

# Evolving Relationship of the Institutionalized Intellectual Disabled and Autistic Children

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**Abstract-** Children born with disability are either left alone to die or even if they stay with their family member they face injustice within the family let alone from the society. They should learn the fact that it was due to their negligence that the child of theirs is facing the problem. The present research focused on the children in their educational setting and the effect of the education on understanding their emotions and relationship with the others. The results of the study shows that children diagnosed with intellectual disability had good progress in understanding and maintaining relationships, and the institution had a positive effect on the children and their development whereas the children diagnosed with Autism showed no improvement in establishing a healthy relationship and showed negative effect on the children's development. Punishments served as a negative reinforcement for the intellectually disabled children, and a positive reinforcement for the Autistic children.

**Keywords:** Intellectual disability, Emotion, Autism, Development, Behaviour.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Disability is a very complex term causing discrimination in all terms from societal relation to personal relationships. People suffering from disability face difficulties in their daily lives, and get ignored of their rights. Among all, intellectual disability and autism are the pivotal. The prevalence of intellectual disability in India is 24.5% and other mental illness is 9.3%. Among all the states and union territories, Sikkim reports the highest prevalence of disability 2.98% of the total population, while Daman and Dui reports the lowest disability rate [3].

A federal statute in the United States replaces the term mental retardation with intellectual disability, Thus, Intellectual Disability is the term in common use by medical educational and other professions and by the lay use by medical, educational, and other professions, and by the lay public and advocacy groups[1]. Following 3 criteria must be met: a) Deficits in intellectual functions intellectual functions, such as reasoning such as reasoning, problem-solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgment, academic learning and learning from experience, b) Deficits in adaptive functioning that result in failure to meet developmental and socio-cultural standards for personal independence and social responsibility, c) Onset of intellectual and adaptive deficits during the developmental period [1]. They often have difficulties in the executive functions like reasoning, planning and evaluating feedbacks from their efforts [11]. Delayed speech and other speech problems are common among individuals [9]. Autism Spectrum Disorder is a neuro-developmental disorder marked by impaired social communication and social interaction accompanied by atypical patterns of behaviour and interest, difficult for them to communicate with others or understand how others are internally reacting to them [8]; and delays in communication and language development are early in children with autism [12]. Widespread anomalies in the structures and functioning of the brain have been found in autistic children [10]. Brain imaging studies shows that the brains of autistic children are larger than average, reflecting abnormal growth during the first year of life, and they also reveal abnormal development in the cerebellum, which coordinates movement and is involved in shifting attention [4], children also show poor comprehension of others emotional responses such as expression of distress [5].

The institution group, even in adolescence, were delayed intellectually relative to the foster care group, displayed significantly greater problem behaviours, were socially less mature and appeared emotionally removed in terms of their capacity to form relationships, social skills deficits and excesses are vital aspects of intellectual disability [7][2]. Furthermore, majority of the institutional children had unsatisfactory social, emotional and educational adjustment and very few of them had good adjustment, their age and academic performance had significant influence on adjustment of them, majority of the children inside the government institution were abandoned and have experienced physical and emotional abuse [6]. Aggressive behaviour and breaches in social norms appear to be characteristic of institutionalized adolescents, in terms of aggressive behaviour; the level was higher among institutionalized adolescents [14].

Study on Response to the Negative Emotions of Others by autistic, intellectual disabled and normal children. Attention, facial affect, and behavioural responses to adults showing distress, fear, and discomfort were compared for autistic, mentally retarded, and normal children. The normal and mentally retarded children were very attentive to adults in all 3 situations. In contrast, many of the autistic children appeared to ignore or not notice the adults showing these negative effects [14]. On contrary, one study revealed that children with autism did surprisingly well in showing empathy [15].

The aim is to understand the role of intellectually disabled and autistic children in the society, how well they maintain their relationship with their family members, teachers and other people they deal with everyday.

## II. PROCEDURE

Qualitative data was collected through case study. It involved an in-depth, intensive and sharply focused exploration of any occurrence. The samples were collected from the parents, teachers, and the staffs from the institution. The researchers studied each and every participant individually to understand the case and its particularity.

### A. Sample and Data

The sample selection was done on a random basis, from Spastic Society, Gangtok. The names of the children were handed by the principal of the institution, from which 6 male students and 2 female students were selected. The selection of the institution was on the basis of the availability participants. One to one interaction helped the researchers gather more relevant information, and gained some insight on other concerning factors.

### B. Tools

Face to face interview was conducted for parents, teachers and other staffs. The interview helped them express themselves freely which helped the researchers acquire important data and direct observation of the children in natural setting.

### C. Figures

TABLE 1.1  
AUTISTIC CHILDREN

Names	Initial behaviour	Change in behaviour	Comments
DS	Aggressive when he does not get what he wants, exhibits challenging behaviour.	His behaviour of immediate gratification was reduced, and he showed some efforts in sharing things with the researchers.	The behavioural change was an indication of some sense of intimacy shared with the researchers
JT	Looked secluded from the rest of the class, frightened look.	During the entire period, the researchers did not record any changes in his behaviour. But he did start responding to the researchers when called his name, or shook his hands.	Behaviour modification should be done to make sure he does not do anything that would be offensive to the others during class hours; some form of punishment should be adapted.
ST	Showed signs of stubbornness	When the researchers showed similar interest as the child he openly accepted the presence of the researchers and showed affection towards the researchers	For stubborn children, being a strict figure would not make things easier, rather make it difficult to understand the child, so being friendly and showing the same interest would develop some form of attachment.

TABLE 2.1  
INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED CHILDREN

Names	Initial behaviour	Change in behaviour	Comments
AP	Inattentiveness, restlessness and often repetition of words	He was allotted one or the other small task keeping him busy which stopped him from getting distracted	Some or the other tasks should be allotted to children who are restless, being a little more strict could lead to conduct problem in them, therefore being genuine and making them understand the importance of the work would keep them attentive and avoid unnecessary movements
JC	Unnecessary screaming and crying, and throwing things here and there	Since the child responded to music or anything that had movement, keeping him involved was a better solution. Playing spin the rings, beating drums or else playing the cassette would calm the child immediately.	Trying to maintain a relationship with a 4 year old is difficult. Children responding to music and spinning objects should be allowed to perform what lies in his/her interest. Forbidding them from doing so would create more hindrance, thus complicating the relationship
PC	Very extrovert with feeling of 'I know it all'	He would integrate his active side to be a part of the social gathering and developing social relationship	Tendency to develop his social interaction was an indication to develop an identity for himself and the group
BC	Was sociable and inviting in the relationship, but was insecure with the divided attention of the researchers.	Showed positive emotions towards the researchers, and learned the art of sharing	Full involvement with other people giving a chance to understand other people (non-disabled)
ST	Lacked eye contact and any form of interaction	At least was able to differentiate between right and wrong judgment	The judgment was a mechanism to develop a social relationship

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implication of this finding in the study is that special schools strive to do services for the children with intellectual disability and autism and several other disabilities do not consider the emotional well being of these children. An institution comprises of teachers who focus more on the academic field as compared to the social, emotional field, so the lack of knowledge of regulation of the emotions stays unsatisfactory. The results in Table I and II show that most of the children have less emotional contact with their father as compared to their mother. Since the father's involvement during this phase is very less, the child then starts depending on his/her mother for comfort, and in the absence of the mother the child seeks comfort in the female teachers. Only three students showed some interest or empathy towards the researchers. The research shows that not entire population under this category have problems in dealing with the emotions and maintaining it.

Each participant had different relationship, the level at which the relationship was maintained and carefully evaluated had very different and unique results. On studying each case it was recorded that too much of affection by the caretaker (mother) would severely damage the formation of any new relationship. The degree of severity of the problem should be measured equally, and the amount of attention should be divided according to that, if this undivided attention continuous for a longer period of time, the child would be unable to maintain any further relation with anyone.

Showing undivided attention to the child, made the child feel wanted, and hence building a good relationship. Children diagnosed with autism often stayed aloof from the rest, avoided making conversations, preferred playing alone, avoided eye contact and above all, avoided any kind of physical contact. Most of the children knew the exhibition of the right emotions at the right time, the exhibition of anger towards the fellow students, teacher or the helper. Results also show that children with autism showed large amount of fear and irritation to loud noises making them behave in an inappropriate manner, negative behaviour of banging tables, howling during class hours, or sometimes even biting or pulling the other child's hair. Most children diagnosed with

Intellectual disability showed no problem in forming a relationship, they do not have problem in adjusting to new situations, but on the findings it was noted that the children were not very sociable before the admission to the institution. They had problems in adjusting to their regular routines at home, and at school. Post their admission to the institution it was learned that most of the children had understood the value and involvement in a relationship, and regulation of their emotion at the minimum as compared to before. They understood the thought of social acceptance and groups, even though they did show some unwanted behaviour initially.

Attention seeking behaviour was very common, causing them to ignore punishment. The tendency of the attention seeking behaviour could be the reason of insecure attachment to the parents or someone close, or the use of challenging behaviour to deal or maintain relationship with the others. Sharing the same interest with children with such attention seeking tendency should be first observed and noted could calm them or things that excites them to behave in that particular way, behaving in the particular manner believing it to be desirable. The children with autism did not share the same amount of excitement as the others confirming that not all autistic children would be able to establish a normal relationship apart from the relationship with his/her parents. It was found that, only few children with autism were able to establish a functioning relationship and regulation of positive emotions with each other on the account of the severity of the case. Students suffering from Down syndrome showed some empathy, but children with Autism rarely showed any empathy but it was total opposite to the cases of Intellectual disability. This shows that people with Down syndrome has the ability to regulate their empathy towards people in pain, but since it was a small number this particular thought cannot be generalized on the large scale basis.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The research showed significant changes in the behaviour of Intellectual Disabled children post their admission to the institution. The end results show that there were some changes in their behaviour especially the regulation of their emotions. Children diagnosed with Autism on the other hand showed no changes in their behaviour. The results also showed some kind of unsatisfactory results in adjustment in their social and emotional level among the students. There was a lack of interactions which did not help students maintain a sense of security, belongingness among them. Based on this study, it shows that relationships can be formed with not just the involvement of one person but both the person trying to form the relation, be it through proper communication, non-verbal communication, gestures, or active participation in their interest these few of the things that could help one build a relation with children suffering from Intellectual disability or Autism. Punishment acted as a positive reinforcement for the unwanted behaviour for children with Intellectual disability, but treated as a negative reinforcement for the children with Autism.

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