

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE FAMILY CONDITIONS OF
MENTALLY RETARDED AND NORMAL CHILDREN**



**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR
THE AWARD OF PH. D. DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY**

BY

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Certified that Manju Biswas has completed the research work under my supervision for the full period prescribed under Clause 1 and that the thesis embodies the results of her investigations conducted during the period (July 1968 to July 1970) she worked as a Ph.D. research scholar.

The thesis has been revised under my supervision and incorporates the suggestions made for improvement.



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PREFACE TO REVISION

I am thankful to the learned examiner who recommended a revision of the dissertation submitted earlier for evaluation.

The valued criticism and suggestions made by him were so useful that, I believe, my work could have been less significant without them. I am indebted to these valued suggestions given for the revision of this work.

The main suggestion was to develop the material in greater depth by using the case history material and statistical data for more deeper analysis. This has been done in terms of the scope and limitations of the present work. A separate chapter has been added dealing with the case history material. The individual cases are given detailed treatment and possible generalizations are incorporated in the conclusion.

I shall always remain grateful for the learned suggestions regarding the review of literature. The introductory part of the dissertation has been enriched with the literature on the subject available to me.

The learned examiner has been kind enough to observe that the present work has made an important step in the right direction and could profit from more intensive work in quantitative and qualitative techniques in future research on mentally retarded samples.

Within the limitations of an individual research, the work has been revised in the light of the criticisms and suggestions made to give an improved shape to the previous shape of the work.

This thesis has been revised under the supervision of Prof. S.K.Srivastava, head (Dept. of Sociology) and Dean Faculty of Social Sciences who has been kind enough to spare time. I am thankful to him.

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P R E F A C E

Mental retardation is a world wide problem and in India it is estimated that about 1.5 to 1.8 million children of the age group of 6 to 14 years are retarded. Mental retardation is not only a biological, educational or psychological problem but it is a multi-dimensional problem of a mixture of psychosocial, biological and educational problems. But the public and professional interest in the etiology of mental retardation and in the problems faced by retarded children and their families has been at best meagre and sporadic. This apathy has persisted despite the high incidence of mental subnormality throughout the world, a problem which no society can avoid. Yet until recent years training schools and other public facilities have suffered from a general lack of attention, a lack of financial support and a lack of trained personnel. Probably no other public health problem of such enormity has been so blatantly neglected.

This thesis entitled "A Comparative Study of the Family Conditions of Mentally Retarded and Normal Children" aims to find out the significant association of the following background factors with the incidence of mental retardation in families under study. The family background constitute has been reduced to characteristics of the parents, caste and

community, income and occupation, sibling order and other relevant factors of family history of the mentally retarded children. Here the investigator has not established any causal design of her findings. Findings only revealed the concomitant relationship of two variables - the social conditions and mental retardation - as the research pools were not competent enough to establish causal relationship between these variables.

The research work reveals that the importance of adequate social and cultural environment is essential prerequisite for normal intellectual development of a child. Investigator finds that mental retardation is inversely related with the socio-economic status of the children; marital status of the parents of such children are not healthy, mostly these children are unwanted and rejected by their parents, frequency of premature deaths of the parents are higher in case of retarded children as compared to normal children, retarded children mostly come from joint families which are tragic and quarrelsome in nature.

Mental retardation, being such an important problem, it is felt that the present thesis will be useful to persons who are working in this field and for the parents who have a mentally retarded child in their families, and for those who are interested in this problem of study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe my sincere gratitude to my reverend Supervisor, Professor S.K. Srivastava, ^{Head} Department of Sociology, ^{Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences} Banaras Hindu University, who has given me the guidance for carrying out the entire work. His affection has been the source of inspiration at the critical junctures of this work.

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I thank the respective Heads, Social Workers, Psychologists and the Teachers concerned with the present work for the facilities they made available to me.

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