

Manpower Resources and Needs in Speech Pathology and Audiology *

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The survey was designed to determine the distribution and utilization of manpower resources in the field of Speech and Hearing.

The needs for Speech Pathologists and Audiologists in the areas of industry and special education were also investigated.

Three types of questionnaires were prepared and mailed to the respective people. The responses were as follows :

Questionnaire 'A' 70%, Questionnaire 'B' 40% and Questionnaire 'C' 60%.

Information was collected through the questionnaires in the areas of demographic and professional characteristics of the Speech and Hearing personnel, Technical and other facilities available for their professional work, professional interaction and on continuing education.

The intention of sending questionnaires to the industries was to know whether the management was aware of the health hazards due to noise exposure and whether they had implemented hearing conservation programme in their industries and whether they need trained personnel in the area of hearing conservation programme.

Necessary information was collected through the questionnaire.

The educational authorities of the Special Schools were requested to provide information regarding personnel, equipment and facilities available with them for rehabilitation programme and also their need for specialists in the area of communication.

Data were analysed and computed in appropriate percentage and shown graphically.

Conclusions

Following conclusions seem warranted :

The workforce in the field of Speech and Hearing was found to be of a younger age group. About 80 per cent of them were within the age of twenty-nine.

Medical Institutions, Speech and Hearing Clinics and Special Schools employed a large majority of the Speech and Hearing professionals compared to industries, Training Colleges and Universities and other institutions.

In their interaction with other professionals the Speech and Hearing personnel had more contact with medical personnel.

More than three-fourths of the professionals were employed within a year or less after qualifying themselves. Their

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monthly income ranged from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,500 and over.

The "critical skill" of the Speech and Hearing professionals could have been effectively used provided the technical and other facilities were adequate in their employment set-up.

There were more number of professionals concentrated in the urban area compared to rural area.

Industrial management seemed to be unaware of the availability of qualified persons in hearing evaluation and noise control

Educational authorities of the Special Schools recognise the need for experts in communication disorders.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further studies in the following areas are suggested :

- (1) A periodic survey of manpower resources, equipment and technical facilities available in the field of Speech and Hearing would be useful for health planning and review of Training Programme.
- (2) The study could be extended to more areas involving different types of industries, schools and rehabilitation organizations.
- (3) A survey of research done by the Speech Pathologists and Audiologists, their facilities for research, their need and areas of interest would be useful.