

## PREFACE

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Disability has been a universal human experience right from the dawn of history. The term connotes a limitation in the functions and activities performed by individuals as members of society, thereby circumscribing their participation in the socio-cultural, political and economic life of their communities.

In the present scenario, there is a growing demand of medical & psychiatry social work in India & abroad...with growing problems getting more complex day by day, there was a need for a timely intervention.

'Disability' is not a homogeneous category. It encompasses different kinds of bodily variations, physical impairments, sensory difficulties or deficits, mental and learning impairments which may be either congenital or acquired. Authors have engaged with the term 'disability' in a variety of ways.

The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Mental health can also be defined as an absence of a major mental health condition. Therefore the impact of social, cultural, physical and education can all affect someone's mental health.

Autism is defined by the **Autism Society of America (ASA)** as: "Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the normal functioning of the brain, impacting development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Both children and adults with autism typically show difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities.

Autism was also known as 'childhood schizophrenia', a misleading term, as, unlike schizophrenics, autistic individuals did not appear to have hallucinations or delusions. Kenner believed that autism was an innate disorder present since birth; unlike schizophrenics, autistic children did not 'withdraw' from the world; rather, they were unable to participate in it, in the first place.

**Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them.**

Autism is a lifelong disorder that interferes with the ability to understand what is seen, heard, and touched. This can cause profound problems in personal behavior and in the ability to relate to others. A person with autism must learn how to communicate normally and how to relate to people, objects and events. However, not all patients suffer the same degree of impairment. There is a full spectrum of symptoms, which can range from mild to severe.

This is an attempt to understand the perception, knowledge, Attitude and Practices towards the autistic children's daily schedule, their life style, behavior, supportive programmes, ministry of education and upbringing including the developmental aspects of the autistic children. The Researcher will focus on the areas as mentioned here: Knowledge, Attitude & Practices.