

INTELLECTUAL ABILITY OF CHILDREN OF WOMEN ENGAGED IN PROSTITUTION STUDYING IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF NEEMUCH DISTRICT

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Abstract

The study is based on the intellectual Ability of the children of women engaged in prostitution. The objective of this study is to assess the intellectual ability level of children from classes 6, 7, and 8 of women engaged in prostitution who are studying in middle schools in the Neemuch district of Madhya Pradesh, and to identify any differences in their average scores based on class and gender (boys and girls). The study employed a descriptive research survey method. The sample consisted of 120 students from grades 6, 7, and 8 attending middle schools in the Neemuch district, selected using a snowball sampling method. For data collection, the researcher used a self-made intellectual ability test, which consisted of verbal and non-verbal questions. Mean, standard deviation, t-test, and one-way ANOVA (one-way analysis of variance) statistical techniques were used to analyze the data collected in this study. The findings reflect that most children had below-average intelligence, but some performed relatively well on both verbal and non-verbal tasks. A significant difference in average scores was found between genders and classes.

Keywords: *Prostitution, children of women engaged in prostitution, middle school, intellectual ability, verbal tests, non-verbal tests.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The intellectual development of children is shaped by a complex interaction of biological, environmental, and socio-cultural factors, with socioeconomic adversity exerting one of the strongest influences on cognitive growth (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Hackman & Farah, 2009). Children of women engaged in prostitution represent one of the most socio-economically marginalized and socially excluded groups in India, facing chronic poverty, discrimination, instability, and limited access to educational opportunities (Biradavolu et al., 2012). These adverse conditions directly affect their cognitive stimulation, emotional security, and learning environments, all of which are critical contributors to intellectual ability (Evans, 2004; Jensen, 2009). Several studies consistently show that children living in contexts of high stress and social marginalization often exhibit delays in cognitive processes, including memory, attention, executive functioning, and problem-solving (Blair & Raver, 2012; Noble et al., 2015).

In India, the children of women engaged in prostitution frequently experience educational neglect, stigmatization, and social exclusion, which contribute to irregular schooling and reduced cognitive enrichment (Dandona et al., 2006). The lack of supportive home environments, exposure to violence, and unstable living conditions further exacerbate cognitive risks (UNICEF, 2019). In districts such as Neemuch in Madhya Pradesh, where prostitution is often intergenerational and linked to socioeconomic deprivation, the intellectual development of children becomes even more vulnerable due to limited access to quality schooling and structured learning experiences.

Given this context, assessing the intellectual ability of children of women engaged in prostitution studying in middle schools of Neemuch district is essential for understanding their cognitive strengths, weaknesses, and developmental needs. Such insight can guide educators, policymakers, and child-welfare organizations in

designing targeted educational interventions and support systems that can mitigate the disadvantages imposed by their socio-economic circumstances. Therefore, this study contributes to the limited but growing body of research on the cognitive development of marginalized children in India by examining intellectual ability across demographic variables and identifying implications for educational equity and child development.

1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study holds significance value on a highly marginalized group of children of women engaged in prostitution, whose developmental needs often remain overlooked in mainstream educational research and policy. Understanding their intellectual ability is essential for identifying the academic and cognitive support required to enhance their educational experiences. Since these children frequently face social stigma, economic hardship, and limited access to stable learning environments, assessing their intellectual functioning provides a foundation for designing appropriate interventions, support systems, and inclusive teaching practices (Evans, 2004; Jensen, 2009).

Moreover, this study contributes to the limited literature concerning the educational conditions of marginalized children in India. By generating evidence specific to the Neemuch district, the research provides valuable insights for educators, child welfare organizations, and policymakers working to ensure equitable access to quality education. The study serves as an important step toward developing informed, context-sensitive strategies that support the holistic development and academic empowerment of these vulnerable children (UNESCO, 2020).

1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the level of intellectual ability of children of women engaged in prostitution studying in the middle school of Neemuch district.
2. To study the significant difference in the mean score of intellectual ability of children of women engaged in prostitution studying in the middle school of Neemuch district with respect to gender and class.

1.4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between the mean score of intellectual ability of boys and girls of women engaged in prostitution studying in the middle school of Neemuch district.
2. There is no significant difference among the mean scores of intellectual ability of class 6, class 7, and class 8 children of women engaged in prostitution studying in the middle school of Neemuch district.

1.5. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The present study was limited to children of women engaged in prostitution studying in government middle schools of Neemuch district of Madhya Pradesh.
2. The present study was limited to students from classes 6 to 8.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

A descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study, which is quantitative in nature.

2.1. Population and Sample

For this study, 120 children of women engaged in prostitution, studying in classes 6 to 8 in six government middle schools located within two blocks (Neemuch and Manasa) of Neemuch district of Madhya Pradesh, were selected using the snowball sampling method.

2.2. Tools used for data collection

The researcher used a self-made *Intellectual Ability Test*, comprising verbal and nonverbal questions, to assess the intellectual ability of the children of these women.

3. RESULT AND FINDINGS

3.1. Intellectual ability of children of women engaged in prostitution studying in the middle school of Neemuch district the collected data was analyzed and interpreted as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Levels of Intellectual Ability

Intellectual Ability	Low		Moderate		High	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
	41	34.2%	51	42.5%	28	23.3%

The table 1 presents the distribution of intellectual ability among children of women engaged in prostitution studying in middle schools of the Neemuch district. The findings show that the largest proportion of students (42.5%) fall under the *moderate* level of intellectual ability, indicating that most children possess an average level of cognitive functioning. 34.2% are categorized under the *low* intellectual ability group, indicating that more than one-third of the children face challenges in reasoning, problem-solving, and overall cognitive tasks. Meanwhile, only 23.3% of the students demonstrate *high* intellectual ability, representing the smaller group that performs well above average. Overall, these results indicate that the majority of children fall at a moderate intellectual level, and a significant proportion exhibit low intellectual ability, highlighting the need for academic support, cognitive enrichment activities, and targeted interventions to enhance their learning potential and cognitive development.

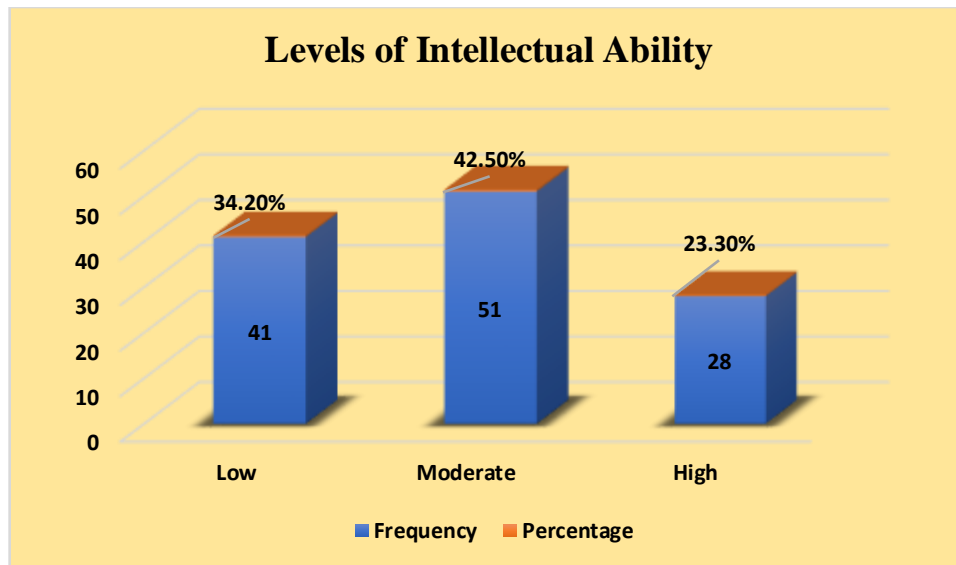


Figure 1: Levels of Intellectual Ability

3.2. There is no significant difference between the mean score of intellectual ability of boys and girls of women engaged in prostitution studying in the middle school of Neemuch district.

Table 2: t-test for significant mean differences between Boys and Girls of secondary level tribal students

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Remark
Boys	61	38.13	5.920	118	-1.028	.306	Not Significant
Girls	59	39.15	4.898				

The above table 2 presents the comparison of boys and girls on their overall intellectual ability scores using an independent samples t-test. The results show that boys (M = 38.13, SD = 5.92) and girls (M = 39.15, SD = 4.89) obtained similar mean scores in intellectual ability. Although girls scored slightly higher than boys, the calculated t-value of -1.028 with a corresponding p-value of 0.306, which is greater than the 0.05 significance level, indicates that this difference is not statistically significant. This shows that the observed mean difference between boys and girls is likely due to chance rather than gender-based differences in intellectual ability. Overall, the findings suggest that gender does not have a significant impact on the intellectual ability of children of women engaged in prostitution studying in the middle schools of Neemuch district. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between the mean intellectual ability scores of boys and girls is accepted.

3.3. There is no significant difference among the mean scores of intellectual ability of class 6, class 7, and class 8 children of women engaged in prostitution studying in the middle school of Neemuch district.

Table 3: One way-Anova for significant mean differences between Classes of secondary-level tribal students

		Sum of Squares	df	F	sig	Remark
Intellectual Ability	Between Groups	39.302	2	.659	.519	Not Significant
	Within Groups	3486.564	117			
	Total	3525.867	119			

The above table 3 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA conducted to determine whether the intellectual ability of children of women engaged in prostitution varies across Class 6, Class 7, and Class 8 in the middle schools of Neemuch district. The ANOVA result shows an F-value of 0.659 with a corresponding p-value of 0.519, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the differences in mean intellectual ability scores among the three class groups are not statistically significant. Therefore, students studying in Class 6, Class 7, and Class 8 exhibit similar levels of intellectual ability, with no meaningful variation attributable to class level.

Since the p-value is greater than the significance, the findings suggest that class does not have any influence on the intellectual ability of these children. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference among the mean scores of intellectual ability of Class 6, Class 7, and Class 8 children of women engaged in prostitution studying in the middle school of Neemuch district, is accepted.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings from the study indicate that the intellectual ability of children of women engaged in prostitution does not significantly differ across gender or class levels. The results showed that boys and girls performed

similarly on overall intellectual ability scores, and the non-verbal component also revealed no significant gender-based variation. This aligns with the work of Lynn and Irwing (2004), who argue that gender differences in general cognitive ability are minimal and often statistically insignificant. Similarly, Halpern (2013) emphasizes that while males and females may show minor differences in specific cognitive domains, these differences do not translate into meaningful disparities in overall intellectual functioning. The slight advantage observed for girls in Intellectual Ability is consistent with previous studies that report better Intellectual Ability performance among females across cultures and socioeconomic contexts (Hyde & Linn, 1988; Tucker-Drob et al., 2013). These types of advantages are often attributed to early socialization patterns and language-rich interactions in daily life.

Regarding class-wise differences, the findings indicate that students from Class 6, Class 7, and Class 8 demonstrated comparable Intellectual Ability scores, indicating that grade level does not significantly influence intellectual function among these children. This finding aligns with prior research indicating that intellectual development is more influenced by environmental and socio-economic factors than by grade placement (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Fergusson & Horwood, 1995). Children of women engaged in prostitution often grow up in environments characterized by instability, social marginalization, and limited access to learning resources, which may suppress the expected intellectual differences typically observed across age or class levels. As suggested by Hackman and Farah (2009), prolonged exposure to socio-economic adversity can hinder cognitive growth, resulting in a flattening of developmental differences across age groups.

Overall, the findings support the notion that structural and environmental disadvantages have a stronger influence on children's intellectual development than demographic factors, including gender and socioeconomic class. The lack of significant variation across groups highlights the importance of addressing broader ecological conditions, including home environment, access to educational support, and emotional security, that are critical for fostering intellectual growth. Therefore, targeted interventions that focus on enriched learning opportunities, psychological support, and stable educational engagement are crucial for enhancing cognitive outcomes in children living in socially vulnerable contexts.

5. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study indicate that the intellectual ability of children of women engaged in prostitution does not differ significantly across gender or class levels, indicating that these children possess comparable cognitive potential despite their disadvantaged circumstances. This reinforces the argument that socio-economic marginalization, rather than innate ability, shapes educational outcomes (Jensen, 2009; UNESCO, 2020). Therefore, schools should prioritize equitable learning opportunities, including remedial instruction, language-enrichment activities, and individualized support strategies, to help learners strengthen both verbal and non-verbal skills (Slavin, 2018).

Given the vulnerability of this population, educational institutions must integrate psychosocial and socio-emotional support, as emotional instability to influence Intellectual Ability and academic performance (Evans & Schamberg, 2009). Collaboration with NGOs and the community can ensure continuity of learning and provide essential resources such as counselling, mentorship, and academic reinforcement (Save the Children, 2013). Additionally, strengthening government schemes aimed at marginalized children that can help to reduce structural barriers and enhance school participation (Mishra & Pettala, 2023). Overall, the study highlights the importance of inclusive, supportive, and context-sensitive educational interventions to enable these children to reach their full intellectual potential.

6. CONCLUSION

The study examined gender and class-based differences in the intellectual ability of children of women engaged in prostitution, with a focus on understanding how demographic factors may influence Intellectual Ability within the marginalized population. The findings show that Intellectual ability did not differ significantly between boys and girls, indicating that gender does not influence Intellectual Ability. Similarly, the analysis across Class 6, Class 7, and Class 8 showed no significant variation in total intellectual ability, suggesting that grade level or class progression does not substantially shape the intellectual development of these children.

Overall, the study highlights that intellectual differences among these children are not determined by demographic attributes, such as gender or socioeconomic class, but are instead shaped by shared socio-economic adversity, limited educational support, and environmental constraints. These results highlight that, despite living

in challenging circumstances, the children possess comparable cognitive potential and can achieve meaningful intellectual growth when provided with stable, nurturing, and resource-supported learning environments. Therefore, the findings reflect the importance of implementing targeted educational interventions, strengthening community-based support systems, and refining institutional frameworks to ensure that these children have equitable opportunities to realize their intellectual potential.

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