

Original Article

Stigma and Children with Disability with Special Reference to Kokrajhar District, Assam

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Abstract:

This article has stated about the stigma of children with disability. When children with disability are commented as falls, the assumption is known as stigma, for the study of stigma reviews of literature are studied. One objective is considered and under this objective four questions are selected. The objective is to examine the opinion of the stigma of teachers and the significant role of teachers, towards children with disabilities. The data are collected in the Google form and interview techniques are taken from different Headmasters of High Schools, Higher Secondary Schools, and students with disabilities. The descriptive survey method is selected for the study besides the focused group interview. The data were collected randomly from 45 teachers from the schools in the Kokrajhar District. The study is based on a qualitative method. The analysis is done with discussion and the conclusion is given after the suggestion.

Keywords: Stigma, Children and Disability

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1. Introduction

Disability is not an unknown problem. Disability is which affects daily activities in some particular areas like self-direction, self-care, capacity for independent living, learning, economic self-sufficiency, mobility, expressive language capacity to receive information. Most of the problem for children with disability is participation in all activities which leads to stigma. In the world, 15% of people are suffering from disabilities and 110-190 million people in the world have difficulties in daily function ⁽¹⁾.

Children are an important asset to the nation. "According to 1974, The National Policy for Children stated that Children are the supreme assets of the nation whose nurture and solicitude are the responsibility of the nation". All individuals are unique in their physical structure, mental ability, observable behavior, learning ability, etc. Learning disability is one kind of disorder that affects a person's ability to see, listen, speak, write, read, and do mathematical calculations resulting from cerebral dysfunction or behavioral disturbances. There are different types of physical disabilities. They are visual impairment, deaf and blind, hearing impairment, health impairment, motor problems, and hyperactivity, memory disorder, Traumatic brain injury, Autism, speech and language impairment, etc⁽²⁾. These problems develop the attitude leading the stigma among the common people.

2. Stigma:

Stigma is when people with disability are commented as falls assumptions are known as stigma. There are some assumptions and beliefs that children with disability are not able to learn.

Stigma is the negative attitude, prejudice, or belief held by society or individuals towards someone. In modern society the concept of stigma has evolved and, it can be applied to different individuals or groups based on culture, gender, socioeconomic status, race, health status, and religion. When one person is stigmatized or commented develops psychological problems, and discrimination, in society. This type of stigmatization affects the own self-perception which leads to psychological problems. Stigmatized people sometimes can perceive and be aware that they are treated differently which begins from an early age and affects their own identity, and perception that are around them. It changes the behavior of the person that makes shapes, beliefs and emotions⁽³⁾ According to Merriam Webster, stigma is the set of unfair beliefs or negative attitude. It is a bodily mark and paints that resembles wounds of the crucified Jesus and is accompanying religious custody. It is one kind of Negative attitude, false believes and prejudice associated with some specific traits.

3. Major concepts:

- i. It is an unfair belief that sets of negativity where the groups and society have something about the children ⁽⁴⁾.
- ii. When a child is named or labeled illness they are observed as part of a stereotyped group. The negative attitude leads to negative actions and creates prejudice in society ⁽⁵⁾.
- iii. It is the characteristics of one person or one group that has defects and is humiliated or isolated who is thought to have this characteristic ⁽⁶⁾

It can be divided into two categories:

Persons with disabilities (PWDs): It involves those who have strong mental, intellectual, and long-term impairments and have different barriers to participation in society and comparison to others.

Students with disabilities: A student who has faced

4. Why is stigmatization arising?

Stigmatizations arise by following way-

- i. A disabled child is ugly.
- ii. A child who has a disability cannot learn and study
- iii. Cultural and social norms: Disability is in some societies marked as a curse, punishment, and shame. They are the product of their parent's and ancestors' sins and as a result of punishment they get that product
- iv. Fear and understanding of Children with a disability, chronic illnesses, special needs, misconceptions, and lack of knowledge have led to the stigma
- v. Families of children with disabilities who have low socio-economic status related to poverty have been facing stigma.
- vi. Children with disabilities have been facing stigma due to diverse ethnic cultural backgrounds and stereotypes.
- vii. Children who have traumatic experiences may experience stigma for the lack of fear and understanding
- viii. Children who have been facing academic problems can be labeled as Lazy or 'not smart'.
- viii. The long-term historical treatments of disabilities such as segregation, and institutionalization have contributed to developing the stigma ⁽⁷⁾.

5. Effects of stigma:

The effects are given in the following:

- i. **Low self-esteem:** Stereotypes and Negative attitudes may develop into low self-worth and low self-esteem in children with disabilities
- ii. **Social isolation:** Children with disabilities develop social exclusion from some social activities which leads to loneliness
- iii. **Mental health concerns:** This type of children leads to experiences depression, anxiety, and health concerns of the stigma
- iv. **Limited opportunities:** Stigma leads to limited education, health care, and employment opportunities for children.

6. Significance of the study:

Stigma is an unspoken attitude that prevails in society related to the disability of children. There are some problems which are not created by him or she or it is not in the hands of his creation. It is believed in the creation of God. But man's mind cannot be controlled and develops some attitude which is complex and miss assumed. But in modern times more problems can be cured with the help of medication.

7. Study area:

Kokrajhar district is situated at the west part of Assam. There are five blocks in the Kokrajhar District- Kachugaon, Kokrajhar, Gossaigaon, Dotma and Parbatjhara. The data are collected from each block randomly.

8. Objective Of the study:

learning difficulties and is not able to achieve minimum requirements in comparison to a normal child. They need special education Services and the development of individual plans or National Education plans

To study the opinion of the stigma of teachers and the significant role of teachers towards children with disabilities

9. Methodology of the study:

Research methodology is a logical and systematic process where the investigator uses a specific topic for achieving and gathering information.

Research methodology is divided into two types. One is qualitative and the other is quantitative research. In the present study qualitative research method is used.

9. i Qualitative method of study: In qualitative research in-depth study and interview is very important with two persons and more than two persons besides the focus group. Qualitative research is inevitable when the researchers want to know the specific opinions, and behaviors, on certain experiences and subjects related to values, beliefs attitudes, and cultures. Qualitative methods of research have been used in health sciences, social sciences, anthropology, and psychology.

9. ii. Sample of the study: The sample of the study is one of the subsets of populations or several objects considered for the investigation. The term sample is applied to the collection of data and drawing. In the present study, 45 head teachers are selected from the Kokrajhar district. The data are collected from each block randomly. The researcher has gone to the schools, taken interviews with the children with disabilities, observed them, and asked about their difficulties. Information is taken by Google form also

9. iii. Sources of data: Out of two sources, i.e. primary sources and secondary sources, data are collected. Primary data is taken from interviews, questionnaires, and observation and secondary data are collected from the census report, Sodhganga, journal of different articles.

10. Analysis and interpretation of the study:

Data analysis is the systematic process of elaboration of extracting insight from data. In the present study, qualitative analyses are done based on images, text, and observations. By using qualitative data the researchers have been using a deep insight or understanding about the special complex phenomena and outcomes related to stigma.

Analysis is done according to the objectives

ObjectiveNo-1

To study the opinion of teachers about the stigma (negative perception) of children with disabilities and related significant role

11. Discussion of the study:

In most countries, people are facing different problems like stigma due to not having good health and lack of socioeconomic conditions of the people mentioned in the paper ⁽⁸⁾ mentioned that Children with disabilities face problems due to proper diagnosis, treatment, and parent's communication with teachers and doctors ⁽⁹⁾

Mentioned in the Indian Journal of Psychiatry about the stigma of mental illness which is done research work in semi-urban and rural communities and it was revealed that significant changes are seen in the second intervention attitude ⁽¹⁰⁾ Every child has to face the attitude of stigma but is different from person to person. Due to lack of information parents do not check up the health of children and consult with doctors about the children's problems.

conditions are not good. Due to this problem, they are not able to receive the information

18. Do you think there is a stigma(negative perception) associated with children with disabilities in the minds of normal people of the society ?

45 responses

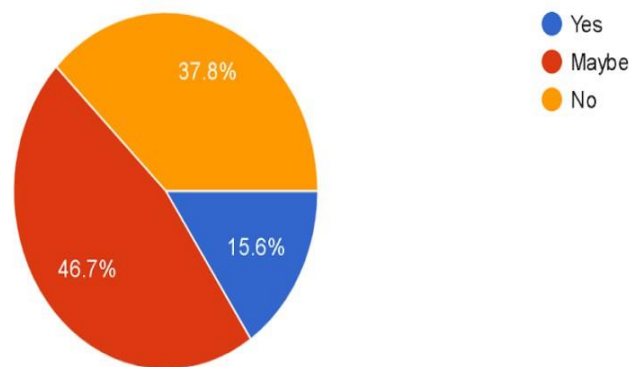


Figure No. 1 a

Some parents are illiterate and socioeconomic

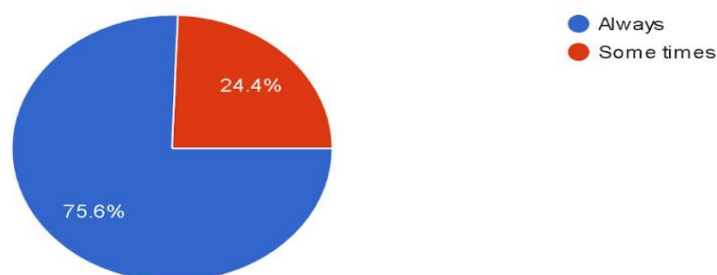
From the above Figure no. 1 it is revealed that teachers responses in respect of stigma (negative perception) that associated with children with the disabilities are found 15.6%, 'no' responses have been found 37.8% and 'maybe' responses 46.7%. In the society still the attitude of stigma are not removed totally.

1. b. significant role of teachers in teaching normal children about themorale education towards the children with disabilities

Figure No.1.b

20. Do you morally educate the normal children not to insult the children with disability and treat them like siblings?

45 responses



From the figure no. 1.b it is revealed that responses of teachers in respect of morally educating normal children not to be insulting the children with disabilities and treating them as their siblings are found 75% in respect of 'always' and 24% is found in respect of 'some times'

12. Suggestions for the eradication of stigma:

The following ways are necessary for the eradication of stigma

- i. Education and awareness: To eradicate stigma of children with disability awareness is necessary for educating the public.
- ii. Representation of Positive media: Media can help in reducing stigma of the children with disability in respect of challenging stereotypes feelings.
- iii. Supporting families: It can be helped by providing resources, social inclusion, and support to the families for eradication of Stigma.
- iv. Focus on abilities: Promoting strengths and abilities of children with disabilities despite their limitations.
- v. Educate others: In educating the children some resources and information should be shared among the community members, friends and family members.
- vi. Advocate for inclusion: Promoting social inclusion, advocating a good inclusive environment and accessibilities. An inclusive environment is essential for the eradication of stigma by promoting accessibility with a good environment.
- vii. Occupational therapists and Doctors time to time visit is very important.
- viii. A traditional method of yoga and physical exercise are essential for reducing some problems of disability.
- ix. Physiological therapy is more in evitable for the children with disability

13. Conclusion:

There are some misconceptions in society including brain injury, mental retardation, and cerebral palsy. The greatest strange of limitations is that these are not earned by themselves but antiquated attitudes that lead to rejection in the society. But at present situation due to the result of modern science, more children with disability can be helped with sufficient medication and eliminate different disorders in association with an understanding of teachers and classmates.

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