

Struggling Deaf Students: Way Forward

Khan MA*

Institute of Special Education, University of the Punjab, Pakistan

***Corresponding author:** Muhammad Ajmal Khan, Institute of Special Education, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan, Tel: +92-332-6896568; Email: ajmalkhan.ise.pk@gmail.com

Received Date: July 13, 2023; **Published Date:** September 01, 2023

Introduction

If you can listen voices around without any hardship, you are blessed one. The more blessed, near me, are ones who are working in the field of rehabilitation of deaf souls. To listen to hearing impaired masses, one ought to have a listening heart. Being a teacher of deaf students. I have personally observed that these differently-abled individuals face myriad challenges.

Psychological challenges of deaf students, being more significant, can affect their academic success, social capital, and overall well-being. Some of the common psychological issues faced by deaf students include social exclusion, communication problems, impaired self-esteem, and complexities in mental health and deficits in educational outcomes to name a few.

Deaf students regardless of their age, gender, religion, locale and educational grades, have to face social exclusion due to communication barriers with hearing peers and resultantly lack access to social gatherings, galas, activities and events. Because of social isolation, deaf students have reported the feelings of loneliness depression and anxiety to my dismay.

Humans are social animals. We, humans can't think of living without linkages, relations, networks and Communication channels. Communication is lifeblood for humans. It is deemed as a prime factor in social and academic achievement of all students across the world. My teaching experience attests that deaf students struggle with communication difficulties like difficulty in understanding spoken language or expressing themselves through sign language. As a result

deaf students have been found struggling with frustration, anxiety, and a sense of alienation.

Self-respect and self-esteem are priceless assets for all humans. But, deaf pupils are unlucky in this regard. They are seen struggling with low self-esteem by dint of negative attitudes and stereotypical behavior towards deafness. This acceptance of deafness has been found leading to feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt, and depression amongst students with hearing impairment.

Brain and heart are vital parts of human existence. A healthy body though has a healthy mind but some face mental issues due to deafness. Deaf students, according to the findings of my recent research study have been found at higher risk for mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety on account of the combination of communication difficulties and social exclusion. Furthermore deaf students across the world have reported facing difficulties in accessing mental health facilities and services specifically tailored to their special needs.

Apart from difficulties in accessing mental health facilities, hard-of-hearing students have been found facing deficits in educational domain. Remarkable Challenges they are reportedly facing include lack of accommodations and adaptations in educational facilities, a limited curriculum and lack of skilled teachers in dealing with special needs. These challenges result into low performance in areas like academician, motivation, morale, creativity and confidence.

The real question is what is way forward? Answer lies in multi-stakeholders approach to deal with issues being

faced by individuals with hearing impairment. Educators, parents, school administrators, governments, NGOs, INGOs health department personnel and support staff need to combine hands in a guided framework to provide necessary support, education, rehabilitation and empowerment of deaf individuals.

The existence and operations of Special Education Department is not a sufficient solution. This may, in itself, lead to exclusion of special students of hearing impairment category. The need of hour is to move towards Inclusion. If special people can live with normal siblings, eat and drink with peers, transact in same markets ,dress like normal population, worship in same worship places, why can't they study in same mainstream schools with required adaptations and in the supervision of teachers skilled in dealing with

special needs?

My argument doesn't necessarily mean to wipe out Special Education Department in a single go. The need of hour is to train mainstream teachers in dealing with special needs and curricular adaptations and induction of already working special education teachers in Inclusive schools. Inclusion will bridge the gaps. Inclusion assures equity, equality, justice and fairness. Training Sign Language Interpreters, creating inclusive classrooms, providing counseling services, and promoting positive attitudes towards deafness and deaf culture, we can ensure ease for deaf individuals in all shades of life. Overcoming challenges deaf students are confronted with, we can help them achieve goals of academic and social success.