

Strength of Relationship between Vocational Learning programs and Educational Qualification on Deaf Employment

Ms. Bhawna Patel & Dr. Karamvir Sheokand

Research Scholar & Associate Professor

IMSAR, MDU ROHTAK, 124001

Abstract

Employment opportunities of deaf is a subject of concern as deafness is construed as invisible disability. This misleading portrayal make deaf a minority group with lesser opportunities to find work and improve their economic status. The social acceptance in the mainstream is another challenge faced by deaf. The Government policies and NGO support is encouraging but that pertains to the disability clan which includes other disabilities as well. At the same time, the educational qualifications acquired have a major contributing role towards generating numbers for deaf employment. However, the number of jobs generated for deaf do not fulfil the demand with which the deaf are increasing every day. In a scenario where the social fabric is not yet evolved to consider females as equal partners, deaf females all the more being a minority group are deprived of opportunities for being economically independent. They are left to the mercy of parents. Educational qualification acquired with current mandates on facilities to be provided to deaf students are yet to mature. The competitive world on platform of equality tends to evaluate the capabilities of deaf with a stereotype eye and biased perception. Vocational learning programs are another parallel trajectory which is driven by learning the skill level and direct the deaf people to move in a planned direction. All the above impose challenge towards employment of deaf. This study aims to look at the strength of relationship existing between vocational learning and educational qualification of deaf on deaf-employment.

Key words-Deaf employment, gender, educational qualification

Introduction

Humans form an integral part of community and society at large. Being a participating member, interactions happen at each stage. Humans are active intermediaries in moulding the environment around them according to constraints of status imposed and altering the landscape of social and structural paths. Further, (Bijker & Bijsterveld 2000, Latour 2003) states that from the above framework, human being applies consciousness and ability to act, decide or choose without external coercion. However, the above does not hold true for disabled community which continues to be a marginalised group owing to low prominence and economically disadvantaged (Garcia,2002)

The P-E-O model which means person-environment and occupation as stated by (Klinger.et.al.,2007) interprets that a high level of congruence between person, environment and occupation has a higher chance of qualitative occupational performance.

(Rosen,2003) states that hearing society regards hearing loss as disability. This manifests the general perspective of the hearing community. Once the hearing develops perception of hearing impairment as disability, there is a natural downgrading of the person capabilities, abilities and skills.

Few researchers have explained deafness as not a disability rather disadvantaged by language barrier. The social set up of deaf is predominantly identified by the unique deaf culture which defines norms of inclusion of deaf with one important character being that the person should be able to interact in sign language. In fact, sign language is the most natural visual form of language (Klinger.et.al.,2007).

Past research on factors responsible for promotion and hindrance in participation in employment of disabled has been elaborately explained by (Archterberg.et.al.,2009) . Out of ten studies undertaken, the authors concluded that Gender was a promoting factor which means that the males have a higher chance of being employed (Broyer.et.al.2004; Burkner.et.al. 2004; Nagarajan.et.al. 2003, Pang.et.al. 2008).

(Sunela Garg.et.al.,2009) in the research work has expressed deafness as one of the most common sensory disability and also the most neglected one. Few researches have also coined it as invisible disability Because this type of condition is not visually evident, people who suffer from it tend to go easily unnoticed. This is why this sector is one of the minority groups classified as invisible (Romero Pérez, 2011, p. 164). The author (Mishra.et.al.,2018) draws statistical information stating that around 5.3% of the world's population suffers from the hearing disability. In India Census 2011, around 2.68 crores persons are disabled out of which around 19% account for hearing disability.

While there are studies organised which have established the low employment rates of deaf, it is pertinent to understand that the institutional set up cannot create as many jobs as the demand is . This implies that alternate channels are warranted which may provide employment to the deaf.

Educational Qualification

In India, diversity of religions, large ethnic groups with varied values, beliefs and 21 officially recognised languages creates a major hurdle in supporting the deaf population with one thought process. Further, the deaf educators have exhibited a dual thought process-first one of oralism and the second thought process of using sign language. This dichotomy has impacted the educational approach that could be standardised in public and private institutional settings. The average age of identification of hearing loss is aid to be 5 years. Another underlying reason of slow and poor-quality education levels amongst deaf is that most of them reside in rural areas. Efforts are on to look at the technological support for improved interactions thereby reducing the gap of communication. The Salamanca statement of 1994 emphasised that schools should accommodate deaf children irrespective of their financial status, age, gender, linguistic or social condition. Th landmark legislation in history of India with Persons with Disabilities Act 1995 emphasises education as major pillar and declares access to free education till age of 18 years.

The education of deaf further gets impacted due to delayed language development. According to report submitted by Rehabilitation Council of India, (RCI,2000),

Education, learning and acquiring of skills forms a basic progressive framework towards being employed in future. This implies a march towards economic sustenance that also includes self-entrepreneurship category as well. Schools and educational institutions form the first basic unit to gather knowledge and learning and skills. These institutions are managed by following a specific methodology of teaching over a period of time along with the environment created for learning. In case of hearing-impaired students, the case is altogether different. Hearing impaired students are the ones who have the disability of loss of hearing and thereby their speech. The mother tongue for such students is sign language which is devoid of any vocal exchange of messages. It is the language of signs which the deaf pick up for their understanding and correspond with the sign as reply. The current education infrastructure and the adaptive practises lack such accommodation resulting in a wrecked educational gain. (Lang.et.al.,2004) has explained significant differences in perception of educational staff members and deaf students with respect to accommodative practises. Further, poor financial support and lack of encouragement from parents forces them to manage themselves without guidance.

With respect to education, another interesting outcome has been notified by the researcher (Rydberg.et.al.,2010) on research done on Swedish deaf and hearing population. the results show that there was similarity related to employment. the higher the level of educational attainment, the higher the employment rate. A peculiar result

emerged that deaf possessed higher educational qualification with respect to the required qualification for the occupation for which they were employed indicates the discrimination in labour market. This shows that the discriminatory practises are deeply embedded in the entire life cycle of deaf population, right from primary education, family, society and even up to the level of occupation and employment.

Education is one of the most efficient means for social and individual development. As Barra Aeloíza and Muñoz Vilugrón (2020) point out, young people who aspire to higher education see in it “the possibility of social and economic realization” (p. 87). Unfortunately, there are some sectors that do not have the same opportunity as the rest of the population to fully access a formal education. One such group includes people with disabilities. Studies have confirmed that deaf people have lower level of education as compared to the hearing people countries (Anon 2006; Barnartt and Christiansen 1996; MacLeod-Gallinger 1992; Rydberg, and Danermark 2009).

Deaf Employment Challenges at workplace.

Numerous researches have evolved in past few years on understanding employment challenges of deaf and the subsequent workplace challenge later on. The oppression of persons with hearing disabilities not an unknown fact. (Humphreys,1975) coined the word “audism” signifying oppression of deaf persons. The definition of audism encompasses notion of superiority based on one’s ability to hear or behave similar to a hearing individual. Based on this, Humphries emphasised presence of audism as “subtly and obviously, directly and indirectly, intentionally and unintentionally, consciously and unconsciously”. Further (Eckert&Rowley,2013; Humphreys,1975; Ladd,2005) have expressed presence of audism as oppression at work and in systems and segments of society. (Punch,2016) interprets research outcome stating the higher rates of deaf unemployment, underemployment and dissatisfaction than hearing individuals. Punch further states that despite seeking employment, there are challenges of upward growth that results in lag in income levels as compared to general population. Fatigue and stress are other added factors that the deaf experiences owing to high concentration and attention applied to understand the situation in an audio centric place which the author states as psychophysiological stress.

While educational attainment is one of the factors that impact employment, occupation is another factor that is affiliated to employment. In fact, occupation goes hand in hand with employment. Requirement of a particular communication level influences the occupation that the deaf musters in (DeCaro, Mudgett-DeCaro, and Dowaliby 2001; Parasnis, Samar, and Mandke 1996; Weisel and Cinamon 2005).

Further, the studies by Welsh and MacLeod-Gallinger done in 1992 have enumerated that there is 50% likelihood in case of deaf that they would require higher education level commensurate to the occupation they are generally engaged in.

Poor employment opportunities also lead to lower social and economic identity within society.

It is also experienced that deaf who would like to pursue their interest do not find enough support and encouragement from their families. In a real time, example, a deaf 10th pass students who wanted to pursue his career in pottery for which he was to be paid a double-digit remuneration pulled himself back as the siblings exerted pressure on him that he would be exploited if he works outside. Today, the person works in a bicycle repairing shop for which he is not even paid. These are the real time challenges that the deaf and hard of hearing face and therefore the institutional set up of providing employment becomes extremely crucial.

Vocational Training

Work is an integral part of sustenance of any human being. It binds the individual to society along with status (Brown,1954).

Work has different connotations and varied purpose statement linked to it and therefore holds the status of imparting identity to individual. Different purposes ranging from earning a livelihood to the extreme of usage of leisure time where action is involved construes work. Unemployed means exclusion from the main stream of important activities and roles related to social group. (Obermann,1980).

Understanding work as an economic activity converts work into employment or job. The economic element attached to work becomes a means of livelihood with which the individual identifies himself. Approaching

employment opportunities requires foundation of basic knowledge gained, educational qualifications attained and skills learnt during the learning years in educational institutions or otherwise.

Vocational training programs form an alternate way of enhancing skills of deaf individuals which is based on individual's capability and competence that would subsequently assist in qualifying for an employment opportunity. Limited opportunities for deaf and biased approach by employers tends to impact the overall employment rates of deaf.

(Stinson&Walter,1997) states that despite similar intelligence like hearing population, the deaf people are more at risk of higher rates of unemployment and underemployment than the hearing population. Vocational training aims to enable deaf reach the level of self-sufficiency. Another perspective laid by (Lerman and Gailfoyle,1970) that focus should be on those vocational training programs that helps generate employment in accordance with changing times. Findings of research by (Pitts,1990) draws that there is no relationship between the result of rehabilitation outcome and the background of hearing impaired.

At the hindsight, skill development programs which require minimum communication and cross exchange of message are the possible areas which can attract deaf employment. In case of female deaf, these vocational skills can be utilised for developing entrepreneurial capabilities.

Studies reveal that despite intellectually superior and good ratings with respect to hearing counterparts, it is unlikely that the deaf employees rise upwards (Welsh,1993) in their career (Moore,1996)

It has also been observed that owing to limited opportunities of employment, deaf make fewer changes in their career. Another unique feature with deaf is that they do not consider themselves as part of disabled community (Lane.et.al.,1996)

However, they consider themselves a part of minority group that comprises of unique language along with set of cultural values. Further, deafness by deaf community is not viewed based on hearing loss but the acceptance of cultural values. Hence alignment to deaf community is essential to manage the perception with which the vocational learning programs are perceived and hence for employment purpose, the related organisation should closely knit with the deaf community to build accommodative practises that are deaf friendly.

One cannot deny the underlying challenges related to communication as hindrance factor. And therefore, deviating from the traditional system of attaining education a systematic way, research has shown that the interests in sports can be leveraged for the deaf people which can be further built on as career. In a study conducted by (Polvakic.et.al.,2019), wherein two groups were tested -one of 47 nos of deaf and hard of hearing and the other of the same number of the hearing population with similar age group. The outcome revealed that the deaf expressed higher interest to be associated with sports which can have a noteworthy impact on socialisation. Correlating the above with the P-E-O Model, one can state that person, environment and occupation have a considerable influence on self-motivation and self-efficacy of the deaf.

Studies undertaken by experts on deaf persons in sports, the author (Atherton.et.al., 2001) states that while in sports challenges of low esteem, status difference, discrimination, low economic background, communication barrier, negative perceptions etc, all tend to disappear. The benefit of sports as vocational learning has impact at three different levels of social, psychological and educational level as explained by (Arsic.et.al.,2015). The above removes the inhibition of participation from the minds of deaf and is indicative of a positive move towards

In a study was undertaken by (Michael,2019) on the Career Decision Making Self Efficacy (CDMSE) of deaf in a test along with hearing group. The results revealed both the study groups did not differ in their CDMSE. However, the deaf who were acquainted with only sign language or used only sign language have reported lower levels of CDMSE.

The vocational behaviour of deaf youth is governed by factors of SES (Socio economic status), interaction style of family, openness in environment. Single parent status, joint family, nuclear family and parent expectations for achievement (Metheny.et.al.,2013).When considering the parents of deaf children which in 95% cases are hearing as notified by (Mitchell.et.al.,2004), owing to the meaningless contact with deaf children because of

communication barrier and limited experience of handling deaf results in low career expectation (Cawthon.et.al.,2014). However, when considering employment status as one of the variables, significant differences in career self-efficacy have been found between the deaf and the hearing group (Miachale.et.al.,2011)

And therefore, it brings us to a level of defining the objective of study.

Objective of Study

The objective of the research study is to study the strength of relationship between three variables mutually.

- a. Vocational learning programs
- b. Educational Qualification
- c. Deaf Employment

By using statistical methods, the existing relationship between the three variables shall be statistically interpreted using SPSS. The inferences drawn from the study will come handy to the policy makers of education system, build vocational training programs and skill development programs. This will help employers and educational institutions to create alternate ways of improvement and enhancing skills and competence of deaf individuals for better employability and self-efficacy. This will also help to break the stereotype existing in minds of hearing people.

Accordingly, following are the objectives:

- To understand the relationship between vocational learning programs and educational qualifications.
- To understand the relationship between vocational learning programs and Deaf Employment.
- To examine the relationship between Deaf Employment and educational qualifications.

Focusing on the above three objectives and the subsequent result derived as an outcome will serve as valuable repository and information to the prospective employers, the educational institutions and to a certain extent the education policy makers. This will help create better and more opportunities for deaf irrespective of gender and improve the economic status. Various past research has pointed out the poor and low economic status of deaf results in their being drop outs.

3. Research Methodology

Under research methodology employed in this study, a brief description of the procedures and techniques used to collect, analyse, and interpret data is presented.

3.1 Hypothesis

In a research project, hypotheses offer claims that may be verified and offer a structure for examining the connection between variables.

1. Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between Educational Qualification and Vocational Training Programs.
2. Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between Educational Qualification and Deaf Employment.
3. Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between Vocational Learning Programs and interviewing techniques.

3.2 Nature of Research

Descriptive research has been conducted with sample of 82 deaf persons including students, employed deaf, school and college passed out deaf. The primary data has been collected from deaf schools and institutions in

Gurgaon. For data collection, sign language interpreters have been used to make the questionnaire understandable to deaf people. This descriptive research been used to understand relationship between educational qualification, vocational learning programs and Deaf employment.

3.2 Unit of Analysis

The primary entity being researched in the study is students, employed deaf, school and college passed out deaf, Deaf Job Aspirants.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

The sampling frame consists of male and female deaf aspirants who are in age bracket of >18 years who aspire to work and be economically independent, deaf who are students or passed out of school and college, students who have passed out of school and aspire for higher education, working deaf.

The sample size taken is 83 Nos for more reliable data analysis.

3.4 Questionnaire has been designed by picking up indicating variables from the review of literature. The statements relate to the items of educational qualification, vocational learning programs and deaf employment,

4. Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation

Primary data was collected from organisations that have deaf employees, deaf schools and educational institutions, deaf what's app groups from Gurugram using a schedule in which the set of questions were prepared and using the sign language interpreter the responses information was collected

The no of respondents selected was 100 Nos out of which 83 respondents provided their valuable feedback. Hence, the current study has used 83 nos for drawing results and interpretation.

The statistical analysis was done using SPSS software.

5. Findings

The result of correlation between Educational Qualification and Vocational Training is depicted in table No 1 below.

Table-1 Correlation Educational qualification and Vocational Training			
		Summated value of educational qual.	Summated value of vocational training
Summated value of educational qual.	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.105
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.344
	N	83	83
Summated value of vocational training	Pearson Correlation	-0.105	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.344	
	N	83	83

The result shows a negative correlation of -0.105 at p value of 0.344 which is greater than qualifying value of <0.05. Basis the results, it can be interpreted that there is no significant relationship present between two variables i.e vocational training and educational qualification. This implies that both the variables have no relationship with each other and hence do not play an influential role in the study. Accordingly, the null hypothesis is proven and we reject the alternate hypothesis. It also means that both the variables are independent to each other.

Table-2 Correlation Educational qualification and Deaf Employment			
		Summated value of deaf employment	Summated value of educational qual.
Summated value of deaf employment	Pearson Correlation	1	.425**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	83	83
Summated value of educational qual.	Pearson Correlation	.425**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	83	83

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Using SPSS, correlation was run between the two variables of Deaf Employment and Educational Qualification. The correlation value of 0.425 is achieved at p value of 0. Since the value of p is <0.05 , this signifies that there exists a medium correlation between deaf employment and educational qualification as the value ranges between <0.30 to <0.70 . Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected that states that there exists a relationship between two variables and we accept the alternate hypothesis.

Table-3 Correlation Vocational Training and Deaf Employment			
		Summated value of vocational training	Summated value of deaf employment
Summated value of vocational training	Pearson Correlation	1	.245*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026
	N	83	83
Summated value of deaf employment	Pearson Correlation	.245*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	
	N	83	83

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 above depicts the correlation result between two variables of Deaf Employment and Vocational training. SPSS software was used to derive results and statistically interpret results based on outcome. The results show that the correlation is significant at 0.026 level with value of correlation being 0.245. Since the value of p is <0.05 , this shows that there exists a significant relationship between the two variables of Deaf Employment and Vocational Learning Programs. Accordingly, we reject null hypothesis and accept alternate hypothesis.

6. Recommendations

Deaf community since ages has been an oppressed community which later was categorised as minority group. Unlike other disabilities, the disability of hearing impairment is a not explicitly evident. This results in deaf are partially associated with disability. Various deaf institutions, schools and NGO's are working towards promoting practises of inclusion and accessibility of deaf. The schools in Gurugram are promoting persons with disabilities. Accordingly, persons with locomotive disability, squint eyed, multi fingers or less fingers are few of such disabilities that have been accommodated. For blind, there is a well-established language of braille with which they can communicate. In case of deaf, wherein, the nature of disability is that the deaf person cannot hear and speak, the inclusion with hearing students becomes a challenge. The mode of communication for them is sign language which the hearing community is not well versed of. More usage of sign language in society will reduce the communication gap and thereby would give opportunity for deaf to grow like hearing individuals. The Technological advancement and increased usage of Artificial Intelligence is a progressive step in this direction.

It is therefore recommended that more and more learning of sign language should be promoted in schools, educational institutions, workplaces which will lessen the gap of communication. The government should look at the conventional educational system and modify it according to the needs of the deaf students which will help them to equip with intellectual capability and also develop self-efficacy. The mode of teaching in deaf institution should be visually aided supported by sign language. The focus of the teachers should be to encourage deaf students to participating practical application of concepts and this is possible if enough resources in form of deaf teachers and well laid out course curriculum specifically for deaf is created that is best suited to their mode of

learning. Government should link the educational institutions ratings with the % of deaf being educated in their respective schools. This will push the existing conventional schools to create appropriate avenues of inclusion and accessibility and develop adaptive practises accordingly.

Adult skill centres, vocational learning programs should be mobilised at large scale for deaf in school and deaf non students at every age group. Better reachability of such vocational skill programs will encourage more participation of deaf and will open up more avenues for them to pick up appropriate jobs commensurate with the acquired skill sets. The corporates should build accommodative deaf friendly environment to attract deafer. Lemon tree hotels is one such successful example in corporates that has included deaf as an employee in good numbers by building robust induction, training and learning programs along with support from values driven as part of culture. Government should identify specific areas of work in industry to be occupied by deaf as employees and for which suitable guidelines should be framed. Specific job portals should be created by Government which is separate for deaf as being part of disability group, the deaf group loses its identity. Mobilisation of parents by educating them more and more on deafness and techniques to handle deaf child at hoe should eb promoted.

7. Limitations of study

The study is limited to geographical area of Gurugram and hence the findings with a small sample cannot be generalised. Also, using a schedule to capture responses may result in respondents' error as the interpreter is also a human being and errors and perceptual bias are bound to exist. In order to minimise this effect, the sample size should be large enough to be a representative sample. The study ceases to draw the corelation between various variables and gender. Also, the age at which the deaf has started his education should be captured to do a comparative analysis of hearing ad deaf community. Further, the vocation learning programs should be categorised into technical and non-technical programs.

Also, the different levels of deafness would result in different outcomes and hence cannot be generalised for the entire deaf community. Also, the factor of whether the deaf included in study were deaf right from birth i.e. natural disability or acquired deafness in the later stage of life. Eac such category has to be dealt with separately.

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