

## PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS FACED BY PARENTS OF PERSON WITH DISABILITIES IN PRESENT ERA

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### Abstract:

Parenting a child with a disability is a unique and challenging journey, especially in the present era, where societal expectations and evolving lifestyles intensify pressures on caregivers. Parents of persons with disabilities (PWD) face numerous psychosocial issues, such as emotional distress, social stigma, financial strain, and lack of systemic support. These challenges are often compounded by the fast-paced modern world, digital advancements, and changing family dynamics. This paper aims to explore these problems, highlight coping strategies, and discuss opportunities for interventions that can alleviate the burden on parents and improve their quality of life.

**Key Words:** Psychosocial Problems, Parents, PWD

### Introduction

Raising a child with a disability requires significant emotional, physical, and financial commitment. Parents of PWD often face challenges beyond caregiving, including societal stigma, isolation, and limited access to resources. In the present era, these challenges are amplified by rapid societal changes, increased digital connectivity, and evolving expectations of parents and children. Despite these difficulties, technological advancements, awareness programs, and inclusive policies present opportunities for better support. This paper examines the psychosocial problems faced by parents of PWD and explores potential strategies for intervention.

### Psychosocial Problems Faced by Parents of PWD

- **Emotional and Psychological Distress:** PWD is significant. Many parents experience chronic stress due to the caregiving demands and uncertainty about their child's future. Anxiety and depression are common, fueled by the emotional and financial strain of raising a child with a disability. Parents also report feelings of grief over unmet expectations and guilt about whether they are providing adequate care.
- **Social Stigma and Isolation:** Parents of PWD often face societal stigma, with misconceptions about disabilities leading to discriminatory attitudes. This stigma can extend to the family, creating feelings of shame and alienation. As a result, many parents withdraw from social interactions, leading to isolation.
- **Financial Strain:** The financial burden of caring for a child with a disability is immense. Parents must often cover the costs of medical care, therapies, assistive devices, and specialised education. For many families, one parent may need to leave their job or reduce working hours to manage caregiving responsibilities, which worsens financial insecurity.
- **Marital and Family Strain:** The stress of caregiving frequently places strain on marital

relationships, with conflicts arising over parenting responsibilities, financial concerns, and emotional exhaustion. Sibling relationships can also be affected, as siblings may feel neglected or overwhelmed by the caregiving demands on the family.

- **Lack of Support Systems:** Parents of PWD often lack adequate support systems, including access to specialized education, healthcare, and recreational services. The unavailability of inclusive programs or trained professionals further compounds the caregiving burden. Government schemes and policies, though beneficial, are often insufficient or difficult to access.

### **Opportunities and Coping Mechanisms for Parents of PWD**

- **Leveraging support networks:** Support groups, whether online or in-person, provide parents with emotional relief and practical advice. Connecting with other parents of PWD fosters a sense of community and reduces feelings of isolation. Advocacy groups can help parents navigate policies and access resources.
- **Mental Health and Counselling Services:** Counselling services tailored to the needs of caregivers can provide parents with coping strategies and emotional support. Access to mental health professionals can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression among parents.
- **Technological Innovations:** Advancements in technology, such as assistive devices, telemedicine, and mobile applications, can ease caregiving responsibilities. These tools enable better communication, education, and health monitoring for children with disabilities.
- **Raising Awareness and Reducing Stigma:** Public awareness campaigns can help reduce societal stigma and foster a more inclusive environment. By normalising disabilities, these campaigns can encourage acceptance and understanding in schools, workplaces, and communities.
- **Strengthening Resilience:** Training programs for parents on stress management, mindfulness, and resilience-building can empower them to face challenges more effectively. Learning coping mechanisms can improve their mental health and enhance their ability to provide care.
- **Government and Community Programs:** The study revealed a strong potential for academicians to engage in research related to global social issues, including migration, climate change, and mental health, which can have a profound impact on social work policies and practices.

### **Review of Literature**

- **Comparing the parental stress between the mothers of disabled boys and the mothers of normal boys”** by Habibi Asgar Abad M, Rashidi A, Motevalipour A. (2009) This study demonstrated that mothers of children with exceptional needs reported elevated levels of parental stress. The investigation's assessment of the effect on each sub-scale revealed that the stress scores of mothers with exceptional children were significantly higher than those of mothers with typically developing children in the sub-scales of parental distress, parent-child dysfunctional interaction, and DC.
- **"Age and gender differences in the well-being of midlife and aging parents with children with mental health or developmental problems"** by Ha JH, Hong J, Seltzer

**MM, Greenberg JS. (2008)** Parents of children with developmental problems exhibited lower levels of social and mental well-being compared to the control group, although in the same study, the social and mental well-being of parents of children with mental health issues showed no significant difference from the control group. Based on the multivariable analysis conducted in the study of Ha et al., parents of children with developmental or mental health problems experienced higher levels of negative agitation, diminished social and mental well-being, and increased physical problems compared to parents without a disabled child; these results indicate that having a disabled child is one factor among numerous others that could affect the social and mental well-being of parents.

- **"Comparing stress levels of parents of children with cancer and parents of children with physical disabilities" by Hung JW, Wu YH, Yeh CH. (2004)** In the study, a significant difference was observed among various diagnostic groups regarding each parenting stress sub-scale. Parents of children diagnosed with cancer exhibited significantly higher levels of stress compared to parents of children with disabilities.

The research methodology for the study "**Psychosocial problems faced by parents of PWD in present era**" adopts a qualitative research design to explore the psychosocial challenges that parents of persons with disabilities face today. A qualitative approach is suitable because it allows for an in-depth understanding of personal experiences, emotional responses, and social contexts of the parents involved.

### **Recommendations for interventions**

- 1. Holistic Support Systems:** To address the disparities in digital access, institutions should invest in the necessary infrastructure and provide regular training programs for faculty on using technology effectively in teaching and fieldwork supervision.
- 2. Community-Based Interventions:** Community centers offering respite care, counselling, and skill-building workshops can reduce caregiver burnout and promote self-care. These interventions can also help parents build social connections and foster a sense of belonging.
- 3. Inclusive Policies:** Advocating for inclusive policies in education, healthcare, and employment can reduce caregiving burdens and create opportunities for children with disabilities to thrive.
- 4. Awareness and Sensitisation:** Societal attitudes toward disability must shift to foster greater acceptance and inclusion. Awareness campaigns, inclusive school programs, and workplace accommodations can help achieve this goal.
- 5. Promoting Research:** Encouraging research into the psychosocial challenges faced by parents of PWD can provide valuable insights for designing effective interventions and policies.

### **Conclusion**

Parents of persons with disabilities face a wide range of psychosocial challenges, including emotional distress, societal stigma, financial strain, and limited access to support

systems. However, the present era also offers opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and advocacy. By fostering inclusive policies, leveraging technology, and building supportive communities, we can empower parents to navigate these challenges and improve their quality of life. A holistic approach that prioritizes the well-being of both parents and children with disabilities is essential for creating a more equitable and compassionate society.

## **References**

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