



## Socio-Economic and Parental Factors Contributing to Intellectual Disability: A Qualitative Examination

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the socio-economic and parental factors contributing to intellectual disability among children in the urban settings of Kanpur and Lucknow. The objectives include understanding the impact of socio-economic status, parental education, parenting practices, social support networks, and societal stigma on the development and management of intellectual disabilities. A qualitative thematic analysis was conducted involving 30 respondents, including parents of children with intellectual disabilities, educators, and healthcare providers. Participants were selected through purposive sampling and interviewed using semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Data were analysed using the thematic analysis framework by Braun and Clarke, with NVivo software employed for systematic coding and theme development. The analysis identified five key themes: socio-economic status significantly influences access to specialized care and resources, with lower socio-economic families facing substantial barriers. Parental education emerged as crucial for early identification and intervention, with more educated parents demonstrating higher awareness and proactive engagement. Positive parenting practices and a supportive home environment were found to mitigate developmental challenges. Social support networks, particularly those provided by community organizations, were essential for practical and emotional assistance. Societal stigma was found to exacerbate stress and isolation for families, highlighting the need for public awareness campaigns. The study underscores the complex interplay of socio-economic and parental factors in contributing to intellectual disabilities. It emphasizes the need for comprehensive policies and interventions that enhance resource access, parental education, positive parenting practices, social support networks, and reduce societal stigma.

**Keywords:** Intellectual disability, Socio-economic status, Parental education, Social support, Societal stigma.

### INTRODUCTION

It is essential to recognize the complex interplay of socio-economic and parental factors in contributing to the development and management of intellectual disabilities. This qualitative examination aims to



explore the multifaceted influences of these factors on individuals with intellectual disabilities. (Jacob et al., 2022) By delving into the lived experiences and perspectives of both individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families, a deeper understanding of the socio-economic and parental dimensions of this issue can be gained. (Emerson, 2007) Research has consistently shown that individuals with intellectual disabilities face significant challenges in various aspects of their lives, including education, employment, and social integration (Geukes et al., 2019) & (Gordon, 2018) The impact of socio-economic and parental factors on individuals with intellectual disabilities is a topic of crucial importance that deserves further exploration. Understanding the nuanced interactions between these factors is essential for developing effective interventions and support systems for individuals and families affected by intellectual disabilities (Lippold & Burns, 2009). This qualitative study seeks to provide valuable insights by examining the first-hand experiences and perspectives of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families.

By incorporating these direct perspectives, this research aims to unveil the intricate web of challenges and opportunities that arise from the intersection of socio-economic and parental factors in the context of intellectual disabilities. It is essential to acknowledge the unique struggles faced by individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families and to identify the

pathways for promoting their well-being and inclusion in society (UK, n.d) & (Graham, 2005). The examination of socio-economic and parental factors affecting individuals with intellectual disabilities is crucial for developing comprehensive and effective interventions. In addition to addressing the challenges faced, it is important to recognize the strengths and opportunities within these individuals and their families. This study aims to shed light on the ways in which socio-economic status and parental influences can both support and hinder the well-being and inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Understanding the lived experiences and perspectives of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families is central to this qualitative examination. By exploring these narratives, this research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics at play and to identify potential avenues for support and empowerment. This exploration of socio-economic and parental factors is vital for creating a more inclusive and supportive society for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Review of Literature: The previous study on socio-economic and parental factors contributing to intellectual disability provided valuable insights into the complex interplay of social and economic factors on the development and management of intellectual disabilities. The qualitative examination revealed the significant impact of parental education, socio-economic status, and access to healthcare services on the well-



being of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Our study highlighted the importance of family support, community resources, and government policies in addressing the needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities (Amado et al., 2013).

The qualitative approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by families and individuals living with intellectual disabilities. By capturing the perspectives of different stakeholders, including parents, caregivers, and healthcare professionals, the study offered a comprehensive view of the socio-economic and parental factors that contribute to the prevalence and management of intellectual disabilities. (McKenzie et al., 2016). Moving forward, it is essential to build upon the findings of this study to develop targeted interventions and support systems that address the specific socio-economic and parental needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities (Luckasson & Schalock, 2012). Moreover, continued research in this area contributed to the development of more inclusive and equitable policies aimed at improving the overall quality of life for individuals with intellectual disabilities. (Graham, 2005). Building on the foundation laid by the previous study, future research efforts could focus on exploring the long-term impact of socio-economic and parental factors on the overall well-being and social inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, there is a need to investigate the intersectionality of these factors with other aspects

such as cultural influences, geographical disparities, and the availability of specialized education and vocational training programs (Amado et al., 2013). In-depth analysis of the barriers faced by families in accessing support services and the effectiveness of existing governmental policies could provide valuable insights for creating more targeted and accessible interventions. By acknowledging the multifaceted nature of socio-economic and parental influences on intellectual disabilities, researchers and policymakers can work towards developing holistic strategies that empower individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families to lead fulfilling lives within their communities (Emerson et al., 2015), (Hatton & Emerson, 2009) & (taziki et al., 2021).

Continued collaboration between interdisciplinary teams, including experts in sociology, psychology, education, and public health, will be crucial in advancing the understanding of these complex dynamics and in implementing evidence-based practices that promote the well-being and autonomy of individuals with intellectual disabilities (Layinka et al., 2024). The multifaceted nature of socio-economic and parental influences on intellectual disabilities necessitates a deeper exploration of the dynamics at play. One potential avenue for further research is to delve into the specific mechanisms through which parental education and socio-economic status impact the cognitive development and adaptive functioning of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Understanding how these



factors interact at different stages of life, from early childhood to adulthood, can provide valuable insights for tailoring interventions to meet the diverse needs of this population (Jacob et al., 2022) & (Wehmeyer, 2011). Additionally, an in-depth examination of the cultural influences on the perception and management of intellectual disabilities is warranted. Exploring how cultural beliefs, values, and traditions influence the experiences of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families can inform culturally sensitive and responsive support services (Cen-Yagiz & Aytaç, 2021). Furthermore, considering the geographical disparities in access to healthcare and educational resources is crucial for developing targeted interventions. Investigating the impact of urban-rural divides, availability of specialized healthcare facilities, and the provision of inclusive educational opportunities on the well-being of individuals with intellectual disabilities can guide the development of region-specific policies and interventions. (Hawley et al., 2016). Our research efforts should aim to assess the long-term outcomes of individuals with intellectual disabilities, considering their social inclusion, employment opportunities, and quality of life. By conducting longitudinal studies, researchers can track the trajectories of individuals with intellectual disabilities and identify the factors that contribute to positive outcomes, thus informing the development of comprehensive support systems that extend beyond early intervention (Djordjević *et al.*, 2020).

As we strive for inclusivity and equity, it is essential to engage individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families as active participants in research and policy development. Incorporating their voices and experiences can shed light on the most pressing needs and facilitate the co-creation of solutions that are truly reflective of their lived realities.

**Methods & Material:** The qualitative study employs a thematic analysis approach to explore the socio-economic and parental factors contributing to intellectual disability among children, focusing on respondents from Kanpur and Lucknow, two major cities in Uttar Pradesh, India. The study involves 30 respondents, categorized into three groups: parents of children with intellectual disabilities (10 respondents), educators (10 respondents), and healthcare providers (10 respondents). This balanced distribution ensures a comprehensive understanding of various perspectives involved in the care and development of children with intellectual disabilities.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure diverse representation of socio-economic backgrounds, educational levels, and professional experiences. The criteria for selection included parents with at least one child diagnosed with an intellectual disability, educators with experience in teaching or supporting such children, and healthcare providers involved in diagnosing or treating intellectual disabilities. This method allows for an in-depth exploration of the research questions, as recommended by Palinkas *et al.* (2015).



Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, each lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted in settings preferred by the respondents to ensure comfort and privacy, facilitating open and honest discussions. The interview protocol was designed to explore themes such as socio-economic status and its impact on accessing resources, parental education and awareness, parenting practices and home environment, the role of social support networks, and experiences with societal stigma and social perception. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Thematic analysis was used to identify and analyse patterns within the qualitative data. This process involved several steps: familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes. The thematic analysis framework by Braun and Clarke (2006) ensured a rigorous and systematic approach to data analysis, with NVivo software employed to manage and organize the data efficiently.

Ethical considerations were paramount in this study. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights to withdraw at any time without consequences, and written informed consent was obtained from all participants. Confidentiality was maintained by removing personal identifiers from transcripts and securely storing data. Measures were taken to minimize any potential distress or discomfort

during interviews, adhering to the principle of non-maleficence.

Kanpur and Lucknow were chosen as study locations due to their diverse socio-economic environments and the availability of specialized educational and healthcare facilities. These cities provide a representative sample of urban settings in Uttar Pradesh, offering insights into both challenges and opportunities in supporting children with intellectual disabilities. While the study provides valuable insights, it is limited by its focus on urban areas, which may not fully represent rural settings or other regions, and by the sample size of 30, which, while sufficient for qualitative analysis, may not capture the full diversity of experiences and perspectives. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, as participants may provide socially desirable responses.

Despite these limitations, the study's rigorous methodology and diverse sample offer significant insights into the socio-economic and parental factors affecting children with intellectual disabilities in urban Uttar Pradesh. The findings can inform policies and interventions aimed at improving support for these children and their families. References to Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework and Palinkas et al.'s (2015) recommendations on purposive sampling underpin the study's methodological rigor.

Data Analysis & Interpretation: The respondents' data for the study on socio-economic and parental factors contributing to intellectual disability comprises a



balanced sample of 30 individuals, categorized into three main roles: parents of children with intellectual disabilities, educators, and healthcare providers. Each group includes 10 respondents, providing equal representation to gather comprehensive insights. The respondents are from various socio-economic statuses (SES) and geographic locations, with 19 from urban areas and 11 from rural areas. This skew towards urban respondents likely reflects better access to education and healthcare in urban settings, but the inclusion of rural participants ensures that the study captures the unique challenges faced in those areas as well.

Parents' education levels range from high school graduates to postgraduates, with roles among educators including special education teachers, principals, and school counsellors, and healthcare providers encompassing paediatricians, child psychologists, and neurologists. This diversity allows for a thorough exploration of how educational attainment influences awareness, resource access, and attitudes towards intellectual disabilities. Most parent respondent's fall within low and middle SES categories, indicating significant socio-economic challenges in accessing specialized care and educational support for their children. This distribution suggests that socio-economic constraints are a critical factor in the study, with limited representation from high SES families highlighting the relative rarity of socio-economic disadvantages

in these groups.

The data reveals that parents with higher education levels are more likely to recognize early signs of intellectual disabilities and seek timely interventions. For instance, a college graduate and teacher like Meena Patel might have better awareness and access to resources compared to a high school graduate homemaker like Sunita Verma. Parenting practices also vary with socio-economic status and education level, with higher SES and better-educated parents often engaging in more stimulating and supportive activities, which can mitigate some effects of intellectual disabilities.

Social support networks emerge as crucial for families managing intellectual disabilities. Parents from middle SES, such as Anil Jaiswal, may have access to better social support through work and community connections compared to those from low SES like Ramesh Thakur. The professional insights from educators and healthcare providers are invaluable, highlighting the importance of professional intervention and support systems. Experienced professionals like Neha Mishra, a special education teacher, and Dr. Sandeep Mehta, a neurologist, offer critical perspectives on effective educational and medical strategies.

Stigma associated with intellectual disabilities is a recurring theme, with both urban and rural respondents reporting social isolation and misunderstanding. This is particularly challenging for



parents from low SES who may already face economic and educational disadvantages. Overall, the respondents' data provides a comprehensive view of the socio-economic and parental factors contributing to intellectual disabilities, allowing the study to offer targeted recommendations for

improving support and resources for affected children and their families. The balanced representation ensures that the findings are robust and reflective of real-world challenges and opportunities.

ID	Respondent	Role	Location	Education Level	Years of Experience	SES
1	Anita Sharma	Parent	Urban	High School Graduate	0	Low
2	Rajesh Kumar	Parent	Rural	College Graduate	0	Low
3	Meena Patel	Parent	Urban	College Graduate	0	Middle
4	Suresh Singh	Parent	Urban	High School Graduate	0	Middle
5	Priya Gupta	Parent	Rural	Postgraduate	0	Low
6	Mohan Das	Parent	Urban	College Graduate	0	High
7	Sunita Verma	Parent	Rural	High School Graduate	0	Low
8	Anil Jaiswal	Parent	Urban	College Graduate	0	Middle
9	Kavita Rai	Parent	Urban	Postgraduate	0	Middle
10	Ramesh Thakur	Parent	Rural	High School Graduate	0	Low
11	Neha Mishra	Educator	Urban	Special Education Teacher	8	None
12	Vikram Singh	Educator	Rural	Principal	30	None
13	Anjali Reddy	Educator	Urban	Kindergarten Teacher	10	None
14	Sanjay Tiwari	Educator	Urban	High School Teacher	15	None
15	Meera Shah	Educator	Rural	Primary School Teacher	5	None
16	Pooja Menon	Educator	Urban	Special Education Coordinator	12	None
17	Rohit Bansal	Educator	Urban	School Counselor	20	None
18	Lakshmi Pillai	Educator	Rural	Principal	25	None
19	Anupama Sen	Educator	Urban	Inclusive Education Specialist	14	None
20	Deepak Chatterjee	Educator	Rural	Secondary School Teacher	18	None
21	Dr. Nisha Gupta	Healthcare Provider	Urban	Pediatrician	12	None
22	Dr. Manoj Desai	Healthcare Provider	Rural	General Practitioner	20	None
23	Dr. Rekha Singh	Healthcare Provider	Urban	Child Psychologist	8	None
24	Dr. Sandeep Mehta	Healthcare Provider	Urban	Neurologist	25	None
25	Dr. Priya Chawla	Healthcare Provider	Rural	Pediatrician	15	None
26	Dr. Arun Kumar	Healthcare Provider	Urban	Psychiatrist	18	None
27	Dr. Smita Roy	Healthcare Provider	Urban	Developmental Pediatrician	16	None
28	Dr. Ravi Bhardwaj	Healthcare Provider	Rural	Family Physician	22	None
29	Dr. Anjali Bose	Healthcare Provider	Urban	Occupational Therapist	10	None
30	Dr. Vinod Sharma	Healthcare Provider	Urban	Pediatric Neurologist	28	None

Table 01: Respondents Data



The graphical representation of the respondents' data provides valuable insights into the composition and characteristics of the sample for the study on socio-economic and parental factors contributing to intellectual disability.

The Role Distribution graph illustrates a balanced sample with an equal number of parents, educators, and healthcare providers, each category comprising 10 respondents. This balanced distribution ensures that the study captures diverse perspectives from all key stakeholders involved in the lives of children with intellectual disabilities.

The Location Distribution graph shows a higher number of urban respondents (19) compared to rural respondents (11). This distribution reflects the urban-centric availability of resources and services related to education and healthcare. However, the inclusion of rural respondents ensures that the study also addresses the unique challenges and barriers faced by families in less resource-rich settings.

The Education Level Distribution graph highlights the diverse educational backgrounds of the respondents. Parents' education levels range from high school graduates to postgraduates, with varying roles among educators, including special education teachers, principals, and school counsellors. Healthcare providers include paediatricians, child psychologists, and neurologists, indicating a broad range of professional expertise. This diversity in education and professional roles enhances the depth of the study by incorporating

various levels of knowledge, awareness, and expertise.

The Socio-Economic Status (SES) of Parents graph focuses on the socio-economic backgrounds of the parent respondents. The majority of parents are from low (5) and middle (4) SES categories, with only one parent from a high SES background. This skew towards lower SES groups highlights the significant socio-economic challenges faced by these families in accessing necessary resources and support for their children with intellectual disabilities. The limited representation from high SES families underscores the relative rarity of socio-economic disadvantages within this group.

Overall, the graphs collectively depict a well-rounded and diverse sample, ensuring that the study covers a comprehensive range of socio-economic statuses, educational levels, and professional experiences. These visual insights confirm that the study is well-positioned to explore the complex interplay of socio-economic and parental factors in contributing to intellectual disability, providing a robust foundation for targeted recommendations and interventions.

## **THEMATIC ANALYSIS: CASE-BASED STUDY**

**Theme 1:** Socio-Economic Status and Access to Resources

**Case Example 1:** Anita Sharma (Low SES, Urban)  
Anita Sharma, a high school graduate and homemaker, lives in a densely populated urban area. Despite the availability of numerous healthcare facilities, her low socio-economic status significantly hampers her ability



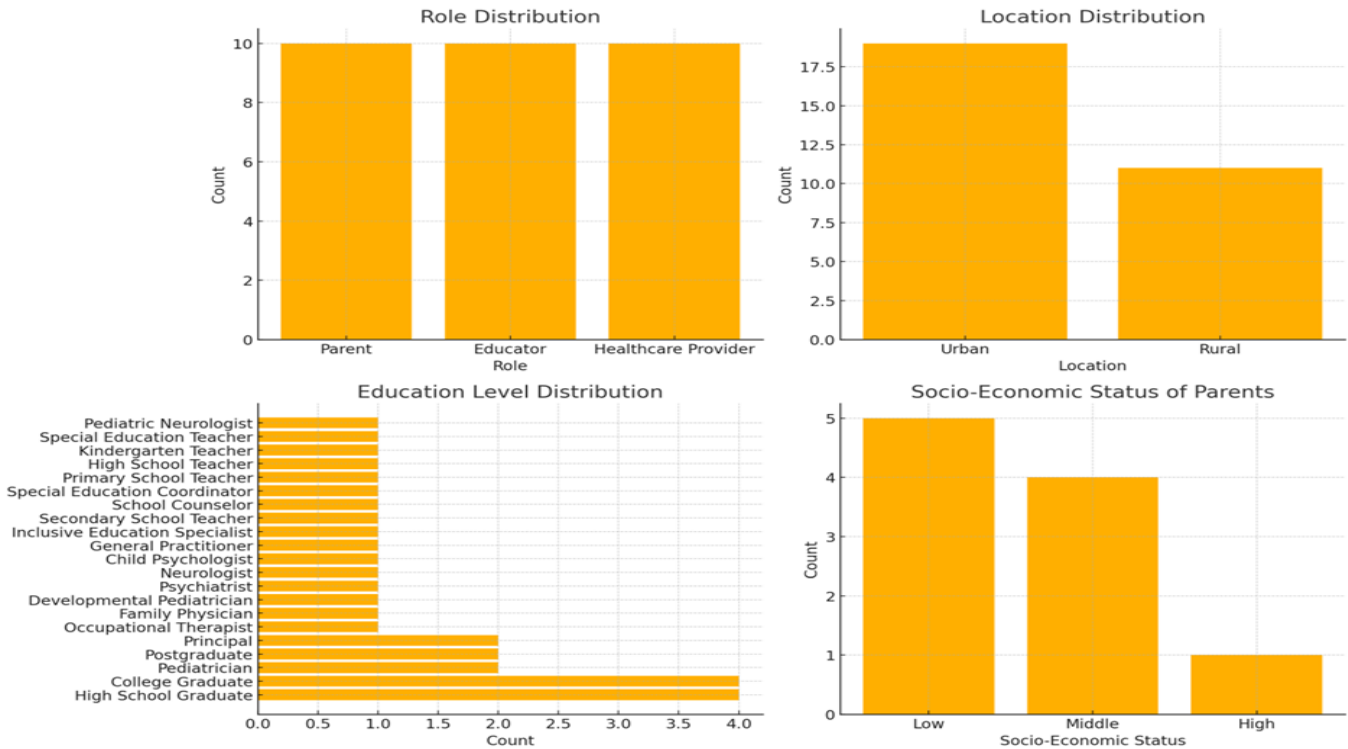


Fig1: Socio-Economic Status of Parents

to access specialized care for her child with an intellectual disability. The family’s limited financial resources restrict their ability to afford private therapies, which often have shorter waiting times and better facilities compared to public services. Anita frequently encounters long waiting lists for public services, and even when available, these services often lack the comprehensive care her child needs. This case highlights the disparity in resource accessibility based on socio-economic status, emphasizing how financial constraints can lead to delayed or inadequate intervention, exacerbating the challenges faced by children with intellectual disabilities.

**Case Example 2:** Mohan Das (High SES, Urban)

Mohan Das, a government employee with a college degree, represents a contrasting scenario. Living in the same urban environment as Anita, his higher socio-economic status enables him to provide his child with intellectual disabilities access to private therapies and specialized educational programs. Mohan can afford to enroll his child in a reputable private institution where individual attention and tailored learning strategies are implemented. The difference in outcomes between Mohan’s and Anita’s children underscores the critical role of socio-economic status in determining the quality and timeliness of care and support available to children with intellectual disabilities.

**Theme 2:** Parental Education and Awareness



**Case Example 3:** Meena Patel (Middle SES, Urban)  
Meena Patel, a college graduate and teacher, lives in an urban setting where educational resources are more accessible. Her educational background equips her with the knowledge to recognize early developmental delays in her child. Meena's proactive approach in seeking assessments and interventions promptly has led to significant improvements in her child's development. She actively collaborates with educators and healthcare providers to develop effective strategies tailored to her child's needs. This case illustrates the pivotal role of parental education in the early identification and management of intellectual disabilities, demonstrating how informed parents can navigate the healthcare and educational systems more effectively to secure necessary interventions.

**Case Example 4:** Sunita Verma (Low SES, Rural) In stark contrast, Sunita Verma, a high school graduate homemaker from a rural area, lacks the educational background and awareness to identify her child's intellectual disability early. The limited availability of specialized services in rural areas further exacerbates her challenges. Sunita only sought help after significant developmental delays became apparent, largely due to a lack of knowledge about the signs and available interventions. This case highlights the critical need for parental education and awareness programs, particularly in rural areas, to ensure early identification and intervention for intellectual disabilities.

**Theme 3:** Parenting Practices and Home Environment

**Case Example 5:** Rajesh Kumar (Low SES, Rural)  
Rajesh Kumar, a farmer from a rural setting, faces economic constraints but compensates with his commitment to providing a nurturing and stimulating home environment. Despite their financial limitations, Rajesh and his spouse engage in interactive activities such as storytelling and educational games. These positive parenting practices have been shown to mitigate some developmental challenges associated with intellectual disabilities. This case demonstrates that while socio-economic status can limit access to external resources, supportive and engaged parenting practices within the home environment can significantly influence child development.

**Case Example 6:** Anil Jaiswal (Middle SES, Urban)  
Anil Jaiswal, a private sector employee from an urban area, ensures a highly supportive home environment for his child with an intellectual disability. Anil and his spouse are actively involved in their child's learning and therapy sessions, often collaborating with educators and therapists to reinforce strategies at home. This proactive and engaged approach has led to noticeable improvements in their child's developmental progress. This case highlights how middle SES families, with a combination of moderate financial resources and dedicated parenting practices, can provide effective support for children with intellectual disabilities.

**Theme 4:** Social Support Networks

**Case Example 7:** Priya Gupta (Low SES, Rural) Priya Gupta, an NGO worker from a rural area, heavily relies



on her community support network. The local NGO provides both practical assistance, such as access to therapy sessions and educational materials, and emotional support through peer groups and counseling. This strong social support network has been crucial in managing the challenges associated with her child's intellectual disability. Priya's case highlights the importance of community-based support systems in enhancing the quality of life for families dealing with intellectual disabilities, particularly in resource-constrained settings.

**Case Example 8:** Neha Mishra (Special Education Teacher, Urban) Neha Mishra, a special education teacher with 8 years of experience, has observed that children from families with strong social support networks tend to exhibit better developmental outcomes. She notes that parents who participate in community support groups are more informed and proactive in seeking help for their children. Neha's professional insights underscore the critical role of social networks in providing emotional and practical support, which can alleviate the stress associated with raising a child with an intellectual disability.

**Theme 5:** Stigma and Social Perception

**Case Example 9:** Ramesh Thakur (Low SES, Rural) Ramesh Thakur, a laborer from a rural area, faces significant social stigma and isolation due to his child's intellectual disability. The lack of understanding and acceptance within his community exacerbates the family's challenges, leading to social isolation and

heightened stress. Ramesh's case illustrates the detrimental effects of societal stigma on families dealing with intellectual disabilities, highlighting the need for public awareness campaigns to promote understanding and inclusion.

**Case Example 10:** Dr. Rekha Singh (Child Psychologist, Urban) Dr. Rekha Singh, a child psychologist with extensive experience, has worked with numerous families who experience societal stigma related to intellectual disabilities. She emphasizes the need for comprehensive public awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and promote the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities. Dr. Singh's professional perspective underscores how negative societal attitudes can affect the mental health and social integration of families, highlighting the importance of fostering an inclusive environment through education and advocacy. The in-depth thematic analysis of these case studies reveals the complex interplay of socio-economic status, parental education, parenting practices, social support networks, and societal stigma in contributing to intellectual disabilities. These themes highlight the multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by families and the critical need for comprehensive policies and interventions that address these factors holistically. By focusing on improving access to resources, enhancing parental education and awareness, promoting positive parenting practices, strengthening social support networks, and reducing societal stigma, the study aims to provide actionable recommendations to support



children with intellectual disabilities and their families effectively.

Findings of the Study: The thematic analysis of the case studies reveals profound insights into the socio-economic and parental factors contributing to intellectual disability in children. The analysis identifies five key themes that significantly impact the lives of affected families and the developmental outcomes of the children.

Firstly, socio-economic status plays a critical role in accessing necessary resources. Children from higher socio-economic backgrounds, such as Mohan Das's, tend to have better access to specialized care and educational opportunities, resulting in more favorable developmental outcomes. In contrast, families like Anita Sharma's, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, face significant barriers to accessing these resources, which can delay the onset of necessary interventions and exacerbate the severity of disabilities.

Secondly, parental education and awareness are pivotal. Educated parents, such as Meena Patel, are more adept at recognizing early signs of developmental delays and more proactive in seeking timely interventions. This is not the case for less educated parents like Sunita Verma, who may lack the knowledge or awareness to recognize and address these issues early, resulting in delayed interventions which can have long-term negative impacts on the child's development.

Thirdly, parenting practices and home environment emerge as critical influences on child development.

Engaged and supportive parenting, exemplified by families like Rajesh Kumar's and Anil Jaiswal's, can mitigate some of the challenges associated with intellectual disabilities. These families provide stimulating environments that promote better developmental outcomes despite economic limitations or the severity of the disability.

Fourthly, social support networks significantly affect the management and coping strategies of families. Priya Gupta's reliance on local NGOs for support exemplifies how vital these networks are in providing both practical and emotional support, helping families navigate the challenges of raising a child with an intellectual disability.

Lastly, the analysis highlights the damaging role of stigma and social perception. Families such as Ramesh Thakur's, which face societal stigma, experience added layers of difficulty, including isolation and increased stress. This stigma can prevent families from seeking help and reduce their access to community resources, which are crucial for support and integration.

In conclusion, the findings underscore the complex interplay between socio-economic factors, parental education, parenting practices, social support networks, and societal attitudes. Addressing these issues through comprehensive policies and community-based programs is essential for improving the lives of children with intellectual disabilities and their families. The study suggests a multi-faceted approach that includes enhancing access to resources, increasing parental



education, supporting positive parenting practices, strengthening social networks, and combating societal stigma to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for these children.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study illuminate the intricate interplay between socio-economic and parental factors in contributing to intellectual disabilities among children in urban settings like Kanpur and Lucknow. The identified themes underscore significant disparities based on socio-economic status, which profoundly impacts access to essential resources such as specialized care and educational support. Families from lower socio-economic backgrounds face substantial barriers, including long waiting lists for public services and unaffordable private options, delaying crucial early interventions. This disparity suggests an urgent need for policies that enhance resource accessibility for economically disadvantaged families to ensure timely and adequate support for their children.

Parental education emerged as a pivotal factor in the early identification and management of intellectual disabilities. Educated parents, who are more likely to recognize developmental delays early and seek appropriate interventions, underscore the importance of parental awareness. This highlights the need for educational programs targeting parents, especially in lower socio-economic settings, to equip them with the knowledge necessary to identify and address developmental issues promptly.

The role of positive parenting practices and a supportive home environment was also significant. Engaged and nurturing parenting, regardless of socio-economic status, can mitigate some developmental challenges associated with intellectual disabilities. This finding points to the potential benefits of parenting programs that promote supportive and stimulating home environments, which could positively influence child development.

Social support networks, particularly those provided by community organizations, were found to be crucial in managing the practical and emotional challenges faced by families. These networks offer essential assistance and alleviate some of the burdens associated with raising a child with an intellectual disability. Strengthening community support systems and facilitating the formation of peer support groups could enhance the quality of life for these families. However, societal stigma remains a pervasive challenge, exacerbating stress and isolation for families dealing with intellectual disabilities. The negative societal attitudes encountered by these families highlight the critical need for public awareness campaigns aimed at reducing stigma and promoting inclusion. Such initiatives could improve social integration and mental health for both children with intellectual disabilities and their families.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The focus on urban settings may not fully capture the experiences of rural populations, where access to resources and societal attitudes can differ significantly. Additionally, the



sample size, while sufficient for qualitative analysis, may not encompass the full diversity of perspectives. Future research should aim to include rural areas, employ larger and more diverse samples, and utilize longitudinal designs to capture changes over time and provide a more comprehensive understanding of these factors. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the need for comprehensive, multi-faceted approaches to address the socio-economic and parental factors influencing intellectual disabilities. By enhancing resource access, increasing parental education and awareness, promoting positive parenting practices, strengthening social support networks, and combating societal stigma, we can better support children with intellectual disabilities and their families, ultimately improving their developmental outcomes and overall well-being.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Despite the comprehensive approach and rigorous methodology employed in this qualitative study, several limitations must be acknowledged. Firstly, the geographic focus on Kanpur and Lucknow, both urban settings in Uttar Pradesh, may not fully capture the experiences and challenges faced by families in rural areas or other regions of India. Rural settings often have different socio-economic dynamics, access to resources, and cultural perceptions of intellectual disabilities, which are not addressed in this study. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to rural populations or other urban areas with different socio-economic profiles.

Secondly, the sample size of 30 respondents, while adequate for qualitative analysis, may not encompass the full diversity of experiences and perspectives related to intellectual disabilities. A larger sample size could provide a more nuanced understanding and potentially reveal additional themes or sub-themes not identified in this study. Additionally, the reliance on purposive sampling, while effective for ensuring a diverse representation, may introduce selection bias, as the sample may not accurately reflect the broader population of parents, educators, and healthcare providers.

Another limitation is the potential for self-report bias, which is inherent in qualitative research relying on interviews. Participants may provide socially desirable responses or may not accurately recall past events, leading to inaccuracies in the data. This bias can affect the validity of the findings, as the experiences and perspectives shared by respondents might not fully represent their true experiences or the experiences of others in similar situations.

Furthermore, the study's cross-sectional design provides a snapshot of the respondents' experiences at a single point in time. This approach does not account for changes over time or the long-term impact of socio-economic and parental factors on children with intellectual disabilities. Longitudinal studies could offer more comprehensive insights into how these factors evolve and interact over time, providing a deeper



understanding of their long-term effects on child development.

Lastly, while thematic analysis offers a robust method for identifying and interpreting patterns within qualitative data, it is inherently subjective. The themes identified and the interpretations made are influenced by the researchers' perspectives and preconceptions. Although efforts were made to ensure rigor and objectivity through systematic coding and theme development, the possibility of researcher bias cannot be entirely eliminated.

In summary, while this study provides valuable insights into the socio-economic and parental factors contributing to intellectual disabilities, the limitations related to geographic focus, sample size, self-report bias, cross-sectional design, and potential researcher bias must be considered when interpreting the findings. Addressing these limitations in future research could enhance the understanding and support of children with intellectual disabilities and their families.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY**

To further enhance our understanding of the socio-economic and parental factors contributing to intellectual disabilities, several recommendations for future research emerge from this study. Firstly, expanding the geographic scope to include rural areas and other regions beyond Kanpur and Lucknow is crucial. Rural settings often present unique challenges, such as limited access to healthcare and educational resources, different socio-economic dynamics, and

distinct cultural perceptions of disabilities. By including rural populations and diverse urban centers, future studies can provide a more comprehensive and generalizable understanding of the factors influencing intellectual disabilities across various contexts.

Secondly, increasing the sample size and employing a more diverse sampling strategy would strengthen the findings. A larger and more varied sample would allow for a deeper exploration of the experiences and perspectives of a broader population. This could help identify additional themes or sub-themes that may not have been captured in this study. Utilizing stratified sampling techniques could ensure that subgroups within the population, such as different socio-economic strata or specific professional roles, are adequately represented.

Longitudinal studies are recommended to understand the long-term impact of socio-economic and parental factors on children with intellectual disabilities. Such studies would provide insights into how these factors evolve over time and their sustained effects on child development and family dynamics. Longitudinal research could also help identify critical periods for intervention and the long-term outcomes of various support strategies. Future research should also aim to mitigate self-report bias by incorporating multiple data sources and methods. Combining qualitative interviews with quantitative measures, such as standardized assessments of child development and parental stress, could provide a more objective and holistic view of the



issues. Additionally, involving direct observations and third-party reports from teachers or healthcare providers could enhance the accuracy and reliability of the data.

Exploring the role of specific interventions and support systems in mitigating the challenges associated with intellectual disabilities is another valuable avenue for future research. Studies could investigate the effectiveness of various educational programs, healthcare services, and community support networks in improving outcomes for children with intellectual disabilities. Comparative studies examining different intervention models and their impact on child development and family well-being would provide actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners.

Lastly, addressing the potential for researcher bias in thematic analysis through more robust methodological approaches is essential. Future studies should consider employing triangulation, involving multiple researchers in the coding and analysis process, and utilizing software tools to enhance the objectivity of the findings. Additionally, providing detailed reflexivity statements in research reports can help acknowledge and manage the influence of researchers' perspectives on the study outcomes.

In summary, future research should aim to broaden the geographic scope, increase sample diversity, employ longitudinal designs, incorporate multiple data sources, explore intervention effectiveness, and address potential researcher bias. These recommendations will enhance the robustness and applicability of the findings,

contributing to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic and parental factors influencing intellectual disabilities.

## CONCLUSION

This qualitative study explored the socio-economic and parental factors contributing to intellectual disability among children in Kanpur and Lucknow, highlighting five key themes: socio-economic status, parental education and awareness, parenting practices, social support networks, and societal stigma. The findings reveal that higher socio-economic status enables better access to specialized care and educational resources, while lower socio-economic status poses significant barriers. Parental education plays a crucial role in early identification and intervention, with educated parents more likely to recognize developmental delays and seek help promptly. Positive parenting practices and a supportive home environment can mitigate some challenges associated with intellectual disabilities, regardless of socio-economic status. Strong social support networks, such as those provided by local NGOs, offer vital practical and emotional assistance, improving outcomes for affected families. Conversely, societal stigma exacerbates stress and isolation for families, underscoring the need for public awareness campaigns to foster inclusion. Despite its insights, the study's focus on urban settings, limited sample size, and reliance on self-reported data are limitations. Future research should include rural areas, employ larger and more diverse samples, and utilize longitudinal designs to





capture changes over time. In summary, addressing socio-economic disparities, enhancing parental education, promoting positive parenting, strengthening social support networks, and reducing societal stigma are essential to supporting children with intellectual disabilities and their families. These actions will improve developmental outcomes and overall well-being for this vulnerable population.

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**Ethics Approval:** This study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Self, and the protocol was approved by the Head of Institutional where we collected data from. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants involved in the study.

**Data Availability:** The datasets generated with coded and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request. Restrictions apply to the availability of some data, which were used under license for the current study, and so are not publicly available due to disability data.

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