



A Study on Superstitions among Parents Towards Intellectual Disability

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Abstract: -

The purpose of the present study was designed to “Know the Superstitions among parents towards Intellectual Disability in Gummadidala village.” NIMH GEM questioner was administered to collect information or data from the parents. The sample was drawn from Gummadidala village of Medchal District of Telangana state, Data analysis was done by using Statical package for social sciences. Among 10 items 90% of the parents believed that the Mentally retarded persons can be fully cured. Majority of the parents have opinion that Mental retardation is Mental illness, it can be cured by Medicines and Mental retardation is due to fate or Karma. The researcher has found the new superstition among parents in Gummadidala village i.e., the birth of Down syndrome child gives wealth and luck for the family. So, in Gummadidala village there is a need to conduct more awareness programs on causes and management of the persons with intellectual disabilities. It has been proved in the research awareness programs plays a crucial role in changing the perspective towards the issue.

Keywords: Intellectual Disability, Superstitions, Parents

Introduction:

Intellectual disability is a lifelong condition that affects a person’s intellectual skills and behavior in different situations. Intellectual disability is the most common developmental disorder. Its effect on the individual, family, and community can be immense since most individuals are affected from an early age.

Through some old scriptures like that of Patanjali, it is evident that persons with Intellectual Disabilities existed in the early centuries. But unfortunately, they were not treated the same as others. They were not considered as humans but were considered a bad omen to the community. They tried to get rid of them in some or other manner and on many occasions, they believed that killing them is the best way to get rid of them and thus used to kill them using various methods such as drowning. In some places, they were abandoned in the woods and it is documented that in some places; they were used as a source of entertainment in king’s courts where they were treated as objects.

But with evolving time, society has recognized that even Intellectually Disabled people are humans and even they have the right to live in society. Yet they were considered a threat to society and they believed to segregate them from the rest of the community and kept them under custodial supervision. Hence, there took place birth of institutional care. Thus, Intellectually Disabled persons were under 24-hour total care in the institutions where they were segregated from their families and community.

The basic needs of Intellectually Disabled individuals were gratified. They were expected to live on charity. As the years passed, there took place development in having pity and charity on them and this development started to take place majorly in the western countries. Historically in India, the responsibilities of persons with Intellectual Disabilities are majorly taken up by their families. Parents or caregiver are the primary caregiving resources for the children with or without any kind of disability. They are the managers, behavior models, disciplinarians and agents of socialization and change for their children. Studies shows that they often lack the knowledge and skill needed to assists their child because of their lack of awareness or misconception about the problem which his/her child suffering from. Thus, if the parents are adequately given information or trained, they can be a better teacher or trainer of their children with intellectual disabilities.

Definitions:

USA - Mental Retardation AAMR – (Luckasson, 1992)

“Mental retardation refers to substantial limitations in present functioning. It is characterized by significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skill areas: Communication, Self–Care, Home Living, Social Skills, Community Use Self-Direction, Health and Safety, functional Academics, Leisure Work. Mental Retardation manifests before age 18”

According to the “Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995”, Mental Retardation means a “condition Of arrested or incomplete development of mind of a person which is specially characterized by sub normality of intelligence”.

It can include difficulties in communication, memory, understanding, problem solving, self-care, social and emotional skills and physical skills.

USA - Mental Retardation – American Association for Mental Retardation (AAMR) – 2002

Mental Retardation is a disability characterized by significant limitations both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social & practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before age 18 years.

Shift in Definition from MR to ID:

This is the 2002 AAMR (now AAIDD) definition, reflecting the recent change in terminology. No other aspects of the definition have been changed. The term Intellectual Disability is now the preferred term for "the same population of individuals who were diagnosed previously with mental retardation" (AAIDD, 2008)

Intellectual Disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities .

United States, 2002 (AAIDD,2008).

Intellectual functioning—also called intelligence—refers to general mental capacity, such as learning, reasoning, problem solving, and so on.

One criterion to measure intellectual functioning is an IQ test. Generally, an IQ test score of around 70 or as high as 75 indicates a limitation in intellectual functioning.

Standardized tests can also determine limitations in adaptive behavior, which comprises three skill types:

Conceptual skills—language and literacy; money, time, and number concepts; and self-direction.

Social skills—interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, gullibility, naïveté (i.e., wariness), social problem solving, and the ability to follow rules/obey laws and to avoid being victimized.

Practical skills—activities of daily living (personal care), occupational skills, healthcare, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of money, use of the telephone.

In defining and assessing intellectual disability, the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) stresses that professionals must take additional factors into account, such as the community environment typical of the individual's peers and culture. Professionals should also consider linguistic diversity and cultural differences in the way people communicate, move, and behave.

Classification:**Table: 1 Psychological classification of ID**

Classification	IQ Score
Mild MR	55-69
Moderate MR	35-54
Severe MR	20-34
Profound MR	Below 20

Table: 2 Educational classifications of ID

Classification	Category
Educable	Mild
Trainable	Moderate ID
Custodial	Severe and Profound ID

Table: 3. Grouping of Persons with ID

Group/Class	Age
Pre-primary	3-6 years
Primary	7-10 years
Secondary	11-14 years
Prevocational	15-18 years
Vocational	Above 18 years

(Source: Kumar's, 2007. Psychological classification of ID. Children with MR and Associated Disabilities).

Characteristics:

Delayed Development is the most significant feature of Mental Retardation; hence they have characteristics like:

- Slow Reaction
- Slow in understanding and learning
- Lack of concentration
- Short tempered
- Poor memory
- Lack of co-ordination poor motor development
- Slow in speech development

Objectives of the study:

- 1.The Main Objective of the study is to Know the Superstitions among parents towards Intellectual Disability in Gummadidala village.
- 2.To Compare the Superstitions of parents towards Intellectual Disability with respect to their Gender
3. To Compare the Superstitions of parents having children with Intellectual Disability with respect to their Age

Method:

The research design that is descriptive in nature and it is a survey study.

Sample: -

Sample for present study was parents of Gummadidala village, Total 100 parents were taken as sample. The respondents belong to the age group of 20 to 40 years.

Tool: -.

For the Present Study NIMH GEM questioner was administered to collect information or data from the parents. NIMH GEM— Questionnaire has 30 items. 10 Items related to Misconceptions have been taken for the present study among 30 items of the NIMH GEM— Questionnaire. The responses were rated on a two-point rating scale as YES/NO. The questionnaire has been administered on parents assess their awareness towards Intellectual Disability.

Procedure: -

Before Conduction of the survey the writer permission was obtained from the Tahsildar of that Mandal. The primary objective was to find -out the Superstitions towards Intellectual Disability among parents in Gummadidala village.

Setting: -

The survey was conducted at every door step of selected sample.

Results and discussions:**Table.4.** Results of the study were analysed and tabulated on the basis of formulated objectives

Sl.no	Statement	Yes	No
1.	Mental retardation is due to fate or Karma.	70%	30%
2.	Mental Retardation is an infection's disease.	60%	40%
3.	Mental retardation is mental illness.	75%	25%
4.	Mentally retarded persons can be fully cured.	90%	10%
5.	As the mentally retarded child grows up, he would gradually become normal.	80%	20%
6.	Mental retardation is due to black magic or spells.	50%	50%
7.	Marriage can cure a mentally retarded person	78%	22%
8.	Medicines only can cure mental retardation	85%	15%
9.	Traditional healers, Poojary's can cure mentally retarded persons.	45%	55%
10.	The problem of Mental Retardation is found only in children	70%	30%

table 4 shows that the responses of parents on NIMH-GEM Questionnaire. Among 10 items 90% of the parents believed that the Mentally retarded persons can be fully cured. Majority of the parents have opinion that Mental retardation is Mental illness, it can be cured by Medicines and Mental retardation is due to fate or Karma. The researcher has found the new superstition among parents in Gummadidala village i.e., the birth of Down syndrome child gives wealth and luck for the family .

Future recommendations:

Based on results of the present study the following recommendations have been suggested,

- There is a need to eliminate superstitions towards intellectual disabilities through awareness programs in the society.
- There is a need to conduct research more on the superstitions of the parents towards intellectual disabilities.
- Parental involvement in training early in the life of the child enables development of positive attitude in the parents towards the child with ID.

CONCLUSION:

Persons with intellectual disabilities live in an atmosphere created by the attitudes held by the people and professionals they come in contact with in addition to those of their families. The persons with intellectual disabilities lead proper and quality of life, If these attitudes are positive and supportive. But in reality, all sections of society showing misconceptions and underestimation towards them.

In a developing country like ours, the existing societal systems are generally influenced by the factors like religion and culture, along with other factors such as illiteracy, poverty and over population influence the community and family to follow certain social practices particularly in case of families having persons with intellectual disabilities.

Due to the superstition's parents underestimate the capabilities of the persons with intellectual disabilities. So, in Gummadidala village there is a need to conduct more awareness programs on causes and management of the persons with intellectual disabilities. It has been proved in the research awareness programs plays a crucial role in changing the perspective towards the issue. The researcher has found the new superstition among parents in Gummadidala village i.e., the birth of Down syndrome child gives wealth and luck for the family

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