

Case Study

Case Study on Asma Ehtesham - A Student at the Kyari School (Centre for Autism, Moradabad)

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ABSTRACT

Asma Ehtesham is a six year old girl studying at the Kyari School Moradabad, suffering from a mild case of Autism. Coming from a middle class family with three older children, Asma's parents did not expect their child to suffer from such a rare disease, but neglecting any form of social boycott their family supported the School and decided to treat Asma with the same amount and sometimes a little more love and affection than her other siblings. Asma is a special child with many different and admirable qualities normal people aspire to have, this is what made me grow a strange liking for Asma. Asma is an affectionate, kind, innocent and helping girl who cares about everyone, in her own way. After being with children and people who suffer from such disease but always look at the bright side of life made me realize how we always ask for more and are never satisfied with what we have. Asma taught me how to be a better person and to accept things the way they are and be happy with whatever I have. Always be happy is what these children ask us to be, and being with them made me happy. Asma is now a little sister to me and will always be. Whoever reads this I hope you can be happy with your life and pay heed to the important things of life and be more like Asma, because she is quite the role model.

Keywords: *Autism, Care, Acceptance, Understanding, Nurture, Happiness*

The student I chose for this case study is a six year old girl Asma who has not received proper schooling because of her mild autism. She has been studying in an autism centre named 'The Kyari School', a Centre for Autistic children in Moradabad for the past three months along with five other kids. She lives in a joint family and being the youngest out of three sisters and her cousins she was pampered by all, her older sisters are very supportive of Asma and treat her with love and care.

The reason why I chose Asma is because she is the youngest of the students at the Centre and because of that she is the moodiest of them all she is also loved by everyone and all the kids treat her like their younger sister. I observed her during classes and the way she interacted with her friends. Out of all Six students Asma has the problem of chewing and is hyperactive she also has incredible balance which is very fascinating. I was told a story about her which was one of the main reasons why I decided to do the study on her. "At the age of two" Mrs.

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Received: April 4, 2019; Revision Received: May 4, 2019; Accepted: May 8, 2019

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Zia Sarshar, Director of The Kyari School told me, "Asma slipped from the sixth floor balcony of her house, she held onto the water pipe and was hanging there for ten minutes she could not call for help because of her impaired speech. Ten minutes later a young boy who lived in their neighborhood saw her hanging from the pipe and ran and pulled her up." This story intrigued me and I started noticing Asma more and more.

On consulting with her teachers and receiving a report from her counselor the noticeable characteristics of Asma were; she has trouble in maintaining eye contact for a long time, if you look at her directly for a long time she gets agitated and throws a tantrum. Asma also has not developed speech so it is difficult to communicate with her. She, like any other, person suffering from ASD lacks patience and she has difficulty waiting for her turn. She also is overly affectionate and wants to be carried in *goadi* always. She has a major OCD (OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER) of putting everything inside her mouth from velcro to cloth and anything she can lay her hands on. She also does not have an appetite for any kind of food except *daal chawal*. She is hyperactive as well and once she is agitated it is very difficult to calm her, she starts kicking and hitting people around her, she also resorts to self harm such as banging her head on the wall, she also beats her head on the ground and pulls peoples hair.

She does not get stirred up when there are people around her but if they are in large numbers she gets cranky. She also is responsive to the PECS system (PICTURE EXCHANGE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM) and identifies pictures accurately. She understands what people say and responds but not in words but sometimes in sounds or signs or even pictures. She has started saying a few words like *dedo*, *kholo*. Her motor skills are good she can walk down stairs independently she can doodle with a crayon using palmer grip. She can segregate similar objects with minimum prompting.

Diagnosis

At the age of 1 year and 3 months, Asma suddenly got a very high fever which lasted for five days. They consulted a doctor who diagnosed her with chickenpox at that early age getting a chickenpox injection is not favored but Asma recovered from her chickenpox. Though recovered, Asma went blank in all other senses she stopped talking whatever little bit she could, she stopped maintaining eye contact and stopped responding she would just watch TV and nothing else she refused to eat as well. Everybody was worried about her because before the fever she was perfectly fine, she used to respond, speak a little bit, maintained eye contact, ate food; it was as if the fever changed Asma completely. Due to her lack of response her family started to wonder that probably she has gone partially deaf but that was not the possible because she used to respond in head nods or finger movements. The family was very troubled by the sudden change in their youngest child. One family friend recommended the parents to see a Counselor the parents didn't find the need to, but after a while Asma was completely lost and paid no heed to anything happening around her. They finally decided when Asma turned two, to take her to a counselor. Asma was taken through some psychometric tests and was diagnosed with mild autism. It was hard for the family to process but they did not shun Asma out, in fact she was pampered by everyone and everyone supported each other.

She had to be trained, and the family had to be taught to deal with the situation. They went through challenges and sometimes they wanted to give up but for the sake of their daughter they didn't. They kept pushing forward. They came up with different communication measures such as signs, it was a very difficult process because Asma's intellectual ability was

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lesser than the average 2 year old due to which it took her six months to learn one sign (water) but after that one sign she started learning faster.

INTERVENTION

The areas where The Kyari School intervened in were motor skills, cognitive skills, daily living skills, social communication and behavioural skills.

Motor Skills

The School taught how to bend and pick up objects, kicking and to touch her feet. She was also taught how to throw a ball on a target and not to keep it with her. She was able to achieve this, she can now throw an object to about three inches with a little prompt. She was also taught to write and colour with a crayon using the tripod grip. She can do this but with a little difficulty, she holds the crayon for 10-12 seconds in the tripod grip but then switches to palmer grip. But there has been progress in her overall motor skills.

Cognitive Skills

Cognitive skills are a little low in autistic people, so it is necessary to build on it. For Asma, she is taught to colour within a stencil. This was achieved and now they plan to teach her how to colour in a boundary. She is being taught how to colour the object red using red. This is being achieved when an array of two objects were displayed. Identification of circles also taught, this is being achieved in an array of three objects. Identification of fruits, such as bananas and apples is taught using pictures. She was taught how to make a three piece puzzle. She can now make an already practiced puzzle.

Daily Living Skills

Daily living skills are necessary to be built in an individual. She has been taught how to pull up her panty and her pants on her own. She was also taught how to flush after using the bathroom. She can do this with a little prompt but remembers mostly. She was taught how to unzip and take out her lunch box and how to zip it back. This was achieved but while unzipping she unzips a little bit but after that just spreads it open she puts the box back and zips it up with a little prompt.

Social Communication and Behavioural Skills

Communication for toilet and water was taught through PECS. This was achieved only when the board was presented. For tantrums she was taught to go to the calming corner and take out frustration there. This is being achieved but a little persuasion is needed. She was also taught how to not try to come in *goadi* all the time. This is being achieved but she still gets cranky when rejected. She was taught to put a cloth in her mouth at particular times and was denied chewing any other object, this still needs more practice. She was taught to swing so that she can channelize her hyperactivity while doing so. This is being achieved.

CONCLUSION

It is difficult to be around children, you have to be patient and calm. I am also a young student who is learning how to be patient and calm so it was quite a challenge. But when I was around them and talking to them, I felt happy and nice, it was a very unique and memorable experience. With Asma especially, I felt as if it was my right to help her in whatever she wanted help in, I wanted to be like a sister to her and from my part she was like my younger sister. I would like to thank The Kyari School for letting me be a part of their routine and for allowing me to do a study on one of their students. It was a learning experience. Learning outside the walls of the classroom, the important values of caring and

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not looking down on people and to treat everyone equally and to accept everyone is what I learnt and I hope everyone can understand that.

Acknowledgements

The authors profoundly appreciate all the people who have successfully contributed in ensuring this paper in place. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be mentioned.

Conflict of Interest

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

How to cite this article: A Santram (2019). Case Study On Asma Ehtesham - A Student At The Kyari School (Centre for Autism, Moradabad). *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(2), 332-335. DIP:18.01.040/20190702, DOI:10.25215/0702.040