

Effect of Presence of Intellectually Disabled Child on The Emotional Development of Normal Siblings

Dr. Simi Shrivastava [1]

Abstract

Intellectual disability is not a disease or a simple entity. It is a term applied to a condition of retarded mental development present at birth or in early childhood and is characterized mainly by limited intelligence.

The upbringing of Intellectual disability in the family calls for a variety of emotional stresses and stress adjustment related to child's disability and these are not restricted to only parents alone. Siblings too form an integral part of family where in the emotional stress, adjustments are also reflected on them which hinder their emotional development. The effect of presence of intellectually disabled child in the family on emotional development of the normal siblings of disabled was studied. Emotional maturity scale was used to ascertain the emotional development of SMDC group and SNC group and it was found that SMDC group was lesser emotionally developed than SNC group.

Keywords: Intellectually disabled , Siblings of Normal Children(SNC), Siblings of Mentally disabled children (SMDC), Emotional development

Article History: Submitted: 19th November, 2021, Revised: 20th November, 2021, Accepted: 13th December, 2021, Published: 31st December, 2021.

I. INTRODUCTION

People with mental retardation have significantly impaired intellectual functioning reduced cognitive ability, limited adaptive skills and need support to participate in the community. The causes for mental retardation may be due to number of factors usually in prenatal period due to chromosomal disorders, genetic disorders, nutritional insufficiency, infections in mother, maternal diseases, exposure to X-ray in early months of pregnancy, using harmful drugs, untreated fits on mother, accidents and congenital defects of CNS such as hydrocephalus and microcephalus. The perinatal causes mostly are premature birth, low birth weight of babies, delayed birth cry etc. whereas the postnatal causes are malnutrition in child, epilepsy, infections such as meningitis and encephalitis. The degree and classification of mental retardation may vary from mild, moderate, severe and profound depending on the intelligence quotient.

The upbringing of a mentally disabled child in the family calls for a variety of stressors and stress adjustment related to child's disability. According to Peshwaria (1992), parenting a mentally handicapped child is not an easy job. The parents, the siblings, the grandparents and in fact the whole family relationship is damaged due to the care taking of a mentally disabled child. Parents, siblings and significant others have negative attitude towards such a child and this negativism brings about immense effects on family relationships between parents and mentally disabled child and between siblings and mentally disabled child.

Siblings feel neglected when parents devote extra attention and care to the mentally disabled and hence the relationship between siblings and mentally disabled child becomes intense.

Siblings also play a critical role in the family. They share sorrow and disappointment that accompany with the presence of mentally disabled child in the family (Circiellie 1982: Turnbull and Turnbull, 1990) and also experience both stressful and rewarding situations. Crnic and Leconte (1986) have indicated a full range of emotional response in siblings from burden to joy in the presence of mentally disabled child.

The emotional reactions of siblings in the presence of mentally disabled child in the family were to be fear, resentment, confusion (Hunter et al, 1972; Binger, 1973; Trevine, 1979; Crnic and Leconte, 1986), guilt (San Martino and Newman, 1974), anger (Breshen et al: 1981; Seligman, 1983), frustration (Featherstone, 1980), jealousy, (Schild, 1979; Mc Dermott, 1980), embarrassment (Wentworth, 1974), rivalry (Mc Dermott 1980), behaviour problems (Gath 1973; Trevine, 1979; Cerrate and Miller, 1981) adjustment problems (Aptey et al, 1907) and differential treatment from parents (Mc Hale and Gamble, 1989).

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The author intends to study whether presence / absence of mentally disabled child in the family exerts any effect on emotional development of normal siblings? More specifically, the problem can be stated as whether siblings of mentally disabled child (SMDC) differ from the siblings of normal child (SNC) in regard to their emotional development?

It can very well be reasoned that siblings in the family with intellectual disabled child face un-favourable and non-encouraging environment in terms of emotional stimulation. Krammar and Phillips (1985) and Lobate et al. (1987)

^[1] Director Projects and Research , Aakanksha, Lions institute of Learning and Empowerment, Raipur (C.G)

observed that siblings of mentally disabled are high on negative emotions i.e, aggression, anger, rivalry guilt, denial, and depression.

Hence it is hypothesized that the children of SNC group would be more emotionally mature than that of SMDC group.

III. METHODOLOGY

THE SAMPLE:

Initially a Sibling Bio-data Form was administered to a large group of school going population of Raipur City studying in class I to class X to determine the presence / absence of mentally disabled child in the family. On the basis of information sought through Sibling Bio-data Form subjects were divided into two groups, i.e., Siblings of mentally disabled child group (SMDC) i.e., presence of mentally disabled child in the family and Siblings of normal child group (SNC) i.e., absence of mentally disabled child in the family. A random sample of 480 subjects was selected, out of which 240 subjects were siblings of mentally disabled child (SMDC) and 240 subjects were siblings of group normal child (SNC) group.

IV. INSTRUMENTS OF THE STUDY

A. SIBLING BIO-DATA FORM

An important problem of the present investigation was to seek the bio-data details of siblings. For the purpose a Sibling Bio-data Form was prepared. It consists of the information pertaining to the name of the student, sex, date of birth, education, father's name, residential address, telephone number, no. of elder brothers and sister, no. of younger brothers and sisters, his/her ordinal position in the family and lastly information pertaining to the presence of mentally disabled sibling in the family, his/ her sex, and his/her ordinal relation to the sibling subject.

B. MEASUREMENT OF EMOTIONAL MATURITY – EMOTIONAL STABILITY SCALE.

Emotional stability scale, constructed and standardized by Dr. (Miss) A. Sen Gupta and Dr. A.K. Singh (1985) was used to assess emotional maturity level of the subjects, It consists of 15 items. The maximum possible score on this test is 15.

V. DESIGN & PROCEDURE

A total of 480 subjects would be drawn. Out of these 480 subjects, 240 subjects would be SMDC (Siblings of Mentally Disabled Child) and to 240 subjects would be SNC (Siblings of Normal Child)

Data were collected in two steps. In the first step, a Sibling Bio data Form was administered on a large group of school going population of Raipur city studying in class I to class X. On the basis of information secured on the sibling Bio-data Form, a total of 480 subjects were selected, out of which 240 were siblings with mentally disabled child in the family (SMDC) and 240 were siblings with normal child in the family (SNC).

In the second step, these finally selected 480 subjects were administered emotional maturity scale to assess their emotional development.

VI. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The specific problem of the study was whether presence of mentally disabled child in the family exerts any effect on emotional development of siblings. It has been assumed that there would be detrimental effect of the presence of mentally disabled child in the family on emotional development of normal siblings.

Table 1. Average scores on emotional development.

GROUP	SNC	SMDC
MEAN	8.065	6.96

The average emotional scores of the SNC group ($M=8.065$) is higher than that of SMDC group ($M=6.96$). A CR was computed to check the significance of this difference between the two groups. The obtained CR ($CR=7.956$; $P<.01$) is significant at .01 level of confidence for 478 degrees of freedom. Thus it can be concluded that the SNC group is genuinely more emotionally developed in comparison to SMDC group. The results confirm the research hypothesis.

There is a long history of concern over possible negative effects of siblings being reared in a home with a child with disability (Farber 1959, 1960; Cohen, 1962; Jorden, 1962; Farber and Jenne, 1963; Schild 1964; Kaplan, 1969; San Martino and Newman, 1974; Shin et al., 2001).

During the emotional development period, the family and its environment play vital roles. This becomes more pertinent when the family has to nurture a mentally disabled child along with other normal children. The interactions between siblings play a critical role in overall development of siblings providing various opportunities along with emotional expressions. Turnbull et al. (1983); Daniels et al. (1985), Peshwaria and Menon (1991), Snow and Hooper (1994), and Nixon and Cummings (1999) noticed critical periods of adjustments by siblings by birth of disabled child in the family. The normal siblings of mentally disabled are potentially at risk for a wide variety of behavioural and emotional problems which may be long lasting (Trevine 1979; Cerrate and Miller, 1981).

Stress plays a primary role in the siblings of disabled due to the differential treatment by parents because of presence of mentally disabled child in the family (Beekman, 1983; Patterson and Eisenberg, 1983; Crnic et al, 1983; Kazak and Marvin, 1984; Crnic, 1991).

The finding of the present study revealed that children of SMDC group are lesser emotionally developed than those of SNC group. The siblings of the disabled often feel ashamed, over burdened due to constant care of such a child. As the mentally disabled child requires more parental attention and energy, the parents are unable to pay due attention to other normal children in the family, consequently the normal children feel dejected and unloved. These conditions eventually put a lot of strain on normal siblings and consequently they are unable to express their emotions in a normal manner. They take longer time to be emotionally mature in comparison to those same aged children who are privileged with a normal sibling. Sibling relationship is vital for all round development of the child and as such healthy interrelationship between mentally disabled child and normal

sibling is lacking. This deprives the normal sibling from various opportunities to learn, to express their emotions in a less diffused and systematic way.

In contrast the siblings of normal children (SNC) have certainly a better family environment, ideal sibling interrelationship to develop a healthier self-concept leading them to be more emotionally matured. The findings of the present study are in consonance with the findings of Farber, 1960, 1963, 1968; Graliker et al., 1962; Fowle, 1968; Grossman, 1972; Hunter et al., 1972; Binger, 1973, San Martino and Newmann, 1974; Gath, 1974; Wentworth, 1974; Schild, 1976; Cleveland and Miller, 1977; Trevine, 1979; Featherstone, 1980; Mc Dermott, 1980; Breslett, et al., 1981; Seligman, 1983; Mc Hale et al., 1984; Crnic and Le Conte, 1986.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

A more detailed and comprehensive comparative study can be undertaken taking into consideration the level of intellectual disability, family type and socio economic status of both SNC and SMDC.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study intends to find the effect of presence of intellectually

A total of 480 subjects were randomly selected . Out of these 480 subjects, 240 subjects were SMDC (Siblings of Mentally Disabled Child) and to 240 subjects were SNC (Siblings of Normal Child).

Emotional Stability Scale (Gupta and Singh, 1985) was used to ascertain the emotional development level of the subjects.

The average emotional scores of the SNC group ($M=8.065$) is higher than that of SMDC group ($M=6.96$) A CR was computed to check the significance of this difference between the two groups. The obtained CR ($CR=7.956$; $P<.01$) is significant at .01 level of confidence for 478 degrees of freedom. Thus it can be concluded that the SNC group is genuinely more emotionally developed in comparison to SMDC group. The results confirm the research hypothesis.

IX. REFERENCES

1. Cerrato, M: & Miller, N.B.(1981) Siblings of handicapped children: A review of the literature. Unpublished paper, University of California - Los Angeles.
2. Cleveland, D. & Miller, N.(1977): Attitudes and life commitments of older siblings of mentally retarded adults: An exploratory study. *Mental Retardation*, 15, 38-41.
3. Cohen, P.C.(1962): The impact of the handicapped child on the family. *Social Case work*, 43, 137 -142.
4. Crnic, K.A.(1991) : Social support predictions to family functioning one year following initial diagnosis. Paper presented at the 24th Annual Gattinburg conference on Research and Theory in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Miami.
5. Crnic, K.A; Friedrich, W.N; & Greenberg, M.T. (1983): Adaptation of families with mentally retarded children: A model of stress, coping and family ecology. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency*, 88, 2, 125-138.
6. Daniels, D:Dunn,J: Frustenberg, F.F.& Plomin, R.(1985): Environmental differences with the family and adjustment differences within pairs of adolescent siblings. *Child Development*, 56, 764- 774.
7. Farber, B. (1959): Effects of a severely mentally retarded child on family integration.
8. Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 24, 2..
9. Farber, B. (1960): Family organization and crisis Maintenance of integration in families with a severely mentally retarded child. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 25,1.
10. Farber, B. (1968): *Mental Retardation Its social context and social consequences*. Mifflin, Boston: Houghton.
11. Farber, B: and Jenne, W.C. (1963): Family organization and parent-child communication: Parents and siblings of a retarded child. *Monographs of the society for Research in Child Development*, 28,7.
12. Featherstone, H. (1980): *A difference in the family Living with a disabled child* Basic Books, New York.
13. Fowle, C.M. (1968): The effect of the severely mentally retarded child on his family. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency*, 73, 468-473.
14. Gath, A. (1973): The School age siblings of mongol children. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 123, 161-167.
15. Gath, A. (1974): Siblings reactions to mental handicap A comparison of the brothers and sisters of Mongol children. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 15,187-198.
16. Graliker, B. V.; Fishler K; & Koch, R.K. (1962): Teenage reactions to a mentally retarded siblings. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency*, 66, 838-843.
17. Grossman, F.K.(1972): Brother and sisters of retarded children: An exploratory study. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press.
18. Gupta, S.A: and Singh A.K. (1985): *Emotional Stability Test for Children*. National Psychological Corporation, Agra.
19. Hunter, M.H; Schucman, H., & Friedlander, G. (1972): *The retarded child from birth to five. A multidisciplinary programe for the child and family*. John Day, New York.
20. Jordan, T.E. (1962): Research on the handicapped child and the family. *Merrill Palmer Quarterly*, 8, 243.
21. Kaplan, F.(1969): Siblings of the retarded. In.S. Sarason & J.Dosis (Eds.) *Psychological problems in mental deficiency*. Harper and Row, New York, 186 - 208.
22. Kazak, A.E: & Marvin, R.S. (1984): Differences, difficulties and adaptations : Stress and social networks in families with a handicapped child. *Family Relations*, 33,67-77.

23. Krammer, Post and Phyllips, Susane. (1985) Counselling services for siblings of handicapped. *Elementary School Guidance and Conselling*, 20, 2, 115-120.
24. Lobato, D; Barbour, L, Hall, L.J., & Miller, C.T. (1987) Psychosocial Characteristics of preschool siblings of handicapped and non-disabled children. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 15, 329-338.
25. Mc Dermott, J. (1980): The complete book on siblings rivalry. Wideview Books, New York.
26. Mc Hale, S.M., Simeonsson, R.J& Sloan, J.L. (1984) : Children with handicapped brothers and sisters. In E. Schopler & G.Mesibov (Eds.) *The effects of autism. on the family*. Plenum, New York, 327-342.
27. Mc Hale, S.M.: & Gamble, W.C: (1989) Siblings relationships of children with disabled and non-disabled brothers and sisters *Developmental Psychology*, 25 (3), 421-429.
28. Nixon, Charisse I: & Cummings, E. Mark (1999): Sibling disability and children's reactivity to conflicts involving family members. *Journal of Family Psychology*. 13,2,274-285.
29. Patterson, L E & Eisenberg, S (1983): *The counselling process*. 3rd (Ed.) Mifflin, Houghton Boston.
30. Peshwaria, R. (1992): Meeting counselling needs of parents of disabled children. *Samadhan Newsletter*, 10-11.
31. Peshwaria, R & Menon, D.K. (1991): Needs of families of mentally handicapped children. *Indian Journal of Disability and Rehabilitation*, 1, 69-72.
32. Schild, S. (1964): Counselling with parents of mentally retarded children living at home. *Social work*, 9, 86 - 91.
33. Schild, S. (1976): The family of the retarded child. In R. Koch & J. Dobson (Eds.) *The mentally retarded child and his family*, Bruner / Mazel, New York.
34. Seligman, M.(1983): Siblings of handicapped persons. In M. Seligman (Ed). *The family with a handicapped child: Understanding and treatment*. Grune & Stratton, New York, 147-174.
35. Shin, Hye; Jeong Kong: Wi, Yung. (2001): A study of sibling relationship on siblings of children with autism. *Journal of Emotional Disturbances and learning Disabilities*, 17,1,381-412.
36. Snow, J.H. and Hooper, S, R. (1994): Paediatric traumatic brain injury. *Developmental Clinical Psychology & Psychiatry*, 31.
37. Trevino, F. (1979): Siblings of handicapped children: Identifying those at risk. *Social Casework*, 60, 8, 488-493.
38. Turnbull, A.P., Summers, J.A; & Brotherson, M.J.(1983): Working with families with disabled members: A family systems approach. Monograph, The Research and Training Centre on Independent Living, University of Kansas, Lawrence. K.S.