



Case Study

ROLE OF SPEECH THERAPY WITH MAHESHWAR SUTRA AND PARENTAL SPIRITUAL COUNSELLING IN AUTISM: A CASE STUDY

Nishi Arora *

Associate Professor, A&U Tibbia College and Hospital, Karol Bagh, New Delhi, India

*Corresponding Author Email: nishiarora_doc@yahoo.co.in

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ABSTRACT

A male child of 7 year old came to the general Ayurveda OPD in March 2013, with chief complaints of problem in speech and lack of social interaction. The child was irritable, aggressive and disobedient. On history taking, it was revealed that he was pre-diagnosed as an autistic child by the registered psychiatrists. His parents had stopped going for the therapies like speech or occupational etc. due to financial burden and only little improvements in the child's behavior or speech. Maheshwar Sutra practice for the child and spiritual counselling was done for the parents. Total duration of the therapy was 6 months. The parental spiritual counselling was done for 8 sessions, of 40 to 50 minutes each. The Maheshwar Sutra practice was done thrice-a-week in sessions of 90 minutes each. The results were encouraging as improvement with eye contact, better speech with formation of two to three sentences, and reduced irritability was seen in the child. The parents found themselves more confident and resourceful after the therapy.

Key words: autism, social interaction, Maheshwar Sutra, spiritual counselling.

INTRODUCTION

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by impaired social interaction verbal and non verbal communication, restricted and repetitive behavior. Parents usually notice signs in the first two years of their child's life. Early speech or behavioral interventions can help children with Autism gain self care, social and communication skills¹. Autism affects information processing in the brain by altering how nerve cells and their synapses connect and organize. How this occurs is not understood². Globally Autism is estimated to affect 21.7 million people as of 2013³. It is assumed that the number of people diagnosed has been increasing dramatically since 1980s. An Autistic child requires multiple therapies for years together to cope up with day to day life challenges. It becomes hard for the parents to bear emotional, physical and financial burden of the child.

It was inferred from the above facts that therapy is needed both for the child and the parents. As speech is the most important component of both diagnostic and treatment modality, Maheshwar Sutra (The **Shiva Sutras** or Maheshwar sutra are fourteen verses that organize the phonemes of Sanskrit as referred to in the Ashtadhyayi of Panini the foundational text of Sanskrit grammar) practice was chosen as tool for improvement in speech of the child. Spiritual counselling was planned for the parents, so that they may learn better ways of coping with the problem. The other goals behind this case study were as follows;

- To improve articulation of the words of the child.
- To help in developing pronunciation skills /clarity of speech.
- To help in increasing concentration of the child,
- To help in reducing aggressive behavior

Help parents to gain strength and confidence to stay stable in personal and social setting.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Maheshwar Sutras were chosen to improve articulation of words of the child. It was presumed that the chanting practice of these verses would not only improve the articulation and clarity of speech but also would help in improving concentration, reducing irritability too. Thrice-a-week sessions of 90 minutes each were arranged for the child for the whole six months. Eight sessions were planned for spiritual counselling with the parents. Twice a week sessions of 40-50 minutes each were taken. The parents were also allowed in the chanting sessions for the child also. Written consent from the parents was taken before application of both therapy and sessions

CASE REPORT

A male child of 7 years old, came to the general Ayurveda OPD in March 2013, with chief complaints of problem with speech, lack of social interaction, and increased irritability. During the course of history, it was revealed that the child was a pre-diagnosed case of Autism by the registered psychiatrist. The parents showed the previous reports, which corresponded with the clinical signs and symptoms present in the child. The child had a normal IQ values. There was no history of seizures or any other psychotic symptoms. The child had undergone multiple therapies before coming to this OPD, but could not get the desired results. The parents were exhausted with physical exertion and financial burdens. Reviewing the overall socio demographic state of the family and the need of the patient, it was decided to use methods told in Indian Psychology to combat these kinds of situations, Written consent from the parents was taken before planning the therapy and sessions. Chanting of

Maheshwar Sutras to improve the articulation and clarity of speech was chosen for speech therapy of the child. Thrice a week sessions of 90 minutes each were arranged. Parents were also allowed for these sessions. Eight sessions were planned separately for spiritual counselling to parents. Two sessions a week of 40-50 minutes were decided. In the first session with parents, they were allowed for catharsis. They were given the opportunity to share their apprehensions as well. In the second session introduction of the Maheshwar Sutras, and importance of these verses were explained. Before third session with the parents, the child was approached in a friendly environment. He was irritable, ignorant and did not respond at all in the initial session. In the next session, recording of Maheshwar Sutras was played in a slow volume in presence of his parents. The pin drop silence was assured in the therapy room. Only sound of recorded chanting of verses was there. The therapist and the parents started singing the verses in a low volume along with the recorder after sometime as per the schedule. The child was a little surprised and sat back quietly for a short duration of time. As soon as the child got irritated, and became uneasy with the ambience around, the session was ended up. The parents of the child gained some hopes, when they saw their child to sit quietly for a short duration with listening to Maheshwar Sutras. The parents were called for their third session. In this session they were counselled with the Karma theory, as told by Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta. Fourth and fifth sessions were about extended discussion on Karma theory. Parents could get that there is no one to blame for any of the good or bad happenings in the life. It is only the fruit of the karma, anyone does in this or even in the previous life. It's a unique law of nature which runs from endless to endless times. All have to accept it, so it is better to accept instead of denial or blame. In the next session, the importance of trust /faith was discussed with the parents of the child. In the seventh session, power of positive surrender in front of the Super power(GOD). was explained. In the Eighth session, the moral strength of joining hands with other parents who were in the same boat, was discussed. Positive social works enhance the moral strength of self and the society. The parents were reassured in this last session that even after the end of therapy sessions, they may come to the therapist with prior appointment.

RESULT

After six months of therapy along with counselling sessions with the parents of the child, the child started speaking about two to three sentences at a time. He could tell his needs both verbally and non-verbally. Eye to eye contact improved. The irritability was controlled. He started responding to his name. The parents became more confident. Their anxiety and exhaustion considerably reduced. Financial burden was also relieved.

DISCUSSION

In the above case study, it was found that recitation of Maheshwar Sutras and spiritual counselling for the parents helped the autistic child to yield speaking technique and his parents to learn better coping styles. To understand the reason behind such miraculous results, Indian Psychology theory of mind must be taken into account. According to this theory, there are three components of mind naming Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas.

These are co-existent and are complementary to each other. Any mental disorder occurs, with the unbalance in their state of harmony. When Rajas and Tamas components overpower the Sattva, diseases appear. With application of Maheshwar Sutras, the power of holy words, known as sound produced from DAMRU of lord Shiva could balance the three components by increasing strength of Sattva and reducing that of the other two. It proved as an indirect method of meditation. Due to this aggression and irritability of the child reduced. On the other hand, spiritual counselling of the parents helped them to come out of their state of complete hopelessness and sorrow. They could learn to surrender, when things go out of hands of the worldly means.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion drawn from the case study that Maheshwar Sutra recitation may prove as a good method to improve speech and social interaction. It even may reduce aggression and irritability in autistic children. In Indian context, where most of the people are religion driven, spiritual counselling may prove like a boost to the tired and hopeless parents of the Autistic children. It may help parents to learn problem solving technique of coping.

SUGGESTIONS

Researches may be conducted for Application of Maheshwar Sutra in more Autistic children and spiritual counselling for parents of these children, with large sample size in collaboration with modern psychiatrists. This way the agony of many children and their parents may be curbed.

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