

## **The Challenges of Teachers and Parents in Developing Speech and Language of Children with Autism**

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**Abstract:** Autism is a neuro-developmental disorder characterized by impaired social interaction and communication. It is observed that teachers and parents of autistic children encounter a vast number of difficulties to improve autistic children's speech and language. The research has been conducted aiming to find out the challenges of teachers and parents following a face-to-face interview of 20 participants (10 parents and 10 teachers) and two classrooms have also been observed in 2 different special schools in Dhaka city. Thematic analysis technique has been followed to analyze the data. The findings reveal proper assessment problem, providing speech therapy, getting sufficient therapy instruments, securing adequate number of trained teachers, rapport building, limited knowledge on autism and speech therapy as the most encountered obstacles for the teachers and parents in developing speech and language. The research also has found out ways like providing sufficient trained teacher, providing training, providing sufficient speech therapy instruments to overcome these challenges.

**Keywords:** Autism, speech and language disorder, language production, Developing Speech and Language (DSL)

### **1. Introduction**

A child starts making a sound like cooing when he or she is 1 to 4 (Bolinger, 2002) months old and utters one word like mama, dada or bye bye at 6 to 8 months (Steinberg, 2003) and two to three words at 9 to 18 months (Fromkin, 1983). After this, they start forming words gradually. At the age of 2 years or more they start making sentences

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with 2 or 3 words. Gradually, they learn to make complex sentences at the age of 3 to 3.5 years (Coplan, 1985. Green et al, 2002). But, this concept is completely different in the case of children with autism. They do not make a sound at their 6 to 7 months of age, do not babble, point gesture at 12, do not say mama, dada or three words at the age of 15 to 18 months of their age. Children affected with autism rarely utter words and sentences till the age of three or more (Schum RL, 2007). Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that prevents people from understanding what they see, hear and otherwise sense. This results in severe problems with social relationships, communication, and behavior. There may be a range of difficulties in expressive and receptive language and communication. Kientz et al. (2007) described Autism as one of the most common pervasive developmental disorders that consists of criteria of defects in communication, social interaction, and creative play. Several hypotheses claimed that Autism Spectrum Disorder is a neurobiological disorder with a strong genetic component and no biological marker for autism was identified (Gothem et al., 2007). Kanner (1943) explained Autism Spectrum Disorder as the child's inability to relate themselves to others and as extreme aloneness. Autism can be observed in several ways, such as by the child's failure to recognize and react when he or she is being picked up, or by the inability of the child to use language to communicate.

Majority of autistic children have speech and language disorder. They take a long time to make a sound, produce alphabets, form words and make sentences though it varies from child to child.

Moreover, Majority of autistic children cannot produce all types of words till their adulthood and fail to make meaningful sentences. Some authors mentioned that some language and communication difficulties of children with autism will probably follow them throughout life, especially if they are not included in remediation programs (Grela & Mclaughlin, 2006; Koegel, 2000; Mandell & Salzer, 2007; They do not know what to say where and whom to say what. It is estimated that up to 50% of people with autism do not develop functional speech. For those who do, speech may have unusual qualities and have limited communicative functions. All people with autism have difficulties with

social interactions but the extent and type of difficulty may vary. Some individuals may be very withdrawn, while others may be overly active and approach people in peculiar ways. They have problems with inattention and resistance to change. They often respond to sensory stimuli in a typical manner and may exhibit odd behaviors such as hand flapping, spinning or rocking (Koegel et al., 1995).

In Bangladesh, many children are affected by autism spectrum disorder. Majority of children affected with autism spectrum disorder have speech and language disorder. Those who have speech problem cannot produce sounds, sometimes stutter to utter a word, and cannot form words properly. Those who have language disorder cannot make a sentence, sometimes mispronounce some words and sometimes utter meaningless sentences. Existing literature shows different types of challenges special children's parents and teachers face. But no research was conducted on the challenges teachers and parents face in developing speech and language of children with autism. However, it is observed in our surroundings that teachers and parents encounter a number of difficulties to improve their speech and language. To teach them speech production, word formation, sentence mechanism, as well as the use of situational language parents and teachers have to face many difficulties. Nevertheless, this article aims to bring out the challenges teachers and parents face in developing the speech and language of children with autism as well as to find out the ways to overcome the challenges. To get an in-depth idea about the challenges face to face interview with 10 special school teachers' and 10 parents' would be conducted following a semi-structured questionnaire. The face to face interview concerning the challenges teachers and parents face in developing speech and language has been conducted by the review of the existing literature. Besides, two classrooms have been observed.

## **2. Literature Review**

Edward, Geraldina (2015) conducted research on "Teachers knowledge and perceived challenges of teaching children with Autism in Tanzanian regular primary schools" aiming to explore teachers knowledge and perceived challenges of teaching children with autism following semi-structured interview. The findings of the study revealed that teachers faced different challenges like poor pre-service training, lack of seminars, insufficient time, lack of cooperation between teachers and

the parents of children with autism, lack of adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials in teaching children with autism in regular school.

Chu, et al (2018) conducted a study titled “Challenges faced by parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Malaysia”. The aim of the study was to explore the perception and challenges faced by parents of children with autism spectrum disorder. A semi structured face to face interview was conducted with eight parents to collect the data of the study. The findings of the study revealed that the parents face various challenges in seeking speech therapy services, diagnosis for their children, in dealing with children’s challenging behavior like crying, hitting, throwing tantrum, to communicate with their children affected with autism spectrum disorder

Another qualitative study was carried out by Hawlader.et al. (2018). on “Perceptions, Practices, and Challenges in schools for autistic children. A qualitative exploration of teachers and school authorities views in Bangladesh” to explore the perceptions, practices, and challenges teachers face in autistic schools in the urban city of Bangladesh. The data were collected through conducting a face-to-face interview, reviewing school reports and documents as well as by classroom observation. The results identified the challenges such as inadequate knowledge, lack of experience and training, space limitation, insufficient therapists, lack of vocational training etc. So, this study did not focus significantly on the challenges teachers and parents encounter in autistic children’s speech and language development.

UNICEF Bangladesh & Ministry of Social Welfare (2014) prepared a report titled “Situation Analysis on Children with disability in Bangladesh” on children with disabilities in Bangladesh focusing the challenges teachers and students encounter at school with a view to promoting their rights in the society. To collect the data for this report they consulted with a variety of government officials and civil society organizations as well as visited different sites and schools in different cities of Bangladesh i.e. Dhaka, Chittagong, Gazipur, Savar, Manikgonj city. This report has brought to light some challenges like hazardous infrastructure in the school, inadequate attention to the student, insufficient trainers, and teachers, limited opportunities for recreation, and lack of vocational training.

Gour, Pandey (2016) carried out a pilot study on “Coping Mechanism and Parental Relationship in the families of a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder” in National Capital Region of India following face to face interview of 10 parents aiming to assess the coping mechanism and parental relationship in families with a child having ASD. This study revealed that parents used to cope with the situation by accepting the diagnosis, adjusting to self-change, developing treatments and seeking support. Besides, spirituality was one of the mechanisms of coping with a child diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.

A qualitative study titled “A study on experiences and challenges mothers of children with autism in Dhaka city” by Akhter. (2015) was conducted to get an overview of mother’s experiences and challenges face while bringing up their children with autism. The data were collected through case studies and focus group discussion. To gather an insight into mother’s experiences and challenges 20 cases were studied and 2 focus group discussion were conducted. This research helped knowing the mother's experiences since child’s conception to the early development. Throughout these phases of life, they experienced difficulties in delivering the child, difficulties in diagnosis process, lack of eye contact, lack of socialization, repetitive behaviors. They faced challenges like insufficient support and services from family and society as well.

A Study titled “Challenges faced by parents of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder” by Ludlow.et al. (2011) was carried out to bring out the challenges parents face to deal with children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. A qualitative method was followed to get an in-depth idea. 20 face to face interviews with parents’ and teachers’ were conducted to identify the challenges faced by the parents. The interview results show that dealing with the challenging behavior of autistic children is the biggest challenge. Besides, changes to routine, judgements from others, sensory and social problems, lack of support, impact on family, coping and support are the challenging factors to parents of children diagnosed with the autism spectrum disorder.

Udoba (2014) conducted research on the “Challenges faced by teachers when teaching learners with a developmental disability”. The main objective of this study was to explore the challenges teachers face in teaching learners with a developmental disability by following a qualitative method. To collect the data of the research a semi-

structured interview was conducted among the teachers of special education school and the parents. The results show the challenges teachers face are insufficient teaching materials, lack of trained teacher, inadequate classes and poor learning environment and curriculum structure as well as lack of motivation and poor salary.

Another research carried out by Lindsay et al. (2013) named “Educators challenges of including children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in mainstream classroom” in Ontario Canada through conducting an in-depth interview of 13 teachers brought out that shows challenges like understanding and managing behavior, socio-structural barriers such as school policy, lack of training and resources as well as creating an inclusive environment.

Katsafanas. (2007) conducted a study titled The Role and Responsibilities of special education teachers. The main objective of this study was to know the roles and responsibilities of the special school’s teacher as well the challenges they experience in the areas of planning, monitoring, and instructing in case of student progress. Focus Group Discussion and a weekly log of 17 special education teachers helped to get an in-depth idea of the encountered challenges of special school teachers. The findings of the study illustrated five challenges i.e. insufficient tool or materials in the school, lack of professional developmental opportunity, dealing with a vast number of autistic children, lack of team work, and insufficient time for students in making planning, monitoring and instructing.

Chowdhury, et al (2014) carried out a study on “Current status of service centers serving Autism Spectrum Disorder in Dhaka City. The main objective of this study was to explore the current service centers serving autism spectrum disorder in Dhaka city. Through a descriptive type of cross-sectional study, it explored that there are only 3 service centers named Society for the Welfare of Autistic children, Autism Welfare Foundation, Autistic Children Welfare Foundation who provide quite satisfactory services to autistic children. These are mainly nongovernment, non-profitable and voluntary organizations. This research revealed that these centers mainly focused on diagnosis and assessment of autistic children, daily life skill training and special education, vocational training, package program, outing program, teacher training, parents counseling,

home visit program, free treatment, seminar and workshop, awareness program, rehabilitation of young and trained autistic children as well as residential training. This study also illustrates that few Medical college and post graduate institutes provide services for autistic children who do not even have in-depth knowledge of autism. Sometimes they do not have any degree of autism.

A study carried out by Kourkoutas et al (2012). on Experience of parents of children with autism: Parenting, Schooling, and social inclusion of autistic children aims to show the experiences of parents of children with autism in parenting and schooling. To get an in-depth knowledge regarding parents experience in dealing with autistic children qualitative method was followed. For data collection technique focus group discussion was conducted and 24 parents participated in the discussion. The parents shared their encountered problems with their other family members, social peers, and school teachers. Content analysis was used to interpret the findings. The parents revealed that they were shocked, stressed, frustrated, depressed after the first diagnosis of autism of their child. Moreover, the study finds out that after the diagnosis of autism mothers have to take every measure for the betterment of their autistic child. No family members were eager to help them. Furthermore, the research revealed parents' difficulties in dealing with their child's challenging behavior, communicating with them as well as their obstacles in working with specialists, Doctors, teachers and social peers.

### **3. Objective**

This study aims to bring out the challenges teachers and parents face in autistic children's speech and language development. It also tries to find out the ways to overcome these difficulties in speech and language development.

### **4. Research Question**

What are the challenges teachers and parents face in autistic children's speech and language development?

What do the teachers and parents suggest to overcome these challenges?

## **5. Method**

### *5.1. Area of the Study*

Four Special Schools have been selected randomly from Mohammadpur, Dhanmondi, and Moghbazar area to collect the data of the study. These schools are Society for the welfare of Autistic Children, SWID Bangladesh, Tauri Foundation, and Autism Medha Bikash Kendro.

### *5.2. Participants*

In this study, parents' and teachers' from different special school in Dhaka city have participated in a Face-to-Face interview. 10 teachers and 10 parents' face to face interviews were conducted to get in-depth data. Teachers who are above 30 years of age and have long time work experience with special children as well as in dealing with speech and language disorder of children with autism have been selected for data collection. Majority of the teachers are Master Degree holder from different discipline like History, Computer Science, Social Welfare, and Political Science. The teachers who do not deal with speech and language of children with autism and those who are not experienced enough have not been selected for the interview. On the other hand parents who have children with autism, and speech and language disorder have been selected. Majority of parents especially mothers are HSC and Bachelor degree holder. Each interview has been conducted for 30 to 35 minutes. The parents who have children with down syndrome and do not have children with speech and language disorder have not been selected. Moreover, the parents whose children have no speech also have not been selected. The In-Charge and the Administrative Officer of the mentioned schools helped to fix an appointment with the parents and teachers to conduct the interview based on their flexible time. Highly experienced teachers have been chosen for the interview. The teachers and speech therapists who participated in the interview have 6, 7, 8, 12 and 17 years of experience.

### *5.3 Instrument*

Semi-structured interview and Classroom Observation have been followed as instruments of data collection.



#### *5.4 Sampling Procedure*

As qualitative research, purposive sampling has been chosen to gather the data of the study. This purposive sampling has been chosen for the convenience of the study. The participants who deal with special children facing speech and language disorder as well as have long time experiences have been selected for the interview. Moreover, the parents who have children with speech and language have been selected for interview. Similarly, parents who have children with autism spectrum disorder have been chosen for data collection.

#### *5.5 Data Collection technique*

Face- to -face interview and unstructured classroom observation techniques have been applied to collect data. The data collection started on 13th March 2018 and ended on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The semi-structured questionnaire was followed to conduct the face to face interview. Based on the semi-structured questions lots of follow up questions have been asked to the informants. Each interview has been conducted for 30 to 35 minutes. Two teachers' interviews have been conducted in their classroom. Before conducting the interview the participants have been provided some basic idea concerning the research topic, objectives, and questionnaire. The face-to-face interviews were tape-recorded and significant points were noted down. Two classrooms have been observed in two different autistic schools.

#### *5.6 Data Analysis*

Data have been transcribed and read in full so as to get an overall sense of data. Transcripts have been analyzed using the techniques of transcripts of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Then, data have been analyzed through following thematic analysis technique. This has been applied to all 20 transcripts. Data has been anonymized by removing references to people's names in order to protect confidentiality.

### **6. Results**

#### *6.1 Proper assessment problem*

80% to 90% school teachers of special children think that due to lack of assessment problem they face lots of difficulties in developing autistic

children's speech and language. Insufficient qualified speech pathologists, inadequate diagnosis centers for autistic children are the reasons for which proper assessment is quite challenging. Most of the time, the types of problems are not properly assessed and categorized. The children could be having a dysfunctional or low-functional or an impaired organ. Or they could have other problems and difficulties in learning speech and in language development. As teachers, they must know the specific difficulties a child faces if they are to prepare Individual Education Plans for them. Children will improve at a slower pace and to a little extent if they are not properly assessed.

Regarding assessment problem most of the participants stated-

Majority of institutions do not have qualified speech therapists. They are not able to identify whether a child has any difficulty in the mechanical aspects of talking in speech production or if they have a problem with the organ. We also think that medical diagnosis and physical diagnosis are needed to identify their specific problems.

On the other hand, parents' inadequate knowledge and awareness regarding autism are some reasons for which proper assessment is quite challenging. Due to this lack of knowledge and awareness, they do not enroll their children at school at an early age. Moreover, some doctors feel hesitant to tell the parents that their child is affected with autism or that they have this specific complication.

Concerning this, other participants asserted that -

Most of the times, we notice that parents do not realize that their child is affected with autism spectrum disorder till they are 5 to 6 years or older. On the other hand, in many cases, doctors cannot specifically identify the exact cause of the difficulties the child is facing. (Participant 2, 4, 3, 7)

## *6.2 Providing speech therapy*

To provide speech therapy the teachers need to have knowledge regarding speech therapy. But the teachers' are from different disciplines like computer Science and Engineering, Social Sciences, Social welfare, sociology, History, and Political Science. The teachers' acknowledged that sometimes it is very challenging to provide speech therapy due to their own lack of in-depth knowledge in speech therapy and autism.

### Majority of participants revealed -

We are from different educational backgrounds, such as Social Sciences, Social Welfare, Sociology, Political Science, Computer Science, etc. We do not have sufficient knowledge or in-depth knowledge about autism spectrum disorder or about any other therapy. (Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 10)

Moreover, they do not get any professional training or do not have any professional degree on speech therapy. They just have the primary concepts of speech therapy that they learnt from different speech therapists that visited their school for work.

### One participant affirmed-

We do not have in-depth knowledge about speech therapy and the functions of speech organs. This is because we do not have expertise in different areas and we barely get training on speech therapy. (Participant-3)

Moreover, few teachers expressed that most of the parents and school authority cannot provide sufficient speech therapy materials or instruments and teaching tools.

### One participant said-

Due to parents poor financial condition they are unable to provide therapy materials and instruments like lotion, honey, powder, and mouth organ that are required to improve and to activate their speech organ. Situations like this make it very difficult for us to make their speech organ active to produce words or sentences. (Participant 1)

On the other hand, some teachers pointed out that autistic children's challenging behavior is one of the biggest hindrances to provide speech therapy. It becomes very effortful for them to deal with autistic children's challenging behavior. In order to provide therapy, the teachers have to go through different kinds of difficulties. When the teachers massage them to help exercise their speech organ, sometimes they would get so hyper that it becomes quite difficult to calm them down. In these cases, they have to deal with them with love, care, and patience.

### One participant said:

If I talk about the challenges that I face, then I would have to say that I have been tolerating their pinches, bites, and kicks for 13 years. For example, we do an exercise where the children need to blow out a candle

and by doing that they are intrigued to move their lips easily. This is a part of therapy for speech development. Sometimes, they would just slap on my face or bite my hands whenever I get close to them during this exercise. Sometimes, I have to conduct speech therapy on them with a spoon and whenever I put my hands on their mouth to help with that exercise, they would bite my hands or fingers. It is not just me who has been facing these challenges. All the other teachers go through the same.”(Participant-1)

Similarly, other participants asserted that-

Sometimes they hit us with their head, sometimes pull us back with our hair when we approach them to provide therapy. Sometimes, they simply refuse to cooperate with the therapy process. Sometimes, they pour water on the table.” (Participant 6 and 10)

### *6.3 Insufficient number of teachers*

Most of the teachers of special school expressed that they have to face various types of difficulties due to the inadequate number of teachers and lack of trained teachers on the premises. They can not spend enough time with their students or cannot provide proper therapy as the number of students in each classroom is very high. Due to shortage of sufficient teachers and therapists they can not concentrate on each child. They fail to conduct one to one session. As a result, the children develop their speech and language very slowly.

One participant stated-

I have 32 students in my classroom. Therefore, it is very difficult and challenging for me to concentrate on each student. It is not possible to conduct one-to-one sessions to make them practice sounds, words or letters to improve their speech and language disorder. It is also quite impossible to engage them in different activities, even though it is a mother and children section.

Furthermore, we have only two speech therapists recruited for our 230 students. The number is absolutely insufficient because 98% of autistic children have speech and language disorder. (Participant 1)

However, owing to their poor financial condition sometimes they recruit Bachelor Degree holders or those who are continuing Bachelor degree in any area for 10 to 15 thousand taka. Moreover, the private institutions are not financially solvent as to invest a huge amount of money for a speech therapist.

Similarly, another participant affirmed-

If we want to recruit a speech therapist at entry level, we have to count 30 to 40 thousand taka for their salary and it goes higher if they are experienced. Nevertheless, we can recruit a bachelor degree holder in any subject for 10 to 15 thousand taka salary. (Participant 4)

On the other hand, majority teacher mentioned that they need sufficient number of music teacher as music helps to develop speech and language disorder.

Another participant stated-

We need more music teachers to be recruited because students enjoy music and it works very effectively on the development of their speech production and language disorder. (Participant 3)

#### *6.4 Teaching speech and language production*

Teaching speech production is one of the challenges faced by the teachers of special children. Teachers from different special schools express that they have to face various obstacles when they teach special children how to utter a word or a sentence. They have to divide syllables, use pictures, repeat the words again and again, show the real objects as autistic children can not utter all the words and construct meaningful sentences due to speech and language disorder. As one of the participants stated -

Majority of autistic children can copy a sentence, but they cannot construct a sentence on their own. They cannot produce a meaningful sentence. Sometimes, they learn some words and use only those certain words in every situation. (Participant 4)

Teaching a multi-syllabic word is another toilsome task for the teachers. They have to make them practice pronouncing a multi-syllabic word a number of times.

According to three of the participants-

At first, we begin with Bilabial sounds like B, M, Baba, Ma. Gradually, we start teaching them di-syllabic words. After the students get a grip on disyllabic words, we teach them the multi-syllabic word. We conduct exercises on learning to pronounce multi-syllabic words by making them speak aloud each syllable of a word repeatedly for a number of times. For instance, 'com' 'pu' 'ter'. In case of teaching multisyllabic words, we use

pictures to make them repeat each syllable of a word one after another. This is an effective exercise even though it takes a longer period of time. (Participant 2, 4 and 7)

Furthermore, other participants explained-

Usually, we teach them a word by dividing it into syllables sounds and by dividing a sentence into words. For example, if we want to teach them to utter the word "ball", we would separate the sounds from each other, like "B" "all" and make them utter this word repeatedly. We would show them a picture of a ball for their better understanding. After completing this stage, we make them say "Red Ball". Then gradually learn to pronounce a complete sentence like- "We will play with a red ball. (Participant 2, 4, 7 and 9)

Similarly, three of the participants also stated -

Majority of autistic children face troubles in producing sounds like t, ʔ, ʃ, l. They can not even produce words that start with these letters. To teach the pronunciation of these words, a teacher has to spend a lot of time after them. For example, we make a list of words containing these alphabets at the initial or medial or final parts. Then we let them practice uttering these words by separating each sound or syllable. Besides, we make them do some tongue movement exercise.(Participant- 2, 3 and 8)

Majority of autistic children have a speech production problem. They cannot produce sound or utter any word. Therefore, teachers and pathologists provide therapy to help them produce sounds and utter words. One of the participants stated-

There are children who cannot utter a single word even at the age of eight or more. They can hardly blow out a candle. (Participant 1)

On the other hand, most of the autistic children keep uttering a word or a sentence repeatedly. It becomes difficult for a teacher to concentrate on teaching a new word and sentence. Due to the repetition problem, a child takes a long time to learn a new word or a new sentence.

Two participants expressed-

Some children take one year or more just to learn to open their mouth and move their tongue without any difficulty. Although, children who have speech production can achieve this goal within a shorter period. (Participant 1 and 3)

Most of the autistic children cannot produce a full sentence. They cannot use a sentence meaningfully and correctly. They just randomly utter two or three words.

Another participant stated-

A student named Shrishty wanted to drink water and asked for it in the following manner –‘No water, no water, no water’. This is how she expressed her needs. She cannot say, ‘I want to drink water’. So, she uttered the only words that she could come up with regarding water.” (Participant 5)

### *6.5 Rapport Building*

70% to 80% of the participants in face-to-face interviews quoted that rapport building is one of the biggest hindrances they encounter in developing speech and language disorder of autistic children. They think building a friendly relationship is essential to communicate with autistic children. Teachers expressed that it is imperative to communicate with the children for their development in speech and language disorder. This becomes a challenging task as the children show aggressive, compulsive and repetitive behavior. The children are hyperactive, impatient, do not make eye contact, do not concentrate on any task, do not love to get in touch with new people and don't want to do what they do not love to do.

Three of the participants agreed -

Sometimes they cry continuously; they do not want to sit on the chair; sometimes, they would want to put off their clothes or go out of the classroom frequently. Sometimes they hit each other and show many such behaviors. (Participant 2, 4 and 8)

Sometimes parents change their children's school repeatedly because of dissatisfactory service, transportation facility, high fees and distance. However, it becomes quite challenging for the teachers and the children to adjust with the new environment and new people.

In the same way, two participants also stated-

There are parents who frequently change their children's school for which it is very difficult for them to adjust to the new environment and new people. However, it is also very challenging for us to make an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and to take steps for their development. (Participant 2 and 7)

The biggest difficulties that they face in dealing with autistic children are that they have severe complications when it comes to making eye contact.

All Participants agreed-

They do not look eye to eye with anyone, especially with an unknown person, for which it becomes very tough to talk with them and teach them to speak up or to provide speech therapy.

On the other hand, another participant expressed -

Sometimes some children become so hyperactive and impatient that it is hard to make them calm and keep them within the classroom (Participant 1)

### *6.6 Taking them for an outing*

Teachers illustrated that they used to take children for an outing in different places to foster their speech and language. Before taking them for the outing, teachers prepare social stories based on real-life contexts and make them listen to those stories repeatedly so that they can become familiar with the situation and understand what they should say and do. This exercise makes them prepared to interact with a person in a given context. They become familiarize through the story with the places and people they are going to visit. It also gives them an idea about how their behavior should be, what they should say or do in that given context. Some participants stated-

In order to improve autistic children's communication skill, we take them to visit different restaurants like KFC, BFC, and supermarkets like Mina Bazar, Nandan. (Participant1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7)

Moreover, a few participants expressed-

We have to prepare this social story 10 to 15 days prior to their visit. Through this social story, we give them a complete idea of their visit on where they are going and what they will do there. They learn how to talk, what to say. We prepare a story 5- 6 sentences long and make them listen to it throughout the week. We show them pictures relevant to that story. In some cases, it can be noticed that they cannot find things during the visit that they had expected to find. For example, a child is looking for noodles and they do not know where to find any. In that case, we ask them to ask a salesperson for noodles and they try to do that. This is how we encourage them to talk with the salesperson and make them pay the bills. We do this so that they can improve their language. After preparing the story, we make them listen to it until the day of the visit. (Participant 2, 3, 7)



Besides, another participant stated-

Before going for an outing we make them visit other classes within the school. They visit their cafeteria or play in the school playground during winter. Through this-in house movement, we try to make them comfortable for outdoor movement. (Participant 7)

However, the teachers have to go through various obstacles when they take special children for an outing. Regarding this, some participants stated-

When we take them for an outing in a restaurant like BFC or KFC, sometimes they would try to snatch other people's food and sometimes they would start crying and become very stubborn and willful in getting what they want. (Participant 1, 7, 2)

Moreover, a participant also stated -

When we take them to a supermarket they take many items from the market. Sometimes, they become stubborn in trying to get something they want. Sometimes, they cause damage to objects in the supermarket. Sometimes, they would start running here and there. It becomes very difficult to make them calm down in situations like this. (Participant 7)

Similarly, another participant stated-

Sometimes they pinch or hit people or pull by the clothes of those around them. (Participant 6)

Another participant stated-

Sometimes, we notice people not being very friendly with these children when we take them for outings. It puts more obstacles before us in helping them grow as social beings. There are some places like Pizza Hut, Korai Gosto where they do not even allow us to take our special children to their restaurant. (Participant 1)

Furthermore, another participant expressed-

Insufficient number of transportation is another obstacle before us in taking them for outings to help improve their communication and social skill. For example, we need to take them for outing at least two or three times a month. But we cannot do that due to lack of transportation. We have to take parents' support for the transportation facility. (Participant 8)

### *6.7 Inadequate cooperation from parents*

To develop special children's speech and language teachers expect parents' cooperation. Majority of time they do not get adequate support from parents. Sometimes they do not give their children enough time to do their own task that make them dependent. Similarly, sometimes they do not get enough time to provide therapy at home that the teachers or therapists taught them.

All the teachers think that parents' cooperation is essential to help special children learn to speak. They expressed that most of the times mothers are busy with their household chores and fathers are busy at work. They suggested parents to spend time with their children and to let them do their own chores as well. They should also encourage and help them practice uttering words as it is done in the school. As a participant stated:

It is noticed that parents fulfill their children's wishes before they ask for it. For example, if a child needs water, they would express their demand through sign language and their parents would give them water. They do not try to encourage them to utter the word or sentence. We think that parents should refuse to instantly fulfill children's wishes and rather encourage them to verbally ask for what they want. In this case, what we do is that until they verbally ask for water, we do not give them water. (Participant 2)

Parents are supposed to make their children practice the activities that they have learnt from school or therapists. However, majority of time parents fail to follow those activities due to insufficient time, inadequate knowledge, and careless attitude towards children.

Similarly, another participant affirmed-

Parents say that they do not get time for their children at home. For instance, I want to refer to a student named Nur e Jannat. It has been 3 years since she enrolled in this school but she even cannot utter a word because her parents cannot make time for her to practice the exercises at home. She stays here for 2 hours but the rest of the time she stays at home with her mother. Her mother asserts that she cannot make any time for her. Actually, an active parent's child makes rapid progress. (Participant 1)

Picture exchange communication system is very effective to foster children's communication skill. But due to parents careless attitude they don't make their child practice picture exchange communication.

On the other hand, one participant expressed-

Parents do not want to cooperate with us in using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) to foster their children’s communication skill. We use a Picture Exchange Communication System for these special children to make them familiarize with the objects as well as to make them able to fulfill their daily living demands. Most of the times, parents do not help or encourage them to practice at their home because they think that it would not work for their child. They do not want to spend time with them and become very frustrated. (Participant 10)

Table 1:

Teacher’s Challenges	Percentages
Proper Assessment	90%
Providing Speech Therapy	85%
Insufficient Teacher	80%
Teaching Speech and Language Production	85%
Rapport Building	70%
Taking for outing	65%
Inadequate Cooperation from family	70%

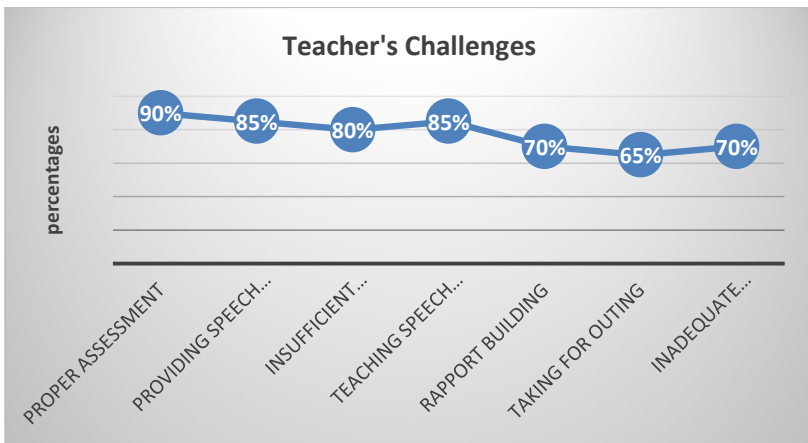


Figure:1

### 6.8 Parents’ Challenges

*Dearth of knowledge on autism and speech therapy:* 80% to 90% of autistic children's parents mentioned that they do not have any

knowledge with regard to autism or speech therapy. Majority of the parents especially mothers are not well educated. Some of them never heard of autism for which it is quite challenging for them to comprehend their children's challenging behavior at their early age. Moreover, parents are not aware of autism because of inadequate number of school for special children, insufficient telecast in media on autism. Besides, parents feel shy for the condition of their children. Due to lack of adequate knowledge regarding autism, they fail to identify or comprehend that their child is affected with autism. This leads to poor capacity of taking care of autistic children. Parents shared their experiences respecting autism and speech therapy as mentioned below:

We never got to know that he was affected with autism till he was 5 years of age. As a result, we could not take any steps at an earlier stage to improve his speech and language disorder. He got enrolled in a special school after 5 years of age and that is when he started to improve. (Participant 4)

One participant also affirmed -

We could not even imagine that our son was affected with autism until he was four years old. We did not even know what autism was. We thought that it was okay to learn to speak at a later stage. We did not even try to teach him how to speak. We thought that he would learn everything eventually and we did not put much importance on this issue. (Participant 6)

We did not have any idea about autism. My first child was normal. We were not aware of autism. We noticed that he loves to be alone and prefers to be with himself. He does not like to be around people. He is always hyperactive and does not bother about his father, mother, and brother. (Participant 3)

### *6.9 Providing Speech Therapy*

Parents expressed that they face various types of difficulties in providing speech therapy to their children. Usually, when they first get to know that their child cannot speak like a normal child, they eventually become very frustrated and feels at a loss. They barely know anything about speech therapy. The mothers do not get enough time to take of their special child to therapy sessions because of their daily household chores. Besides, they do not have vast knowledge on autism

and do not get support from other family members. At the same time, enrolling their children in special school and therapy center cost a huge amount of money for which the parents have to face lots of difficulties. The schools and the centers for therapy are also far away from them which is another difficulty for them.

Some of the parents expressed their opinions in this way-

I used to go CRP at Mirpur 14 for my son's speech and occupational therapy. The place is quite far from my home. Yet I had to go to Mirpur because there are only two branches of this institution and the other one is at Saver which is even farther. I continued my son's speech and occupational therapy in Mirpur CRP for two years. I used to learn those things from the therapists and helped my child practice at home. It was very challenging and had to go through this hard time alone. (Participant 3)

We do not know how to talk with special children, how to train them or what to do to develop their speech disorder. After enrolling him in this school, we learned a little bit about speech and language disorder, but the school authority does not get enough time to train us. (Participant 4)

When I got to know that my daughter is affected by an autism spectrum disorder, I had to struggle a lot to improve her speech and language by providing speech therapy. I read lots of articles, magazines, and books on autism, and speech and language therapy. However, the most difficulties I encountered were to find a place and trained doctors for proper speech therapy. I had to go to Mirpur CRP for 3 years, which is far away from my home. (Participant 7)

Moreover, they mentioned that institutions like CRP (Center for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed), as well as trained speech therapists, physiotherapists or specialized doctors for special children, are not available in every city or area. On the other hand, they found that the speech therapists that are available are not well qualified in most cases.

One of the parents expressed their opinions in this way-

Another troubling issue that we all face is that we do not have a sufficient number of speech pathologists or doctors in our country to help with these special children. Moreover, these speech therapists from CRP and from other institutions are not highly qualified. Most of them do not have a professional degree in speech therapy. They simply complete courses on speech therapy that are three or six months or at best one-year long. These are very primary level courses that can qualify them as technical

support for therapies. That is why sometimes we need to go abroad for our children. So, due to insufficiency and unavailability of qualified speech therapists, we have to suffer a lot.

Moreover, we are not getting satisfactory services from school either. We observed that there are 30 to 40 students in each section of a class, which is quite impossible for only one or two teachers to deal with. However, as far as I know, to improve a child's speech and language disorder, one-to-one sessions are required, which is impossible in my daughter's school due to a shortage of teachers.”(Participant 2)

“I have only one child. My husband and I, both are service holders. We are four members in our family, including our helping hand. Most of the times, we have to stay outside the house for work or other purposes. So, we rarely get any time to talk with our child. So, it gets very challenging to make him speak with us and others.” (Participant 5)

#### *6.10 Lack of cooperation from other family members*

Majority of parents mentioned that they do not receive cooperative behavior from other family members of their family. Some families consider it as curse not as blessing. Some families and parents used to keep their children hidden because of being affected with autism. Some of the parents are not encouraged to enroll their child in school. In order to improve autistic children's speech and language disorder, assistance from other family members, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings is essential. If the other family members communicate with the autistic child, then it could help develop their speech and language disorder at a quicker pace. Unfortunately, it is very rare to have cooperative family members when it comes to raising a special child.

Parents have expressed their experiences like this-

My daughter had never been accepted warmly at her grandfather's house. She was never allowed to play with her cousins due to her behavioral problem and speech impairment. They used to think that if her cousins came in contact with her, they would behave like her or might imitate her behavioral pattern. I have been facing these difficulties since my daughter's birth and I think I will have to go through these difficulties for the rest of my life. They never assist me in raising my child. (Participant 1)

The parents expressed that they are the only people in their family who has to do everything to work on their children's speech and language

disorder through speech therapy and occupational therapy. Some of them expressed that they have their mother-in-law and husband, but they are not interested in doing this for their children.

“In my family, I used to provide all kinds of assistance including speech therapy, occupational therapy and other supporting exercises to my son. My husband gets little time to learn about these therapies and train my son. Although, I hardly received any support from my in-laws and other family members. They have never accepted her warmly.” (Participant 3)

Most of the parents responded that they have 3 or 4 members in their family. They do not live with their extended family members. Their children do not get to spend time with anyone but the parents. In most cases, the child has no one in the family except its parents. Only some of the parents acknowledged that they have another child in their family.

*6.10 Lack of cooperation from other family members*

Table : 2

Parent's Challenges	Percentages
Dearth of Knowledge on Autism and Speech Therapy	90%
Providing Speech Therapy	85%
Lack of Cooperation from other Family Members	80%

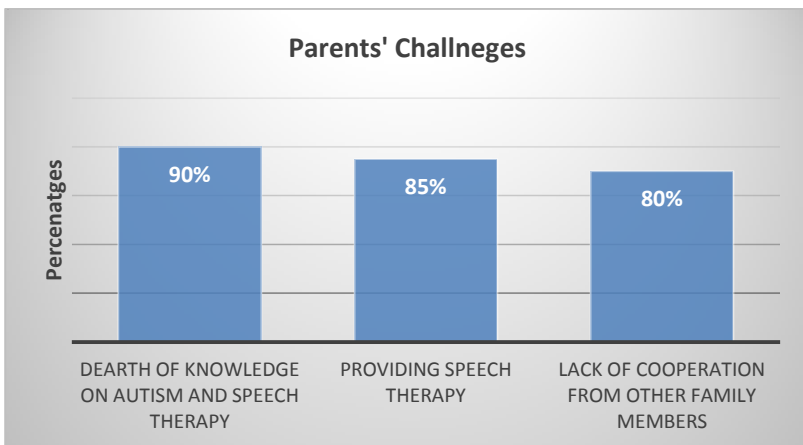


Figure: 2

## **7. Suggested ways to overcome these challenges (Teachers' Suggestion)**

### *7.1 Need proper assessment*

The teachers suggested proper assessment through medical diagnosis and physical diagnosis to develop autistic children's speech and language. As they mentioned-

We think a proper assessment is needed to develop autistic children's speech and language disorder and to make individual education plan based on their specific problems. (Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 10)

Moreover, medical diagnosis and physical diagnosis is essential to identify their specific problem. (Participant 1, 5 and 4)

Parents should be more aware and should have in-depth knowledge with regard to autism so that they can recognize the symptoms of autism during the early stage and enroll their children at a special school in the Early Intervention Section. (Participant 2, 6 and 10)

### *7.2 Provide sufficient training and well-established environment*

The participants of the study suggested for sufficient training and therapy materials in different special schools. They think that a sufficient number of training, therapy instruments and materials would be effective for speech and language development of children affected with autism. Besides, they mentioned a well decorated and well-organized classroom.

"Every school should provide sufficient training in speech and language for special children. Government and different private organizations may take some initiatives to provide training facilities." (Participant 3, 1, 2, 6, 10)

"Moreover, some participants think that the school authority should provide with sufficient speech and language therapy materials or instruments such as wooden and plastic toys, drawing boards, coloring pencils, art paper, balls, musical instruments, mirrors, flutes, paper, candles, lotion, powder, and televisions etc. They should provide with bigger classrooms, sufficient chairs, tables, and other instruments and facilities for physical training such as a treadmill, basketball, football, rings, swings etc." (Participant 1, 3, 4, 6, 8)



### *7.3 Provide a sufficient number of teachers*

“School authority should recruit a sufficient number of trained and qualified teachers.” (Participant 1, 3, 5, 8 and 9)

“School authority should pay a high salary to the teachers so that highly qualified candidates become interested in this job.” (Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10)

### *7.4 Rapport building*

According to the participants -

Parents should not change their children's school too frequently. They should continue their children's education in a specific school for a long time. It helps teachers and students to build a good relationship among themselves which lead them to improve faster. (Participant 2, 4, 7)

Besides, maximum participants stated-

Every teacher should be more careful about each child's likings and disliking.

### *7.5 Taking them for an outing*

Cooperation from everyone involved is necessary for taking special children for outings. For example, when we take our children for outing, everyone around should accept them with warmth and behave in a friendly way. They should not be annoyed by our children's challenging behavior. Moreover, our children should be allowed to any supermarket, food court or a restaurant. We have noticed that special children are not allowed entrance to many spots due to restrictions imposed by authorities.” (Participant 2, 3, 4 and 8)

“We need more transportation facilities to take our children for outings and it is imperative for them to go outside and socialize with people in order to improve their speech and language disorder. We could take them for outings more frequently if we had proper transportation facilities”. (Participant 7, 2, 3, and 5)

### *7.6 Parents' cooperation*

More or Less all the participants suggested the mentioned collaboration from the parents of autistic children-

Parents should spend more time with them. They should enroll their children to special schools at an early age, as well as be more aware of autism.

They should train themselves to deal with autistic children.

They need to take children to the therapist at an early age. Children should complete the whole course of therapy if the parents decide to go for one.

Parents should take their children to visit their relatives' house and to different places where they love to go.

Table: 3

Teacher's Suggestion	Percentage
Need Proper Assessment	90%
Provide sufficient training and well established environment	85%
Provide Sufficient Teacher	80%
Rapport Building	70%
Taking for outing	65%
Parents' Sufficient Cooperation	70%

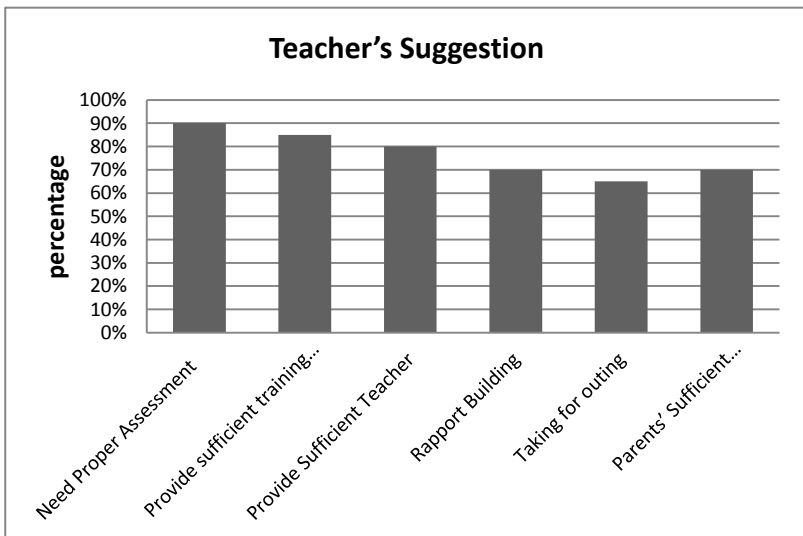


Figure: 3

Parents should engage them with other family members and assign them different tasks that they might enjoy.

Parents should prioritize the child's likes and dislikes." (Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10)

### *7.7 Parents' suggestion*

#### *7.8 Need adequate number of doctors, pathologists, and therapists*

Every participant agreed to the following ways to overcome the challenges in providing speech therapy-

More speech pathologists or therapists and occupational therapists are needed.

Well-qualified doctors and speech therapists for special children are required to be hired by every school in each area and city. This might resolve the obstacles in identifying specific complications and in developing children's speech and language disorder.

Government, school authorities and different organizations should provide with more training to the parents on speech therapy and occupational therapy, so that they can help their children practice those exercises at home.

Parents should talk as much as possible with their child. Family members should involve them to interact when they all are together and give them opportunities to say or do what they want to.

#### *7.9 Adequate number of educational institutions, training facilities, and proper exposure*

The participants think that adequate number of educational institutions and training would make it easy to develop speech and language disorder of children affected with autism spectrum disorder.

Most of the participants urged for a sufficient number of educational institutions and training facilities to enrich knowledge regarding autism. (Participant 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10)

Moreover, they demanded proper exposure to growing public awareness regarding autism to enhance knowledge.

#### *7.10 Cooperation from other family members*

All the participants of the interview expects more cooperation from other family members. To develop their children's speech and language disorder they need everybody's support.

All the participants agreed-

We want more support from our family members. For example, our special children has more chances to improve faster if their grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles treat them like a regular child. Moreover, fathers do not want to play any significant role in assisting to the improvement of their speech and language disorder. We expect more cooperation from fathers.

Moreover, a participant also expressed that-

If we could live within an extended family, then our children could improve at a faster pace than they are doing now. Joint family is very advantageous for an autistic child. We do not expect negligence from our family members. (Participant 1)

Table : 4

Parents' Suggestion	Percentage
Need adequate Doctors, Pathologists, and Therapists	95%
Adequate educational institution, training facility, and broadcasting	85%
Cooperation from other family members	75%

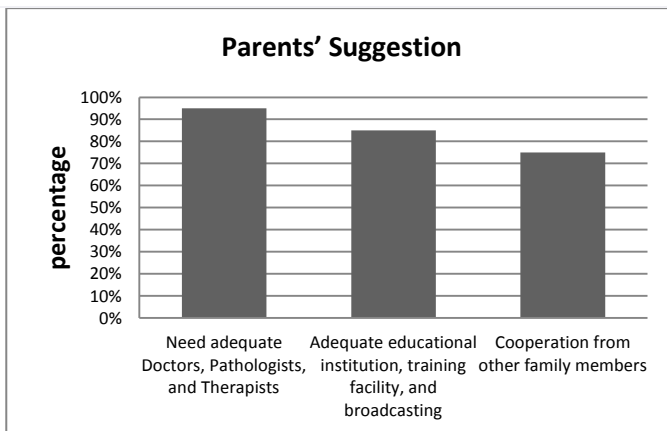


Figure: 4

## 8. Classroom Observation

Two classrooms have been observed following an unstructured classroom observation method in two different special schools to find out the challenges teachers face. 32 students were enrolled in one of these classes, even though only 15 to 20 students on average remained present each day. This was a parent and child section. The age of the students in this class ranged from three years to eight. Two teachers were assigned to this classroom. There were 18-20 small chairs and 8 small tables for the students. There were one large table and two chairs for two teachers. A few posters and pictures of alphabets were hung on the wall of the classroom. There was one television in the corner of the classroom. In this classroom, mothers were allowed to come with the children. The first thing that can be noticed was that the classroom was too small for 32 students and their parents. Therefore, one of the teachers were asked how they could manage a large number of students including their parents in such a small room. She claimed that due to the lack of a larger classroom they were bound to manage their classes within this small one. Moreover, she ensured that all the students are not regular. They are mostly highly irregular. Only one teacher was present during classroom observation. She assured that the other teacher was busy with another task in the field. The class started with Sargam. The students began with singing Sargam peacefully, but after a while, some of them became hyperactive. Some of them started crying, beating and biting each other, hitting each other, pouring water on the table. It was observed that some of the students were more affected by autistic behavioral patterns than others. For which, those who were rather mild and moderately autistic could not concentrate on any task. Sometimes they were simply imitating each other's behavior and actions. Therefore, at one point, it became very challenging for the teacher and parents to keep them calm and to let them do their tasks. The teacher was trying to massage the students' cheeks and chins but they were not letting her do that. She was, again and again, being interrupted by their challenging behavior.

Another classroom was observed in another special school in Dhaka city. This one was observed in May 14th, 2018 from 1.00pm to 1.50pm. This classroom is approximately 60 to 70 square feet in area,

which is quite small. The room was so small that the students could barely move. Six students and two female teachers were present in the classroom. There were one table and two benches on each side of the table. The wall of the room was full of handwritten colorful posters but there was no television, no computer, no mirror, and no air-conditioner. One of the two teachers was a student from an institution that has little idea about autism and speech therapy. The other teacher was not trained enough either. It was observed that they were trying to make their students repeat a word, such as names of different flowers, fruits etc. and to help the students utter different sounds like “Tak .....Tuk”. Besides, they were picking some words from Bangla poems and making the students repeat those words after them in order to teach speech production. Nevertheless, the students failed to reproduce those words most of the times. Another exercise that was being conducted was that the teachers were helping the students in blowing paper and bubble so that they could do the movement of their speech organs. It was noticed that the teachers were facing difficulties in making the students concentrate on a specific task due to their challenging behaviors like screaming, continuous laughing making sounds, avoiding eye contacts, lack of concentration and such.

## **9. Discussion**

Children affected with autism spectrum disorder have speech and language impairment as revealed in the existing literature by Kientz et al. (2007) and Green et al (2002). This study aims to look at the challenges teachers and parents encounter in autistic children’s speech and language development. Children affected with autism take a long time to develop their speech and language as showed by Coplan(1985). Many studies were carried out by respecting parents’ and teachers’ obstacles in dealing with children affected with autism. Existing literature revealed that teachers have inadequate knowledge due to a limited scope of training and workshop, Edward, and Geraldina (2015). This present study also speaks in line with the existing literature in finding out that teachers’ insufficient knowledge respecting autism and speech therapy led them to face different obstacles in developing speech and language of autistic children. Besides, this study illustrates that teachers encounter obstacles in developing special children’s speech and language disorder due to insufficient teaching tools,

shortage of well-established classroom and such, which is also established in the existing literature Udoba. (2014), Katsafanas. (2007).

On the other hand, this study claims that parents and teachers confront difficulties in assessing a child properly while giving efforts to develop their speech and language. Proper assessment to identify the specific problem is essential for helping the teachers and parents to focus on the solutions to advance children's speech and language and to make Individual Education Plan for each of them separately. However, in most cases, it turns out that the parents and teachers fail to assess the exact problem of a child due to unavailability of speech therapists, doctors, and institutional support. Lack of awareness among the parents as well as among the teachers is another reason why children are not being diagnosed and assessed properly at the right time.

Moreover, some teachers stated that they have encountered obstacles in providing speech therapy due to a lack of necessary instruments, shortage of trained teachers and qualified speech therapists. To overcome these hardships, they suggested that more teachers and qualified speech therapists should be recruited in each institution. Providing with sufficient materials and instruments in each classroom and school is also important. Maximum autistic schools are non-profitable, non-governmental, voluntary welfare foundations that are run by different individuals from within our society. It has been found out during key individuals' interview that due to limited financial capacity, the school authorities are unable to accommodate well-furnished classrooms, large school buildings or campus. Similarly, maximum school authorities do not have the financial capacity to provide enough materials and instruments for the classrooms. School authorities do not get sufficient financial support from the governmental bodies and parents. School authorities have to reconsider their decision of increasing tuition fees of the students reflecting upon the fact that most of the parents do not have the same financial capacity.

On the other hand, these schools require accomplished and adequate multidisciplinary team consisting of educators, occupational therapists, speech therapists, doctors and such to provide the students with proper training and education. Nevertheless, owing to high expenses, they fail to fulfill this requirement that results in poor performance within the classrooms. Moreover, teachers are not trained enough

because school authorities are incapable to administer sufficient training and workshops.

Furthermore, rapport building with special children is highly crucial for the development of their speech and language production. However, this is a very difficult task due to their challenging behavior. Shifting from one institution to another at shorter frequencies is another reason for the teachers for not being able to familiarize with a child's condition and behavioral patterns. Most of the parents frequently change schools owing to unsatisfactory services or in search of a school that is nearby. Financial crisis is also responsible for some students to leave an institution or to shift from one to another.

On the other hand, to improve autistic children's speech and language disorder, teachers need to take them for outings to teach them situational use of language. The outings are also a toilsome endeavor as the teachers as well as the students face unexpected and hostile behavior from outsiders and sometimes, even from certain authoritative bodies. It is necessary to establish an autism-friendly supportive environment in all stages of society. Moreover, parents' cooperation at home in exercising speech therapy is also needed and expected by the teachers. Teachers expect parents to help their children practice what they have learned at school and to maintain regular communication with them.

Similarly, the teachers pointed out the challenges they face while teaching speech and sound production. They urged that all the teachers and parents should have more patience, dedication and care towards the autistic children while teaching them sound and speech production as it is already very difficult for the students to utter a single word or sound on their own.

In contrast, a study by Akter (2015) explained that lack of eye contact, repetitive behavior, fear of socializing and insufficient support and services from family and society are the challenges that mothers encounter in dealing with special children. This claim is supported by this current study also. Besides, the present study also stated that owing to these issues, parents might face points of breaking down while trying to help their children achieve progress in speech and language disorder.



Another study (Kourkotas et al 2012) showed that parents get stressed out and frustrated after the initial diagnosis of their children with autism. Parents also become stressed while dealing with their children's challenging behavior and developing their speech and language. In support with this claim, the present study also exhibits the challenges mothers encounter in teaching speech production after the diagnosis.

As the study reveals, parents are confronting these challenges due to their lack of knowledge and awareness regarding autism as well as for inadequate family support. Moreover, the lack of educational institutions and proper education on autism and scarcity of public awareness are the significant causes of these obstacles being created.

Most of the families these days are nuclear in nature. They rarely get any support from their extended family members. Moreover, owing to prevailing superstitions respecting autism among the parents are not making any positive impact either. Illiteracy and ignorance regarding autism take parents further backward in taking proper care of their children.

Furthermore, teachers of special schools face many difficulties in improving the students' speech and language disorder in the classroom. To identify these challenges in the classroom, two classrooms were observed in this study. It has been found that the classrooms were not well-furnished for the very young autistic children that were admitted there. There was no air conditioning system, even though it is crucial for the students to remain in a soothing environment. There was no mirror, whereas mirrors are essential to teaching them how to imitate when they learn sound production or speech production. There were an insufficient number of chairs and tables, no carpet on the floor and very little space to move about. Moreover, all types of autistic children, be it severe, mild and moderate, were in the same class, which made it even harder for the teachers to make the students concentrate on one single task or to provide them any therapy at all. On the other hand, it was not possible for one or two teachers to provide them therapy or to help them do any task where one-to-one session was required.

## 10. Conclusion

This study attempts to identify the challenges teachers and parents face in improving the speech and language of children affected with autism. The major findings of the research illustrate that providing therapy, getting a sufficient number of teachers, doctors, therapists, and schools, teaching speech production are the major challenges for parents and teachers. Furthermore, taking for outings, providing adequate training facilities for parents and teachers, securing well-decorated classrooms, gaining enough therapy materials, and receiving cooperation from other family members, relatives and neighbors are the significant challenges encountered by the parents and teachers. However, considering these difficulties, teachers and parents suggested some ways to gain control over these obstacles. Among these, ensuring a sufficient number of teachers, doctors, and therapists, providing training facilities for all teachers and parents, providing speech therapy materials, ensuring well-decorated classroom, as well as more cooperation from parents, teachers and all the family members are expected.

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## **Appendix-1**

### **Questionnaire (Semi-Structured)**

#### **Face-to-Face interview**

1. What Challenges do you face in Developing autistic children's Speech and Language Disorder?
2. Why do you face such obstacles?
3. What do you do to improve their phonological disorder?
4. What challenges do you face to develop their phonological disorder?
5. What do you do to improve their articulation disorder?
6. What obstacles do you face to improve their articulation problem?
7. What do you do to improve their language disorder?
8. What challenges do you face to develop their language disorder?
9. What kinds of lexical challenges do you face?
10. What kinds of syntactical problems do you face?
11. What are the impediments you face at school?
12. What are the impediments you face at home?
13. What do you recommend to overcome these difficulties?

