

## QUALITY OF LIFE OF ADOLESCENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to find out the quality of life of adolescents with intellectual disability. The study widely investigates the vital aspects related to the life of adolescents like basic living skills, social skills, domestic activities, community orientation, personal care, and emotional wellbeing. This study aims to find out the quality of life mainly through direct assessment and observation of adolescents. Descriptive method of research was employed for the study. The study sample consisted of 204 adolescents with intellectual disability, randomly selected from various special schools in Kottayam and Ernakulam district of Kerala state, in South India. Data on quality of life of these individuals were collected through a standardised Quality of life Scale of Adolescents with Intellectual Disability developed by the authors. The data were analysed through arithmetic mean and standard deviation. The result indicated that quality of life of adolescents with intellectual disability is of an average level. About 37% have a high or very high quality of life. Whereas the remaining 63% belong to average, low or very low quality of life.

**Keywords:** intellectual disability, quality of life

### INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the transition period to adulthood. The present study is designed to investigate various dimensions of quality of life of adolescents with intellectual disability. Studying the quality of life of adolescents becomes highly relevant as the quality at this transition period can be considered as a predictor of their quality in the adulthood.

Further, the quality of this group may be taken as a yardstick for assessing the effectiveness of the special education they received in special schools.

According to Burke et al., (2002) Quality of Life is higher in those who have a dedicated service planner and for those with a less severe to profound disability. People who were in gainful employment reported significantly higher QoL as did those availing of outreach and residential services, over and above local services.

The study widely investigates the vital aspects related to the life of adolescents like basic living skills, social skills, domestic activities, community orientation, personal care, and emotional wellbeing. This study aims to find out the quality of life mainly through direct assessment and observation of adolescents.

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This study gives importance to the basic living skills of adolescents with intellectual disability. The information on these skills will be an indication of the effectiveness of the special education. So, the result of the present study is expected to provide certain clues regarding the effectiveness of existing special education system and parental support. The present study is also expected to yield information on the status and well-being of adolescents with intellectual disabilities.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To analyse the nature of quality of life of adolescents with intellectual disability
2. To analyse the relationship among the various components of quality of life of adolescents with intellectual disability.

### **Hypotheses**

There will be no significant relationship among the various components of quality of life.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The World Health Organization's Quality of life group (1995) has illustrated quality of life as an individual perception in terms of culture and value systems with respect for goals, expectations, standards, and concerns. The World Health Organization states that quality of life is affected by an interaction of the individual's health, mental state, spirituality, relationship, and elements of their environment. An individual's status is influenced by the position he holds and the way others in the social unit perceive and value him (Bhushan and Sheikh, 2002).

For a range of economic, social, and political reasons, Quality of life has emerged as a desired outcome of service delivery in mainstream and special needs education, health care, social services (particularly for disabled and elderly people) and, increasingly, for cross-cutting public sector partnership policy at all levels (Galloway, 2005).

There are many published quality of life measures but there is still a lack of consensus among researchers about its definition and this is reflected in the choice of items for their instruments (Skevington et al., 2004).

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Adolescents with intellectual disability and adults with the general intellectual capabilities for educational, vocational, and social adjustment who do not gain satisfactory competitive or sheltered employment because they do not benefit sufficiently from educational and rehabilitation resources that are available (Gardner, 2006).

Research by Malapela and Tshweneagae (2019) states that Positive transition of adolescents with intellectual disability would ensure improvement of quality of life for the individual. Governments and other stakeholders need to further develop the policy framework needed to assist individuals with intellectual disability and related interventions. Education, employment, and leisure are key to a fruitful integration of individuals with intellectual disability in mainstream society.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The researchers chose the descriptive survey method for data collection. The study sample was composed of 204 adolescents with intellectual disability, randomly selected from various special schools in Kottayam and Ernakulam district of Kerala state, South India. Quality of Life Scale for Adolescents with intellectual disability, developed and standardised by the researchers was used for data collection. Data were tabulated and analysed using appropriate statistical techniques.

### **Reliability**

The reliability of the test was estimated using the method of internal consistency reliability analysis. Reliability coefficient was calculated for the scales constructed by the investigator using a sample of 100 adolescents.

In the present study the reliability coefficient of Quality-of-life scale of adolescents with intellectual disability was computed by using split half method.

The scores obtained for each of the items of the total sample of 100 adolescents for the odd and even items were grouped separately. Thus, for every individual a pair of score was obtained. The score pairs of 100 adolescents were used to work out Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation. The Spearman-Brown prophecy formula was used for estimating the reliability of the total test and the obtained split half reliability coefficient is 0.95. This is high and significant at 0.01 level.

### **Validity**

Validity refers to the extent to which a measure actually measures the intended property. No relevant quality of life scale for adolescents with intellectual disability was there to calculate. Here face validity refers to the extent to which the material appears to measure what the author of the quality-of-life scale of adolescents is desired to measure. This scale contains items that seem to be relevant to its stated purpose.

Evidence regarding the validity of the inventory lies in procedures adopted for developing them. Many aspects were consulted to scrutinize the selected items and to make judgments like discussion with researchers and experts in the field of intellectual disability. Thus, the investigator was able to make sure that all the relevant content areas were adequately represented in the scale. Therefore, newly constructed scale can claim for both content validity and face validity.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

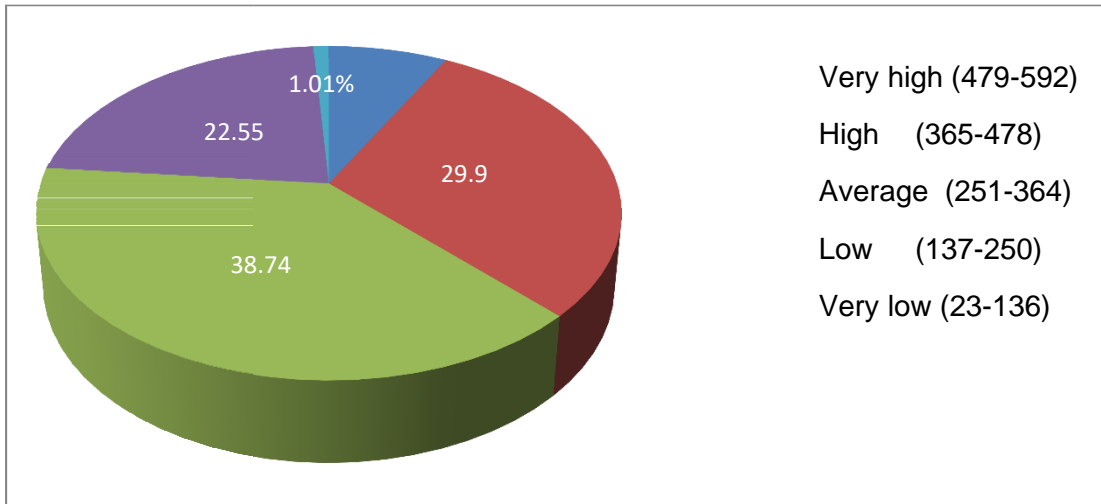
**Table 1:** *Descriptive Statistics of Quality-of-life scores of Adolescents with Intellectual Disability(N=204)*

*\*Multiple values exist, smallest value shown*

SI No	Measures	Value
1	Mean	331.00
2	Median	342.50
3	Mode	301.00*
4	Standard Deviation	103.57
5	Coefficient of Skewness	-0.06
6	Coefficient of Kurtosis	-0.69
7	Obtained minimum	124
8	Obtained maximum	557
9	Percentage of mean	55.91

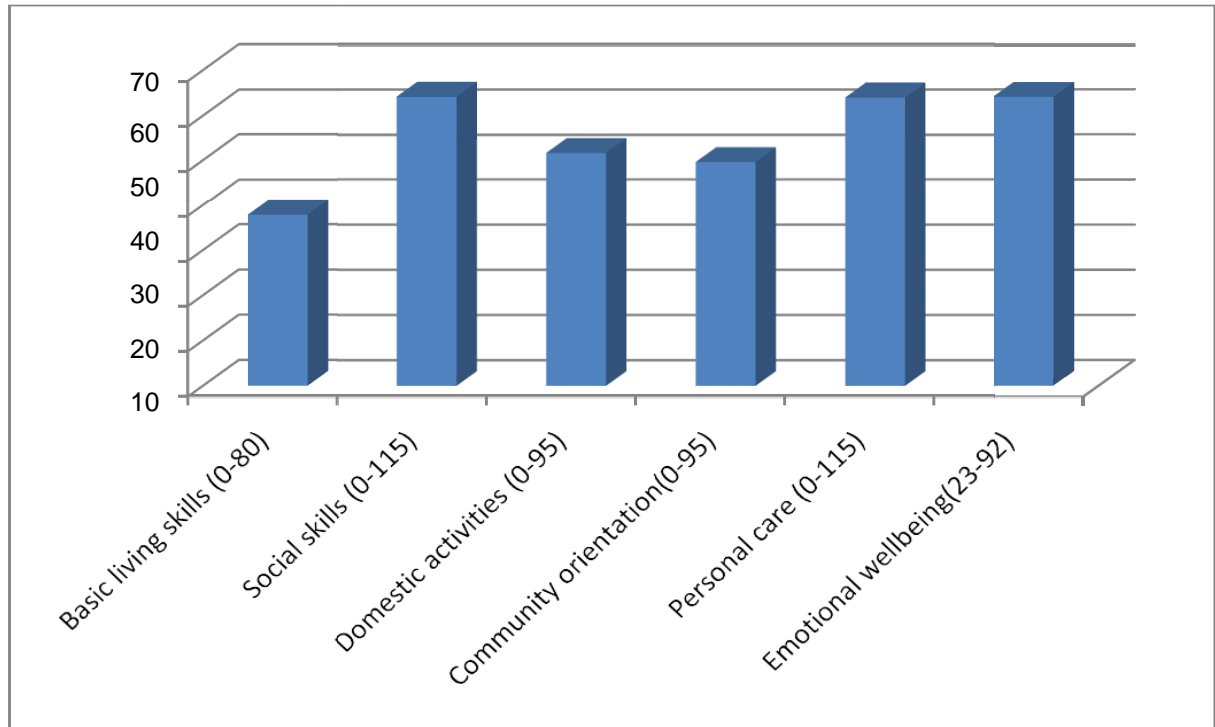
**Table 2:** *Frequencies and percentages of adolescents with intellectual disability with respect to level of Quality of life*

Level	(Range of scores)	N	Percentage
Very high	(479-592)	16	7.80
High	(365-478)	61	29.90
Average	(251-364)	79	38.74
Low	(137-250)	46	22.55
Very low	(23-136)	2	1.01
Total	(23-592)	204	100.00



**Table 3:** Mean values and standard deviations of domain wise Quality of life scores of adolescents with intellectual disability.

SI no	Domain (possible range of scores)	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Basic living skills (0-80)	37.82	17.87
2	Social skills (0-115)	64.13	24.64
3	Domestic activities (0-95)	51.55	21.81
4	Community orientation (0-95)	49.54	21.48
5	Personal care (0-115)	63.93	25.52
6	Emotional wellbeing (23-92)	64.03	14.56
Total (23-592)			



**Table 4:** Coefficient of correlation among various components of quality of life of adolescent with intellectual disability

	Basic living skills	Social skills	Domestic activities	Community orientation	Personal care	Emotional wellbeing	Total
Basic living skills	1	0.62**	0.75**	0.73**	0.61**	0.33**	0.83**
Social skills		1	0.81**	0.66**	0.75**	0.30**	0.88**
Domestic activities			1	0.85**	0.73**	0.24**	0.92**
Community orientation				1	0.71**	0.23**	0.88**
Personal care					1	0.23**	0.86**
Emotional well being						1	0.42**

\*\*significant at 0.01 level

## DISCUSSION

The present study revealed that quality of life of adolescents with intellectual disability is an average level. In addition, the study reveals that most of the adolescents (38.74%) have an average quality of life, 7.8% of adolescents have very high quality of life and 29.90% of adolescents have high quality of life. About 22.52% of adolescents have low quality of life and 1.01% of adolescents have very low quality of life. A further observation of the percentage values reveals that about 37% have a high or very high quality of life, whereas the remaining 63% belong to average, low or very low quality of life. There is a significant positive correlation among all the variables. Each domain of quality of life is highly influenced by the other domains. The present study reveals that quality of life of adolescents with intellectual disability is of an average level. The quality of life was studied in terms of skills which are inevitable for a better life. The average level of quality of life of adolescents with intellectual disability means that they have average level skills in reading, writing, number concepts, social skills, personal care, and essential domestic activities.

As the quality of life was studied in terms of functional abilities that are essential for daily life, the present findings do not reveal functional independence of the sample of adolescents studied. The majority (62.30%) of the sample of adolescents studied were found to have average or below average functional ability. To be successful one should have a high or very high level of functional abilities. This deficiency should be addressed scientifically, and steps should be taken to remediate the deficiencies. As the principles of special education ensure functional development of children with intellectual disabilities, the minute details of the practice of special education are to be examined thoroughly for identifying the exact causes of the under development of these adolescents.

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