

Children with hearing impairment in Sri Lanka with special reference to Kalutara district

This study centres around an analysis of issues related to hearing impairment among children in Sri Lanka. Objectives were (1) To analyse the causes of hearing impairment, (2) To examine the problems encountered by school-age children with hearing impairment.

Case study methodology was used to gather in-depth data on causes of hearing impairment. Ten cases included in the study were drawn from a sample of seventy three children in six special units for hearing impaired children in the educational zones, Kalutara, Horana and Matugama in the Kalutara district. Data was gathered from a range of sources-growth charts, progress reports, medical reports and interviews with mothers.

Data on problems encountered by children with hearing impairment were gathered through in-depth case studies, interviews with teachers attached to special units in the sample and from two experienced teacher educators dealing with hearing impaired children. Further, records maintained by the Special Education Unit of the Ministry of Education, were perused. Following findings were made:

Low birth weight of the child, mother experiencing emotional trauma during pregnancy, parents being genetic relations, childhood diseases affecting the brain and hereditary factors appear to be related causal factors of hearing impairment.

In Sri Lanka, children with hearing impairment encounter problems related to speech, communication, perception, cognition and motions that have educational and social implications. These problems are compounded basically due to the lack of adequate services at national level to meet needs of these children.