



"THE PREVALENCE OF BEHAVIORAL DISTURBANCES AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES".

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the prevalence of behavioral disturbances among individuals with intellectual disabilities. Students with intellectual disabilities, due to their deficits in academics, activities of daily living (ADL), and language and communication, exhibit behavioral disturbances more frequently than their peers without neurological impairments. This population is often vulnerable to emotional and social challenges. Behavioral disturbances such as violent and destructive behavior, temper tantrums, misbehavior with others, self-injurious behaviors, repetitive behaviors, odd behaviors, hyperactivity, rebellious behaviors, antisocial behaviors, and fear (as assessed by BASIC-MR Part B – Behavioral Assessment Scale for Indian Children) are common and can significantly impact daily functioning, social interactions, and overall quality of life. This study aims to examine the frequency and types of behavioral disturbances across different levels of intellectual disability (mild and moderate), gender (male and female), and age groups (6–10 years, 10–14 years, and 14–18 years). Observations will also include contributing factors such as severity of disability, age, gender, and environmental influences. Understanding these patterns is crucial for the development of effective interventions, support strategies, and policies that promote the psychological well-being and social inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for clinical psychologists, special educators, speech therapists, occupational therapists, counselors, caregivers, and policymakers in designing comprehensive care programs and home-based interventions tailored to the specific needs of this population.

KEYWORDS : Intellectual disability, behavioral disturbances, fear, self-injury, hyperactivity, prevalence, intervention.

INTRODUCTION:

Individuals with intellectual disabilities often exhibit behavioral problems, making it challenging for both teachers and parents to manage them. The present investigation was conducted to determine the rate of behavioral disturbances among different categories of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

A sample of 90 individuals with intellectual disabilities was selected and categorized based on the level of disability, age, and gender. The sample was drawn from Deepshikha (Institute for Mentally Handicapped Children), Ranchi, and School of Hope, Jamshedpur, Tata, Jharkhand.

Behavioral disturbances are reported to be four to five times more prevalent in individuals with intellectual disabilities compared to those who are intellectually typical (Rutter et al., 1976). Most studies have shown a higher prevalence of behavioral disturbances among individuals with intellectual disabilities than among individuals without disabilities (Benson & Ivins, 1992; Berkson et al., 1999–2000; Bodfish et al., 1995; Clarke & Marston, 2000). These disturbances tend to increase with the severity of intellectual disability (Eyman & Call, 1977; Schroeder et al., 1998).

Keeping this in view, the current study was undertaken to estimate the prevalence rate of behavioral disturbances associated with intellectual disabilities in the Indian context, considering variables such as age and gender.

The data revealed that the severity of behavioral disturbances increased with the severity of intellectual disability. Additionally, differences in prevalence were observed with respect to both age and gender.

METHODOLOGY:

In a study designed to determine the rate of behavioral disturbances among different age groups of children with intellectual disabilities, the subjects were selected from various special schools.

The individuals with intellectual disabilities were subdivided based on two levels of intellectual disability: mild and moderate. Those with an IQ of 50–70 were classified as having

mild intellectual disability, while those with an IQ of 35–49 were categorized as having moderate intellectual disability.

Based on this classification, 30 individuals were identified as having mild intellectual disability, and 60 individuals were identified as having moderate intellectual disability.

The details of the age-wise and gender-wise distribution of individuals with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities are provided in Table 1. The data is further subdivided by gender and three age groups: 6–10 years, 10–14 years, and 14–18 years, as well as by the level of intellectual disability.

Sample:

The sample for the study consisted of 90 individuals with intellectual disabilities in a special school setting, selected using the purposive sampling technique. Subjects were chosen from special schools located in Ranchi and Jamshedpur.

The children were further subdivided based on gender (male and female) and three age groups:

- 6–10 years
- 10–14 years
- 14–18 years

This resulted in a total of six sample subgroups, with 15 cases selected in each subgroup.

Tools:

1. Behavioral Assessment Scale for Indian Children with Mental Retardation (BASIC-MR, Part B): Developed by Rita Peshawaria and Venkatesan, this tool was used to assess behavioral problems. It includes a total of 75 behavioral items.

2. Hindi Adaptation of the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: To assess the level of intellectual disability among the children, the Hindi adaptation of the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale by Kulshreshtha was used.

Extent of Behavioural Disturbances in Mild and Moderate Intellectual Disabled Individuals of Different Age and Gender Categories : (Percentage)

Table:1

Age in years	Level of Retardation	Gender	Violent & Destructive	Temper Tantrum	Misbehavior others	Self Injurious	Repetitive Behaviour	Odd Behaviour	Hyperactive Behaviour	Rebellious Behaviour	Anti social	Fear
6-10	Mild	M-10	30.62	42.50	32.86	1.00	1.37	15.00	46.67	26.67	1.11	12.50
		Fe-8	18.75	21.87	32.14	3.75	3.13	7.81	16.67	16.67	6.67	21.87
6-10	Moderate	M-5	42.50	55.00	28.57	18.00	15.00	20.00	53.33	16.67	11.11	20.00
		Fe-7	41.96	32.14	38.77	17.14	26.76	30.36	38.09	23.81	7.94	28.57
10-14yrs	Mild	M-2	25.00	37.50	28.57	0.00	0.00	6.25	0.00	8.33	16.67	0.00
		-Fe-6	19.79	29.17	23.81	3.33	8.33	0.00	27.78	36.11	3.70	12.50
10-14yrs	Moderate	M-13	40.38	28.85	40.66	10.77	19.23	26.92	43.59	24.36	7.69	23.08
		-Fe-9	35.42	44.44	38.09	17.78	22.22	33.33	55.55	33.33	4.94	19.44
14-18yrs-	Mild	M-1	6.25	25.00	28.57	10.00	0.00	12.50	0.00	16.67	0.00	25.00
		-Fe-3	12.50	33.33	4.76	3.33	4.17	12.50	0.00	44.44	3.70	16.67
14-18yrs	Moderate	M-14	34.37	42.85	29.60	7.85	24.10	28.50	42.85	29.76	8.73	8.92
		Fe-12	17.71	22.92	23.81	9.17	16.67	27.08	41.67	26.39	5.55	22.92

Table:2

Level of Retardation	Violent & Destructive	Temper Tantrum	Misbehavior others	Self Injurious	Repetitive Behaviour	Odd Behaviour	Hyperactive Behaviour	Rebellious Behaviour	Anti social	Fear
MildN-30	18.81	31.56	25.12	3.57	2.83	9.01	13.10	24.81	5.35	14.76
Moderate-60	35.39	37.70	33.25	13.45	20.67	27.70	45.85	25.72	7.66	20.49

Extent of Behavioural Disturbances in Mild and Moderate Intellectual Disabled Individuals of Different Age and Gender Categories : (Percentage)

According To Research

- Mild and moderate male individuals with intellectual disabilities aged 6–10 years do not differ significantly in any domain of behavioral disturbances.
- There are significant differences between mild and moderate male individuals with intellectual disabilities aged 10–14 years in domains such as self-injurious behavior, repetitive behavior, odd behavior, hyperactive behavior, rebellious behavior, and fear. In all these comparisons, individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities consistently obtained significantly higher mean scores than those with mild intellectual disabilities.
- A similar pattern is observed among 14–18-year-old male individuals with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities. They differ significantly in behavioral disturbances such as violent and destructive behavior, repetitive behavior, odd behavior, hyperactive behavior, rebellious behavior, antisocial behavior, and fear. Therefore, in seven out of ten comparisons, significant differences were found between males with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities.
- In these comparisons, moderate intellectual disability individuals consistently obtained significantly higher mean scores than mild intellectual disability individuals. In fact, male individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities recorded higher mean scores across all ten domains of behavioral disturbances in all three age groups, regardless of whether the t-values were significant or not.
- The same findings were observed in female samples as well.
- Significant mean differences were found in violent and destructive behavior, repetitive behavior, odd behavior, and hyperactive behavior among females aged 6–10 years, with moderate intellectual disability individuals scoring higher than mild cases.
- Similarly, significant mean differences were found in self-injurious behavior and odd behavior among females aged 10–14 years, with moderate cases scoring significantly

higher than mild cases.

- Among females aged 14–18 years, significant mean differences were observed in three out of ten comparisons, particularly in repetitive behavior, odd behavior, and hyperactive behavior. Again, moderate cases obtained significantly higher scores.
- It is interesting to note that, like their male counterparts, female individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities also scored higher across all ten domains of behavioral disturbances in all three age groups.
- To make the findings clearer, explicit and detailed t-test comparisons were conducted between mild and moderate intellectual disability individuals by combining age and gender categories. The data in the table further confirms that moderate intellectually disabled individuals have significantly higher levels of behavioral disturbances compared to mild cases. As shown in the table, mild and moderate intellectually disabled individuals differ significantly in violent and destructive behavior, misbehavior with others, self-injurious behavior, repetitive behavior, hyperactivity, and fear. In all these comparisons, moderate cases consistently scored higher than mild ones. However, no significant t-values were reported for temper tantrums, rebellious behavior, or antisocial behavior, even though the mean scores of moderate individuals were higher in these cases as well.
- Therefore, the findings confirm the fourth hypothesis of the present study: moderate intellectual disability individuals exhibit more behavioral disturbances than mild intellectual disability individuals.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

The data were analyzed to estimate the prevalence of behavioral disturbances among different categories of intellectual disability, as well as across gender and age groups, and are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

There is a clear-cut tendency in the female group, indicating that the extent of behavioral disturbances is higher among individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities compared to those with mild intellectual disabilities. This is evident from the higher percentages in all ten domains of behavioral disturbances, as well as the cumulative percentage on the

total scale. This trend is consistent across all three age groups. An exception is observed only in the domain of temper tantrums, where females with mild intellectual disabilities aged 14–18 years exhibited a higher percentage of disturbances than their moderate counterparts.

However, the same clear-cut pattern does not emerge among males with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities across the three age groups.

Despite this, the cumulative percentages in the three male age groups are similar to the female findings, showing that individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities tend to have higher behavioral disturbances than those with mild intellectual disabilities. Nevertheless, individual behavioral disturbances show varying patterns across different age groups.

In the 6–10 years male age group, individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities showed a higher prevalence in behaviors such as violent and destructive behavior, temper tantrums, self-injurious behavior, repetitive behavior, hyperactive behavior, antisocial behavior, and fear. In contrast, misbehavior with others, odd behavior, and rebellious behavior were more prevalent among individuals with mild intellectual disabilities in this age group.

A similar pattern is observed in the 10–14 years male group, where individuals with mild intellectual disabilities recorded higher percentages in temper tantrums and antisocial behavior compared to those with moderate disabilities. However, in the remaining eight domains, individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities had higher percentages of behavioral disturbances.

Among 14–18-year-old males, individuals with mild intellectual disabilities were found to have more self-injurious behavior and fear than those with moderate disabilities. Yet again, in the remaining eight behavioral disturbance areas, individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities recorded higher percentages, indicating a general trend of greater behavioral disturbances in the moderate group.

A very clear-cut picture emerged when age and gender categories were combined, and percentages were calculated for both mild and moderate intellectual disability groups across all ten domains of behavioral disturbances.

Individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities consistently exhibited more behavioral problems than those with mild disabilities. The differences between the two groups were found to be more significant in older age groups than in the younger ones.

These results confirm the findings of Eyman and Call (1977) and Schroeder et al. (1978). Similar findings have also been reported by Jacobson (1982). Contrary findings, however, were reported by Gillberg et al. (1986) and Gostason (1985), as well as by Deb, S., Thomas, M., & Bright, C. (2001); Holden, B., & Gitlesen, J. P. (2006); and Myrbakk, E., & von Tetzchner, S. (2008)—who found in their respective studies that behavioral disturbances were higher among individuals with severe intellectual disabilities.

There is a need for further research to better establish the magnitude of the problem, as the general consensus remains that individuals with intellectual disabilities are particularly vulnerable to behavioral disturbances.

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