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A comparative study of parental attitude towards their children with intellectual disability based on educational qualification, financial background and region

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Abstract

Comprehending intellectual disability involves acknowledging the various obstacles that people may encounter in their cognitive abilities, adaptive behaviour, and social interactions. Understanding how parents support their children with intellectual disabilities is aided by researching their attitudes towards these kids. This quantitative study explores how parental attitudes towards their children with intellectual disabilities are impacted by their educational background, socioeconomic status, and location. Purposive sampling was used to select 30 participants for this study. Following their completion of an attitude scale, the relevant statistical analyses were conducted. The findings showed that parents of children with intellectual disabilities demonstrated more negative attitudes towards their children when they were living in rural areas, had a lower socioeconomic status, and had less education. These results have important implications because they indicate the need for tailored support networks and interventions to meet the unique demands of low-income families. Resources and educational programs should be created to promote acceptance and understanding of people with developmental disabilities, especially in rural and underserved communities.

Keywords: Parental attitude, intellectual disability

Introduction

“The reality that the (Intellectually disabled) person is a version of myself is one from which so much can be learned and gained, and yet, it is a reality which most people deny and try to escape from” – Wolf Wolfensberger.

Children have a special place in the hearts of their parents. Parents are filled with hope and expectation when their child is about to be born. However, they all disappear the moment the child is delivered with a disability of any kind. When a kid is found to be intellectually retarded, the joy and delight that a new family member brings might be replaced by feelings of inadequacy, failure, hopelessness, and emotional perplexity (Genc, 2015) ^[4]. We call them special children because these children need special care to survive. Special children includes those who have intellectual disability, learning disabilities, speech and hearing impairments, physical disability, emotional problem such as antisocial or other behaviour problems etc. In this particular case, we are focusing on children who have intellectual disability (ID). An intellectually disabled child's birth has a profound effect on the child's parents. The individual with ID and his/her parent constantly face stigma prejudice and discrimination from the society and from their own family members. Most of them face problems in their social life. They feel uneasy to discuss about their child with their friends and in work place, they tend to withdraw themselves from any kind of social gathering. Study by Mythili Hazarika *et al.*, (2017) ^[6] in Assam showed that substantial amount of parents have accepted their child's condition and happy to have him or her. However, some of them also reported frustration and disappointment due to the stigma and rejection of their community as more than half of the parents reported that they are not comfortable when other people are around their child. Studies have also revealed that parents report more emotional and physical issues when there are more unfulfilled needs (Dunset & Leet, 1987) ^[2]. Schooling of the child with intellectual disability is another problem for the parents because there also the child faces discriminations and sometimes bullied by other students. These circumstances affect how parents feel about their child who has an intellectual disability.

On the other hand, some parents deal with these situations effectively. They try to gain

proper knowledge about the problems of their child and how these problems can be solved. Past researches has shown that a positive perception can be a good coping strategy to overcome these stressors. Positive emotions are useful in the setting of stressful events, according to Lazarus *et al.*, (1980) [8]. They went on to say that when negative emotions predominate, good emotions might boost ongoing coping mechanisms and offer a psychological reprieve. A traumatic incident can act as a stimulant for good transmission, according to Janoff Bulman (1992) [7]. Recovery from a traumatic experience, according to Meichenbaum and Fitzpatrick (1993) [9] depends on a person's or a family's capacity to adjust in a way that reaffirms belief in the goodness and intrinsic value of oneself and of life. He studied the intimate relationships between children. According to Singer *et al.*, (1999) [14] parents who participated in parent-to-parent support groups saw an improvement in their positive opinions of their disabled kid. Education qualification of the parents, demographical area where they are living and economical condition can play big role in showing positive attitude towards children with intellectual disability. It may be easier for the parents who are higher educated to get proper knowledge about the disability, its reasons and how it can be treated or what kind of behaviour can help their child to overcome it than the parents who are less educated. It can be said that people who live in urban area have more access to the facilities (counselling, doctors, medicine, and therapy) that can help their child with disability than the people who are living in rural area. In the same way, economical condition helps to get these facilities easily.

According to the 2011 Census, 2.68 Cr, or 2.21% of India's 121 Cr population, are classified as "disabled." Of the population with disabilities, 44% (1.18 Cr) are female and 56% (1.5 Cr) are male. The majority of the disabled population (69%) lived in rural regions (1.86 Cr disabled persons in rural areas and 0.81 Cr in urban areas) of the total population. Additionally, 69% of the population as a whole is from rural areas, and the remaining 31% lived in cities. Males make up 51% of the population, while females make up 49%. These figures clearly show that now is the best moment to work in the disability sector to ensure that

individuals with all types of disabilities receive the care they need.

From the above discussion it can be said that research indicates, the parenting style and attitude of parents towards their intellectually disabled children significantly influence the overall development of these individuals. While some studies have addressed this topic, there remains a notable gap in understanding how factors such as financial status, educational background, and geographic location of parents impact their approach in a developing country like India, particularly in the state of West Bengal. The present study aims to:

1. To investigate the influence of different parental attitude of parents' of different socio economic class towards their children with ID.
2. To examine the impact of different parental attitude of parents' of different educational qualification towards their children with ID.
3. To determine the effect of different parental attitude of parents' of different demographic area (rural and urban) towards their children with ID.

Methodology

Sample

The sample will be selected from Socio Economic Rehabilitation (SER) department of NILD. 30 Participants (Parents of children with ID) will be considered for this present study.

Sampling Technique

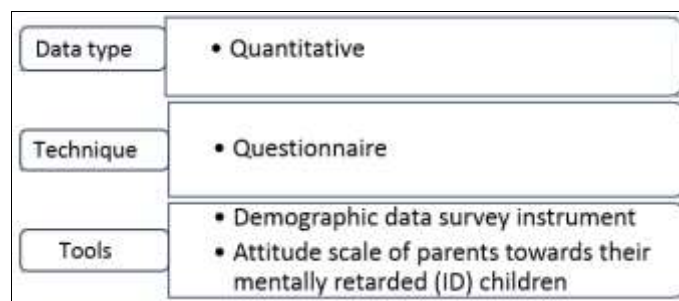
Purposive sampling was used for the selection of sample in this present study. Inclusion Criteria:

Only the parents of children with mild and moderate intellectual disability were included.

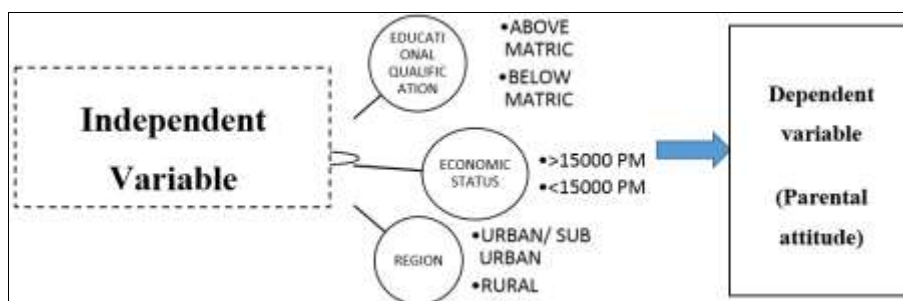
Exclusion Criteria

1. Participants recently diagnosed with any kind of psychopathology were not included.
2. Non-consenting individuals

Collection of Data



Relationship of the variables



Tools Used

1. Demographic data survey instrument has been used in order to record the demographic details of each participant.

2. Attitude scale of parents towards their ID children

Results & Discussion Means

Table 1: Total Score * Location

Report					
Total_SC					
Location	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	% of Total Sum	% of Total N
Rural	65.1333	15	5.52742	54.4%	50.0%
Urban	54.6667	15	8.64099	45.6%	50.0%
Total	59.9000	30	8.89537	100.0%	100.0%

ANOVA Table ^a							
			Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total SC * Location	Between Groups	(Combined)	821.633	1	821.633	15.618	.000
	Within Groups		1473.067	28	52.610		
Total			2294.700	29			

Table 2: Total Score * Educational Qualification

Report					
Total_SC					
Educational Qualification	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	% of Total Sum	% of Total N
Below 10	64.6429	14	5.55542	50.4%	46.7%
Above 10	55.7500	16	9.32023	49.6%	53.3%
Total	59.9000	30	8.89537	100.0%	100.0%

ANOVA Table ^a							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total_SC * Educational Qualification	Between Groups	(Combined)	590.486	1	590.486	9.702	.004
	Within Groups		1704.214	28	60.865		
Total			2294.700	29			

Table 3: Total_Score* Monthly Income

Report					
Total_SC					
Monthly Income	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	% of Total Sum	% of Total N
Below 15K	65.0667	15	6.32982	54.3%	50.0%
Above 15K	54.7333	15	8.16322	45.7%	50.0%
Total	59.9000	30	8.89537	100.0%	100.0%

ANOVA Table ^a							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total_SC * Monthly Income	Between Groups	(Combined)	800.833	1	800.833	15.010	.001
	Within Groups		1493.867	28	53.352		
Total			2294.700	29			

Table 1 highlights a significant finding with an F Value of 15.618, indicating significance at the 0.01 level. This suggests that the location of the sample greatly impacts the total score on the attitude scale. Specifically, the mean total score for participants from rural backgrounds stands at 65.13, while for those from urban backgrounds, it is 54.67. This indicates that individuals from urban backgrounds tend to exhibit a more positive attitude towards children with intellectual disabilities compared to their rural counterparts. This trend aligns with findings from prior research. For instance, in a 2007 study by Vidhya Ravindranadan and Raju, it was noted that the locality of parents influences both social adjustment and parental attitude. Factors such as limited access to healthcare facilities and a lack of awareness about disabilities are more prevalent in rural areas, compounded by enduring stigmas and prejudices. Moreover, financial constraints also play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards children with intellectual

disabilities. Given that rural families often face greater financial hardships compared to their urban counterparts, it is unsurprising that parents from rural areas may exhibit more negative attitudes towards their children with intellectual disabilities. This aligns with the findings of the present study, as discussed later. In countries like India, where disparities in wealth and access to resources are pronounced, these socioeconomic factors further contribute to differences in parental attitudes across different geographical backgrounds.

Examining Table 2 reveals a significant finding, with an F Value of 9.702, indicating significance at the 0.05 level. This suggests that the educational qualifications of participants significantly influence their attitudes towards intellectually disabled children. Specifically, the mean total score for participants with educational qualifications below grade 10 is 64.64, whereas for those with qualifications above grade 10, it is 55.75. It is indicating that more educated participants tend to exhibit a more positive

response towards children with intellectual disabilities. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that widespread knowledge of mental illness tends to lessen stigmatizing beliefs. (Schulze *et al.*, 2003) ^[13].

Analyzing Table 3 reveals a significant finding, with an F Value of 15.01, signifying significance at the 0.01 level. This suggests a substantial impact of participants' monthly income on their attitudes towards children with intellectual disabilities. Specifically, participants with a monthly income below ₹15,000 exhibit a mean total score of 65.07 on the attitude scale, whereas those with an income above ₹15,000 display a mean score of 54.73. The lower mean score indicates that participants with higher incomes tend to demonstrate a more positive attitude towards their intellectually disabled children compared to those with lower incomes. Financial resources afford greater opportunities for treatment and education about disabilities, fostering clearer understanding and scientific approaches to addressing challenges. Consequently, increased knowledge facilitates overcoming superstitions, misconceptions, and negative attitudes. This assertion finds support in a 2016 study by Basvuru Tarihi, which concluded that a child's level of rejection due to intellectual disability was influenced by the father's income status.

Conclusion

Based on the results presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3, it is clear that various socio-economic factors significantly influence the attitudes of parents towards children with intellectual disabilities. The results show that the location of the sample, the educational qualification and the monthly income of the participants have a decisive influence on the formation of these attitudes. First, the study emphasizes that people from an urban background usually have a more positive appearance attitude towards children with intellectual development with disabilities compared to their rural counterparts. Factors such as limited access to health care, awareness of disability, persistent stigma and economic constraints in rural areas can cause this disparity. Secondly, educational qualifications are another influencing factor, as the most educated participants rise more positive response to children with intellectual disabilities. This is consistent with the argument that education plays a key role in reducing prejudice (Allport 1954) ^[1] as higher education allows people to understand the connections between social well-being and foster a more inclusive mind-set. The findings show a significant impact on participants' monthly income to their attitudes, while people with higher incomes have a more positive attitude towards their children with intellectual disabilities. This suggests that financial resources provide opportunities for better care, education and understanding of disabled people, which reduces negative attitudes and misunderstandings. Finally, the study highlights the importance of considering socio-economic differences in forming attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities. By understanding and addressing the underlying socio-economic factors, interventions can be tailored to promote more positive and inclusive attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities, thereby promoting a more supportive and egalitarian society.

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