

DEAF CLUBS AND OPINION OF THEIR MEMBERS ABOUT SOCIAL ACTIVITIES OF DEAF CLUBS

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to identify the different social activities of the Deaf clubs and their benefits/detriments for the Deaf club members. 50 Deaf people from different Deaf clubs are involved in this study with experience of at least 2 years and have membership of Deaf club. The survey method followed for the opinion. The researcher made opinionnaire were used for opinion about social activities of the Deaf clubs. Based on the opinion of Deaf club members, study has shown that the Deaf clubs organize different types of activities including “social activities”. Study has also shown about social activities of Deaf clubs that 18% Deaf opined that the social activities of the Deaf clubs are fully beneficial, 68% of them opined partially beneficial and the remaining 14% opined minimally beneficial. Deaf clubs are the informal agencies and organize various activities. The opinion of club members about Deaf clubs and activities will be detrimental in understanding & promoting Deaf clubs and developing activities for the Deaf in various parts of the country and world so as to meet the goal of socialization and overall development of an individual and community.

Key Terms:

Opinion: For the present study opinion means to the view/belief (both favorable and non favorable), held by the members about the various activities of the Deaf clubs based on their experiences.

Deaf: Individuals with hearing loss who use sign language as a predominant mode of communication irrespective of their degree and type of hearing loss. They should be members of at least one Deaf club for the past two years.

Deaf club: A gathering place of the Deaf individuals for holding meetings to carry out various activities for the empowerment of Deaf and Deaf Community.

Introduction

Like food, shelter and clothing, socialization is a basic need for all individuals to survive life with the community for various purposes of life. Education in earlier times was confined mainly to subject teaching. The various social activities like physical and cultural were regarded as ‘extras’. The social activities carried out in those days were labeled as ‘extra curricular’ activities. With the modern concept of education, the educative experiences comprise of experiences inside and outside the classroom to bring about a balanced development in the individuals. Hence, it is a misnomer to label those outside activities as ‘extracurricular’ activities and the term ‘extracurricular activities’ is replaced with ‘co- curricular activities’ these days.

The co-curricular activities are as an integral part in overall development of individual for achieving the long- term life goals. Co-curricular activities provide scope for the mental, physical, psychological, spiritual and vocational development of individual. They also provide scope for democratic living, develop social skills, a sense of cooperation, team spirit and self discipline, which are important for any citizen to function in a democracy. Hence, the schools, parents and community are increasingly and intelligently designing and promoting co- curricular activities for the purpose of development individuals’ social life.

The co-curricular activities planned and implemented inside and outside both the schools include literary activities, physical activities, aesthetic activities, cultural activities, social welfare activities, leisure time activities, excursion activities and so on¹¹. As the term suggests, literary activities aim at developing as well as improving the receptive and expressive language skills of students. Various activities like debates and discussion, subject-wise clubs, school magazine, dramatics, study circle, story writing, seminar, recitation, library work are planned and implemented at various levels. Games, indoor and outdoor athletics, mass drill, parade, scout are planned and implemented for developing physical fitness of students. Programmes of music, dance, drawing, painting sculpture, dramatics, exhibition, fancy dress, folk dance, folk songs are also offered to students. A wide variety of programmes are thus practiced for developing aesthetic and cultural values in students. Civic development in students is mainly done by involving them in all the activities of cooperative bank, cooperative store, assembly, students’ council, canteen, celebration of religious, national and social festivals and organizing of mock parliament. Many schools offer social welfare activities like social study circle, social services on special occasions like fairs, festivals, professions, cultural programmes, assembly, scouting or guiding, first aid and red-cross and social survey. During vacation, students are encouraged to do stamp

collection, coin collection, photography, reading, needle work and knitting for utilizing their time effectively. Excursion activities like picnic, visit to museum, zoo etc. are also planned and implemented for students at various levels.

It is well documented that students who are involved in co-curricular activities reap several benefits in their overall development. Students participating in literary activities are in a better position to express their feelings effectively, get exposure to various literary works, develop independent thinking, trace references related to a topic, comprehend magazine articles and edit them, develop interest in supplementary reading, collect articles related to subject matter, develop skill of articulation, comprehension and analysis, develop creative ability, develop interest in literature, and communicate effectively. Participating in cultural activities enable them to develop effective expression, control their emotions, develop creativity, use leisure time properly, build good character and develop personality, exhibit hidden talents, become socialized, promote national integration, cooperate and coordinate with teachers, develop skill of planning and organizing and know and respect their culture and traditions. Physical activities enable the students to gain physical development, get psychomotor development, develop discipline, inculcate in themselves team spirit, develop leadership qualities, and develop social qualities.

In today's highly competitive world, students have to bear a lot of pressure from themselves, parents and society and also have to get involved in so many things in order to succeed in life. In such context, co-curricular activities play a very significant role in meeting the demands to some extent. Being only brilliant in academics doesn't help a student become a responsible citizen of that country. A student should also be equally talented in other fields and even if not, they should at least pay some interest in them. It's because being both academically and co-curricularly talented helps a student to face the world. There is no doubt that academics is the main priority in a student's life, but it would be very wrong to say that co-curricular activities are a kind of hindrance to academic excellence. Students don't go to school only to study but they also go to develop their hidden talents. Sometimes, schools alone cannot meet all the demands of students and hence need to redirect the students to get enrolled with one or more of the co-curricular activities run by the informal agencies. Deaf club is one such particularly planned for the Deaf and hard of hearing in the country.

Deaf Clubs

Deaf clubs are considered as one of the informal agencies established for Deaf individuals across the world. Generally, members of the Deaf clubs hold a common Deaf culture and use sign language as the primary mode of communication². Hence, Deaf with sign language knowledge enroll as members of the Deaf clubs. In western countries, systematic efforts have been made in establishing & running Deaf clubs for Deaf. Eg: Royal Association for Deaf People of UK, British Deaf Association, Royal National Institute for Deaf people etc⁵. Like western countries, Deaf clubs have been established in different parts of India including Mumbai. Deaf clubs is a place where Deaf can gather and meet on regular bases. Deaf clubs are also the places where Deaf individuals meet face-to-face and conduct social business. It is also a place to develop friendship with young deaf men and women to seek out possible marriage partners. Very often, members of the Deaf clubs communicate via sign language and holds common Deaf culture². In India, Deaf clubs are also popularly called as Deaf associations.

In India, Deaf clubs are functioning in various cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Indore, Dehradun, Chennai, Pune, Nagpur etc. Some of the Deaf clubs are working at the national level and some are at state or regional levels like All India Federation of Deaf, National Association of Deaf, Deaf Enabled Foundation, Youth association of the Deaf, Omkar Karnabhadhir Vikas Sanstha, The Deaf Way Foundation, India Deaf Society etc. Even Deaf women in India have their own club/association.

Literature related to Deaf clubs

A key institution in the maintenance of Deaf community is the Deaf clubs (Autherton 2009). Deaf clubs are very popular among the Deaf. They are the places where Deaf people gather together for various purposes on a day to day or weekly or monthly basis. Much more than a place for chatting and interacting, many Deaf clubs are deeply involved into the development and transfer of Deaf culture from one generation to the other². The members of the Deaf communities also share and experience common Deaf culture (Breivik, 1999). Anderson (1994), Atherton (2009), Lad(2003), Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan (1996), Woodward (1980) found that the gathering together of Deaf people resulted in the creation of shared sign language, which contributed to the development of Deaf society and culture. Many Deaf clubs organize plays, lectures, parties, as well as share the news of the day. Deaf Clubs even frequently organize athletic events and group outings. Atherton (2005) reported that the Deaf club members regularly participate in a number of different types of sports and other forms of leisure activities. Many of the cultural practices of today have their roots in Deaf Clubs.

While tracing the history, one can find that 1940s and 1950s were considered as the golden age for Deaf Clubs in the western world. During that time, these clubs rented rooms to meet, and frequently changed their locations due to the difficulty in getting permanent rooms for holding the meeting. As clubs gained in popularity, many were able to get financial support from their members and buy permanent accommodations¹. These were the first public spaces owned by Deaf people, spaces carved out of a hearing wilderness to form permanent places where Deaf could be themselves without reservation. While reviewing the literature available, it was found that, Deaf Clubs were born out of the solitary lives; most Deaf people led during the 1920's to the 1950's⁵. Many were working in jobs with no other Deaf people around. In a time before the civil rights movement in western world, interpreters and other important communication tools were frequently unavailable and Deaf people were expected to perform their job without comment. The Deaf Clubs were the only place to go and blow off steam, where everyone spoke the same language and was ready for fun.

In the 1960's, Deaf Clubs began to decline in the western countries. As more and more Deaf people started working in white collar jobs such as teaching, and the civil rights movement insisted to America that everyone deserved to be treated equally, Deaf

people were not so isolated in the workplace⁸. Then the focus of Deaf clubs underwent a radical change. The developments in assistive technology put the final nails in the Deaf Club coffin in western countries. The western Deaf people no longer needed the clubs for entertainment, nor to conduct business or arrange for services. There are still a few Deaf clubs in abroad. The details available were reviewed and mentioned below.

World Federation of the Deaf

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) was established in the year 1951 in Rome, Italy. It is an international non-Governmental organization that acts as a peak body for national associations of Deaf people, with a focus on Deaf people who use sign language and their family and friends. The WFD aims to promote the human rights of Deaf people worldwide, by working closely with the United Nations and various UN agencies such as the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization. The WFD is also a member of the International Disability Alliance. The major objectives of the organization are to, (i) Improve the status of national sign languages, (ii) better education for Deaf people, (iii) improve access to information and services, (iv) improve human rights for Deaf people in developing countries and (v) promote the establishment of Deaf organizations where none currently exist. The WFD claims to represent 70 million deaf people worldwide, of which more than 80 percent live in developing countries. This is done mainly through membership of national deaf organizations, where such organizations exist. As of February 2009, 130 national associations are members. Associate members, international members and individual members also make up WFD's membership base. The WFD holds the World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf every four years since 1951¹⁰.

Royal National Institute for Deaf People

The National Bureau for promoting the general welfare of Deaf people was founded in 1911 by Leo Bonn, a deaf merchant banker. In 1924, this became the National Institute for the Deaf. In 1961, the Queen agreed to the organisation being called the Royal National Institute for the Deaf. The name was changed again in 1992 to the Royal National Institute for Deaf People. The main focus of this organisation is to offer welfare services to the needy Deaf⁵.

Deaf Clubs and Association in India

Like western countries, India has also several deaf organizations at the national, state, and regional levels. Deaf Enabled Foundation is working along with the Deaf Friendship Clubs across South and South-West India in Hyderabad, Warangal, Vijayawada, Nalgonda, Mahabubnagar, Guntur, Anantapur, Machilipatnam, Chennai, Kancheepuram, Thanjavur, Trichy, Puducherry, Pune, Nagpur and Mumbai. Even deaf women in India have their own organizations⁶. There is the Delhi Foundation of Deaf Women, and the Madras Foundation of Deaf Women. There is Bombay Deaf Women club in CST at Mumbai (Maharashtra). The Deaf Clubs organize various activities to meet the needs of the Deaf persons by giving them the opportunity to meet other Deaf persons and enabling them to get together with likeminded persons in the Deaf community. The Deaf Clubs are very popular among young Deaf people who meet and exchange ideas, share problems and find solutions while enjoying each other's company. The Deaf Clubs also organize activities for the betterment of the Deaf community. However, documentation of the activities of the Deaf clubs is very limited in the country.

All India Federation of the Deaf

The All India Federation of the Deaf (AIFD) was set up on 22 December, 1955 at the first All India Conference of the Deaf held at Constitution Club, New Delhi. The aim of setting up the Federation was to unite the deaf all over the country, to strive for their all round welfare and total rehabilitation and to further the interest of the deaf, to maintain liaison between the deaf and public Government and other authorities and to educate the deaf in the country for their rights and responsibilities, etc. The activities of All India Federation of the Deaf include free distribution of hearing aids to needy and the poor, material and moral assistance to affiliated state organization, participation in National and International Congresses and seminars, counseling and guidance to organizations of the deaf in cultural performances, painting, photo and other competitions. In 1957 the All India Federation of the Deaf got affiliated to the World Federation of the Deaf. The institute Vocational Training Centre for Photography was established in November, 1960. The printing press institute for the deaf was set up in November, 1962. The AIFD organized the 2nd All India Deaf and Dumb Sports Meet at the National Stadium in 1965. A special feature of this meet was the creation of All India Sports Council of the Deaf (AISCD) as the sports wing of the AIFD.

The AIFD started its official magazine "Mook Dhawani" in March 1968. In the same year Dr. Zakir Hussain, the then President of India, accepted to be the Chief Patron of the All India Federation of the Deaf. The AIFD expanded its rehabilitation activities including grant of individual assistance to the needy deaf persons. A nuclei of the programme of giving free hearing aids to the needy was also set up with gifts from some eminent companies. The Federation held special camps at various places for free distribution of hearing aids to be available to the beneficiaries nearest to their homes and extended to other parts including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Orissa, Maharashtra, Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. Training in Printing Technology, Phototography, Filter and Turner, Computer and Tailoring were offered to Deaf. Thus the organization is playing multifaceted roles in empowering the Deaf in the country.

The Deaf Way Foundation

The Deaf way Foundation is a voluntary organization working in India in the field of Deaf Welfare. The Deaf Way came into existence 14 years back with the sole aim of reaching out to the millions of deaf of our country whose call for help goes unheard. Since then, the organization has been working towards educating and empowering deaf youth so that they lead happy and meaning lives. The Deaf way foundation provides a wide array of services from Education, Vocational training, Job Placement, Interpreting, Material services, Counseling for Youth and also for the Parents of Deaf Children, Leadership Training and Personality Development, Sign Language Seminar, Deaf Education Methodology Seminar for Deaf School and more. The

organization also conducts programme beneficial to the deaf in various parts of India including, Delhi, Bhopal, Varanasi, Dehradun, Patna, Shimla, Hyderabad and Chennai and publish a magazine called "The Deaf Way". This magazine fulfills this need by providing essential information to school, institutions and also parents of the deaf. The Deaf Way is distributed free of charge to all institutions of the deaf in India. The organization also runs five educational centers across India including Delhi and Ludhiana. The organization not only teaches computers and English at Basic and Advance level but also teach Personality development, Life skills, General Knowledge and Indian Sign Language. All these subjects are taught for the purpose of all round development for our students⁷.

Youth Association of the Deaf

Youth association of the Deaf was established in the year 2010 with the objective of promoting the Deaf culture and sign language among the Deaf community. The association holds election to elect the office bearers. The organization carries out various activities for the welfare of the Deaf and educates their members on various educational and social topics. Spot memberships are offered for participating in the various activities of the Deaf club. Hence, there are no annual or life members in this Deaf club. In each meeting, more that 50 Deaf participates. The association holds several awareness programmes and organizes the lectures of Deaf leaders.

India Deaf Society

India Deaf society is one of the oldest Deaf clubs in Maharashtra. Though the year of establishment is not knows, the organization is functioning from the last forty years. The major objective is to empower the Deaf and disseminate information to Deaf. The society holds election to elect the office bearers .The society holds several programmes including awareness meetings. Festival celebrations to empower the Deaf club members.

Research studies on Deaf Clubs

There are only two research studies found in the area of Deaf clubs. In a longitudinal study of the 28 Deaf clubs across northwestern England during a 50 year period beginning in 1945, Atherton (2005) found that club members regularly took part in a number of different types of sports and other form of leisure activity. Hall (1994) identified some extra roles of the Deaf clubs; for example. Deaf people in social Deaf clubs look within the club for adult guidance of their youth. Meet other Deaf people for first time there or meet their future spouse, band together in philanthropic or religious activities, and if they are strangers in town, seek aid and friendship^{1,3}.

The present researcher did not come across with any other research done on deaf clubs and their activities in India and abroad. Further, no Indian research studies have been found on the opinion of Deaf about Deaf clubs. Considering the importance of evidence based practices, it is very important to study the opinion of Deaf about Deaf clubs.

Methods

Survey method was followed to explore the opinion of Deaf about the Deaf clubs. Fifty Deaf club members participated in the study. A researcher made opinionnaire was used as the tool for data collection. Activities of the Deaf clubs were selected as an area and some are categorized in form of social activities as sub area. 10 statements based on social activities given in the opinionnaire. It was decided to include 70% desirable and 30% undesirable statements in the opinionnaire. The opinionnaire was validated by a group of Special educators, Lecturers in special education, Indian Sign Language Instructors, Indian Sign Language Interpreter cum lecturer. The researcher provided sign language assistorial services wherever required. The experience of Deaf club members who has participated in the study were grouped and categorized based on their experience. The qualitative data was converted into quantitative data for the purpose of analysis. The qualitative data obtained were also compiled to answer. Scheffe's test was applied for multiple comparisons and testing. Additionally, a fact sheet was also distributed to collect information about various activities.

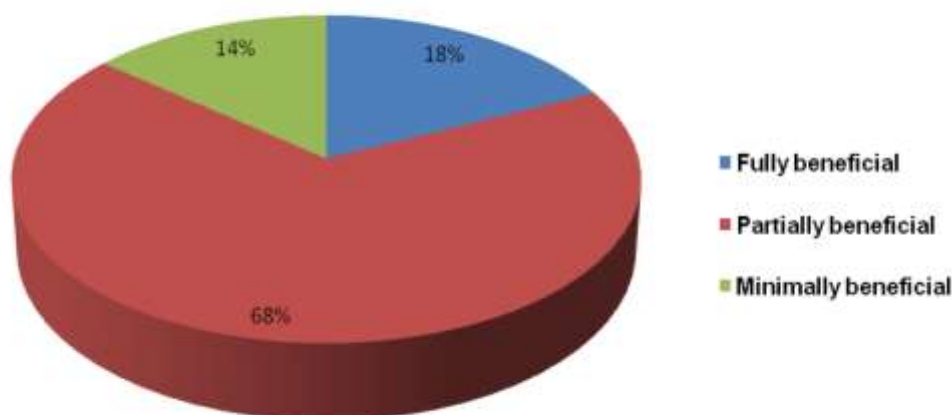
Analysis & Discussion

The responses of Deaf club members, marked on a 4 point scale were converted into raw scores for the purpose of statistical analysis to test the hypotheses. The information collected through the fact sheet was compiled for the purpose of answering some of the questions.

levels of opinion of the deaf about social activities of the deaf clubs

Parameter	Sample and size	Number of Deaf and their opinion about the social activities		
		Fully beneficial (score above 38)	Partially beneficial (score between 27 and 38)	Minimally beneficial (score below 27)
Social activities of the Deaf clubs	Deaf n= 50	9 (18%)	38 (68%)	7 (14%)

Levels of opinion of the Deaf about social activities



levels of opinion of the deaf about social activities of the deaf clubs

It is observed that 18 % Deaf opined that the social activities of the Deaf clubs are fully beneficial, 68% of them opined partially beneficial and the remaining 14% opined minimally beneficial.

Individual characteristics of the Deaf such as behavior, socialization, personality have a strong influence in deciding whether the social activities of the Deaf clubs are beneficial or not. The difference in these individual characteristics might have also led to the difference in opinion among the Deaf.

Levels of experience versus the opinion of the Deaf about social activities of Deaf clubs

Objective of the research was to study the impact of levels of experience of the Deaf on their opinion about the social activities of the Deaf clubs. Based on this, the hypothesis framed was ‘levels of experience of the Deaf have no impact on their opinion about the social activities of the Deaf clubs’. The data collected through the opinionnaire was considered for the purpose of statistical analysis. Scheffe’s Test was applied to test the null hypothesis framed. The details regarding the analysis are mentioned in table.

social activities: levels of experience versus opinion

Group	Experience (I)	Experience (J)	Mean difference (I-J)	Significance	Result
Levels of experience Vs Opinion about social activities	(i) Low (2-10 years)	Moderate (11-20 years)	1.511	.807	Not significant
		High (21+ years)	3.293	.166	
	(ii) Moderate (11-20 years)	Low (2-10 years)	-1.511	.807	
		High (21+)	1.782	.784	
	(iii) High (21+ years)	Low (2-10 years)	-3.293	.166	
		Moderate (11-20years)	-1.782	.784	

As mentioned in table, the Deaf participated in the present study varied in their years of membership in Deaf clubs. Hence, the Deaf were grouped under three categories based on their experience. Multiple comparisons using scheffe’s test was made to arrive at the results. While comparing the opinions of the low experienced and moderately experienced Deaf about the social activities of the Deaf Clubs, it was found that there is no significant difference between the opinions of less experienced and moderately experienced Deaf about the social activities (0.807 > 0.05). On further comparison, it was found that no significant

difference was found between the opinions of less experienced and highly experienced Deaf about their opinion on the social activities ($0.166 > 0.05$). Multiple comparisons using scheffe's test was carried out between the moderately experienced and the (i) low and (iii) highly experienced Deaf about their opinion on the social activities. The study found no significant difference between the opinions of (i) low experienced and (ii) moderately experienced Deaf ($0.807 > 0.05$) and (ii) moderately experienced and (iii) highly experienced Deaf about their opinion on the social activities ($0.784 > 0.05$). On further comparison between the (iii) highly experienced and the (i) low and (ii) moderately experienced Deaf about their opinion on the social activities, it was found that no significant difference between the opinions of highly experienced and low experienced Deaf ($0.166 > 0.05$) and highly experienced and moderately experienced Deaf about the social activities ($0.784 > 0.05$).

Results

There exists no significant difference in the opinion about the social activities of the Deaf clubs between less experienced and highly experienced Deaf, There exists no significant difference in the opinion about the social activities of the Deaf clubs between less experienced and moderately experienced Deaf, There exists no significant difference in the opinion about the social activities of the Deaf clubs between moderately experienced and less experienced Deaf, There exists no significant difference in the opinion about the social activities of the Deaf clubs between moderately experienced and highly experienced Deaf, There exists a significant difference in the opinion about the social activities of the Deaf clubs between highly experienced and low experienced Deaf and There exists no significant difference in the opinion about the social activities of the Deaf clubs between highly experienced and moderately experienced Deaf.

Conclusion

The study arrived at the conclusion that, Deaf clubs carryout various activities for empowering the Deaf community. While some activities carried out by the Deaf clubs have educational values, others have social and personal values. The different activities of Deaf clubs are in turn act as catalysts for promoting Indian Sign Language and Deaf culture in the country. However, the number of Deaf clubs is very limited in the country. The study further arrived at the conclusions that, majority of the Deaf club members have the opinion that the social activities of Deaf clubs are not fully beneficial but partially beneficial to their members. A small percentage of the members differ with this opinion. The study finally came with the conclusion on social activities that all the members participated in the study held same type of opinion amidst of their differences in Deaf club experience.

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