

Research Paper

Knowledge of Intellectual Disability (ID) among the Graduates of Social Work

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ABSTRACT

Intellectual disability is a condition where an individual is unable to perform his/her own needs as well as the society prescribed norms. The individuals need care and attention given by his/her parents or care givers for the day-to-day activities. The social worker plays a major role in providing various services in terms of prevention, awareness, treatment process and also in helping the individual and the family to have a normal functioning. In order to understand the knowledge on Intellectual Disability and improve their awareness on the subject the study has been conducted. **Methods** - A descriptive method is used for the study. The study participants' students who are pursuing social work and data is collected using self-prepared questionnaire as a tool. The collection of data is done through convenient sampling method, non-Probability sampling technique. **Results** - The knowledge level of the students are high in their second year of social work. There is no relation found with their residence or the sex of the students to their knowledge level on intellectual disability. **Conclusion** - The study can be done in a wide scale to understand various other factors influencing the knowledge level of social work students also has a scope on providing proper awareness on the Intellectual Disability.

Keywords: *Intellectual Disability, Knowledge, Awareness and Social Work*

Intellectual disability involves impairments of general mental abilities that impact adaptive functioning in three domains, or areas. Intellectual disability (intellectual developmental disorder) as a DSM-5 diagnostic term replaces "mental retardation" used in previous editions of the manuals. (American psychiatric Association, DSM - 5). Intellectual disability means a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn and apply new skills (impaired intelligence). This results in a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning), and begins before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development. Disability depends not only on a child's health conditions or impairments but also and crucially on the extent to which environmental factors support the child's full participation and inclusion in society.

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Background of the Study

The terms “mild,” “moderate,” “severe,” and “profound” have been used to describe the severity of the condition. This approach has been helpful in those aspects of mild to moderate ID differ from severe to profound ID. The DSM-5 retains this grouping with more focus on daily skills than on specific IQ range. Mild to Moderate Intellectual Disability, the majority of people with ID are classified as having mild intellectual disabilities. Individuals with mild ID are slower in all areas of conceptual development and social and daily living skills. These individuals can learn practical life skills, which allow them to function in ordinary life with minimal levels of support. Individuals with moderate ID can take care of themselves, travel to familiar places in their community, and learn basic skills related to safety and health. Their self-care requires moderate support. Severe Intellectual Disability, Severe ID manifests as major delays in development, and individuals often have the ability to understand speech but otherwise have limited communication skills (Sattler, 2002). Despite being able to learn simple daily routines and to engage in simple self-care, individuals with severe ID need supervision in social settings and often need family care to live in a supervised setting such as a group home. Profound Intellectual Disability, Persons with profound intellectual disability often have congenital syndromes (Sattler, 2002). These individuals cannot live independently, and they require close supervision and help with self-care activities. They have very limited ability to communicate and often have physical limitations. Individuals with mild to moderate disability are less likely to have associated medical conditions than those with severe or profound ID.

The social work students theoretical knowledge on Intellectual Disability (ID) would be useful when it comes to field work or when working with individuals with ID also in the ways they can address the family regarding the services that can be provided to the patient and also the activities which can help them with the social activities. The social workers role has a major role when it comes to the prevention role were the community needs to be addressed on the consequence and also about treatment and therapies that can be given to the individuals with intellectual disability. The knowledge level on intellectual disability would be helpful when it comes to a multidisciplinary approach were the social worker needs to coordinate with doctors, physician for various services which is needed for the person with intellectual disability, and also in working on the stigma around the intellectual disability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mental Retardation refers to significantly sub average general intellectual functioning resulting in or associated with concurrent impairment in adaptive behaviour and manifested during the developmental period. “Over the last few years, there have been many changes in the delivery of the mental retardation services including roles of special educator, therapist, parents and community. Integration and inclusion is turning point for mentally retarded persons to create a general awareness amongst the children of regular schools about the special needs of the children with mental retardation. This would help in the inclusive atmosphere both in families and in the society in general. This study will be helpful to know the extent of awareness on mental retardation among regular school children. (Sravankumar Sriram, 2014). Awareness is the most important factor in a community, without awareness level regarding mental retardation among college students. (Sneha Chandrapal, 2018)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To understand the demographic details of the respondents, to assess the knowledge level of social work students on Intellectual Disability, to create awareness among social workers on intellectual disability. The study was conducted among students aged between 18 to 23 who

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are pursuing social work in their under graduation and post graduation level in 6 different colleges (Madras School of Social Work, Madras Christian College, Loyola College, Stella Maris College, Hindustan College of Arts and Science) that are offering social work course. Knowledge level on ID was tested by using a self prepared questionnaire which consisting of 25 items, the respondents answers were scored in order to understand their knowledge in that subject. Quantitative research method with Descriptive research design was used; this studies the concerns with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or group.

RESULTS

The analysis in this study was performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version. Descriptive analyses were performed to calculate the frequencies and percentages for categorical variables and mean and standard deviation for continuous variables for the socio-demographic characteristics including age, gender and level of graduating. The study includes 66 respondents of students graduating in Social Work. The study majorly focuses on understanding the knowledge level of social work students in Intellectual Disability, because it is priority for them to have knowledge in Intellectual Disability in order to work efficient in those areas in their future. Out of 66 samples 24 male (36.4%) and 42 were female respondents (63.6%).

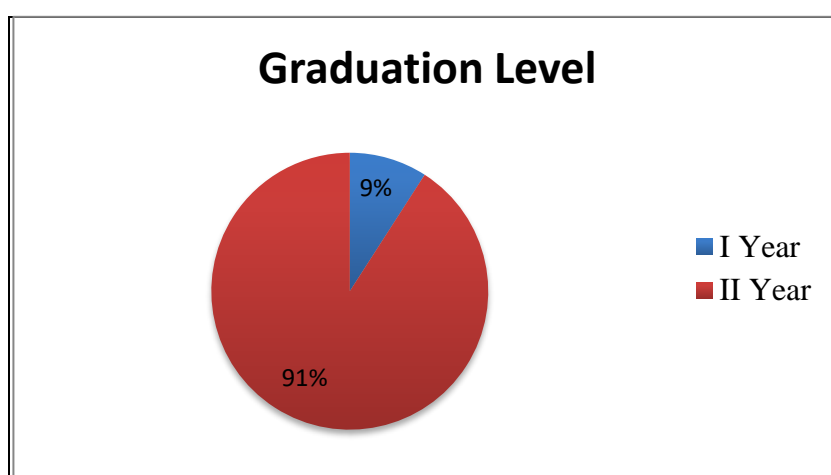


Fig .1 Graduating Levels of the respondents

The above figure illustrates that majority of the respondents are in their second year of graduating in social work subject. The majority of respondents (72.7%) come under Hindu religion, 18.2% and 9.1% of respondents comes under Christian and other religions respectively. The age of the respondents between 18 to 24 years, in which more number of respondents (36.4%) is in 22 years of age. The respondents are slightly more from Rural (54.5%) compared to Urban (45.5%). The responses were collected from students of Madras School of Social Work (27.3%), Stella Maris (9.1%), Rajiv Gandhi National Institute for Youth Development (54.5%) and Tata Institute of Social Science (9.1%). The graduating level in Social Work varies for the respondents, were 9.1% are I years and 90.9% are from II year Post Graduate in Social Work.

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Table No. 1 Knowledge among Students Graduating in Social Work

| Variable | | Knowledge | | Total |
|-----------|--|------------|----------|--------|
| | | Inadequate | Moderate | |
| Sex | Male | 6 | 18 | 24 |
| | | 9.1% | 27.3% | 36.4% |
| | Female | 18 | 24 | 42 |
| | | 27.3% | 36.4% | 63.6% |
| Residence | Rural | 18 | 18 | 36 |
| | | 27.3% | 27.3% | 54.5% |
| | Urban | 6 | 24 | 30 |
| | | 9.1% | 36.4% | 45.5% |
| College | Madras School of Social Work | 6 | 12 | 18 |
| | | 9.1% | 18.2% | 27.3% |
| | Stella Maris | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| | | 0.0% | 9.1% | 9.1% |
| | Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development | 18 | 18 | 36 |
| | | 27.3% | 27.3% | 54.5% |
| | Tata Institute of Social Sciences | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| | | 0.0% | 9.1% | 9.1% |
| Year | II Year | 18 | 42 | 60 |
| | | 27.3% | 63.6% | 90.9% |
| | I Year | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| | | 9.1% | 0.0% | 9.1% |
| Total | | 24 | 42 | 66 |
| | | 36.4% | 63.6% | 100.0% |

From the above table it is understood that female (36.4%) has adequate knowledge on Intellectual Disability comparing to male (27.3%). Among Urban population (36.4%) there is adequate knowledge on Intellectual Disability. Respondents (63.6%) doing II year of Social Work has more knowledge on Intellectual Disability.

DISCUSSION

Based on the demographic details such as age, gender and graduating level, the knowledge level on Intellectual Disability of the respondents has been combined in order to obtain the result. From the result it is understood that females have adequate knowledge, were as keeping the respondents population count on mind the female and male participants are not distributed properly so we cannot come to a conclusion. Residence of the respondents doesn't have any relation with the knowledge level of the individual as the result hasn't shown much variance. The knowledge level of the students are high in their second year of social work since they exposed to field works and also gained knowledge through theory class when compared to first years who had initially started with basics of social work. The study comprises of very few variables in relation to knowledge level of the Social Work students. More factors can be included, which can also be influencing the knowledge of the respondents in the area of Intellectual disability. This only includes limited respondents from few colleges offering social work course, were as it can be done wider aspect covering high number of population as it is a highly needed area of intervention.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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