Short Communication

STUDY OF MENTALLY CHALLENGED CHILDREN AND THEIR SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

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ABSTRACT

The study is an empirical piece of research work to find out the needs of mentally challenged children and their family and social adjustment. The sample was collected from different areas of Chhattisgarh state of India consisting of 300 children and their parents, enrolled in different special schools for these special children. The study revealed the causes and needs of these children by using measures like general mental ability test, coping behavior scale, family adjustment questionnaire. It concluded that the level of mental retardation, affects fulfillment of needs and social adjustment of these special children.

Key Words: Mentally challenged, Family and Social Adjustment, Special Institute, Retardation

INTRODUCTION

A family may suspect mental challenge if the child motor skill, language skills, and self-help skills do not seems to be developing or slower rate than the child peers, failure to adopt adjust to new situation normally and grow intellectually may become apparent early in a child life. In the case of mild retardation these failure may not become recognized until school age or later.

“Mental retardation is a disability features of significant limitation both is intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before age eighteen”. Mental retardation is a stage of developmental problems, beginning in early childhood period, result in significant limitation of intellect, or cognition and poor adaptation to the demands of life living.

Symptoms

Continues infant like behavior, decreased learning ability, failure to meet the intellectual development, inability to meet the educational demands, and lack of curiosity.

Level of retardation – there are different level of retardation profound, severe, moderate, mild, and borderline intellectual functioning. The children of profound mental retardation have IQ level below 20, the children of severe mental retardation have IQ level 20-30, the children of moderate mental retardation have IQ level 35-49, the children of mild mental retardation have IQ level 50-69, and the children of borderline intellectual functioning have IQ level 70-84.

Causes

Maternal age and the number of previous pregnancy indicating causes of mental retardation very young mother and the mother over forty both condition are affected to child brain and development. Several causative factor have been identifies related to low birth weight and gestational age, infant chromosomal aberration, maternal infant interaction, early pregnancy trauma, indicate birth weight and incomplete gestation. Chromosomal abnormal-lities and genetic errors cause a number of mental retardation. Problem occurring during the delivery of baby may cause damage that results in mental challenge. Fetal damage causing reduced mental functioning may result from such factors as maternal infection and drug.

Family adjustment of mentally challenged children

Generally for facing any situation, adjustment is very much required for that many psychological factor are responsible. While adjustment with any situation fear occurs in different amount. When a person is well balanced with his wishes, decision, thoughts, aims, process of adjustment,
certain things help the families to cope and adapt well. Families need to gather the right kind of information about it. At some stage, they have to accept the mental illness in family members will continue to development.\textsuperscript{6,7}

**Needs of mentally challenged children**

Every family has their own basic needs. That need depends on same sources and for identifying that sources family member help to attain basic needs like, love, affection care. Affection is the foundation of life and family is the root. Other than these needs there are some conventional needs like physical safety, accommodation, food and shelter.

Mentally challenged children are different from normal children but they are some similar from them or therefore have all of the basic needs of their normally children.\textsuperscript{8-10}

**Hypotheses**

1. The level of retardation would emerge as predictor of fulfillment of needs among mentally challenged children.
2. The level of retardation would emerge as predictor of family adjustment among mentally challenged children.

**AIMS**

1. To examine the relationship between level of retardation and fulfillment of needs among mentally challenged children.
2. To examine the relationship between level of retardation and family adjustment among mentally challenged children.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research design**

In this research work correlational research design was employed. Fulfillsments of needs and family adjustment are the criterion variables. However, level of mental retardation are suspected predictor. (Table 1 and Table 2)

The present study is on different level of retardation mild and moderate. To select the sample in the present study the sample has been drawn from the population of institutionalized mentally challenged children of Chhattisgarh. The age group for the sample taken in to consideration was from age under eighteen years. Hence 300 samples were selected for the study.

| Table 1 : Sample according level of retardation on fulfilment of needs |
|-------------------------|-----------------|------|
| **Group**               | **Number**      | **%** |
| Mild                    | 150             | 50   |
| Moderate                | 150             | 50   |

| Table 2 : Sample according to level of retardation on family adjustment |
|-------------------------|-----------------|------|
| **Group**               | **Number**      | **%** |
| Mild                    | 150             | 50   |
| Moderate                | 150             | 50   |

**Measures**

**Group test of general mental ability (Jalota)**

In this study, level of mental retardation was measured by group test of general mental ability (Jalota). This tool generated the level of I.Q. and the mental age of the respondents. The tool has 100 questions and the difficulty level of the items is low. It is basically a speed test that checks the intelligence in terms of quick cognition and mental ability. Total time of 25 minutes is given to the respondents to solve the questions. The number of correct responses generated the total score which was further checked in the table given in the manual and I.Q. was found out.

**Coping behavior scale**

In this study, fulfillment of need was measured by coping behavior scale (National Handicap Institute Secundrabad, India).

**15-Item family adjustment questionnaire**

Family adjustment scale was measured by self developed 15- item family adjustment questionnaire. Responses are obtained on a 5-point like scale ranging from 1 to 5, it’s produced Minimum 15 and maximum 75 score. In the present sample the internal consistency (\(\alpha\)) was .739 for 15-item family adjustment questionnaire.

**Demographic data sheet**

In this study, children general information status were recorded in demographic data sheet.
Statistical analyses procedure
All 300 cases were included for data calculation. Multiple regression models were used to examine the predicting effect of different predictor on criterion. SPSS version 22.0 was used for prediction analyses.

Table 3: Predicting effect of level of retardation on fulfillment of needs and family adjustment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Need(β)</th>
<th>Family adjustment (β)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>.251**</td>
<td>-.320**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<0.01

Table 3 and Fig. 1 indicates clearly that 150 mild and 150 moderate was positively associated with fulfilment of need (.251, p<0.01). This shows that increasing level of the participant reported high fulfilment of need of mentally challenged children, and family adjustment was negatively associated with family adjustment (-.320, p<0.01) this shows that increasing level of mental retardation of the children reported low family adjustment.

Fig. 1: Predicting effect of level of Retardation on fulfilment of need and family adjustment

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Multiple regression models suggested level of mental retardation as significant predictor of fulfillment of need Table. Those children who had moderate mental retardation reported high fulfillment of need. Current findings are in full agreement with the earlier reports on family adjustment at western cross-cultural context. Therefore predictive hypothesis stands confirmed.

CONCLUSION
The Present study arrives at the sound judgment that there is sufficient empirical and statistical information indicating of the predication effect of level of mental retardation on fulfillment of need and family adjustment. Present research demonstrates thorough
understanding of family adjustment and needs of mentally challenged children and social adjustment.

REFERENCES