

RESEARCH PAPER

Influence of parental factors on sibling relationship of normal children with mentally challenged children

AROGYAASHA A. SHALI AND MANJULA PATIL

Department of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Community Science
University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad - 580 005, Karnataka, India

E-mail: arogyaashashali92@gmail.com

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Abstract: The present study was conducted in 2015-16. The population of the study comprised of 90 children from urban and rural areas of selected districts of Northern Karnataka and special schools for mentally retarded located in Hubballi-Dharwad city. Sibling relationship Questionnaire (SRQ) was used to assess the typical sibling's perceptions of the relationship and behaviors towards their sibling with parental factor. Socio-Economic Status Scale (Aggarwal *et al.*, 2005) was employed to assess the socio economic level of family. Results revealed that education and occupation of the father and mother showed significant association with sibling relationship of children in both rural and urban area. Higher the education and occupation of parent's children showed higher level of sibling relationship in both rural and urban area. Parent's education and parent's occupation had major influence on sibling relationship of children. Majority of children who had higher educated and graduate/post graduate fathers were in moderate level of sibling relationship. Children having fathers working in government/private sector was higher in sibling relation as compared to children with father working in agriculture/small business and self employment which calls for educational programmes for parents to promote healthy sibling relationship among children.

Key words: Mentally challenged children, Parental factor, Parents, Sibling relationship

Introduction

The sibling relationship is often the most long-lasting and influential relationship in a person's life. It is unlike any other relationship in a person's life because it provides physical and emotional contact at critical life stages and often outlasts relationships with both parents and peers (Rhodes, 2006). Siblings play very positive roles in each other's lives. Sibling means one of two or more individuals having one or both parents in common. Almost 80% of children grow up with at least one brother or sister. Brothers and sisters teach each other how to get along with others. A sibling relationship is important and only one of its kind because its duration is often lengthy, a common cultural setting is shared, and the nature of the relationship is highly unobstructed than any other human relationship. It is an ascribed rather than an earned role and endures regardless of circumstances or achievements. Siblings play a major role in each other's development, which in some cultures may be equally or more influential than parents (Mandleco *et al.*, 2003).

Faber (2010) has shown that brothers and sisters of disabled children are at compatibility problems and have low self-esteem than non-disabled children. It has been demonstrated adaptability problems in brother and sisters of disabled children. Various studies have found that when social support is provided, siblings of children with disabilities show higher self-concept and more positive family relationships particularly when there is a low level of parental stress.

The presence of a mental retarded child can be a stress source for family (Jefferson, 2007) and affects deeply on sibling's relationships. The situation of a mental retarded child requires the most money, attention and support of the family. Presence of brother or sister with disability can have a profound impact

on siblings by creating a source of tension in family. In non-disabled siblings of these children, self-esteem and confidence is low. In these families, non-disabled siblings have been described as a forgotten people whom their duty is care and maintenance of their disabled siblings. The birth of a child with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities is an experience that few families are well equipped to cope with. Parents and siblings face a unique set of challenges and responsibilities that are often compounded by negative societal attitudes and insufficient supportive services (Seligman and Darling, 1989).

Material and methods

The present study was conducted in 2015-16. The population of the study comprised of normal siblings of mentally challenged children studying in special schools of mentally challenged of Hubballi-Dharwad. A total of 45 normal children having one mentally challenged sibling were selected as urban samples. For the rural area, the population consists of villages from the four districts of Northern Karnataka namely Dharwad, Belagavi, Vijayapur, Bagalkote and Gadag. A total of 45 normal children having mentally challenged child as sibling were selected. The total sample for the study constitutes 90 children. The children were contacted through home visits, and their parents and sibling were interviewed to obtain required information.

Sibling relationship Questionnaire (SRQ) (Furman Buhrmester, 1990) was used to assess the typical sibling's perceptions of the relationship. Items are rated with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "hardly at all" to "extremely much". It was used for all scales except the parental partiality scale in which possible choices range from "my sibling most always

gets treated better, more attention, *etc.*” to “I almost always get...” and scores were based on deviations from the midpoint of “about the same”. The score range from High (176-240), Average (112-175), and Low (48-111). Socio –Economic Status Scale (Aggarwal *et al.*, 2005) was employed to assess the socio economic level of family. Frequency and percentages were computed in order to know demographic characteristics of parental factor. Chi-square test of association was employed to know the association of parental factors with sibling relationship of normal children with mentally challenged dyad.

Results and discussion

Distribution of children based on parental characteristics

The educational level of parents, particularly father’s revealed that majority of father were educated up to higher education followed by 27.7 percent were completed primary level of education.13.3 percent were completed the graduate/post graduate level and 4.4 percent were found to be illiterate. In rural area 6.6 percent of fathers educated up to Graduate/Post-graduate level of education followed by 48.8 percent of them completed higher education, 40 percent of fathers educated up to primary education and 4.4 percent found to be illiterate. Among urban children 20.0 percent fathers were with graduate/post graduate degree and most of fathers were completed higher education (60.0%), 15.4 per cent were educated up to primary level and 4.4 percent found as illiterate. (Table 1).

With respect to mothers education 38.8 per cent of mothers educated up to higher education followed by 34.4 per cent were completed primary education. 20 per cent of them educated up to graduate/post graduate level and 6.6 percent were found to be illiterate. In rural area, maximum number of mothers (46.7%) completed up to primary school level followed by 31.1 per cent

of were educated up to higher education and 15.6 per cent completed graduate/post graduate degree. In case of urban area most of mother were educated up to higher education (46.6%) followed by 24.4 per cent completed their graduation/post graduation. 22.2 per cent were educated up to primary level and 6.6 percent were found as illiterate.(Table 1).

Results on the occupation of the father revealing that 47.7 per cent of them engaged in agriculture/small business followed by 37.7 per cent of them working in government/private sector. In rural area the results depicting that majority of father were doing agriculture/small business (60.0%) followed by self employment (20.0%) and service in government /private sectors. Among urban area majority of them were engaged in service in government sector/service in private sector (55.6%) followed by 35.6 per cent of them are doing agriculture/small business and 8.9 per cent of them are engaged in self employment. (Table 1).

With respect to occupation of mothers majority of them were house wives (64.4%) followed by 30 per cent were engaged in agriculture/small business. Only 5.5 per cent were *doing* service in government/private sectors. In rural area, majority of them were house wife (66.7%) followed by 31.1 percent engaged in agriculture/small business. Only 2.2 per cent were engaged in service in government/private sector. In case of urban area most of them were house wives (62.2%) followed by 28.9 per cent of them were engaged in agriculture/small business and 8.9 per cent were doing service in government sector/service in private sector.(Table 1).

Influence of education of father on sibling relationship of children:

The association between father’s education and sibling relationship of children is presented in Table 2. Half of the

Table 1. Percentage distribution of parental characteristics of children

Characteristics	Category	Rural (n=45)		Urban (n=45)		Total (N=90)	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Education of father	Graduate /Post graduate	3	6.6	9	20.0	12	13.3
	Higher education	22	48.8	27	60.0	49	54.4
	Primary education	18	40	7	15.4	25	27.7
	Illiterate	2	4.4	2	4.4	4	4.4
Education of mother	Graduate /Post graduate	7	15.6	11	24.4	18	20
	Higher education	14	31.1	21	46.6	35	38.8
	Primary education	21	46.7	10	22.2	31	34.4
	Illiterate	3	6.7	3	6.6	6	6.6
Occupation of father	Service in government /private sector	9	20.0	25	55.6	34	37.7
	Agriculture/small business	27	60.0	16	35.6	43	47.7
	Self employment	9	20.0	4	8.9	13	14.4
Occupation of mother	Service in government /private sector	1	2.2	4	8.9	5	5.5
	Agriculture/small business	14	31.1	13	28.9	27	30
	House wife	30	66.7	28	62.2	58	64.4

children with illiterate fathers belonged to moderate and low level of sibling relationship. Among children whose fathers were educated up to primary level of education 77.7 per cent of children were in moderate level followed by 22.2 per cent were in low level of sibling relationship. Children with fathers who educated up to higher education and fathers educated up to graduate/post graduate all of the children were in moderate level of sibling relation. Chi-square analysis showed that significant association between education of father and sibling relationship. In case of urban children with illiterate fathers half of them were in low level followed by moderate level of sibling relationship. 57.14 per cent children were in low level and 42.85 per cent were in moderate level of sibling relationship that had fathers educated upto primary education. Among children who had higher educated and graduate/post graduate fathers all of them were in moderate level of sibling relationship. Chi-square analysis showed significant association between sibling relationship and education of father. This may be due to fact that parents were open about the disabled child's condition, and viewed disability as possibility. They educated their non-disabled child so that he could help his/her disabled sibling. This awareness helped the children define his/her role in the sibling relationship, nurture their prosocial behavior, and enhance their ability to adapt the needs. The results are in line with research

conducted by Joseph *et al.* (2014) reported that educational status of mothers and fathers influences attitude and knowledge towards mentally retarded children. Awadalla *et al.* (2008) found that parent's education and occupation were significantly associated with psychosocial adaptation.

Influence of education of mother on sibling relationship of children

There is significant association between sibling relation and education level of mother in both rural and urban area on chi-square analysis. With respect to mother education in rural children whose mothers were illiterate 33.3 per cent of children were in low level and 66.6 per cent were in moderate level of sibling relation. Children who had mothers educated up to primary level 58.71 per cent of them were in moderate level followed by 14.28 per cent were in low level of sibling relation. Among the children whose mother educated up to higher education majority of them were in moderate level (92.8%) and only 7.14 per cent were found to be in low level. In case on children whose mothers were educated up to graduate/post graduate all of them were in moderate level and none were in low and high level of sibling relation. With regards to mother education, in urban area children having illiterate mothers 66.6 per cent of them were in moderate level followed by 33.3 per cent were in low level of sibling relation (Table 3). Children with mother who had primary education 70 per cent were in moderate

Table 2. Association between education of the father and level of sibling relationship among rural and urban children

Locality	Education of the father	Level of sibling relationship			Modified χ^2
		Low	Moderate	Total	
Rural	Illiterate	1 (50)	1 (50)	2 (100)	10.19**
	Primary education	4 (22.2)	14 (77.7)	18 (100)	
	Higher education	-	22 (100)	22 (100)	
	Graduate/Post graduate	-	3 (100)	3 (100)	
	Total	5 (11.1)	40 (88.8)	45 (100)	
Urban	Illiterate	1 (50)	1 (50)	2 (100)	15.49**
	Primary education	4 (57.14)	3 (42.85)	7 (100)	
	Higher education	-	27 (100)	27 (100)	
	Graduate/Post graduate	-	9 (100)	9 (100)	
	Total	5 (11.1)	40 (88.8)	45 (100)	

Figures in parentheses is indicate percentage

**Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3. Association between education of the mother and level of sibling relationship among rural and urban children

Locality	Education of the mother	Level of sibling relationship			Modified χ^2
		Low	Moderate	Total	
Rural	Illiterate	1 (33.3)	2 (66.6)	3 (100)	9.45**
	Primary education	3 (14.28)	18 (58.71)	21 (100)	
	Higher education	1 (7.14)	13 (92.8)	14 (100)	
	Graduate/Post graduate	-	7 (100)	7 (100)	
	Total	5 (11.1)	40 (88.9)	45 (100)	
Urban	Illiterate	1 (33.3)	2 (66.6)	3 (100)	14.92**
	Primary education	3 (30)	7 (70)	10 (100)	
	Higher education	1 (4.7)	20 (95.23)	21 (100)	
	Graduate/Post graduate	-	11 (100)	11 (100)	
	Total	5 (11.1)	40 (88.8)	45 (100)	

Figures in parentheses is indicate percentage

**Significant at 0.01 level

level followed by 30 per cent were in low level. In case of children with higher educated mother most of children were in moderate level (95.25%) and only 4.7 per cent of them were in low level. Among children of graduated/post graduated mothers all were in moderate level and none were in low and high level of sibling relation. The results are in line with research conducted by Sola and Diken (2008) suggested that the mothers who were university graduate collect more information about their disabled children. The high education level, employment status, helps in how to spend time and communicate with their children, and how to teach some skills all provide the parents to collect data about what to do now and in the future, which helps the parents increase the warmth/closeness among siblings.

Influence of occupation of father on sibling relationship of children

The association of sibling relationship of children by father's occupation is depicted in Table 4. With regards to occupation of father in rural area, children with fathers who engaged in self-employment 88.9 per cent of them had moderate level and only 11.1 per cent had low level of sibling relationship. Among children whose father are engaged in agriculture/small business 81.5 per cent of them had moderate level followed by 18.5 per cent of them had low level. Children with fathers who engaged in service in government/private sector 77.8 per cent were in moderate level followed by 22.2 per cent were in low level of sibling relation. Chi-square analysis showed that non-significant association between occupation of mother and

sibling relationship. Results on father occupation in urban area reflect the significant association between father's occupation and sibling relation. Children who had self employed fathers and children whose fathers were engaged in agriculture/small business found in moderate level (75%) and low level of sibling relation (25%). All children were in moderate level whose fathers engaged in service in government/private sector. Chi-square analysis showed significant association between father occupation and sibling relation. Result of study conducted by Mohan (2013) revealed that significant differences were found between parental occupations *i.e.* government, private, self employed and unemployed on mild stress, moderate stress, severe stress in coping and adjusting in the family. Un-employed parents experience severe and total stress in handling their children due to their children disability.

Influence of occupation of mother on sibling relationship of children

There is significant association between mother occupation and sibling relation of children in both rural and urban area. With respect to mother occupation in rural area children whose mothers were house wives majority of them had moderate (93.3%) followed low level of sibling relation (6.7%). Among those whose mothers were engaged in agriculture/small business 64.3 per cent of them were in moderate level and 35.7 per cent were in low level. Further among those, whose mothers were engaged in service in government/private sector all were in moderate level of sibling relationship. In case of urban area

Table 4. Association between occupation of the father and level of sibling relationship among rural and urban children

Locality	Occupation of the father	Level of sibling relationship			Modified χ^2
		Low	Moderate	Total	
Rural	Self employment	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	9 (100)	0.40 NS
	Agriculture/Small business	5 (18.5)	22 (81.5)	27 (100)	
	Service in government/ Private Sector	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	9 (100)	
	Total	8 (17.8)	37 (82.2)	45 (100)	
Urban	Self employment	1 (25.0)	3 (75.0)	4 (100)	7.03*
	Agriculture/Small business	4 (25.0)	12 (75.0)	16 (100)	
	Service in government /Private sector	-	25 (100)	25 (100)	
	Total	5 (11.1)	40 (88.9)	45 (100)	

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

*Significant at 0.05 level

NS - Non-significant

Table 5. Association between occupation of mother and level of sibling relationship among rural and urban children

Locality	Occupation of mother	Level of sibling relationship			Modified χ^2
		Low	Moderate	Total	
Rural	House wife	2 (6.7)	28 (93.3)	30 (100)	3.75*
	Agriculture/small Business	5 (35.7)	9 (64.3)	14 (100)	
	Service in government /Private sector	-	1 (100)	1 (100)	
	Total	8 (17.8)	37 (82.2)	45 (100)	
Urban	House wife	2 (7.1)	26 (92.9)	28 (100)	8.25*
	Agriculture/small Business	3 (23.1)	10 (76.9)	13 (100)	
	Service in government /Private sector	-	4 (100)	4 (100)	
	Total	5 (11.1)	40 (88.9)	45 (100)	

Figure in parenthesis indicate percentage

*Significant at 0.05 level

children whose mothers were house wives most of children were in moderate level (92.9%) followed by 6.7 per cent were in low level of sibling relation. Among children whose mothers are engaged in agriculture/small business 64.3 per cent were in moderate level followed by 35.7 per cent were in low level on sibling relationship. In case of children whose mothers engaged in service in government/private sector all were in moderate level. This may be due to fact that Children with mothers who engaged in government or private sector were in moderate level of sibling relation. As mothers were exposed to different environments and gaining knowledge and using better

parenting strategies. The mother's were giving knowledge to the normal sibling on adjustment with retarded child. (Table 5).

Conclusion

Education of the father and mother showed significant association with sibling relationship of children in both rural and urban area. Higher the education of parents higher level of sibling relationship. Occupation of the father and mother showed non-significant association with sibling relationship in rural children. Among urban children mother occupation showed significant association with sibling relationship. Higher the mother occupation showed higher sibling relationship.

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