among 6-12 years government school going children of Ludhiana district, Punjab. A quantitative approach with exploratory study design was used with a view to develop the guidelines along with the objectives. The data was collected using selected demographic variables of teachers and children, and standardized tool Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire. The results revealed that 47.2% of children had very high behavioural problem and 30.17% had high level of behavioural problems among school going children. The association between overall behavioural problems of children with demographic variables revealed that age, gender and occupational status of mother was found statistically significant with overall behavioural problems of children. The selected demographic variables that age of child, number of living siblings and education of mother had shown impact on all selected behavioural problems except peer behavioural problems. The education of father had shown impact on all except pro-social behaviour of children. The occupation of mother had shown impact on all selected behavioural problems except peer behavioural problems. The marital status of respondent had shown impact on emotional, hyperactivity and peer behavioural problems of children. The type of family had shown impact only on emotional and hyperactivity behavioural problems. The family income per month had shown only on emotional behavioral problems. The dietary habits had shown impact only on emotional and pro-social behavioral problems and area of residence had shown impact on emotional, conduct and pro-social behavioural problems among school going children. Thus it was concluded that more training programs and seminars should be carried out for teachers to identify the behavioural problems at the initial stage.

1. Background of the Study

Children are mirror of a nation. They are our future and our most precious resources. The quality of tomorrow’s world and even its survival will be determined by the well-being, safety, physical and intellectual development of children today. To predict the future of a nation, it has been remarked, one need not consult the stars; it can more easily and plainly be read in the faces of its children.

Although childhood is generally regarded as a carefree time of life, many children and adolescents experience emotional difficulties growing up. While children go from school age to their preteens, there are many changes that take place, including typical development for 6-12 years old is both physical and behavioral. Children grow taller at a rate of about two and a half inches each year. They will also gain weight at a faster pace when they reach the age of 8 years old. At age 8, children will usually start thinking about how they look to other people. For girls, it is very common to be over concerned about their weight. However, boys are often sensitive about their height.1

The psychological development of children is influenced by societal norms and traditions, mainly the culture in which the child is born and raised. Children grow up in a traditional value system with hierarchical authority. They are expected to show absolute respect and unquestioning obedience to their parents. Furthermore, the “single child policy” increases pressure on children to achieve academic success in life due to parents’ heightened expectations for their only child.

There is a range of risk factors for behavioral problems in children that relate to the parent, family and/or social or economic environment.

Behavioral problems in childhood are also likely to lead to a variety of negative psychosocial outcomes in adolescence and adulthood, including an elevated risk of peer rejection, early initiation of drug abuse, depression, juvenile delinquency, school failure, and mental disorders. These negative outcomes can impact not only the life of the individual but also the community and society at large. Parents and teachers often regard normal behaviour that interferes with the efficient running of the home or school as problem behaviour. When they do this, they are likely to develop unfavorable attitudes in the child toward them and toward the situation in which the behavior occurs. The result is the many children then develop the real problem behaviour such as lying, sneakiness, destructiveness as the way of getting their revenge.2 In this study selected behavioural problems are related to emotional problems, conduct disorder and hyperactivity disorder, peer relations and pro-social behaviour.
2. Need of the study

“Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man.”

- Rabindranath Tagore

The World health organization estimated that about 10-20% of children worldwide have mental or behavioural problems. Furthermore affected children are neglected and do not have access to appropriate resources for recognition, support and treatment. Every society needs physically and mentally healthy individuals in order to progress in various socioeconomic and cultural domains. In developing countries 50% of population consists of children. The well-being of this great population is significantly influence on the future health and flourishing of society and next generation. It is therefore necessary to focus on increased attention on children's mental and physical health in order to take essential measures for preventing and treating psychological disorders.

3. Statement of the problem

An exploratory study to identify the behavioural problems and their determinants among (6-12 years) government school going children of Ludhiana District, Punjab.

Objectives included were:
1. To identify the selected behavioural problems among 6-12 years government school going children of selected schools.
2. To identify the determinants of behavioural problems among 6-12 years government school going children.
3. To find the association between the behavioural problems and selected demographic variables among government school going children.

4. Hypothesis

H1. There is statistically significant difference in the prevalence of selected behavioural problems among school going children at p<0.05 level of significance.

H2. There is statistically significant association between the behavioural problems and selected demographic variables among selected school going children at p<0.05 level of significance.

The review of present study was organized under five broad categories i.e. studies related to hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorder, emotional problems, peer problems and abnormal pro-social behaviour. ZS Lassi, et al (2011) conducted a cross-sectional study on behavioural problems among children living in orphanages facilities of Karachi, Pakistan. The study was conducted on a sample of 330 children, aged 4-16 years, living in either an SOS or other conventional or orphanages of Karachi, Pakistan. Data was collected and assessed the behavioural problems using Strength and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ). Behaviour problems on Strength and difficulty questionnaire sub scales were compared in 2 groups. Results showed overall prevalence of behavioural problems was 33%. On univariate comparison, groups did not differ to their overall behavioural problems, while they are significantly different on the peer scales (P=0.026). They found a high burden of behavioural problems among children living in orphanages of Karachi, Pakistan. Robert E. Mckeeown, Joseph R. Holbrook, Melissa L. Danielson, Steven P. Cuffe, Mark L. Wolraich and Susanna M. Visser (2015) conducted a case control study to determine the impact of varying ADHD diagnostic criterion on prevalence estimation. Parents and teachers report identified high and low screened children with ADHD from elementary schools in two states that produce a diverse overall sample. 1060 caregivers are interviewed. The results showed that teachers and parents reported 6 or more ADHD symptoms for 20.5% children respectively. Hence, it was concluded that these findings quantify the impact on prevalence estimates of varying case definition criteria for ADHD.

Tabitha Wang'ery (2013) conducted a descriptive study to assess the influence of peer pressure on behavioural aspects. It was conducted on 217 students from six schools of Kenya. A paper based questionnaire was used. The result found that 30% of adolescents reported that having been encouraged by peers to engage in romantic relationships, more than 31% were those who reported to get encouraged by friends to attend parties, near about 40% were those who reported to get encouraged to have friends of the opposite sex by peers and more than 15% were encouraged to take drugs. Hence, the findings proved that the negative influence of peer pressure occur on behaviour of adolescence.

5. Methodology

An exploratory approach and non-experimental comparative design was adopted to accomplish the objectives of the study. The present study was conducted in Ludhiana district The reliability for standardized tool i.e. Strength and Difficult Questionnaire was 0.79 through Cronbach's alpha coefficient and reliability for self structured tool was found 0.82 through split half technique. Therefore, tool was found to be reliable to conduct the main study. Sample consisted of teachers of selected 6-12 years school going children of various government school of Ludhiana district. The teachers were contacted who were present at the time of data collection and teaching the same student from at least 6 months.

6. Findings and Conclusion

Appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze data as per objectives and hypothesis of the study. Frequency, range and percentage distribution of sample characteristics was computed. Mean, SD of selected behavioural problems score was calculated as reported by teachers.

It was concluded that majority (46.8%) 6-8yrs old children with first order of birth were included in the study. The maximum mothers and fathers were qualified up to primary only. In occupation of father majority 88.22% and mother 53.18% were included in labor class. The maximum 67.83% family type was nuclear and respondents were married 97.45%. The family income per month showed maximum 86.62% had less than 10,000. As per number of living siblings...
51.27% had two siblings. The dietary habits showed majority 76.11% had vegetarian habits and maximum 93.31% living in rural area. The majority 76.11% of children belongs to schedule caste.

The overall total difficult score indicated that 47.13% were reported in close to average category by teachers, followed by high 30.57%, 21.02% slightly raised and only 1.27% in close to average category. As reported by parents 49.04% were in very high followed by high 26.11%, 20.06% slightly raised and only 4.78% in close to average category in difficult score of behavioural problems. But these were also not found significant.

Overall, the total level of impact including all selected determinants of behavioural problems among school going children showed that 74.84% had moderate level of impact, 25.16% had mild level and none had severe level of impact.

Table: Level of Impact of Determinants on Behavioural Problems of Children As Perceived By Parents 
\( N = 314 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determinants</th>
<th>Severe No.</th>
<th>Severe %</th>
<th>Moderate No.</th>
<th>Moderate %</th>
<th>Mild No.</th>
<th>Mild %</th>
<th>Max. Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents' Attitude</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>66.56</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>26.75</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of Parents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>32.17</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>66.24</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude of Family Members</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>21.97</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>75.80</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strictness</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>75.16</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>22.61</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child &amp; School</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>69.43</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>26.11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Impact</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>74.84</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>25.16</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, it was concluded that parents' attitude towards child rearing, level of strictness, parents' attitude towards child's school performance and total impact showed majority had moderate level of impact on behavioural problems among school going children. But relationship of parents among themselves and attitude of family members towards child showed majority had mild level of impact on behavioural problems among school going children.

It was concluded that age of child, education of parents, occupation of parents, marital status, type of family, family income per month, number of living siblings, dietary habits and area of residence had shown impact on emotional behavioural problems among school going children. The birth order of child, gender and caste system had shown no association with the presence of emotional behavioural problems among school going children.

It was concluded that age of child, education of parents, occupation of mother, number of living siblings and area of residence had shown impact on conduct behavioural problems among school going children. The birth order of child, gender, occupation of father, marital status, type of family, family income per month, dietary habits and caste system had shown no association with the presence of conduct behavioural problems among school going children.

It was concluded that gender, age, education of mother, education of father, occupation of mother, living siblings, dietary habits and area of residence has found association with pro-social behavioural problems of school going children in teachers perception. Birth order, occupation of father, marital status, type of family, family income and caste had no association with pro-social behavioural problems of school going children in teachers perception.

The overall behavioural problems had found association with age, education of mother, education of father, occupation of father, occupation of mother and living siblings of school going children in teachers perception. Gender, birth order, marital status, type of family, family income, dietary habits, area of residence and caste had no association with overall behavioural problems of school going children in teachers perception.

Therefore it can be concluded from significant association between the selected demographic variables that age of child, number of living siblings and education of mother had shown impact on all selected behavioural problems except peer behavioural problems. The education of father had shown impact on all except pro-social behaviour of children. The occupation of mother had shown impact on all selected behavioural problems except peer behavioural problems. The occupation of father had shown impact only on emotional and overall behavioural problems of children. The marital status of respondent had shown impact on emotional, hyperactivity and peer behavioural problems of children. The type of family had shown impact only on emotional and hyperactivity behavioural problems. The family income per month had shown only on emotional behavioural problems. The dietary habits had shown impact only on emotional and pro-social behavioural problems and area of residence had shown impact on emotional, conduct and pro-social behavioural problems among school going children.

The birth order of child, gender and caste system had shown no impact on the presence of emotional behavioural problems among school going children. It was recommended on the basis of findings that more training programs and seminars should be carried out for teachers to identify the behavioural problems at the initial stage among school going children.
References