



Special Children and their Siblings with Regular Features Co-exist with Peace and Harmony: A Case Study from West Bengal

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<p>Received 04/06/2025</p> <p>Accepted 09/06/2025</p> <p>Published 09/07/2025</p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p><i>Children with Special Needs (CWSN) definitely draw immense attention and claim for care and support from the family members for their upbringing. It is a common observation that CWSN disturb the family balance and create sadness, frustration, anxiety and relevant feelings among the family members. On the other hand, it is also found that if the family members are well aware about the issues of CWSN and provide necessary care and support towards them, the CWSN instead of being burden to the family becomes treasure for the family. In the present research effort an attempt is made to study the co-existence of CWSN and their siblings with regular features for maintaining the peace and harmony in the family. An area of North 24 Parganas has been selected and 10 families consisting of both CWSN and their siblings with regular features are interviewed with structured tool. The positive attitude of the siblings with regular features have been found out which are closely associated with traditional Indian values.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>CWSN, Peace and Harmony, Siblings with Regular Feature, Peace and Harmony, Traditional Indian Values</i></p>
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Introduction

Family is a primary social group or a basic unit of the society. Every member in a family is in relation with other member and continues to influence each other. Usually, a child in a normal family gets exposure of parents and siblings. Siblings in a family grow up together, share common discipline pattern and socialization process within a family set up. The genetic and physical closeness among siblings may be marked by the development of strong emotional bonding, such as love or hostility. In this respect other factors, like, parental treatment, birth order, personal experience and so on are found to keep impact on emotional bonding among the siblings.

When one child in a family is a child with special need (CWSN), he/ she often consumes a lot of attention and restrict family activities. Siblings with regular features sometimes get less

attention from parents and grow up on their own way. On the contrary, sometimes they feel pressure to be good or perfect in order to make life easier for their parents.

In the present study an attempt is made to identify the positive and negative attitude of the normal siblings to their special counterparts and how does it influence the life of the CWSN?

Review of Literature

Nnomchi and Okefer (2021) investigated how sibling position and family SES influence sibling's attitude towards their disabled brothers and sisters in South Eastern Nigeria. They have studied 118 children with disability, whose age ranged between 13 to 18 years. Results indicated that sibling positions and family SES had no significant influence on attitude of siblings. The interaction of both factors influenced sibling's attitude, e.g. First born children from higher SES showed more positive attitude towards their disabled siblings compared to those from lower SES. Middle born children from lower SES showed more positive attitude towards their disabled siblings than their counterpart from high SES. On the other hand, last born children from high SES scored high in positive attitude toward their disabled siblings than those from low SES. Findings provide a step towards an understanding of the dynamics of sibling relationship can direct assistance and training program for children with disabled siblings and their families as well as inform counseling services for children with disabled siblings and their families.

The study of Park, Sunwon, Byu, Wonjung and Hyerin (n.d.) aims to explore specific life experiences and what it means to live as a sibling of disabled person by focusing upon the brothers and sisters of persons with disabilities. This is a cohort in the field welfare of the disabled. Park Byu and Yang conducted one to one in depth interviews with 4 adolescents who grew up with younger siblings having disabilities. As a result, five core themes of these life experiences were identified, namely 1 the birth of a younger disabled sibling, 2 surviving differentiations within the family 3 ambivalence towards parents, 4 adolescents with resurfaced psychological conflicts and relieving emotions and 5 a future to be planned around a life of co-existing with disabled siblings.

Caroll et al. (2013) investigated 140 typically developed siblings (13 to 18 years) with brothers and sisters having either Down Syndromes (DS), Autism (AUT) and Intellectual Disability (ID). Results showed that siblings of brothers and sisters with DS thought that they could be entered into the world of work and achieve personal autonomy; siblings of brothers and sisters with ID and AUT assumed that they could be unfortunate persons marginalized by other people and putting a strain on the siblings. In addition, siblings of brothers and sisters with AUT expressed more negative self-concept than the others.

Senel et al. (n.d.) studied here the stress level and attitude towards disability of normal siblings of children with disability (SCD) Siblings of normal children (SNC) were compared in terms of gender, family type and educational level. 60 subjects participated in the study, where 30 were SCD and remaining 30 were SNC. T test was used for data analysis. Results revealed a significant difference between the stress level of SCD SNC. However no significant difference was found between two sibling groups' attitudes toward disability. Also, gender, family size and educational level of both sibling group showed no significant difference either on the stress level of both sibling group nor on their attitude towards disability.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the type (positive or not) of attitude among normal siblings towards CWSN in selected families.
2. To find out whether CWSN are supported by their normal siblings to carry out their daily living activities.
3. To find out the roles of normal siblings in case of education of the CWSN.
4. To find out the nature of overall relationship among CWSN and their siblings with normal features for the present sample.

Methodology of the Study

Sample

In the present study data have been collected from 10 families where both CWSN (Mentally Retarded) and their normal siblings stay together. In those urban families (with two parents, normal and special children) normal children are found to achieve at least upper primary level of education. The description is given below.

Case No.	Name	Age	Sex	Education
1. CWSN	Mehedi Hossain	14	M	Class III
Normal Sibling	Nasrin Hossain	20	F	H S Passed
2. CWSN	Sumita Chatterjee	15	F	Nil
Normal Sibling	Swarup Chatterjee	20	M	S E Exam. appeared
3. CWSN	Arup Sarkar	20	M	Class V
Normal Sibling	Apurba Sarkar	15	M	Class IX
4. CWSN	Rohit Mallick	14	M	Class VI
Normal Sibling	Rahul Mallick	12	M	Class VI
5. CWSN	Sounak Ghosh	18	M	Special School
Normal Sibling	Souparno Ghosh	15	M	Class x
6. CWSN	Agnibho Middy	18	M	nIL
Normal Sibling	Swarnabho Middy	14	M	Class IX
7. CWSN	Anjali Das	20	F	Class- II
Normal Sibling	Ajoy Das	14	M	Class -VIII
8. CWSN	Tarakanath Mahir	18	M	Class II
Normal Sibling	Sanjoy Mahir	24	M	Class XII
9. CWSN	Pritram Roy	20	M	Nil
Normal Sibling	Preeti Roy	25	F	B. Arch
10. CWSN	Abir Chowdhury	15	M	Nil
Normal Sibling	Saheli Chowdhury	20	F	B. Com.

Tools

A tool has been developed for the present purpose after ample discussion with family members of the CWSN. It has been checked by three experts in the field of education. Finally, a questionnaire with two answering categories has been developed.

Procedure

In order to accumulate the information, field visit and interview were undertaken. Rapport was established with the family members of CWSN. Then the Data have been collected through interviewing the siblings of the CWSN. Their responses were presented in a table and required statistical treatment (Mean and SD) was done for the received data.

Data and Result:

Table-1: Attitude of Normal Children toward their siblings (CWSN)

Respondent Normal Sibling	Yes	%	no	%
1	20	100%	0	0
2	11	55%	09	45
3	15	75	05	25
4	11	55	09	45
5	13	65	07	35
6	14	70	06	30
7	09	45	11	55
8	13	65	07	35
9	18	90	02	10
10	17	85	03	15
Total	141		59	

Graphical Representation of the obtained responses from the Normal Siblings of the CWSN

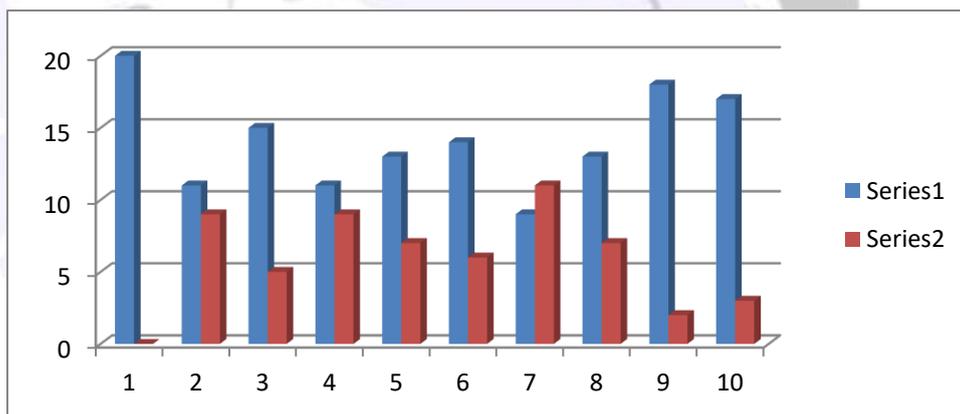


Table 2 Mean and SD of the scores regarding positive Attitude of the Normal Children toward their siblings (CWSN)

N	Mean	SD
10	14.1	3.3

Discussion

There are some common observations for the present data, which include the positive

feeling and emotional bonding among the CWSN and their normal sibling. Obviously, frustration of the family members and a feeling of helplessness have been observed.

Awareness and Initiatives: From the obtained information the lack of awareness and inadequate initiative to educate the CWSN have been identified. Parents expressed that they are not well aware about the government facilities for the CWSN. This is why there are 4 CWSN (MR), who are not enrolled in any educational institution. Among them rest 4 CWSN are in primary level and only one boy has gone to Class VI. On the contrary, among the normal siblings everyone has got education at school, while two of the have gone to College and Higher study.

Sibling Attitude: Overall positive attitude has been observed among normal siblings towards their special counterparts. As the graphical representation shows more positive than negative responses came out in favour of CWSN from their normal siblings. They also expressed a genuine feeling and helpful attitude toward their (CWSN) daily living activities. But the normal siblings do not spend much time with CWSN during social activities, like attending social gathering, spending leisure hours etc.

Other Observations: The normal children expressed some issues associated with their special siblings which are not liked by them. Normal siblings mentioned about insufficient care and attention from their parents as the CWSN demand for more attention. Further, the normal siblings are expected to show more patience, tolerance and compromise as their special counterparts are not able to do those.

Conclusion

It can be concluded with the note that the objectives have been fulfilled in this short span study. As per the data the normal siblings though have some pressure and issues, yet feel for their special siblings. In order to maintain peace and harmony in family, they extend their co-operation. Also, they are ready to support their special siblings in almost all the cases.

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