

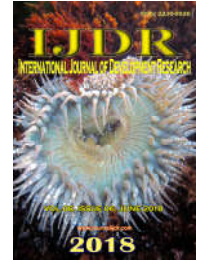


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ATTITUDE OF PARENTS TOWARDS THEIR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY IN TRIPURA

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate and determine the attitude of parents towards their mentally retarded children. It also aimed to ascertain differences, if any between the attitude of mother and father towards their mentally retarded children. For the present study 50 parents of mental retarded students are selected by using purposive sampling techniques from West Tripura district which includes 23 fathers and 27 mothers of mental retarded students. To know the parental attitude, the researcher used a self made tool consisting of seven dimensions like Over Protectiveness, Elimination, Acceptance, Domination, Nepotism, Permissiveness and Submission. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics like Mean, SD, Skewness, and Kurtosis etc. and Inferential statistics like- z-score, t-test etc. The results indicated that the parents have unfavourable attitude towards their mentally retarded children. The study also revealed that there is no difference between the attitude of father and mother towards their mentally retarded children.

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INTRODUCTION

Every child is special to a parent in their own way. In a family all the children may not have satisfied level of development. Several children in the family are found lacking in some of the abilities. One among them is Mentally Retarded about which the present study is made up. Mental Retarded Children suffers from a rigorous brain disease and it bothers the usual development of the brain which results robust incongruity in the mental development of the child (Goswami, 2013). Thus they have special needs which dispute parents to way out for these children for the future and to handle the problems with them. They are sharply differentiated from the normal by the range of ideas they can grasp (Luria, 1963). In 1983, American Association of Mental Deficiency (AAMD) defines as Mentally retarded refers to significantly sub average general intellectual functioning result in, or associated with concurrent impairment in adoptive behaviour and manifested during development period. Every parent wishes his or her child to be perfect in developmental aspects. But if a child born in a family with a disability, can have thoughtful effects on the family.

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If the parent shows positive attitude towards their disable child then it will be fruitful. But it should be cleared that the term attitude implies a favourable or unfavourable reaction towards something or someone show off in ones projected behaviour, beliefs, feelings, or mentality. Parents' attitude towards education manipulates their involvement in educational matters. It cannot ignore that a mental retarded child or a child with any disability may have disquiet, fear, shame or other unenthusiastic feelings. These reactions usually are a sign of how the child has been treated by especially his/her parents or by others in the family (Thompson and Rudolph, 1996). Most literature about the parental attitude has shown that parents' attitudes are crucial to the triumphant caring of children with sickness. Parents' react to a laid up child partly depends on how they perceive the sickness and thus the practical impact shows the sickness has on them (Atkinson and Coia, 1995). Likewise, parents' reaction towards a child with mental retardation will depend on the parents' attitude towards the child's mental retardation. Parent's attitude relates positively to the students achievement and many educationist chew-over that parental involvement are the core factors responsible for successes in education today (Daniela and Necúoib, 2012). Therefore an attempt has been made by the researcher to study how parents' of Mentally Retarded Children view and cope with the situation. This study operationally finds out the

relevant ideas to be used to have improved the present condition of MR Child in particularly about their education and living.

Purpose and significance

The purpose of this study was to investigate and determine the attitude of parents towards their mentally retarded children. It also aimed to ascertain differences, if any between the attitude of mother and father towards their mentally retarded children. A related purpose is to contribute of our understanding to the improvement of the parental involvement in the care of MR Children for their sustain living. Mental retardation, a worldwide problem is a shocking and alarming fact in India over the society as around 2.5 to 3% of the entire populations are mentally retarded (Goswami, 2013). Mental retardation is not merely a mental, physical or biological, educational or psychological problem but also a multi-Dimensional and multiple problems in families having a mentally retarded child. Mc Conachie (1986) agrees that parents' attitude is an important source of information about their behaviour towards their children. Adequate idea about the cited problem is greatly indispensable for the wellbeing of the MR Child and this is why ample attempt is needed to be studied more and more about the same. In Tripura very few researches has been found in this area even today. This study aims to find out the Parental Attitude of Mentally Retarded children in Tripura.

Literature Review

A study conducted by V. Ravindranadan and Raju, S. University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, on Adjustment and Attitude of Parents of Children with Mental Retardation mentioned that some parents may still feel ashamed of their wards with retardation and considers them as a burden. Goswami in 2013 conducted a study on the same topic and observed that the parents of MR Children in an around of the city of Kolkata also consider their children to be burden. In normal scenario they find the vice versa taking place. Samuel, K. O., has conducted a study on entitled Parents' Attitude towards Academic Performance of their Children: Implications for Societal Development and found that the parents are very much looking for the good academic achievement of the normal children but not towards their MR Children alike the siblings. Oundo, E. L. Et al in 2014 have carried out a study to establish the relationship between parents' attitude towards MR Child and academic performance and found that parental attitude towards education involvement affects students' performance. The study recommended that school administrators and policy makers find ways of enhancing parental involvement towards education of MR Child. Rastogi, C. K. Has studied on the Parents of 50 mentally retarded children in order to investigate their attitudes towards their retarded children. His study asserted that both the parents showed more negative attitudes towards their Mentally retarded child. In general mothers exhibited more negative attitude than the fathers.

Objectives of the study

Throwing the light of the purposes, following objectives are laid down:

- To find out the level of attitude of parents towards their Mentally Retarded Child

- To compare the attitude of father and mother towards their mentally retarded child.
- To review the nature of attitude of parents towards their Mentally Retarded Child

Hypothesis

Based on the objectives, below mentioned hypothesis is framed:

H01: There is no significant difference between the attitude of father and mother towards their mental retarded child.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is a survey research which involves the assessment of attitude using questionnaires. Purposive Sampling methods were used in which a representative sample of the population of interest was used to provide the data need for the study.

Participants: The population consisted of all the parents of mentally retarded children of West Tripura. To arrive at the study's sample, Parents of 50 mentally retarded children were selected for their attitudes towards their retarded children in the West district of Tripura.

Data analysis: To analyse the data various statistical techniques like SD, Mean, Z scores, t-test, and skewness kurtosis were used. Standard Deviation (SD) was used to determine the deviation of the different scores from the average and t test was conducted to find out the further differences, if any, between the attitude of the father and mother towards their MR Child. Z scores were used to establish the norm by following the Normal Probability curb and its range in terms of sigma ($\pm\sigma$).

RESULTS

Objective 1: To interpret the objective 1 (To find out the level of attitude of parents towards their Mentally Retarded Child) a norm has been established by consulting SD, Mean and normal probability curb (Norm or level of attitude was framed when measuring tool was being standardized). The findings revealed that parents attitude towards their mentally retarded child is not favourable. Maximum percentages (35%) are of unfavourable. Out 50, 4% are of extremely favourable, highly favourable are 9%, 20% are of favourable, moderately favourable 30%. (See the Table 1).

Table 1. Showing the level of attitude of parents towards their Mentally Retarded Child

Z score range	Level of attitudes	Percentage of respondents	No of respondents
+2.01 and above	Extremely favorable	4.00%	2
+1.26 to +2.00	Highly Favorable	9.00%	5
+0.51 to 1.25	Favorable	15.00%	10
-0.50 to +0.50	Moderate	30.00%	15
-0.51 to -1.25	Unfavorable	35.00%	16
-1.26 to -2.00	Highly unfavorable	5%	2
-2.01 and below	Extremely unfavorable	2%	0

Objective 2: To interpret the objective 2 (To compare the attitude of father and mother towards their mentally retarded child) t-test was conducted to ascertain the difference between the attitude of father and mother.

Table 2. Showing the comparison (in terms of t-test) of the attitude of father and mother towards their mentally retarded child

Parents	N	Mean	SD	t-test	Degrees of freedom	Level of significance
Fathers	23	216.39	7.81	1.38	48	0.05
Mothers	27	219.70	9.74			

Table 3. Showing the nature of attitude of parents towards their Mentally Retarded Child

No of Dimension	Father			Mother				
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	DF	T value
Over Protectiveness	23	34.91	4.54	27	34.92	6.36	48	0.01
Elimination	23	17.52	2.52	27	20.81	3.45	48	3.85
Acceptance	23	43.21	3.57	27	41.37	4.30	48	1.67
Domination	23	8.43	2.31	27	9.33	2.60	48	1.39
Nepotism	23	13.34	4.28	27	13.59	2.87	48	0.28
Permissiveness	23	22.91	2.48	27	24.96	3.10	48	2.58
Submission	23	31	3	27	32.92	3.66	48	2.16

No significant difference was found between attitudes of fathers and mothers towards their mentally retarded students. The Mean and SD values of attitudes of parents towards mentally retarded students are 216.39, 219.70 and 7.81, 9.74 respectively. The critical value for the degree of freedom 48 is 2.01 and the calculated t value is 1.38 which is not exceeding the critical value. Thus the Null hypothesis there is no significant difference between the attitude of father and mother toward their mental retarded student is accepted. So the result signifies that father and mother both shows same attitudes towards mentally retarded students. (See the Table-2)

Objective 3: To analyse the objective 3 (To review the nature of attitude of parents towards their Mentally Retarded Child) the attitude towards MR Child is being divided into seven Dimensions like over protectiveness, Elimination, acceptance, domination, Nepotism, permissiveness and submission. To find out Dimension wise responses the total scores of each Dimension was divided by the total number of participant and then percentages of each Dimension's score with corresponding of overall score (aggregate scores of all Dimension) (See the Table 3).

DISCUSSION

The main aim of the present study was to find out the attitude of parents towards their Mentally Retarded Children in Tripura Context. Various studies have asserted that the parents have an altogether intimidating attitude towards a Mentally Retarded child. They sometimes consider their MR Children as a perpetual burden, which they will have to carry throughout their life. They are very much distrustful about the future of these children. They even become more anxious and worried when they think about the future of these Mentally Retarded children. To find out the nature of the attitudes of parents towards their Mentally Retarded Child, this study has been conducted and it was found that they behave in such a manner with their Mentally Retarded Children which is different than that of their other children. In the current study it was also observed that out of 50, 35% of the parents have shown unfavourable attitude towards their MR Children and significantly only 15% of them have shown favourable towards their MR Children. Our study is consistent with the study of Goswami, 2013 where he asserted One of the significant findings of his study that the parents are typically anxious about their child's future.

Again the researcher found that the parents are not in a usual habit to save money for their MR Child, which makes their future much more insecure. To test our framed null hypothesis i.e. there is no significant difference between the attitude of father and mother towards their mental retarded child, a t-test was used and the findings revealed no differences consequently the hypothesis is being accepted. The current study likely demonstrated better outcomes for the concern of MR Children Tripura. The results of this study contribute meaningfully to the literature by suggesting various recommendations mentioned in the recommendation part.

Recommendations for policy and practice

On the light of the findings of the present study different suggestion regarding the MR Child and their welfare may be laid down. First of all Counselling is highly essential for those who are not fully aware about the susceptible phenomenon labelled Mental Retardation. Different NGOs and the social workers should have a thoughtful role to play in such types of activities so that the MR Child cannot be isolated as waste and burden of the parents. They may aid them to find the possible solution. The government should take a good number of responsibility and initiatives regarding the nurturing process of the MR Child for their sustain living which can approximately be benevolent help for the parents of such child. Society should not treat them differently by distinguishing them from the other siblings or other normal person.

Limitations: Although the study reveal a significant and comprehensive idea about the parents and the attitude of them towards their child and also reveal various suggestion yet it is not free from the limitations. The current study has been conducted only on the 50 samples of Tripura which is really a matter of concern and its scope is limited only in the west Tripura District. Consequently Results may not generalize to other cities, states, or regions in the Country or abroad because data were gathered from one district of Tripura only. However, many other cities have similar characteristics like west Tripura with regard to variety, income, and social matter, which may permit this study to provide a model for similar districts considering the MR Child and their welfare.

Conclusion

In ending up it can be concluded by asserting that the present study will contribute significantly to the benevolent for the finding out the various initiatives regarding the MR Child. As

the current study is dealing with the parental attitude towards the MR Children, it helps in bringing out the way for the same. The attitudes of the parents towards their MR Child are not fully favourable and are typical in nature which is identified by the researcher. The study suggest for Counselling, awareness programmes, group counselling, supportive therapy, psycho guidance etc. for the parents of MR Child. Through means of the above mentioned activities parents can develop more favourable attitudes towards their wards.

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