

Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being among the Parents of Children with Intellectual Disability

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Abstract

Parents of children with intellectual disabilities have varying degrees of distress, which rises with the rise in child-related demands linked with short-term as well as long-term goals, which has an impact on parental psychological well-being globally. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and improved mental health as well as environmental adaption in general. The aim of the present study was to assess the emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among Parents of children with intellectually disability. The study was conducted on 100 parents by using purposive sampling technique from required population from different centers of Sehore district and Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India. Ex -post facto research design was used for the study. Results revealed that emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of father of children with intellectual disability was better as compared to mother of children with intellectual disability. Findings also suggest that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Psychological well-being, Parents, Children with Intellectual Disabled.*

Introduction

Parents of children with intellectual disabilities face many challenges in their life. In addition to concern of their children's success in school, they often worry about the social lives of the children.

Intellectual disability is a disorder with onset during the developmental period that includes both intellectual and adaptive functioning deficits in conceptual, social and practical domain. Intellectual disability, historically referred to as mental retardation, is characterized by significant impairments in intellectual functioning and limitations in adaptive behavior that begin prior to the age of 18 (Schalock et al. 2010). Conceptual, social, and practical skills such as personal care, use of the telephone, and managing money are examples of adaptive behaviour. The impact of intellectual disability can range from mild (e.g., a person can engage in meaningful conversation and carry out simple occupational skills) to profound (e.g., a person is completely dependent on others for personal care and has minimal verbal abilities) impairment.

Raising a child with an intellectual disability is a stressful experience for the parents (McConnel and Savage, 2015; Khadi and Hidangmayum, 2012). The birth of the child would be like an accident happened in the family (Walsbren, 1980). Initially, parents would have difficulty to accept reality. Later, when they were ready to accept, close and distant relatives would formulate intricate speculations regarding the associated reflections and stigmatizations in the society. Interpersonal and intrapersonal responses of the parents to the accepted reality depends on how much they identify these speculations as true or false. Along with the speculations, various other stressors related to the parent-child relationship will together interplay in bringing down the hope and expectations and ultimately, the self-esteem of the parents. Distress in parents, as a whole, is multidimensional and more than the sum of its parts (Gohel, Mukherjee, & Choudhary, 2011). Care giving to individuals with disability is laborious and associated with many mental health issues and related problems. The mental health issues, stress and burden of the care givers of intellectually disabled individuals are equally important as indicated by the recent researches. In some cases, family members neglect the disabled individuals. The scenario is very serious with caregivers of individual with intellectual disability.

Well-being is the general phenomena in everyone's life which shows that life is good. The term 'well-being' is also related with specific variety of goodness like living in a good environment being of worth for the world, being able to cope with life, enjoying life etc. (Singh and Shyam,

2007). It is based on individual and society how they achieve this goal. Archer, Probert and Gage (1987) stated that it is a process of human functioning that involves the body, mind and spirit. It is a dynamic process which moves through social and psychological dimensions as well as health-related behaviors. Psychological well-being is a new concept of well-being in modern time. Psychological wellbeing was earlier studied in philosophy. Subjective well-being is indicated by hedonic measures, whereas psychological well-being is indicated by eudemonic measures (Samman, 2007; Kallay & Rus, 2014). Psychological well-being is the subjective feeling of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with experiences and of one role in the word of work, sense of achievement, utility, belongingness, and no distress, dissatisfaction or worry, etc.

The components of Psychological Well-Being are 1) Life satisfaction which is the act of satisfying or the state of being satisfied; graduation of desire, contentment in possession and enjoyment, repose of mind resulting from compliance with its desires or demands. 2) Efficiency which is the comparison of what is actually produced or performed with what can be achieved with the same consumption of resources. The quality of being efficient or producing an effect or effects; efficient power, effectual agency. 3) Sociability that is the relative tendency or disposition to be so cable or associate with one's fellows. The quality or state of being sociable; the act or an instance of being sociable. 4) Mental health is a term used to describe either a level of cognitive or emotional well-being or an absence of a mental disorder. A person's overall psychological and emotional condition. 5) Interpersonal Relations is an association between two or more people that may range from fleeting to enduring. This association may be based on limerence, love and liking, regular business interactions, or some other type of social commitment. Previous research reported that parents of children with intellectual disabilities were found to have low quality of life due to various stressors. Stressors faced by the parents include comments by others on the errors committed by them to have such a child, remarks by the observers on the deficits in the child and flaws in parenting, stigmatization while attending the public functions, dilemma in facing the mental health professionals, financial difficulties due to the investment in the treatment, behaviour of the child and so on (Minnes, 1988; Dervishaliaj, 2013). All these factors are potential inverse

contributors to the low quality of life of the parents. The most predominant among these is the problem behavior of the child (Mulder, Tudor, & Walsh, 2013), which acts as a moderator in the relationship between pain experienced by the parents and their stress. To prevent this stressor, parents may show a tendency to separate the child from the family. Some parents had reported high suicidal ideation due to this stressor.

Some coping methods are more like habits than skills and can be harmful. Emotional intelligence is one of the skills that minimize the negative stress consequences according to Montes & Augusto (2007). There is an indirect relationship with psychological distress being predicted by coping style and coping style predicted by emotional intelligence (Campbell, Alistair, and Ntobedzi, Alice (2007). Daniel Goleman described emotional intelligence as the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and our relationships. First popularized in 1990, the term Emotional Intelligence is described by Salovey and Mayer as the ability to recognize, manage and understand emotions within oneself and others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Goleman (1998) suggests that 80% of an individual's life success relies on the concept of emotional intelligence, whereas IQ reflects 20%. In theory, emotional intelligence is the collective blend of emotion and intelligence. Emotional intelligence harmonizes individuals with the self and environment (Stanescu & Tasente, 2021). When an individual is emotionally intelligent, their behaviors afford the ability to effectively regulate their emotions (Sekhri et al., 2017). As this concept has become increasingly studied, it is apparent that skills of emotional intelligence may serve as a foundational undertone for enhanced student academic achievement and in society, along with the skills necessary for workplace success (Sekhri et al., 2017).

Review of literature

In a longitudinal study on the well-being of parents of individuals included in the Australian Rett Syndrome Database over the period from 2002 to 2011, Mori et al., (2019) reported that poorer parental physical well-being was related with residential remoteness, the child being a teenager at

baseline, having frequent sleep disturbances or behavioural problems, and being a single parent or on a low income was associated with later poorer physical well-being, while the child having enteral feeding was associated with later poorer emotional well-being.

Hayat and Zafar (2015) investigated the relationship between coping strategies and psychological well-being among parents with Down syndrome children. The sample comprised 120 parents (60 fathers, 60 mothers of diagnosed 60 children with Down syndrome). Results showed significant correlations between psychological well-being and coping strategies. Those parents who relied more on active avoidance coping, reported lower levels of psychological well-being as compared to those who relied on problem-focused coping strategies. Fathers scored significantly high on psychological well-being than mothers. Data analysis suggested significant differences in parental psychological well-being and coping strategies with the increasing age of the children. Gender differences were also explored which suggested that parents with girl-child had comparatively higher levels of psychological wellbeing than parents with boy-child.

Boromand and Narimani (2014) compared the psychological well-being factors among the parents of the mentally retarded children with those of the normal children. The sample of the present research includes all the parents of the mentally retarded and normal children whose children were studying in the mentally retarded and normal schools. The results shows that there is a significant difference between the parents of the normal children and those of the mentally retarded children with regards to the psychological well-being factors (positive relationship with the others, mastering the environment, self-acceptance factors, independence, having purpose in life, and personal development).

A study on Psychological Well Being among the Parents of Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities by Parameswari et al. (2017), investigated the level of psychological well-being among the parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In this study the results shows that more than half 56.8% of the respondents are having low level of

psychological wellbeing. The findings convey that more than half of the parents do not have good mental health due to their multiple responsibilities.

Cram et al., (2011) aimed to identify the conditions under which psychological well-being and parental stress are affected using parental stress as a mediating factor. They found that parental stress and the child's depressive feelings strongly affected psychological well-being. They also found an indirect relation of restricted caregiver social activities through parental stress.

Gray and Holder (2009) studied the psycho-social well-being among an Australian sample of parents of children with autism. The results indicated that fathers, and those parents who received more social support, had lower score of depression, anxiety and anger. The age of symptom onset was positively related to depression but was not significant in terms of anxiety and anger. Parents with older children, females and larger families reported lower score of anger. These independent variables were not significantly related to depression or anxiety. Neither the type nor the extent of coping behaviour was significantly related to any of the measures of psycho-social well-being used in this study.

Laurvick, et al., (2006) reported in a study on mothers (n = 135, age ranged from 21 to 60 years) of children with Rett syndrome (age between 3 and 27 years) that the most important predictors of maternal physical and emotional health are child behavior, caregiver demands, and family function.

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Method

Aim: The aim of the present study was to assess the emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among Parents of children with intellectually disability.

Objective of the study

1. To assess the level of emotional intelligence among the parents of children with Intellectual Disability.
2. To assess the level of psychological well-being among the parents of children with Intellectual Disability.
3. To assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being.
4. To compare the emotional intelligence and psychological well-being between mother and father of children with Intellectual Disability.

Hypotheses:

1. There will be high emotional intelligence among the parents of children with Intellectual Disability.
2. The level of psychological well-being will be high among the parents of children with Intellectual Disability.
3. There will be a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being.
4. There will be high emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among the father as compared to mother.

Measures:

1. Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS-SANS) developed by Dr. Arun Kumar Singh and Dr. Shruti Narain (2014). It consists of 31 items that measures four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence – Understanding emotions, Understanding motivation, Empathy, and Handling relations. The answers of those items which tallied with the items given in the scoring key were given a score of

+1. If they did not tally, they were given a score of zero. It has a test re-test reliability of 0.86 and has a concurrent validity of 0.86.

2. Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS-SDCP) developed by Dr. Devendra Singh Sisodia and Ms. Pooja Choudhary. It was used for measuring psychological well-being. It comprises of 50 items. The test-retest reliability was found to be 0.87 and the overall consistency value of the scale was 0.90.

Procedure:

The data is collected by administering the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS-SANS) and Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS-SDCP) on 100 parents of children with Intellectual disabilities by using purposive sampling technique from different centers of Sehore district and Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

RESULTS

Table no. 1 Shows mean and standard deviation of Emotional Intelligence and Psychological well-being

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Intelligence	100	10.00	30.00	25.7400	5.18666
Psychological well-being	100	111.00	196.00	168.6900	25.49815

Table no. 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of Emotional Intelligence and Psychological well-being. The mean score of Emotional Intelligence was 25.74 and SD 5.18; the mean score of Psychological well-being was 168.69 and SD was 25.49.

Table 2. Shows the comparison of Emotional Intelligence and Psychological well-being of father and mother

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	p
Emotional Intelligence	Father	50	28.4800	1.12920	.15969	6.202	0.00
	Mother	50	23.0000	6.14452	.86897		
Psychological well-being	Father	50	184.0400	5.83431	.82510	7.523	0.00
	Mother	50	153.3400	28.26089	3.99669		

Table 3. shows the comparison of Emotional Intelligence and Psychological well-being of father and mother of children with intellectual disability. There is a significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence ($t= 6.202, p=0.00$) of father and mother of children with intellectual disability. Findings also indicate that there is a significant difference in the Psychological well-being ($t=7.52, p=0.00$) of father and mother of children with intellectual disability.

Table 3. Shows the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological well-being

	Psychological well-being	
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	0.898**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	100
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

Table 3 shows the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological well-being. It was found that Emotional Intelligence was significantly positively correlated with the Psychological well-being ($r= 0.898, p>0.00$).

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to assess the emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among Parents of children with intellectually disability. The results revealed that emotional intelligence of father of children with intellectual disability was higher as compared to mother. It was also revealed that psychological well-being of father of children with intellectual disability was better as compared to mother of children with intellectual disability. Findings also suggest that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. The findings of the study are also supported by another study done by Hayat (2015) which concluded that the psychological well-being of father of children with Down Syndrome is better than the mother. A study done by Mona et al (2019) concluded that two third of parents with Down Syndrome Children had low level of psychological well-being. Another study concluded that the 58% parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities has low level of psychological well being (Parmeswari and Eljo, 2017).

Based on the findings of the study, it was found that if the emotional intelligence of the parents of children with intellectual disability is higher then the overall psychological well-being of the parents would be better. In order to improve the psychological well-being of parents of children with intellectual disability, the mental health professional should work on enhancing the emotional intelligence of the parents.

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