



Depression and Stress in Mothers of Autistic and Mentally Retarded Children- A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

The no. of disable children is increasing day by day in India and in our state in Tripura. The parents, especially the mother of disabled children are suffering from many psychological problems. Depression and stress are seen as common psychological problem among the mothers of disabled children. This work intends to assess the level of IQ of mentally retarded children, and also assess the level of autism of children with autistic disorder. Depression and parental stress level of the mothers of MR and autistic children were also measured. A sample of 50 MR children with their mothers and a sample of 50 autistic children with their mothers are selected for this purpose. Standard psychological tests were administered to collect data. Results reveal that the mothers of mentally retarded and autistic children are suffering from depression and stress. The level of stress and depression of mothers' increases with the increased level of autism and retardation of their children. Result also indicates that the mothers of autistic children are suffering from more depression than the mothers of mentally retarded children.

KEYWORDS : Mental Retardation, Autism, Depression and parental stress of mothers.

World Health Organization(2001) reports that mental retardation have an overall prevalence of 1-3% in the world as a whole. 2012 review of global estimates of prevalence of autism spectrum disorder was found of 62 cases per 10,000 people. No data are available from India to provide an India-specific estimate of the prevalence, and it is unknown whether there are variations in this rate worldwide (Elsabagh, Divan, Yun-Joo et al., 2012). It suggests the magnitude of the problem in terms of the economy for a developing country like India. Mothers of children with autism experience more stress, depression and poorer health than the mothers in general. Psychological, social and financial distress is also higher in families of MR Children, particularly parents, as they are usually the only constant caretakers (Schwartz, 2003). Mothers of these children suffer more psychological distress than otherS as they are the primary care givers (Weisset al, 2003). Fathers are generally less involved in caregiving activities when compared with mothers (Hastings, 2003). Depression and anxiety are common among mothers of mentally disabled children. Studies from different countries on parents of children with disabilities suggested that 35-53% of mothers of children with disabilities have symptoms of depression (Emerson, 2003). In the Indian society, it is mostly the mothers of the mentally retarded children who bear the burden and stress of upbringing an underprivileged child.

With the aforesaid literature review and research findings, a study was intended to carry in Tripura, a northeastern hilly state of India, with the following objectives:

To find out the IQ level and the rate of autism of diagnosed mentally retarded and Autistic children.

To find out the correlation of level of IQ and autism of children with their mothers' stress and depression level.

To find out the level of depression and level of stress of mothers of MR and autistic children and compare them.

METHOD

Sample: - A sample of 50 MR children with their mothers and a sample of 50 autistic children with their mothers are selected for the purpose of the study. Data were collected from the District Disability Rehabilitation Centre of Dhalai District and west district of Tripura. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the participants from the registered cases of the DDRC.

Hypotheses:

Following hypotheses are undertaken to complete the study:

There is no significant correlation between the level of Retardation of the Mentally Retarded children and level of Depression of their mother.

There is no significant correlation between the level of Retardation of the Mentally Retarded children and level of stress of their mother.

There is no significant correlation between the level of Autism of the Autistic children and level of Depression of their mother.

There is no significant correlation between the level of Autism of the Autistic children and level of stress of their mother.

The mothers of mentally retarded children significantly differ from the mothers of Autistic children in respect of their level of depression.

The mothers of mentally retarded children significantly differ from the mothers of Autistic children in respect of their Stress level.

Tools used:

Binet Kamat Test of Intelligence:-

The original Stanford Binet test was modified and standardized to measure general mental ability for age group 3-22 years. This Indian adaption has items at each age level and yields a mental age and intelligence quotient. It includes both verbal and performance test. There is a moderate convergent validity with B.K.T ($r=-0.66$, $p=0.001$). The IQ level between 50-69 is mild mental retardation, 30-49 is moderate mental retardation, IQ level of 20-29 is severe mental retardation and IQ level below 20 is profound mental retardation.

Childhood Autism Rating Scale 2:-

The childhood autism rating scale has been in use since 1971 in the form published as an appendix to Schopler, Reichier, De vellis and Daly (1980). The Childhood Autism Rating Scale Second Edition includes three forms, Child hood Autism Rating Scale Second Edition Standard Version (CARS-2 ST) Child hood Autism Rating Scale Second Edition High Functioning Version (CARS-2HF) and the questionnaire for parents (CARS-2 QPC) CARS20ST and CRS-2 HF rating are made based not only on the frequency of behaviors but also on their intensity peculiarity and duration. This allows for great flexibility in integrating comprehensive information about a case and at the same time yield consistent quantitative results.

The CARS-2 includes 15 items that ask respondents to rate an individual on a scale from 1 to 4 key areas related to autism diagnosis. Internal estimate reliability is estimated at .93 for the CARS2- ST.Rating

values for each of the 15 CARS2-ST item ranges from 1 to 4. Generally, a rating value of 1 indicates that an individual's behavior is within normal limits for and individual of that age A Value of 2 means that the individual's behavior is mildly abnormal compared with a person of the same age. 1.5 indicates very mildly abnormal for that age. 2.5 indicates mildly to moderately abnormal for that age, 3 indicates moderately abnormal for that age, 3.5 indicates moderately to severely abnormal for that age. 4 indicate severely abnormal for that age.

Parental stress scale :-

The parental stress Scale by Berry, J.O & Jones W.H (1995) it has 18 items. The parental stress scale demonstrated satisfactory levels of internal reliability (.83) and test retest reliability (.81). The scale demonstrated satisfactory convergent validity with various measures of stress, emotional role satisfaction. Including previous stress. Family stress, loneliness anxiety, guilt, marital satisfaction job satisfaction and social support. The scores of the scale can range between 18-90, high scores on the scale indicates greater stress and low score indicates lower stress.

Beck Depression Inventory (B.D.I.):

Beck Depression Inventory (B.D.I.) developed by Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock and Erbaugh (1961) is a self-reported inventory for measuring the severity of depression. It contains 21 items of which 15 deal with psychological symptoms and 6 are concerned with somatic ones. Each item contains statements ranked in order of severity. It has been shown to have high reliability and validity and compares well with the Hamilton scale. The split half reliability is around 0.9 and its test-retest reliability is approximately 0.75. It has consistently been found to correlate well with clinicians' ratings of severity of depression as well as with other scales of depression.

The total score ranges from 0 to 63. The higher the score the greater is the level of depression.

Procedure:- With Informed consent from the respondent, data were collected from the District Disability Rehabilitation Centre of Dhalai District and west district of Tripura, a north eastern hilly state of India. At first the level of mental retarded ness and level of autism of the children (already diagnosed as MR or Autistic by specialist psychiatrist) were found out with the help of two appropriate psychological scales. Then, two questionnaires were used to find the level of parental stress and depression of mothers of MR children and mothers of autistic children.

Result and Discussion

TABLE -1: The Correlation Table

GROUPS	N	CORRELATION	Level of significance
IQ Level of Mentally Retarded Children	50	-0.37	.01 level
Depression Level Of mothers of Mentally Retarded children	50		
IQ Level of Mentally Retarded Children	50	-0.71	.01 level
Stress Level Of mothers of Mentally Retarded children	50		
Level of autism in Autistic children	50	0.29	.01 level
Depression Level of mothers of Autistic children	50		
Level of Autism in Autistic children	50	0.72	.01 level
Stress Level Of mothers of Autistic children.	50		

TABLE -II: Comparative table between depression and stress level of mothers of mentally retarded children and mothers of autistic children

GROUPS	N	MEAN	SD	t	df	RE-MARKS
Depression of mothers of Mentally Retarded Children	50	22	22.43	12.82	48	Significant at .01 level
Depression of mothers of Autistic Children	50	34.5	34.56			
Stress of mothers of Mentally Retarded Children	50	34.02	35.06	0.53	48	Not Significant
Stress of mothers of Autistic Children	50	34.84	35.03			

The Table of correlation indicates that a high negative correlation exists in level of depression and stress of the mother with the level of IQ of the children. It means that the depression and stress of the mother increases with the decreased score of IQ of their child.

On the other hand, a positive correlation of depression and stress of mothers of Autistic children with their level of autism indicates that with the rising level of autism in their children, mothers face more depression and stress.

The mean score of Depression of mothers of mentally retarded children is 22 and SD is 22.43 and the mean score of mothers of autistic children is 34.5 and SD is 34.56. The t value is 12.82 hence the t value is significant at 0.01 level. So there is a significant difference between mothers of mentally retarded children and mothers of autistic children in respect of depression. The Table II also shows that the mean score of stress of mothers of mentally retarded children is 34.02 and SD is 35.06. The mean stress score of mothers of autistic children is 34.84 and SD is 35.03. The t value is 0.53. Our computed value of t does not reach the critical value, hence it is not significant. So, all the hypotheses taken are rejected except the sixth hypotheses. It indicates that the mothers of autistic children and MR children suffer from same level of stress although depression is higher in mothers of autistic children.

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