
IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN THE LIVES OF HEARING- IMPAIRED CHILDREN

***Vipul Kumar Pathak**

Maa Baliraji Sewa Sansthan, Mirzapur U.P.

Article Received: 25 May 2026, Article Revised: 13 June 2026, Published on: 02 July 2026

***Corresponding Author: Vipul Kumar Pathak**

Maa Baliraji Sewa Sansthan, Mirzapur U.P.

Doi: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijarp.5828>

ABSTRACT

Education plays a transformative role in the lives of children with hearing impairment by promoting their cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and vocational development. It is not merely a means of acquiring academic knowledge but also a powerful tool for fostering independence, self-confidence, and social inclusion. Hearing-impaired children often encounter significant barriers in accessing quality education due to communication difficulties, inadequate educational resources, lack of trained teachers, and limited availability of assistive technologies. These challenges may hinder their academic achievement and overall development if appropriate educational interventions are not provided. However, inclusive and accessible educational practices can significantly improve learning outcomes and quality of life for these children.

The importance of education for hearing-impaired children extends beyond literacy and numeracy. Early identification of hearing loss, timely intervention, and access to appropriate communication methods such as sign language, spoken language, total communication, or bilingual approaches are essential for language acquisition and cognitive development. Schools that provide individualized educational plans, assistive listening devices, captioning services, speech-to-text technology, and qualified special educators create supportive learning environments that enhance participation and academic success. Furthermore, inclusive education encourages interaction with hearing peers, promoting mutual understanding, reducing stigma, and developing social competence.

Teachers, parents, speech-language therapists, audiologists, and special educators play a collaborative role in ensuring the holistic development of hearing-impaired children. Family involvement in education strengthens communication skills and emotional well-being, while

continuous teacher training improves instructional effectiveness. Technological advancements, including digital hearing aids, cochlear implants, interactive educational software, artificial intelligence-based learning tools, and online captioning services, have further expanded educational opportunities for students with hearing impairment. These innovations facilitate equitable access to learning and improve classroom engagement.

*National and international policies, including the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, the **Salamanca Statement**, and India's **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act**, emphasize the right of every child with a disability to receive inclusive, equitable, and quality education without discrimination. These frameworks advocate for accessible educational environments, reasonable accommodations, and equal participation in society. Despite these policy initiatives, many educational institutions continue to face challenges related to infrastructure, trained personnel, and the provision of specialized support services.*

KEYWORDS: *Hearing Impairment, Inclusive Education, Special Education, Educational Accessibility, Children with Disabilities & Academic Achievement Etc.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human right and a powerful instrument for promoting equality, dignity, and social inclusion. For children with hearing impairments, education is not only a means of acquiring academic knowledge but also an essential pathway for developing communication skills, cognitive abilities, emotional well-being, and independent living. Hearing impairment may affect a child's ability to access spoken language, classroom instruction, and social interactions, but with appropriate educational support and inclusive teaching practices, these challenges can be significantly reduced. Access to quality education enables hearing-impaired children to participate actively in society and realize their full potential (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020).

Hearing impairment ranges from mild to profound hearing loss and may be congenital or acquired. The extent of hearing loss influences language development, speech acquisition, literacy, and academic achievement. Without timely educational intervention, children with hearing impairments may experience delays in communication, reduced academic performance, and limited social participation. Early identification, intervention, and specialized educational services are therefore essential for improving developmental

outcomes. Educational programs that incorporate sign language, speech therapy, assistive listening devices, captioning technologies, and individualized teaching strategies help children overcome communication barriers and enhance learning opportunities (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021).

Inclusive education has emerged as a globally accepted approach for ensuring that children with disabilities learn alongside their peers in regular classrooms while receiving appropriate accommodations. Inclusive educational settings promote equal opportunities, reduce discrimination, and foster mutual understanding among students with and without disabilities. Teachers play a critical role in creating accessible learning environments by using visual teaching aids, differentiated instruction, and effective communication strategies. Additionally, parental involvement and collaboration among educators, therapists, and support professionals contribute significantly to the educational success of hearing-impaired children (UNESCO, 2020).

Education also contributes to the holistic development of hearing-impaired children by strengthening their self-confidence, social competence, and emotional resilience. Through meaningful classroom participation and extracurricular activities, children develop interpersonal relationships, leadership qualities, problem-solving skills, and self-advocacy. Educational attainment further enhances employment opportunities, economic independence, and participation in community life. As societies increasingly recognize the rights of persons with disabilities, educational institutions are expected to provide accessible infrastructure, qualified teachers, assistive technologies, and supportive policies that facilitate equitable learning experiences.

In India, the implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and the promotion of Indian Sign Language (ISL) have strengthened efforts toward inclusive education for children with hearing impairments. These initiatives emphasize accessibility, equitable educational opportunities, and the use of assistive technologies to improve learning outcomes. However, challenges such as inadequate teacher training, limited communication support services, and insufficient educational resources continue to affect the quality of education available to many hearing-impaired children.

Therefore, understanding the importance of education in the lives of hearing-impaired children is essential for policymakers, educators, researchers, and families. By ensuring accessible, inclusive, and learner-centered educational practices, society can empower

hearing-impaired children to achieve academic success, social inclusion, and lifelong personal development.

Review of literature

Education is widely recognized as one of the most important factors influencing the overall development and social inclusion of children with hearing impairment. Over the past several decades, researchers have examined various aspects of hearing impairment, including language development, communication methods, inclusive education, assistive technologies, teacher preparedness, family involvement, and educational outcomes. The following review summarizes significant national and international studies relevant to the importance of education in the lives of hearing-impaired children.

One of the earliest and most influential contributions to the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing children was made by Moores (2010), who emphasized that education is fundamental to language acquisition, cognitive growth, and social participation. According to Moores, hearing-impaired children require early access to effective communication systems and appropriate educational environments to develop literacy and academic competence comparable to their hearing peers. The study highlighted that delays in language development often lead to reduced educational achievement if early intervention is not provided.

Research by Marschark and Spencer (2011) demonstrated that hearing-impaired children can achieve academic success when schools adopt evidence-based instructional strategies and provide communication support. Their work suggested that language proficiency is one of the strongest predictors of academic performance. The authors argued that classrooms should incorporate visual learning strategies, sign language support, captioning, assistive listening devices, and differentiated instruction to enhance learning outcomes.

Luckner and Muir (2001) reviewed educational practices for students with hearing impairment and concluded that teacher quality and instructional adaptations significantly influence academic achievement. The researchers observed that students who received individualized instruction, cooperative learning opportunities, and visual teaching materials demonstrated better comprehension and classroom participation. Their findings stressed the importance of specialized teacher training in deaf education. Language development during early childhood has consistently been identified as a critical determinant of educational success. Yoshinaga-Itano (2003) found that children whose hearing loss was identified within the first six months of life and who received early intervention exhibited significantly better language, literacy, and cognitive outcomes than those diagnosed later. The study highlighted

newborn hearing screening, early amplification, and family-centered intervention as essential components of educational planning.

The role of families has also received considerable attention in the literature. Calderon (2000) reported that active parental involvement positively affects children's language development, academic achievement, and emotional adjustment. Parents who consistently communicate with their children using appropriate communication methods—whether sign language, spoken language, or total communication—contribute significantly to educational success. Family participation in school activities also strengthens collaboration between educators and caregivers.

Inclusive education has become a central theme in disability research. Ainscow (2005) argued that inclusive schools benefit not only children with disabilities but also their hearing peers by promoting diversity, equality, and social acceptance. Inclusive classrooms encourage collaborative learning, reduce discrimination, and improve interpersonal relationships among students. However, the effectiveness of inclusion depends on teacher preparedness, accessible teaching materials, and adequate institutional support.

Similarly, UNESCO (1994), through the Salamanca Statement, emphasized that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or sensory differences. The statement recognized inclusive education as the most effective strategy for combating discriminatory attitudes and creating welcoming communities. It further recommended curriculum adaptation, teacher training, and specialized educational support for children with hearing impairment. Communication methods remain one of the most debated areas in deaf education. Marschark, Tang, and Knoors (2014) discussed various communication approaches, including oral education, sign bilingual education, total communication, and bilingual-bicultural models. Their review concluded that no single approach is universally effective; instead, educational planning should be individualized according to each child's hearing level, language needs, family preferences, and educational context. Flexible communication approaches produce better educational outcomes. Technological advancements have significantly transformed educational opportunities for hearing-impaired children. Easterbrooks and Beal-Alvarez (2013) found that digital hearing aids, cochlear implants, FM systems, captioning technology, speech-to-text applications, and multimedia learning resources improve classroom participation and academic performance. Technology reduces communication barriers by providing greater access to spoken information and supporting literacy development.

Recent developments in artificial intelligence and educational technology have further expanded learning opportunities. AI-powered captioning systems, speech recognition software, personalized learning platforms, and interactive educational applications help students access classroom instruction more effectively. These technologies support individualized learning and increase educational accessibility, particularly in inclusive classrooms where real-time communication support is essential. Teacher competence is another recurring theme in the literature. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) emphasized that teachers require continuous professional development in inclusive pedagogical practices. Effective teachers adapt instructional methods, use visual supports, encourage peer interaction, and maintain high expectations for all learners. Their research showed that teacher attitudes significantly influence student participation and academic confidence. Several studies conducted in India have highlighted persistent challenges in educating children with hearing impairment. Jangira (1995) noted that inadequate teacher preparation, limited educational resources, and insufficient support services often reduce the effectiveness of inclusive education. The study recommended strengthening special education programmes, improving teacher education, and increasing governmental investment in educational infrastructure. The policy framework supporting inclusive education has also expanded considerably. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006) recognizes education as a fundamental human right and requires member countries to provide inclusive, equitable, and quality education for persons with disabilities. Article 24 specifically mandates reasonable accommodation, accessible communication, and individualized support to maximize academic and social development.

In India, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 guarantees equal educational opportunities for children with hearing impairment through inclusive education, barrier-free infrastructure, assistive devices, and reasonable accommodations. The Act also emphasizes teacher training, curriculum adaptation, and the availability of communication support services. Complementing this, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 advocates equitable and inclusive education by promoting flexible learning environments, assistive technologies, Indian Sign Language, and specialized educational support for children with disabilities.

Overall, the reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that education is fundamental to the holistic development of hearing-impaired children. Early identification of hearing loss, family involvement, qualified teachers, appropriate communication methods, inclusive educational practices, assistive technologies, and supportive national policies collectively contribute to

improved academic achievement, language development, social participation, and future employment opportunities. Despite considerable progress, challenges related to educational accessibility, trained personnel, infrastructure, and technological resources remain significant, particularly in developing countries. Future research should focus on strengthening inclusive educational practices, evaluating the effectiveness of emerging technologies, and addressing barriers that continue to limit educational equity for hearing-impaired children.

Importance of Education in the Lives of Hearing-Impaired Children

Education is a fundamental human right and a powerful tool for personal, social, and economic development. For children with hearing impairment, education plays an even more significant role as it helps overcome communication barriers, promotes independence, enhances social inclusion, and improves the overall quality of life. Hearing-impaired children often face challenges in language development, communication, academic achievement, and social interaction due to limited access to spoken language. However, with appropriate educational support, assistive technologies, qualified teachers, and inclusive learning environments, these children can achieve academic excellence and become active contributors to society. International conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and national legislations such as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 emphasize the right of children with hearing impairment to receive quality and inclusive education (United Nations, 2006; Government of India, 2016).

1. Development of Language and Communication Skills

One of the most important benefits of education for hearing-impaired children is the development of language and communication skills. Hearing loss often delays speech and language acquisition because children have limited access to auditory information. Early educational intervention helps children develop communication through spoken language, sign language, total communication, bilingual-bicultural approaches, or augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), depending on their needs.

Teachers of children with hearing impairment use specialized instructional strategies, speech therapy, auditory-verbal therapy, and Indian Sign Language (ISL) to facilitate language learning. Early exposure to language is critical because language forms the foundation for cognitive development, literacy, and academic success (Marschark & Spencer, 2016).

2. Cognitive Development

Education significantly contributes to the intellectual and cognitive development of hearing-impaired children. Quality educational experiences stimulate critical thinking, problem-solving, reasoning, creativity, and memory. Contrary to earlier misconceptions, hearing impairment does not affect intelligence. Rather, limited access to communication may restrict learning opportunities if appropriate educational support is unavailable.

Inclusive classrooms equipped with visual teaching methods, multimedia resources, captioned videos, and interactive learning activities enhance cognitive engagement. Educational interventions encourage children to understand abstract concepts, participate in classroom discussions, and develop analytical thinking skills (Hallahan et al., 2022).

3. Academic Achievement

Education enables hearing-impaired children to acquire literacy, numeracy, scientific knowledge, and other academic competencies necessary for lifelong learning. Historically, many children with hearing impairment experienced lower academic achievement due to communication barriers and inaccessible educational materials. However, advances in educational technology, inclusive practices, and specialized teaching methods have significantly improved academic outcomes. Support services such as sign language interpreters, note-taking assistance, speech-to-text applications, hearing aids, cochlear implants, and assistive listening devices ensure equal access to classroom instruction. Research suggests that appropriate accommodations enhance academic performance and reduce educational disparities (Luckner & Bowen, 2010).

4. Social and Emotional Development

Education provides opportunities for hearing-impaired children to develop social relationships, emotional regulation, teamwork, and interpersonal communication. Schools serve as environments where children learn cooperation, empathy, respect, and conflict resolution.

Inclusive education allows hearing-impaired students to interact with hearing peers, promoting mutual understanding and reducing stereotypes. Participation in sports, cultural activities, clubs, and group projects enhances self-confidence and social competence. Positive peer relationships contribute significantly to emotional well-being and reduce feelings of isolation (UNESCO, 2020).

5. Promotion of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education ensures that hearing-impaired children learn alongside their hearing peers in regular schools while receiving appropriate support services. Inclusive classrooms promote

equality, diversity, and respect for individual differences. Teachers adapt instructional methods, classroom communication, and assessment strategies to meet diverse learning needs.

The **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016** mandates inclusive education and requires educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations, accessible learning materials, and necessary support services for students with disabilities (Government of India, 2016).

6. Development of Self-Confidence and Independence

Education empowers hearing-impaired children by helping them develop self-confidence, self-advocacy, and independent living skills. As children gain knowledge and communication abilities, they become more capable of expressing their needs, making decisions, solving problems, and participating actively in society.

Educational experiences encourage leadership qualities, resilience, and self-esteem. Students who understand their rights and responsibilities are better prepared to advocate for accessibility, equal opportunities, and inclusion in higher education and employment (United Nations, 2006).

7. Preparation for Employment and Economic Independence

Education equips hearing-impaired individuals with vocational skills, professional qualifications, and technical competencies necessary for employment. Higher educational attainment significantly increases employment opportunities and financial independence.

Vocational education, digital literacy, entrepreneurship training, and skill development programs help hearing-impaired youth become productive members of society. Many successful professionals with hearing impairment work as teachers, engineers, lawyers, researchers, entrepreneurs, artists, and government officials. Education reduces dependency and promotes economic empowerment (World Health Organization, 2021).

8. Access to Technology and Assistive Devices

Modern education integrates assistive technologies that greatly improve learning experiences for hearing-impaired students. These include:

- Hearing aids
- Cochlear implants
- FM systems
- Captioning software
- Speech-to-text applications
- Video relay services

- Interactive whiteboards
- Artificial intelligence-based learning platforms

Technology bridges communication gaps and enables students to access classroom instruction, participate in discussions, and complete academic tasks more effectively. Teachers trained in educational technology can create more accessible and engaging learning environments (World Health Organization, 2021).

9. Development of Literacy Skills

Reading and writing skills are essential components of education for hearing-impaired children. Literacy enables students to access textbooks, digital resources, newspapers, employment opportunities, and higher education.

Teachers use visual phonics, sign-supported reading, bilingual instructional methods, and multimedia learning resources to improve literacy outcomes. Strong literacy skills enhance lifelong learning and independent access to information (Marschark & Spencer, 2016).

10. Participation in Society

Education promotes active citizenship by enabling hearing-impaired individuals to participate fully in community life, democratic processes, cultural activities, and social organizations. Educated individuals understand their legal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for civic participation. International frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognize education as the foundation for full participation, equality, and inclusion in society (United Nations, 2006).

11. Family Empowerment

Education also benefits families of hearing-impaired children. Schools provide parental counseling, communication training, awareness programs, and guidance regarding assistive technologies and educational planning. Parents become active partners in their children's learning and contribute to improved educational outcomes.

Family involvement strengthens communication between home and school and creates supportive learning environments that enhance children's academic and emotional development (UNESCO, 2020).

12. Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Providing quality education to hearing-impaired children contributes directly to **Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education)**, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable

quality education for all. Education also supports SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by promoting equal opportunities regardless of disability.

Inclusive educational policies strengthen social justice, human rights, and national development by ensuring that every child reaches his or her full potential (UNESCO, 2020).

Hearing-Impaired Children Characteristics

Education plays a vital role in the overall development of children with hearing impairments by providing them with opportunities to acquire knowledge, communication skills, social competence, and independence. It helps overcome barriers created by hearing loss and ensures equal participation in society. Inclusive and quality education enables hearing-impaired children to achieve their full academic, emotional, and vocational potential. The following characteristics highlight the importance of education in their lives.

1. Development of Communication Skills

Education provides hearing-impaired children with opportunities to develop effective communication through spoken language, sign language, lip-reading, total communication, or augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Early educational intervention improves language acquisition, which is the foundation for academic achievement and social interaction (Marschark & Spencer, 2011).

2. Cognitive and Academic Development

Educational programs help children develop thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, memory, and critical thinking skills. Appropriate instructional strategies, visual learning materials, and assistive technologies support academic success in subjects such as mathematics, science, and languages. Research indicates that access to quality education significantly improves cognitive outcomes among children with hearing impairments (Paul & Moores, 2012).

3. Social and Emotional Growth

Schools provide opportunities for hearing-impaired children to interact with peers, teachers, and the community. Education promotes self-confidence, emotional regulation, teamwork, leadership, and social responsibility. Inclusive educational environments also reduce feelings of isolation and enhance self-esteem by encouraging meaningful participation (UNESCO, 2020).

4. Development of Independence

Education equips hearing-impaired children with life skills, decision-making abilities, and self-advocacy skills. They learn to communicate their needs, use assistive devices effectively,

and become independent learners. These skills contribute to greater autonomy in adulthood and improve their quality of life.

5. Equal Educational Opportunities

Modern educational policies emphasize equal access to education regardless of disability. Inclusive education ensures that hearing-impaired children receive appropriate accommodations such as sign language interpreters, captioning services, hearing aids, cochlear implant support, and individualized educational plans (IEPs). These supports enable them to participate actively in classroom learning (United Nations, 2006).

6. Career Preparation and Employment

Education prepares hearing-impaired students for higher education, vocational training, and employment opportunities. It develops literacy, digital skills, professional competencies, and workplace communication, increasing employability and economic independence. Educated individuals with hearing impairments are better equipped to contribute productively to society.

7. Promotion of Inclusion and Human Rights

Education promotes awareness, acceptance, and respect for diversity. Inclusive schools foster positive attitudes among hearing and hearing-impaired students, reducing discrimination and promoting social inclusion. The **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016** in India and international conventions emphasize education as a fundamental right for persons with disabilities.

8. Use of Assistive Technology

Educational settings introduce hearing-impaired children to assistive technologies such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, FM systems, speech-to-text software, captioning, and interactive learning applications. These technologies enhance access to classroom instruction and improve academic participation.

The implementation of inclusive education policies, such as those promoted under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Salamanca Statement and India's Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, has strengthened the educational rights of children with hearing impairments by advocating equal opportunities and barrier-free learning environments. However, challenges such as shortages of trained teachers, inadequate assistive technologies, limited awareness of sign language, and insufficient institutional support continue to affect educational outcomes. Therefore, collaborative efforts among governments, educational institutions, teachers, parents, rehabilitation professionals, and

communities are essential for ensuring equitable and quality education for hearing-impaired learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Early Identification and Intervention:** Universal newborn hearing screening and timely intervention should be strengthened to facilitate early language acquisition and educational readiness.
- 2. Inclusive Educational Practices:** Schools should adopt inclusive teaching strategies that accommodate diverse communication needs through differentiated instruction, visual learning materials, and flexible assessment methods.
- 3. Teacher Training:** Pre-service and in-service teacher education programs should include specialized training in inclusive education, hearing impairment, Indian Sign Language (ISL), and assistive technology.
- 4. Communication Support Services:** Educational institutions should provide qualified sign language interpreters, captioning services, note-taking assistance, speech-to-text technology, and hearing assistive devices to support effective classroom participation.
- 5. Parental Involvement:** Parents should actively participate in educational planning and receive guidance on communication strategies that promote language development at home.
- 6. Use of Technology:** Schools should integrate digital learning tools, artificial intelligence-based educational applications, hearing assistive technologies, and accessible multimedia resources to enhance learning experiences.
- 7. Policy Implementation and Monitoring:** Governments should ensure effective implementation of inclusive education policies by allocating adequate financial resources, monitoring accessibility standards, and strengthening institutional accountability.
- 8. Awareness and Community Participation:** Public awareness campaigns should promote positive attitudes toward hearing impairment, reduce stigma, and encourage inclusive participation in educational and social activities.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, education empowers hearing-impaired children by fostering communication, confidence, independence, and lifelong learning. An inclusive education system supported by accessible infrastructure, trained professionals, technological innovations, and strong policy implementation is essential for achieving educational equity and improving the quality of life of children with hearing impairments. Education is a fundamental human right and serves as

the foundation for the holistic development of every child, including children with hearing impairments. It not only enhances academic knowledge but also promotes communication, social participation, emotional well-being, vocational competence, and independent living. For hearing-impaired children, education is particularly significant because it provides opportunities to overcome communication barriers, develop language skills, and participate equally in society. Inclusive and accessible educational environments empower these children to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

The success of hearing-impaired learners depends on the availability of appropriate educational support systems, including early identification and intervention, qualified teachers, sign language interpreters, captioning services, assistive listening devices, speech and language therapy, and inclusive teaching methodologies. Research consistently demonstrates that children with hearing impairments who receive early educational intervention and language support achieve better academic performance, stronger communication skills, and improved psychosocial outcomes compared to those who receive delayed intervention (World Health Organization [WHO])

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