

Parental Perceptions on Children with Intellectual Disability: A Situational Analysis

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ABSTRACT: *Most of the children with special needs are dependent on their parents. The parents take utmost care for their wards but feared to discuss about their future with anyone. Therefore, education plays a decisive and key role for framing up the constructive future of every child with special needs. Perception plays an important means in the advancement of children with special needs especially for inclusive education. The parents are the first teacher for any kind of child; hence the parental perception plays a major role in identifying the needs and early inclusion to the schools for the children with intellectual disability. Recent facts show that there is a mount of inclusion process which is needed in the schools as the trend of inclusion of children with intellectual disability is not satisfactory. Therefore, the present study focuses to identify the parental perception towards their children with intellectual disability. Although, some parents of children shows positive perception towards their wards, but others feel them as an extra burden to their family. Therefore, a larger inclusive community is needed with specific professionals to understand and cater the various needs for children with intellectual disability.*

KEY WORDS: *Children with Intellectual Disability, Parents, Perceptions.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Access to good-quality education provides individuals with opportunities to learn and to realize their potential, building capacity to participate in social, economic, political and cultural life. However, children with various types of special needs can actually attend regular education in many countries nowadays (Nakken and Pijl 2002). The development to include children with special needs in regular education settings is generally described by the term 'inclusion', which refers to 'the process of educating children with disabilities in the regular education classrooms of their neighbourhood schools – the schools they would attend if they did not have a disability – and providing them with the necessary services and support' (Rafferty, Boettcher, and Griffin, 2001). In various countries, inclusive education was initiated by parents of children with disabilities. Although parents' motives to place their disabled child in a regular school might vary, they mainly choose a regular education setting because of the possibilities for their child to participate socially in the peer group. Parents hope and expect that physical integration – 'being there' – will lead to their child participating socially with the peer group (Scheepstra, Nakken, and Pijl 1999).

About 124 million children and young adolescents were estimated to have been out of school worldwide in 2013, including more than 59 million children of primary school age (UNESCO, 2015b). More than half of all out-of-school children live in 19 developing countries, including several countries affected by conflict, according to UNESCO.

Parental Perceptions:

Parent's reaction can be described in terms of various stages. A state of shock is experienced at the initial disclosure, i.e. a feeling of not being able to register or understand the news and thus withdrawing. This will be followed by a reaction stage during which emotions of denial, sadness, anger may be felt in rush. Then gradually parents will enter an adaptation stage when they, for e.g. begin to ask questions about what can be done and finally reorganization stage when they seek help and begin to plan ahead.

Parent's reaction influenced by a number of factors such as whether the disability is evident at birth or becomes evident later, whether there is a prospect of severe or not, whether the disability is obvious to other people and by the attitudes of other people such as lay people, teachers, social workers and doctors to disability and disabled people. Overall the study revealed a common and universal reaction of love and sorrow across cultures. Initial reactions of parents are affected by the manner in which they are informed of their child disability. Parents who are well informed 'well reported' 'primarily feelings of sadness rather than anger which

do change from one of numbing, shock, rejection, and depression to one of acceptance and understanding as the child grows older. It is likely to be added that parents are unlikely to accept that their child is handicapped if they are informed well and in an impersonal manner. The higher levels of acceptance of a disabled child by their parents are associated with greater coping efforts by relying either on self (self-help) or others (i.e. help seeking).

Statement of Problem: The present study is an attempt to find out the importance of the parental perception towards Children with Intellectual disability. Therefore, the present study has been entitled as A study on Attitudinal Aspects of Parents for Inclusive Education/Inclusion for Children with Intellectual Disability.

Operational definitions:

Children with Special Needs: Children who require special attention and specific necessities that other children do not, are said to be children with special needs.

Children with Intellectual Disability: Children who lack intellectual ability studying in the schools of the study area (Guwahati city).

Inclusion: It involves changes in content, approaches, structures, and strategies, driven by a common vision that covers all children and the conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all of them.

Inclusive education: It refers to a system where all children learning together even if they differ from each other in styles and pace of learning.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the parental perceptions on their children with Intellectual disability.
2. To list out the emerging concerns and basic recommendations for further discussion by the subject experts and policy makers.

Delimitation of the Study: The study is delimited to the 50 parents of Children with Intellectual disability in Guwahati city of Assam.

Significance of the Study- Parent's attitude and belief are very important for the successful inclusion of children with special needs in any kind of system. It is the attitude of the parents which is very important to believe the various potentialities of children with intellectual disabilities. It is very much evident that the positive parental attitude towards children with special needs will help to achieve the inclusive education. This will enhance to achieve the various schemes and benefits in a larger for children with intellectual disability. Various researchers have contributed in their research explaining the importance of parental attitude in attaining inclusive education. Parental aspect helps in building social, emotional relationships with everyone. Therefore, there is an urgent need of the study for understanding the parental attitudes towards the whole inclusion process for better achievement of inclusive education.

III. METHODOLOGY

In the present study Descriptive Survey Method is used. The primary sources of data have been used in the study.

Population of the study: The researchers had selected 50 parents from Guwahati city through random sample technique. The researchers have collected data from Guwahati Metro block for the particular study.

Tools:

- Attitude scale for the Parents of Children with Intellectual Disability.

The first draft of the attitude scale consisted of 34 items. After consultation with experts, the scale was finalized with only 18 numbers of items. The statements for the present attitude scale based on five point scaling namely "strongly agree", "agree", "undecided", "disagree", "strongly disagree".

- Informal interview with parents.

IV. ANALYSIS

Attitude of parents towards child with special needs:

Item wise analysis is carried out in the following sections based on the responses offered by the parents.

Table-1: Percentage of response offered by the parents.

Sl. No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I have accepted the fact that my child is differently abled.	32%	38%	26%	4%	0

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2	It hurts me to think that I am a parent of a child with special needs	0%	10%	14%	30%	46%
3	I do not feel embarrassed to take my child with special needs with me when I attend functions.	42%	28%	16%	14%	0%
4	Raising child with special needs is a nerve wrecking job.	6%	10%	18%	26%	40%
5	I give more attention to my child with special needs than my other children.	24%	34%	22%	12%	8%
6	I felt disappointed when I found out that my child needs special educational needs	16%	24%	20%	24%	16%
7	It makes me feel good to know that I can take care of my child with special needs	40%	44%	12%	4%	0%
8	I would love my child more if he/she was not differently-abled.	0%	6%	10%	48%	36%
9	I wish I could help my child with special needs to lead an independent life.	36%	28%	22%	14%	0%
10	The various requirements of my child with special needs comes first	36%	44%	12%	8%	0%
11	I don't like my child with special needs to play with other normal children.	0%	2%	0%	46%	52%
12	I am disappointed that my child with special needs does not lead a normal life.	54%	40%	4%	2%	0%
13	I feel that I must protect my child with special needs from the remarks of other children.	38%	30%	32%	0%	0%
14	I think that my child with special needs is capable of attending a normal school.	36%	24%	6%	10%	24%
15	Thinking about my child with special needs future makes me sad.	40%	44%	0%	60%	10%
16	My child with special needs feels that I am the only one who understands him or her.	4%	28%	42%	14%	12%
17	I am not embarrassed when people question me about my child with special needs.	12%	36%	30%	14%	8%
18	Sometimes I feel very ashamed because of my child with special needs.	2%	8%	22%	28%	40%

Note: Child with Special Needs means Child with Intellectual Disability

Table-2 Responses offered by the Parents

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have accepted the fact that my child is	0	10%	14%	30%	46%

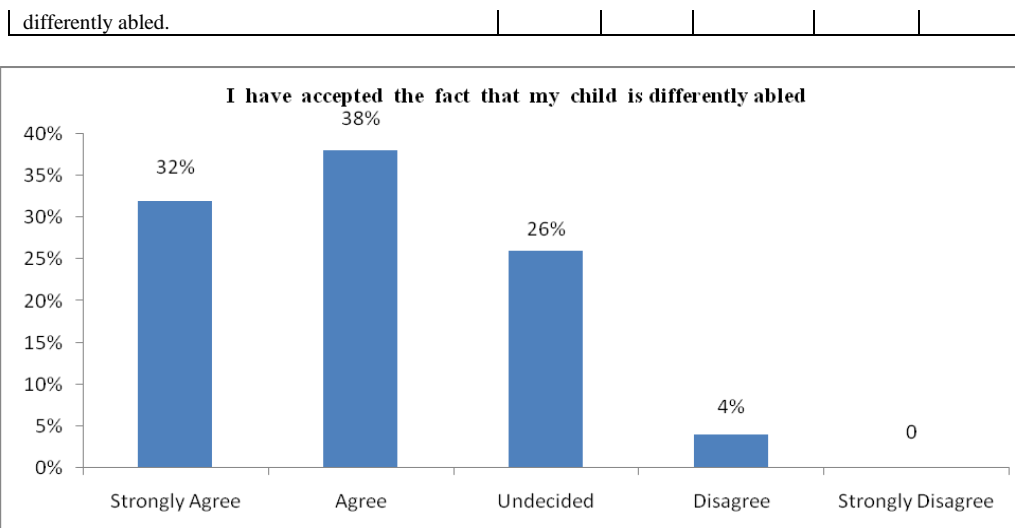


Fig: 1

Most of the parents have accepted that their child with intellectual disability as differently abled child. In this regard, around 70% of the parents have accepted that their child is born with certain disability. 26% of parents showed no reaction in this regard. Only 4% could not accept the fact that their child is born with certain disability. Hence, maximum number of parents agreed the fact that their child needs special care as evident from Table-1, Fig-1.

Table-2 Responses offered by the Parents

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It hurts me to think that I am a parent of a child with special needs	0	10%	14%	30%	46%

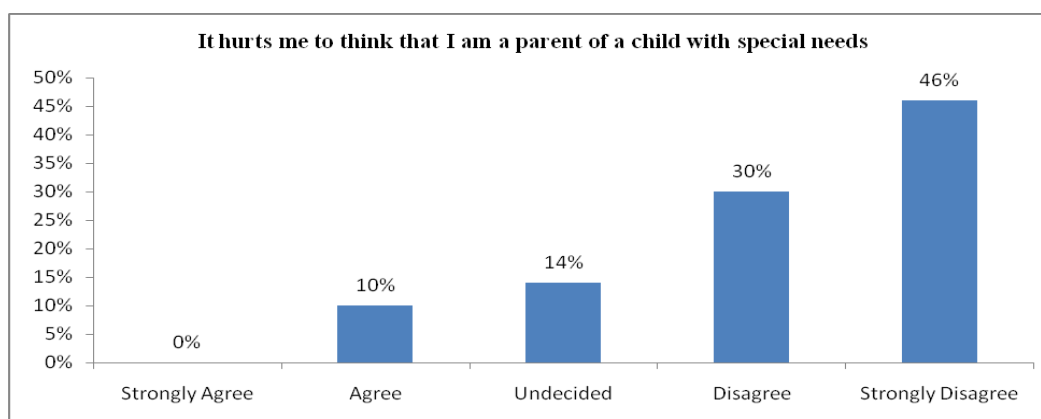


Fig: 2

It's a fact that all parents want a normal child; a child born with disability hurts the sentiments of the parents. Regarding this 10% agreed that giving birth to a child with intellectual disability is painful. 14% are undecided in this regard while 30% disagree with the fact & 46% strongly disagree to it. This indicates that a child born whether with or without disability always tends to bring happiness in life of the parents as evident from Table-2.

Table-3: Responses offered by the Parents

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I do not feel embarrassed to take my child with special needs with me when I attend functions.	42%	28%	16%	14%	0%

Most of the parents are not embarrassed to take their child to attend any functions. In this regard 42% strongly agree to this, 28% agree, 16% are undecided regarding this matter. However there are certain parents (14%) who disagree to this and are embarrassed to take their child out with them as evident from Table-3.

Table-4: Responses offered by the Parents

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Raising child with special needs is a nerve wrecking job.	6%	10%	18%	26%	40%

Many take disability as a curse but it really doesn't mean that raising a child with special needs is a nerve wrecking job. 40% strongly disagree that they found it very difficult to raise their child with intellectual disability. 26% disagree, 18% are undecided, and 10% found it difficult and 6% found it very difficult to raise their child with intellectual disability. It is because raising a child with intellectual disability requires a lot of care and attention on the part of the parents as evident from Table-4.

Table-5: Responses offered by the Parents

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I give more attention to my child with special needs than my other children.	24%	34%	22%	12%	8%

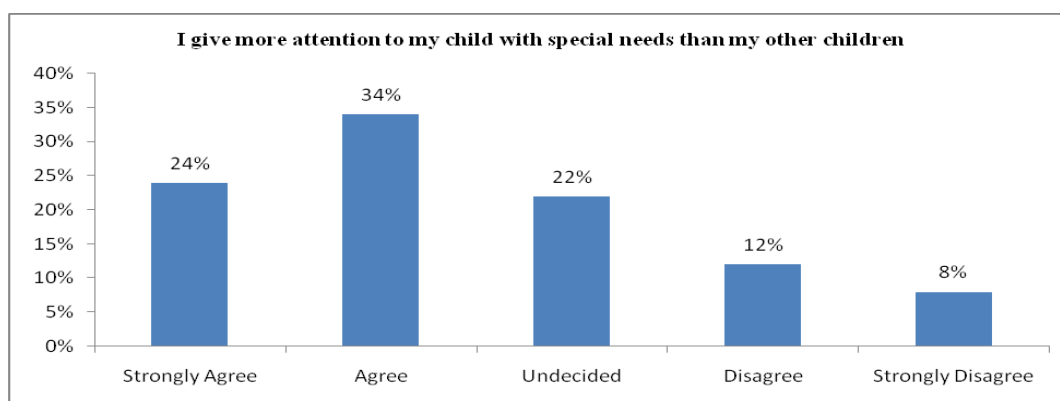


Fig:3

It is true that children with special needs require more care than a normal child as responded by more than half of the parents because their needs are special as they are. They demand more care, love and affection on part of the parents. In this regard 24% of parents have strongly agreed that their child with intellectual disability more care than other children, 34% have agreed to this, 22% are undecided. However, 12% of parents disagree & 8% strongly disagree to this attitude of other parents as evident from Table-5.

Table-6: Responses offered by the Parents

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I felt disappointed when I found out that my child needs special educational needs	16%	24%	20%	24%	16%

It is true that a child with intellectual disability leaves his or her parents most of the time confused. In this regard it was found of mixed reaction of the parents. 24% of parents and 16% of parents were disappointed and very much disappointed respectively, when they found out that they have given birth to a child with intellectual disability. 20% were undecided. 24% disagreed and 16% strongly disagreed to the fact that they were disappointed when they found their child to be a special one as evident from Table-6.

Table-7: Responses offered by the Parents

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It makes me feel good to know that I can take care of my child with special needs.	40%	44%	12%	4%	0%

Raising a child is a difficult task and raising a special child is more of a breathtaking job. In this regard 40% of the parents have strongly agreed that it made them feel good to know that they can take care if their child with intellectual disability in a better way. 44% have agreed to it, 12% were undecided, 4% disagreed to it as they found it difficult to raise their disabled child as evident from Table-7.

Table-8 Responses offered by the Parents

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I would love my child more if he/she was not differently abled.	0%	6%	10%	48%	36%

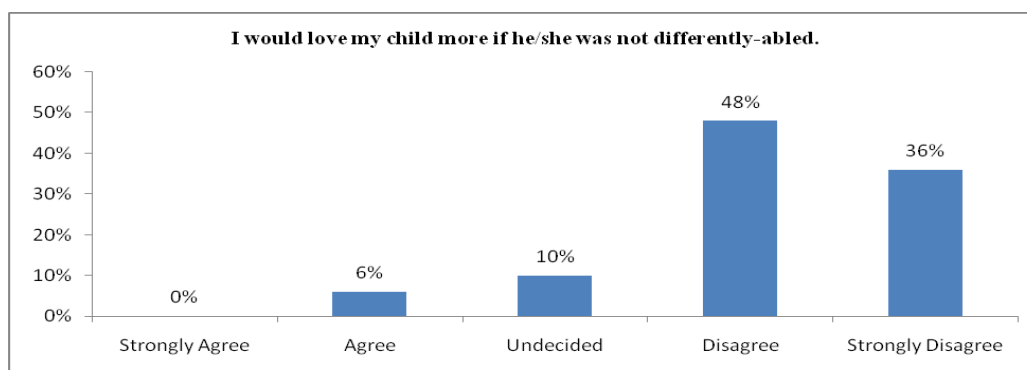


Fig:4

It is very true that every parent wants to deliver a normal child. However, most of the parents have accepted the fact that they have given birth to child with intellectual disability, but to them it does not mean that they will love them less. 36% have strongly disagreed to the fact that they would have loved their child more if he or she were a normal child, 48% have agreed to this. 10% were undecided. Only 6% of the parents could overcome the fact that their child was abnormal and had the desire to love them more if he/she were born normal as evident from Table-8, Fig-4.

Table-9: Responses offered by the Parents

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I wish I could help my child with special needs to lead an independent life.	36%	28%	22%	14%	0%

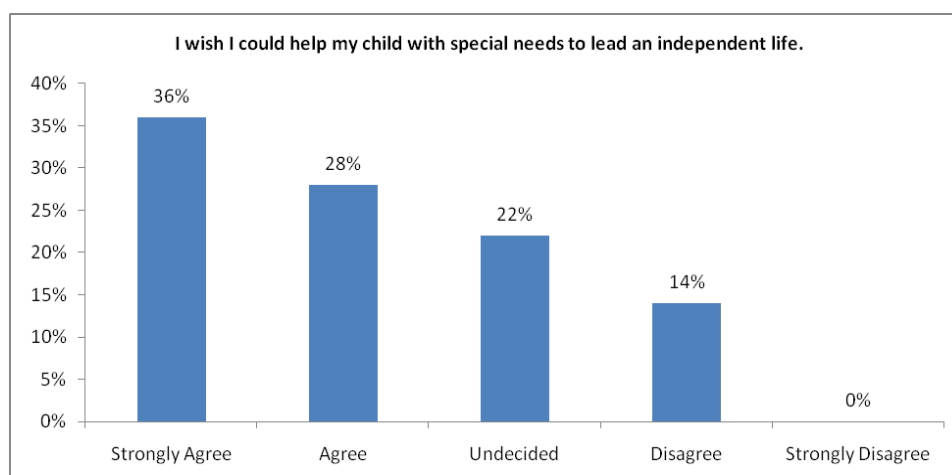


Fig:5

Around 36% parents had a strong desire that they could help their child with intellectual disability to lead an independent life, 28% agreed to it. 22% were undecided. 14% parents disagreed to it and want their child to live with them as they believed that it would be very hard for a child with special needs to lead an independent life if they were left alone and free to survive in the outside world as evident from Table-9, Fig-5.

Table-10: Responses offered by the Parents

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The various requirements of my child with special needs comes first	36%	44%	12%	8%	0%

As the child with special needs requires special care, to the parents, their needs comes first than their normal child's as the normal child is able to help him or herself. 36% of parents have strongly agreed to it, 44% have agreed, 12% were undecided. Only 8% of the parents felt the need to give equal importance to both their child with intellectual disability and child without intellectual disability as evident from Table-10.

Table-11: Responses offered by the Parents

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I don't like my child with special needs to play with other normal children.	0%	2%	0%	46%	52%

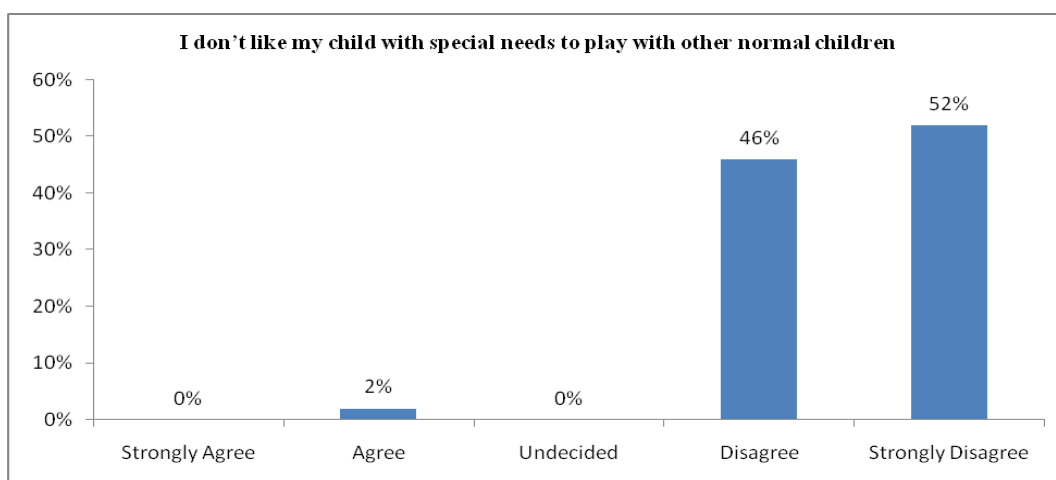


Fig: 6

Every parent wants that their child with intellectual disability to mingle with other child without intellectual disability. In this regard 52% of parents have strongly disagreed that to the fact that they don't like their child with intellectual disability to play with other normal child, 46% have disagreed and 2% parents wanted their child to be left alone as they do not want their child to mingle with the normal ones as evident from Table-11, Fig-6.

Table-12: Responses offered by the Parents

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am disappointed that my child with special needs does not lead a normal life.	54%	40%	4%	2%	0%

It is fact that their child's inability to lead a normal life has left parents' of child with special needs disappointed. 54% of parents have strongly agreed to it, 40% have agreed, 4% were undecided. Only 2% of parents seemed not be disappointed by their child's inability to lead a normal life as evident from Table-12,

Table-13: Responses offered by the parents.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel that I must protect my child with special needs from the remarks of other children.	38%	30%	32%	0%	0%

It is the duty and responsibility of the parents to protect their child with special needs from being bullied by other children. 38% of parents have given their strong consent to this, 30% have agreed. 32% were undecided. However, none has disagreed to this as evident from Table-13.

Table-14: Responses offered by the parents.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I think that my child with special needs is capable of attending a normal school.	36%	24%	6%	10%	24%

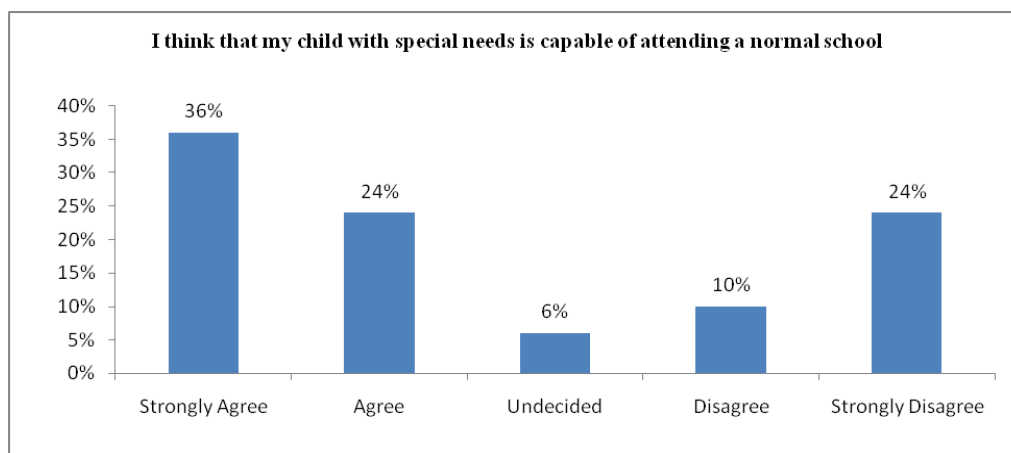


Fig: 7

It's a dream of every parent to send their child to schools and parent of a child with special needs is no different too. In this regard, 36% of parents strongly agree that their child is capable of attending a normal school, 24% agree to it. 6% are undecided. However, 10% parents disagree and 24% strongly disagree to idea that their child is capable of attending normal school as evident from Table-14, Fig-7.

Table-15: Responses offered by the parents.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Thinking about my child with special needs future makes me sad.	40%	44%	0%	60%	10%

Future of their child with intellectual disability is a major concern for their parent as the child might not be able to care of him/herself in future. In this regard, 40% of parents strongly agree and 44% agree that thinking about their child's future makes them sad. However, 60% have disagreed and 10% have strongly disagreed to it as evident from Table-15.

Table-16: Responses offered by the parents.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My child with special needs feels that I am the only one who understands him or her.	4%	28%	42%	14%	12%

According to the response of the parents it is found that around 32% agrees to the statement whereas 26% disagreed and the remaining percentage offered no comment as evident from Table-16, Fig-16.

Table-17: Responses offered by the parents.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am not embarrassed when people question me about my child with special needs.	12%	36%	30%	14%	8%

As per the response of the parents it is observed that less than half of the parents feels no embarrassment in taking the child along with them whereas 22% of the parents do feel certain kind of embarrassment as if evident from Table 17.

Table-18: Responses offered by the parents.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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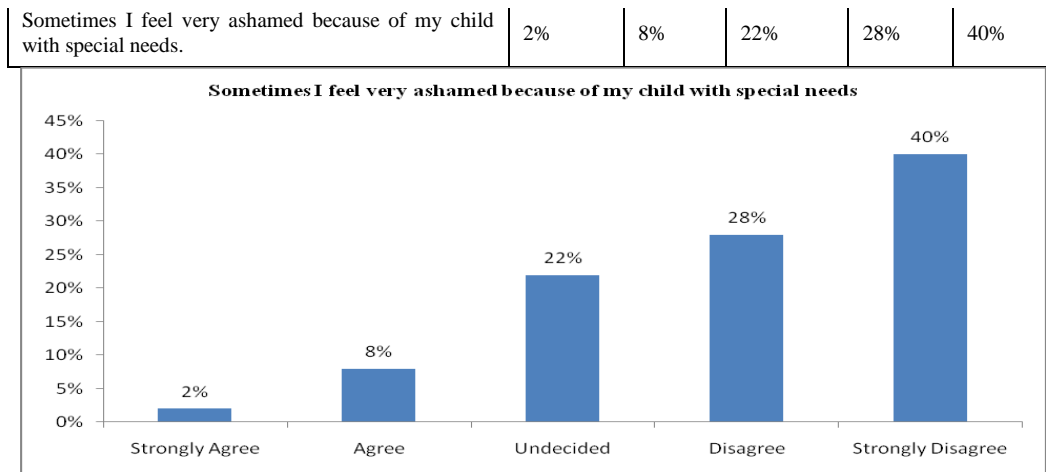


Fig: 8

The response obtained from 68% of the parents shows that they are not ashamed of their child with intellectual disability on the other hand only 10% of them are ashamed of their child as evident from Table-18, Fig-8.

V. FINDINGS

The study clearly shows about the basic problems that the parents are facing. The study tells the attitude of parents towards a child with intellectual disability.

- 70% of the parents have accepted that their child is born with certain type of disability. Only 4% could not accept the fact that their child is born with certain disability.
- 10% of parents agreed that giving birth to a child with intellectual disability is painful. 14% are undecided in this regard, while 30% disagree with the fact and 46% strongly disagree with it.
- 42% of parents strongly agree to the fact that the parents don't feel any embarrassment while going to any type of functions. However, 14% of the parents disagree with the statement.
- 40% of parents strongly disagree with the fact that raising a child with intellectual disability is a nerve wrecking job. 26% of parents strongly disagree with the above mentioned fact. However, 10% found it difficult and 6% found it very difficult to raise their child with intellectual disability.
- 24% of parents have strongly agreed that their child with intellectual disability needs more care than other children, 34% have agreed to this, 22% are undecided. However, 12% of parents disagree & 8% strongly disagree to this attitude of other parents.
- 24% of parents and 16% of parents were disappointed and very much disappointed respectively, when they found out that they have given birth to a child with intellectual disability. 20% were undecided. 24% disagreed and 16% strongly disagreed to the fact that they were disappointed.
- 36% of parents have strongly disagreed to the fact that they would have loved their child more if he or she were a normal child, 48% have agreed to this. 10% were undecided. Only 6% of the parents could overcome the fact that their child was abnormal and had the desire to love them more if he/she were born normal
- 36% parents had a strong desire that they could help their disabled child to lead an independent life, 28% agreed to it. 22% were undecided. 14% parents disagreed to it and want their child to live with them as they believed that it would be very hard for a disable child to lead an independent life.
- 36% of parents have strongly agreed to the fact that their child with intellectual disability needs comes first than their normal child's while 44% have agreed, 12% were remained undecided. Only 8% of the parents felt the need to give equal importance to both their child with intellectual disability and child without disability.
- 52% of parents have strongly disagreed to the fact that they don't like their child with intellectual disability to play with other normal child, 46% have disagreed and only 2% parents wanted their child to be left alone as they do not want their child to mingle with the normal ones.
- 52% of parents have strongly disagreed to the fact that they don't like their child with intellectual disability to play with other normal child, 46% have disagreed to the fact and only 2% of parents wanted their child to be left alone as they do not want their child to mingle with the normal ones.
- 54% of parents have strongly agreed to the fact that their child with intellectual disability does not lead a normal life, 40% have agreed, 4% were undecided to this particular statement. Only 2% of parents found not to be disappointed by their child's inability to lead a normal life.

- 36% of parents strongly agree that their child is capable of attending a normal school, 24% agree to it. However, 10% parents disagree and 24% strongly disagree to idea that their child is capable of attending normal school.
- 40% of parents strongly agree and 44% agree that thinking about their child with intellectual disability futures makes them sad. However, 60% have disagreed and 10% have strongly disagreed to the statement.
- The response obtained from 68% of the parents shows that they are not ashamed of their child with intellectual disability on the other hand only 10% of them are ashamed of their child having intellectual disability.

VI. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The results of the study suggest that the parents of children with intellectual disability express a positive perception towards their wards. They do not have feelings of embarrassment towards their children with intellectual disability. Those statements which received the most undecided answers or a wide range of answers from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” were concerned with the behavior and life of children with intellectual disability. However, parents and family members were over protective towards children. But the important finding is that there was a strong feeling of love and acceptance among all towards their children with intellectual disability and almost all of them did not display strongly negative attitudes.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The parents have positive perception towards children with intellectual disability. Though some parents and family members considered them as a burden and feel ashamed of them, yet majority of them consider it as their duty to take care of such children. They love and accept their children with intellectual disability. However, the perceptions of the respective groups towards children were affected by their individual knowledge, beliefs and perceptions. Further there was no any gender impact on the attitudes of parents towards their children with disability. The most important implication of this study is the need for equalizing the attitudinal variances of the different groups for the psychological well-being of the children with disability.

Huge efforts and patience are required to deal with the students with children with intellectual disability. In spite of the attempt by the institutions to provide the best facilities to the children with intellectual disability, parents expressed the need for providing playground for children. Beside that vocational training should be provided so that they might be able to know the best in their child. Moreover medical checkup should have been provided once in a week than a month. Children with Intellectual disability can be made a special child in real sense only if the society accepts him with due kindness and affection. Society should accept it as their duty to improve their condition and not as a sole duty of the parents. Such child should be provided special scope so that they might receive secure career. Their special abilities should be channelized so that they become active contributors to the society in their own way which in a way would make them self-independent and not as mere disabled child.

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