



# A Review On Psychological Wellbeing Among Parents Of Children With Intellectual Disability

Sanchita Bhunia,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Irom Shirly,<sup>2</sup> Dr. Saphabi Devi Nongthombam.<sup>3</sup>

1. PhD Scholar, Department of Nursing Studies, Manipur International University, Manipur, India
2. Associate Professor and Research Officer, Department of Social Work, Manipur International University, Manipur, India
3. Associate Professor, Department of Nursing Studies, Manipur International University, Manipur, India

**Abstract:** An intellectual disability is a neurodevelopmental condition that develops in childhood. It affects capacity to learn and retain new information, and it also affects daily living activities such as fundamental self-care tasks and social skills. Depending on the severity of the intellectual disability, children tend to be dependent on their parents. Overdependence of the child may reduce psychological wellbeing of parents. Psychological wellbeing is the positive mental states such as happiness or satisfaction of parents. The prevalence of intellectual disability in India estimated to be around 1.8 to 2%. A child is most special in a family because they bring happiness and energy within the family. In a family when a child first diagnosed as intellectual disabled, parents experience lot of negative emotions like stress anxiety, depression and also fear about the future of the child. Financial problem and lack of social support has impact on their mental wellbeing. The objective of the review is to explore psychological wellbeing of parents with intellectual disability and associated demographic factors. Systematic literature scrutiny was performed by using the key search words intellectually disabled children, parents and psychological wellbeing in the electronic databases such as Research gate, Academia, Google Scholar. Several descriptive studies were conducted on this area and it has been observed that parents of intellectually disabled children had a high prevalence of psychological illness than the parents of normal children. Most of the parents did not have good mental health due to their multiple responsibilities. They faced problems and perceived considerable stress as their whole life style get affected including their mental health and psychological wellbeing. They had a higher prevalence of psychological morbidity than the parents of normal children. The commonest psychiatric disorders among parents were dysthymia followed by generalized anxiety disorder, stress, moderate depression, feeling of guilt, shame, helplessness. This review helps to know psychological condition of parents. On the basis of review findings, in future interventional research can be conducted on psycho education, relaxation technique, coping strategy for improving psychological wellbeing of parents.

**Key Words:** *Psychological wellbeing, Intellectually Disable Children, Parents*

**Introduction:** Intellectual disability is a word used to define an individual with particular limitations in their skills and functions such as communication and self-care skills. Main features of intellectual disability are intellectual and adaptive functioning deficits and onset during the developmental period. Psychological wellbeing is a positive mental state and overall functioning of parents with intellectual disabled children such as autonomy about life and environmental mastery. Parents felt difficulties to maintain balance between their role responsibilities in family and care of the child. According to World Health Organization(WHO)<sup>1</sup> Intellectual disability refers to when a child has major difficulty or delay in acquiring skills across most developmental areas including: motor (movement) skills, communication and speech, social interaction, play and learning (cognitive skills). Prevalence of intellectual disability in India is around 1.8% to 2%. Higher prevalence in rural areas (2.3%) compared to urban areas (1.4%) which suggest that roughly 1.8 to 20 out of every 1000 people have intellectual disability.<sup>2</sup> According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) survey<sup>3</sup> conducted in 2018, the prevalence of intellectual disability in West Bengal was estimated at 0.2% for males and 0.1% for females. However, the prevalence of intellectual disability in India overall is higher, with a recent meta-analysis indicating a pooled rate of 1.8%, with higher rates in rural areas.<sup>4</sup> Children with intellectual disability require special care as they are unable to do daily living activities. Caregivers or parents are responsible to meet their needs. One study showed that most of the mothers that is 89% had anxiety, depression, or both anxiety and depression together as compared to fathers that is 77%.<sup>5</sup> One study conducted to assess psychological wellbeing of fathers with or without intellectual disabled child and observed that the majority of fathers with normal child reported that their general health was good and they had very close relationship with their child and high level of life satisfaction compared with fathers of children with intellectual disability.<sup>6</sup>

**Psychological wellbeing:** A study was conducted to compare the psychological wellbeing factors among the parents of intellectual disabled children and results showed that there is a significant difference between the parents of the normal children and those of the intellectual disabled children with regards to the psychological wellbeing factors such as positive relationship with the others, mastering the environment, self-acceptance factors, independence, having purpose in life, and personal development.<sup>7</sup> Another study carried out on psychological wellbeing among the parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and result showed that more than half (56.8%) of respondents had low level of psychological wellbeing and more than half of parents do not have good mental health due to their multiple responsibilities.<sup>8</sup> One systematic review and meta-analysis on mental health and wellbeing of fathers of children with intellectual disabilities showed that mothers were significantly poor mental health and wellbeing than fathers.<sup>9</sup> One study showed that prevalence of depression was 28.33%, anxiety disorder 18.33%, other psychiatric disorder was 8.33% (psychotic disorder 3.33%, insomnia 1.66%, and alcohol use disorder 3.33%) and total psychiatric morbidity was about 55% in parents of children with intellectual disability.<sup>10</sup> Parents of mentally challenged children face problems and perceived considerable stress as their whole life style get affected including their mental health and psychological wellbeing.<sup>11</sup> Another study showed that mean scores of mental health in parents of normal child was 85.60 and in parents of intellectual disable child the mean scores was 77.09. For the mothers the mean 76.61 which indicate that mental health of parents of intellectually disabled children was found impaired with compared to the parents of normal children.<sup>12</sup>

**Association between psychological wellbeing among parents of intellectual disabled children with socio demographic variables:**

Findings indicate that anxiety of parents is more whose income is less.<sup>13</sup> Quality of life of parents with intellectual disability positively related with intellectual disabled child.<sup>14</sup> Another study revealed that significant relationship found between caregiver's psychological well-being and the clinical characteristics of children with intellectual disability.<sup>15</sup> Regression analyses showed that behavioral and emotional problems of child, living in income poverty and paternal employment were more important than disability status of child in predicting well-being of fathers.<sup>6</sup> There is no statically significant association between psychological morbidity and level intelligence quotient of child, gender of child, type of family and problem behavior of child. Psychiatric morbidity was more prevalent among parents of children with moderate to severe intellectual disability, parents residing in nuclear family, children with problem behavior.<sup>10</sup> Another study showed that there is significant association between depression with educational status, IQ of child and other medical illness of child. Significant association found between stress with occupational status, duration of stay with the child.<sup>15</sup>

**Discussion:** Parents has significant role in rearing their child. They need to give extra care if the child is intellectual disabled. Sometimes they are unable to maintain balance between their responsibility in family and care of child. The review has been proven that parents of intellectual disability having poor psychological wellbeing and they have negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, stress and fear about future of child. All these symptoms associated with degree of intellectual disability, type of family and problem behavior of child.

**Conclusion:** After review it has been concluded that parents of intellectually disabled children confront lot of problems that lead poor psychological wellbeing. They felt emotional pressure such as feeling of ashamed and guilty, social embarrassment and stigma. They need some psychological interventions to maintain their mental and physical wellbeing that helps to increase their coping ability and maintain good quality of life.

#### References:

1. World Health Organization. (2019). Retrieved from [https://applications.emro.who.int/docs/EMRPUB\\_leaflet\\_2019\\_mnh\\_221\\_en.pdf](https://applications.emro.who.int/docs/EMRPUB_leaflet_2019_mnh_221_en.pdf)
2. Ram, L., Shabazi, M., Ekundayo, O.(2015). An estimation of the prevalence of intellectual disabilities and its association with age in rural and urban populations in India. *Journal of Neurosciences in Rural Practice*, 6(4): 523–528. doi: 10.4103/0976-3147.165392
3. West Bengal Disabled person by type and gender.(2023).Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1080114>
4. Kumar, D., I. D. Singh., Kumar,S.(2025). Meta-Analysis of the Prevalence of Intellectual Disability in India. *International Journal of Current Pharmaceutical Review and Research*, 17(2); 1092-1095.Retrieved from <http://www.ijcpr.com>
5. Azeem, MW., Dogar, IA., Shah, S., Cheema, MA., Asmat, A., Akbar, M., Kousar, S., Haider II. (2013). Anxiety and Depression among Parents of Children with Intellectual Disability in Pakistan. *J Can Acad Child Adolescent Psychiatry*, 22(4):290-5. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3825469/>
6. Langley, E., Totsika, V., Hastings, RP.(2020). Psychological well-being of fathers with and without a child with intellectual disability: a population-based study. *J Intellect Disabil Res*, 64(6):399-413. doi: 10.1111/jir.12692
7. Boromand, N., Narimani, M., Mosazadeh, T.(2014).Comparing the psychological well being factors among the parents of the mentally retarded children with those of the normal children. *International*

- Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences,21:1-8. doi:10.18052/www.scipress.com/ILSHS.21.1
8. Paramaswari, S., Eljo, JOJG. A study on psychological wellbeing among the parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. IOSR Journal of Humanity, 8 -12. Retrieved from [www.iosrjournals.org](http://www.iosrjournals.org)
  9. Dunn, K., Kinnear, D., Jahoda, A., McConnachie, A.(2019). Mental health and well-being of fathers of children with intellectual disabilities: systematic review and meta-analysis, BJPsych, 5(6): 96. doi: 10.1192/bjo.2019.75. PMID
  10. Tak, NK., Mahawer, BK., Sushil, CS., Sanadhya, R.(2018). Prevalence of psychiatric morbidity among parents of children with intellectual disability. Ind Psychiatry J,27(2):197-200. doi: 10.4103/ipj.ipj\_39\_18
  11. Kumari, S., Kiran M. (2020). Parenting stress, psychological wellbeing and social support in mothers of children with mental retardation, International Journal of Scientific Research, 9(1):57-60. DOI:10.36106/ijsr.
  12. Garva NR.(2025). Mental Health Status Among Parents Of Intellectually Disabled Children. international Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews, 12 (1): 22-28. Retrieved from <http://www.ijrar.org/>
  13. Kaur J., Nazil., Chavan BS. (2019). Anxiety among parents of individuals with intellectual disability. Journal of Disability Management and rehabilitation, 5(1): 35 -42. Retrieved from <https://www.griid.edu.in>
  14. Krishnan, R., Ram, D., A. J., S., V. M., H. (2023). Parental Wellbeing and Clinical Characteristics of Children with Intellectual Disability. Journal of Social Work Education and Practice, 3(2), 35-49. <https://www.jswep.in/index.php/jswep/article/view/52>
  15. Shinija, K., Jayanthi. MR., Mr, Vipin. (2025). a study on psychological status and well-being among parents of children with intellectual disability. international journal of scientific research.14(12):1-3. DOI : 10.36106/ijsr