

# PRE AND POST-NATAL INFLUENCE OF A HANDICAPPED CHILD

..Martins Lawani

In special Education, what happens before the birth of a child are considered very important. A Handicapping condition can result at any of these levels if proper care is not taken. You should therefore be familiar with events that can take place at the different periods which could result in handicap. In this unit, you will be concerned with pre-natal and post-natal influences

## DEFINITION OF PRE-NATAL AND POST-NATAL INFLUENCES

Pre-natal influences are natural or artificial conditions which affects a pregnant mother before the birth of an abnormal or normal child :

Post-natal influences are natural or artificial conditions which could occur or take place after the birth of a child that could result in having an abnormal or normal child .Pre-natal therefore means before birth, while Post-natal means after birth.

## PRE-NATAL INFLUENCES THAT CAUSE HANDICAP TO A CHILD

Pre-natal influence are those conditions that affect a pregnant woman before the birth of a child which could result in the birth of an abnormal baby.

The influences include:

Genetics (inherited or inheritable)traits from either one or both of the parents .

There are certain hereditary traits which are contributed and passed on from father and mother to the offspring at the time of conception. These are carried on thread-like structures called chromosomes. They are present in the egg of the mother and sperm of the father. These hereditary materials will determine ,after they have interacted with other factors of the environment, whether a baby will develop into a normal or handicapped baby.

- Infection or ill- health in the mother. If the mother does not have proper medical care ,her baby may be handicap because the disease or germs that are likely to cause damage will not be detected and treated . She might also take wrong drugs which could cause damage to the baby.
- Malnutrition of the mother during the pregnancy.
- Poor feeding of the mother during the pregnancy could result in a number of situations like: The loss of a developing baby(miscarriage) , The birth of an abnormal baby , A very reduced growth of the baby in the womb.
- The effects of drug: If a pregnant woman takes dangerous drugs especially at the early stage of the pregnancy, the baby could be born abnormal.
- If a pregnant woman has an infection of measles during the first three months of pregnancy, the baby could be born abnormal.
- Smoking by an expectant mother could lead to the birth of a handicapped child.
- High blood pressure in pregnant mother could also affect the baby.

- Duration of pregnancy : If a baby is born much earlier prematurely under (38 weeks), the baby's brain cell may be damaged during the period of incubation due to lack of excess supply of oxygen. If the baby also over stayed in the womb, there may be problem which could cause damage in the brain cells.
- Mother age : When a pregnant woman is over 38 years of age, the possibility of having handicapped child is high.
- Prolonged labour could also cause handicap in the baby.
- During the labour , damage could also be caused to the head or brain of the baby. For example, .if the labour is unduly prolonged, the baby may suffer from oxygen deprivation and the brain cell will be damaged, physically pulling of the baby (forceps delivery) may cause injury to the baby's head and brain.

## POST NATAL INFLUENCES THAT CAUSES HANDICAPPED

Post natal influences are those condition which affects the child after birth and that results in handicap . Such post-natal influences include:

- Child hood disease such as; whooping cough, chicken pox and jaundice.
- ✎ Blows to the head
- ✎ Harsh climate condition
- ✎ Poisonous materials and chemicals when taken in error
- ✎ Accidents
- ✎ Social and environmental conditions- a child from poor homes will not have television , book and enough play materials for stimulation.
- ✎ Slaps to the ear or eye.
- ✎ Marriage between in compatibles (e.g. carriers of sickle cell trace) couples
- ✎ River blindness when bitten by a tiny black fly carrier.
- ✎ Self medication.

## PREVENTION OF HANDICAP

You can help in the prevention of what cause handicapping condition in pre- and post- natal influences. Some ways of preventing Handicaps includes:

1. Genetic counseling couples who are much older should be discouraged from having babies.
2. Self medication should be discouraged
3. Improved health care- improved health care and good medical attention should be given to pregnant mothers and babies.
4. Encourage immunization of mothers and babies
5. Pregnant mothers should be encouraged to take balance diets.
6. Children should be provided with rich and stimulating environment.