



A Study on Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Hopelessness in Fathers of CwSN with Mild or Moderate Intellectual Disability

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Abstract:

The present study aimed to examine the levels of depression, anxiety, stress and hopelessness among fathers of children with mild or moderate intellectual disability. Data were collected from a total sample of N=30 participants with the help of DASS- 21 and BHS. The findings indicate that fathers' psychological distress varies significantly with both their own age and their child's age. Additionally, a significant difference was found in the hopelessness particularly influenced by the severity of the child's intellectual disability.

Keywords: Mild vs Moderate Intellectual Disability, Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Hopelessness, CwSN.

Introduction:

Intellectual Disability (ID) increases the psychological, social, and financial distress of the family, particularly parents. Past studies claim that parents of the CwSNs, as they play the caregivers role constantly may experience various psychological distress such as stress, anxiety and depression in compare to the parents of normally developing children. Studies also found that compared to mothers, father's involvement is less and there is limited research on father's mental health having CwSNs.

Behavioural issues and lack of adaptive skills identified in Children with ID. Usually fathers stay and work outside from home and interaction with their child is very less. As a result low parenting satisfaction is arising in fathers along with negative mental health.

Children with intellectual disability frequently have difficulties in adapting to their environment. The extent of the experienced problems does not only depend on cognitive functioning but is influenced by other factors, such as the presence of a psychiatric disorder or other brain disorders, or adverse environmental factors.

Cognitive disability has as a common denominator a subnormal intellectual functioning level; nevertheless, the extent to which an individual is unable to face the demands established by society for the individual's age group has brought about four degrees of severity: Mild, moderate, severe and profound.

It is observed that children with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities have high rates of difficulty in motor skills, executive function/attention, social and emotional/ behavioural functioning.

Few components are noticed in fathers of CwSN like emotional impact, mental health and coping, systems of support, and hopes and fears. It has often been assumed that the extra stress of caring for a child with disabilities places parents at risk of suffering from depression.

Parents of children with special needs have higher risk of psychological distress and experience many challenges with their children. Children with physical-motor disorders and intellectual disability and they need continuous treatment, these parents experience high levels of stress, depression and frustration, with their children development.

Objective:

1. To study significant difference in Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Hopelessness in Father’s Age group of CwSN with Mild /Moderate ID.
2. To study significant difference in Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Hopelessness in Children’s Age group of Fathers of CwSN with Mild /Moderate.
3. To study significant difference in Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Hopelessness in Children’s ID level of Fathers of CwSN with Mild /Moderate ID.

Hypotheses:

There is no significant difference in depression, anxiety, stress and hopelessness in father’s age group, in children’s age group and in children’s ID level in fathers of CwSN with Mild / Moderate ID.

Methodology:

Data were collected from total N=30participants from south and north Kolkata, aged between 25-45years having children with mild/moderate ID. Fathers’ of CwSN with other disability criteria had been excluded from the study. DASS-21and BHS were administered to assess the psychological variables such as depression, anxiety, level of stress, and hopelessness of the fathers. In this study, purposive sampling was used to collect the data to fulfill the purpose of the study. The data were analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics and t-test to find the significant difference.

Result:

Table:1 There is no significant difference in Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Hopelessness in Father’s Age group of CwSN with Mild / Moderate ID.

Variable		Mean	SD	df	t stat	P value	Interpretation
Depression	Father’s age 25yrs-35yrs	9. 5	1. 74	28	3	0. 005	There is statistically significant difference between group means as determined by t (df 28) = 3, P < 0. 05, Ct 2 and the hypothesis is rejected.
	Father’s age 35+yrs-45yrs	11. 43	1. 75				
Anxiety	Father’s age 25yrs-35yrs	9	1. 77	27	1. 18	0. 24	There is no statistically significant difference between group means as determined by t (df 27) = 1. 18, P > 0. 05, Ct 2 and the hypothesis is accepted.
	Father’s age 35+yrs-45yrs	9. 81	1. 64				

Stress	Father's age 25yrs-35yrs	6	1.95	28	3.33	0.002	There is statistically significant difference between group means as determined by $t (df 28) = 3.33, P < 0.05$, Ct 2 and the hypothesis is rejected.
	Father's age 35+yrs-45yrs	8.6	2				
Hopelessness	Father's age 25yrs-35yrs	4.9	1.85	28	3.58	0.001	There is statistically significant difference between group means as determined by $t (df 28) = 3.58, P < 0.05$, Ct 2 and the hypothesis is rejected.
	Father's age 35+yrs-45yrs	7.75	2.43				

Table:2 There is no significant difference in Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Hopelessness in Children's Age group of Fathers of CwSN with Mild / Moderate ID.

Variable		Mean	SD	df	t stat	P value	Interpretation
Depression	Children's age 6yrs-8yrs	9.28	1.8	26	-3.99	0.0004	There is statistically significant difference between group means as determined by $t (df 26) = -3.99, P < 0.05$, Ct 2 and the hypothesis is rejected.
	Children's age 8+yrs-10yrs	11.75	1.5				
Anxiety	Children's age 6yrs-8yrs	9	1.8	23	-1.78	0.087	There is no statistically significant difference between group means as determined by $t (df 23) = -1.78, P > 0.05$, Ct 2 and the hypothesis is accepted.
	Children's age 8+yrs-10yrs	10	1.34				
Stress	Children's age 6yrs-8yrs	6	2	27	-3.56	0.001	There is statistically significant difference between group means as determined by $t (df 27) = -3.56, P < 0.05$, Ct 2 and the hypothesis is rejected.
	Children's age 8+yrs-10yrs	8.68	1.99				
Hopelessness	Children's age 6yrs-8yrs	5.5	2.31	28	-1.95	0.06	There is no statistically significant difference between group means as determined by $t (df 28) = -1.95, P > 0.05$, Ct 2 and the hypothesis is accepted.
	Children's age 8+yrs-10yrs	7.25	2.59				

Table:3 There is no significant difference in Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Hopelessness in Children's ID level of Fathers of CwSN with Mild / Moderate ID.

Variable		Mean	SD	df	t stat	P value	Interpretation
Depression	Children with Mild ID	10	2	24	-1.8	0.079	There is no statistically significant difference between group means as determined by $t (df 24) = -1.8, P > 0.05$, Ct 2 and the hypothesis is accepted.
	Children with Moderate ID	11	1.9				

Anxiety	Children with Mild ID	9	1.78	25	-0.52	0.6	There is no statistically significant difference between group means as determined by $t(df 25) = -0.52, P > 0.05, Ct 2$ and the hypothesis is accepted.
	Children with Moderate ID	9.66	1.66				
Stress	Children with Mild ID	6.8	1.97	19	-1.75	0.09	There is statistically significant difference between group means as determined by $t(df 19) = -1.75, P > 0.05, Ct 2$ and the hypothesis is accepted.
	Children with Moderate ID	8.4	2.67				
Hopelessness	Children with Mild ID	5.4	2.35		-2.9	0.0075	There is statistically significant difference between group means as determined by $t(df 25) = -2.9, P < 0.05, Ct 2$ and the hypothesis is rejected.
	Children with Moderate ID	7.9	2				

Discussion:

In the present study older age group of fathers having children with ID had more depression, stress and hopelessness than younger age group of father and the result was significant. The present finding is not supported by any finding. In the study of **Jetmira Millaku (2023)** noted that parental age does not co-relate with mental health.

The findings of the present study showed that, fathers of older age group of children with ID are more depressed and stressed than father of younger age group of children with ID and the results is significant. This finding is supported by the study of **Margarida Pocinho (2018) and Jessica N. Hoyle (2021)**. The reason behind of this result is both father and children are getting older so fathers are becoming more concerned about their children's future.

In the present study it is noted that fathers of children with moderate ID have higher hopelessness than fathers of children with mild ID and the result is significant. The present finding is supported by the study of **Sreedevi PAppukkuttan (2025) and Nazan Kaytez (2025)**. The reason behind of this result is performance and activity level of the CwSNs vary from level of severity and disability, which negatively affect in parental hope.

Conclusion:

From the result it can be concluded there is significant difference in depression, stress and hopelessness level in fathers age group having Children with mild/moderate Intellectual Disability. It is also notice that in children's in age group there is a difference in depression and stress level in fathers having Children with mild/moderate Intellectual Disability. There is a significant difference in hopelessness between fathers of children with mild ID and fathers of children with moderate ID.

Implication:

The role of father is very important in family. The mental health of the fathers should be taken into consideration. The fathers of CwSNs can also be referred to join intervention classes. It will help them for mental wellbeing.

Limitation:

In this study the sample was selected from the parents with mild/moderate ID from a specific area. Due to limited data collection, non-random selection of data and small size of sample the study was not generalized.

Scope for Further Study:

Poor mental health is noticed in fathers of CwSNs. Fathers have lack of involvement in their child's regular activities, as well as their intervention programme. Fathers are unable to share their emotions and feelings and gradually get poor mental health. Father's occupation, income, family type, location, education all are included in child's progress and for parental wellbeing.

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