

## CHAPTER- IV

### SPECIAL NEEDS OF DISADVANTAGED AND DISABLED CHILDREN.

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION :

In the second lesson, you have studied about different aspects of development, like physical, social, emotional development. You have learnt that the pattern of growth and development is different. There are some children in our society, whose needs are different from their age mates. These children are unable to solve various social and emotional problems. This has marked effect on the child's social and personality development. Such child needs special attention to make them grow to the full potential. In this chapter, we will discuss about such children and their needs. After reading this chapter you will be able to know the following-

- Concept of disadvantaged children.
- Definition of disability and handicap
- Causes of disability
- Different types of disability
- Causes of blindness and the needs and characteristic of blind children.
- Characteristics and needs of a child with affected limits.
- Causes of social disadvantaged among children.

#### 4.2. CONCEPT OF DISABLED AND HANDICAP CHILDREN

A healthy child is free from disease with normal growth and development and are able to prepare themselves for future life. Any deviation from the above puts a child at disadvantage. Changes in growth and development is not similar with every child and they can be best understood by different terms, such as impairment, disability and handicap.

Impairment refers to a diseased or a defective tissue. According to WHO-  
 ("Impairment is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or of anatomical structure") With the improvement of science and technology, these impairment can be corrected or can be reduced. You will understand better with this example. If a child cannot hear properly or is deaf, he can use hearing aid and thus, the impairment can be corrected. Spectacles can be used to correct eye problem.

Disability is also a type of impairment which interferes with the functions that a child should perform in his special environment. Famous psychologist Baker defines the disabled child as "one who deviates from what is supposed to be an



average in physical, mental, emotional and social characteristics to such an extent that the child needs special services to help develop to the maximum capacity")

Handicappedness is a condition, when the society considers the child as disadvantaged due to his disability. For example, if a child cannot hear properly with one ear, due to an accident, it may not hamper in his studies or in listening to others. But, if in school, his friends and others do not interact with him normally because of his hearing impairment, it makes him believe that he is at disadvantage. Thus it becomes a cause for his handicappedness.

#### 4.3. CAUSES OF DISABILITY, IMPAIRMENT AMONG CHILDREN

There are various causes of disability among children. They are

- a. Unfavorable pre-natal environment
- b. Heredity
- c. Injury during child birth
- d. Accident during childhood leads to orthopaedic problem
- e. Mental and emotional problem during early childhood result in stammering and speech defects.
- f. Ear infections or injury may lead to hearing defects.
- g. Surgical removal of any part of the body due to disease or accident, which requires amputation.

h. Feeling of neglect in the family or society result in behavioural problem. Such children are unable to follow the social norms and becomes disadvantaged.

#### 4.4. TYPES OF DISABILITY, HANDICAPS

Handicaps results in physical, neurological and social maladjustment. It leads to defects in the body. They are discussed below :-

##### A. PHYSICAL DEFECTS :

1. Eyes : Blind and partially sighted
2. Ears : Deafness.
3. Missing limb, weak limb.
4. Physical abnormalities such as hunch back, cleft palate, birth marks in the body, more finger than required. Webbed fingers etc.
5. Defective speech : Some children stammer while talking. It may affect a child's personality.
6. Chronical defects : The defects exists year after year e.g. congenital heart disease, rheumatism etc.

##### B. NEUROLOGICAL DEFECTS

These defects are caused by the disorders of the central nervous system. e.g. cerebral palsy, epilepsy, schizophrenia etc. In cerebral palsy, the brain and other body organs cannot function normally. Epilepsy results in loss of consciousness and muscle control.



### C. SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENT DEFECTS

The children who do not conform to the social norms of the society, cannot adjust properly in the society. Socially disadvantaged child is also known as deprived child. Because they are deprived of love, affection, social security, proper guidance etc. These children may indulge in antisocial activities leading to juvenile delinquency, drug addictions etc.

#### 4.5. BLINDNESS

Soon after birth, the newborn infant opens his eyes and looks around. As children grow, they try to obtain information about the world in which they live. Therefore vision is an important and proper tool. Impairment of vision may lead to partial or total blindness. Partial or total blind child cannot perform his normal tasks and remain physically dependant on others.

**Causes of blindness :** Blindness may occur due to many reasons. They are -

**1. Congenital blindness :** Some children are blind from the moment he is born. Genetic impairment results in malformation of eyes during pre-natal period, which result in blindness. Such children learn about the environment through the senses of touch or by hearing.

**2. Acquired blindness :** In this case,

the child is not born blind. The child may lose eye sight due to accident, playing with sharp object may cause eye injury and lead to impairment of vision

**3. Nutritional blindness :** During pregnancy, if the diet of the mother is deficient in vit A, it will affect the vision of the child. Moreover, prolonged deficiency of vit-A in the diet of children result in various diseases of the eye. You have studied about these in the first year course. Untreated and long term deficiency may lead to complete blindness, Nutritional blindness is preventable, if the regular diet contains foods rich in vit - A regularly.

**4. Delayed treatment :** In case of children, any problem in the eye must be treated immediately. Delay in treatment may result in blindness. Many parents delay in providing medical treatment to their children due to poverty, ignorance, superstition etc.

#### **Characteristics of blindness and partially blindness :**

- A blind or partially blind child is very cautious in his movements but is clumsy and feel awkward.
- Their eyes may be red, swollen, watery, itching and sensitive to light.
- Partially blind child may have symptoms like headache, vomiting, blurred vision etc.
- The child becomes irritable, self



centered and pre occupied because of poor vision.

- Blind child gets fewer opportunity to get along with social groups. Hence they find it difficult to adjust properly.

- Blind child is always dependent on others for doing any work. This makes them rebellious and at times frustration occurs, which lead to inferiority complex among them.

### SPECIAL NEEDS OF BLIND CHILD

It has been mentioned earlier that blind children are always dependent. Hence it is essential to render all possible help to them, by which they become independent and economically viable. Every member of the society should give special attention to fulfill their physical and emotional needs. The needs of blind children are discussed below:

**Physical needs** : Parents of a blind child should play an important role in fulfilling his physical needs. Parents should train a blind child to do his daily routine work like going to the toilet, bathing, dressing and feeding.

- They should be trained properly to move around the house without hurting themselves.

- Blind or partially blind children must be made familiar with their bodies and the environment where they live in, so that, they feel comfortable with them.

- Parents must be alert all the time, so that the child is protected from any disease and should take them regularly to the doctor.

- Parents, siblings and others should always be ready to help a blind child and should behave well with them.

**Emotional needs** : The world of a blind child is very limited. A blind child's social world is his or her parents. Hence, parents should love them and try to solve their routine problems.

- Like a normal child, a blind child too needs love and care. Each and every family member should love and care for them.

**Need for independence** : Blind children should be helped to become independent. They should be trained to do their routine work like- use of toilet, bathing, dressing, combing hair, tying of shoe laces etc. independently. They must be appreciated for doing these activities. This will encourage the child and will help him to take up any major job with confidence.

**Educational needs** : It is important to provide education to a blind child at proper age. A special tool is used to provide education to a blind child. It is known as 'BRAILLE'. Letters, numbers and words can be read and write with braille. Special educators are needed to teach blind children with the help of the



braille system. Books meant for blind or partially blind children should have letters with big print. Recorded tapes can be used to impart education to the blind. Special attention must be given while imparting education to blind child. Numbers and letters used in braille systems are shown below

#### 4.6. DEAFNESS :

Soon after birth, children respond to loud sound, animal voice by closing or blinking their eyes. As they grow, they recognise their parent's voices and starts cooing and make gurgling sounds. Gradually, they learn to identify many sounds. Children born with hearing impairment cannot learn properly. As a result communication problem occur.

Hearing impaired persons are known as Deaf.

The children who born with hearing impairment are unable to learn the language and becomes mute and silent. On the other hand, the children who are deaf later in life cannot communicate properly with other people.

**Causes of deafness :** Deafness occurs due to the following factors:-

**1. Conductive deafness :** Generally, any sound conducted to the ear through air. When there is any blockage in the passage of the ear, it may result in hearing impairment. These blockage may be due to deposition of wax in the ear, any foreign body in the pathway and any infection or swelling of the outer ear etc. These conditions may lead to deafness.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j
•	••	••	••	•	••	••	••	•	••
k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t
•	•	••	••	•	••	••	••	•	••
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
u	v	w	x	y	z				
•	•	••	••	•	•				
••	••	•	••	•	••				

Fig - 7

Number and letter used in braille system