

Literature Review: The Effect Of Social Stigma On Children With Intellectual Disabilities

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Abstract

Children with intellectual barriers often have to deal with negative views from the surrounding environment. Negative labeling like, "cursed child", "unintelligent", "family burden", and the like. This research aims to provide a clear picture of the social stigma that children with intellectual barriers face and how it affects their lives. The method used is Systematic Literature Review (SLR) by identifying 10 journals that correspond to the research title. The results of the study show that social stigma against children with intellectual barriers is still inherent in society. Lack of information and education is the cause of negative stigma that has an impact on children's lives. To overcome this, there needs to be awareness starting from the family and the community to create a more inclusive and positive environment for children with intellectual barriers.

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INTRODUCTION

Every child certainly wants to be accepted and understood in an environment that can support their growth and development. But unfortunately, not all children get what they want. Certainly, we have seen or even witnessed firsthand children with special needs, especially children with intellectual disabilities who often have to deal with negative views from the surrounding environment. This article aims to provide a clear picture of the social stigma that children with intellectual disabilities face and how it affects their lives.

This stigma includes the negative view of society towards children and their families, many stigmas that arise from society ranging from malnourished children, naughty children, stupid children, or considering children as a burden on the family, or even children as a result of parental negligence. This view is in line with the concept of stigma described in the journal Nursholichah et al., citing Goffman's theory that "stigma is a sign or attribute that discredits individuals and makes them unacceptable to society by emphasizing that stigma often arises from society's ignorance or misunderstanding of a particular individual's condition" (Goffman, 1963, as quoted in Nursholichah et al., 2024). In another study by (Werner, 2015) it is shown that the negative perception of people's disabilities is often exacerbated by a lack of education and understanding of disability. In addition, research has reported that some communities in the African context consider individuals with ID (*intellectual disability*) to be people who are cursed or possessed by spirits, resulting from sinful acts or punishments from God (Tilahun et al. 2016).

This stigmatization is not just about what people say, but the impact can be very profound. Many of them become withdrawn, lose confidence, and are even reluctant to come to school. The negative stigma that arises in society not only impacts children, but also on their families. Families are often blamed for the condition of children, are considered incapable of educating, or become the subject of gossip by the general

public. This is reinforced by the labeling theory put forward by Becker (1963, as cited in Nursholichah et al., 2024), which states that social labeling can affect the way individuals are perceived and treated by society, as well as how they perceive themselves. Children with disabilities are also often victims of bullying from friends of their age who do not understand the shortcomings of children with disabilities. This indicates a lack of inclusivity in their social interactions. According to research by (Rose et al., 2011), children with special needs are more susceptible to bullying than other children, especially in environments that are less supportive of acceptance of diversity.

The community should not compartmentalize any child, let alone give negative labeling to children who are physically different/not in general. This is the same as people looking at it with one eye. In fact, all of God's creations are the same, "There is no disabled man in this world, there is only man". That is the wise word of Prof. Dr. R Soeharso which still resonates today among people who are on the side of people with disabilities. All human beings have the same rights, no one is treated differently and no one feels better than anyone else.

The best help we can get from society is to tell people living in communities not to look down on children with disabilities, to tell them not to mock them, not to discriminate. (Parent 012, Zhengzhou). Therefore, changing society's perspective on children with intellectual barriers is very important. So that society does not look at a person from their inabilities or limitations, but sees them from a more positive angle such as their potential and abilities. By raising public awareness of this, it can reduce the social stigma and negativity that is often shown towards individuals with intellectual barriers.

Efforts to reduce stigma should involve community education, policy change, and raising awareness about the rights of children with disabilities (UNESCO, 2017). We hope that with increased public understanding, a more inclusive and supportive environment for children with intellectual barriers can be created, so that they can grow and develop according to their potential.

METHOD

This research used the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology, which involves locating pertinent journals aligned with the specified theme, followed by examining, interpreting, and aggregating data derived from scientific research across diverse sources. The data is compared and evaluated to ascertain the relationship between different journals, hence facilitating the formulation of a conclusive framework. This literature evaluation utilizes data from articles published in the past decade. The SLR approach comprises six stages: (1) planning (identifying the research aim); (2) literature search; (3) evaluation of inclusion and exclusion criteria; (4) quality assessment; (5) data collecting; (6) data analysis. (Triandini et al., n.d.)

Data including journal articles obtained from Google Scholar and SAGE Journal in both English and Indonesian, covering the period from 2020 to 2025. This literature study examines 10 journals, comprising 8 international and 2 national publications. A debate was conducted regarding social stigma in children with intellectual impairments, including the phrases "Social Stigma in Children with Intellectual Disabilities" and "Social Stigma of Children with Intellectual Disabilities." Consequently, the findings yield a clear and precise comprehension of the social stigma faced by individuals with intellectual disability. Articles that fulfill the requirements will be examined. Data analysis is essential as it pertains to deriving conclusions. The analytical approach utilized in this study is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a technique employed to meticulously locate data pertinent to a research theme.

1) Planning (establishing the research objective)

The initial stage in conducting a systematic literature review is to identify the study subject. This article investigates social stigma among children with intellectual disabilities.

2) Literature Review

The literature search method is used to address specific research topics. The researcher utilized the Google Scholar search engine (Website: <https://scholar.google.com/>) and SAGE journal to identify pertinent references for addressing these concerns. Search results for the term "Social Stigma of Children with Intellectual Disabilities." There exist 4,670 articles concerning social stigma.

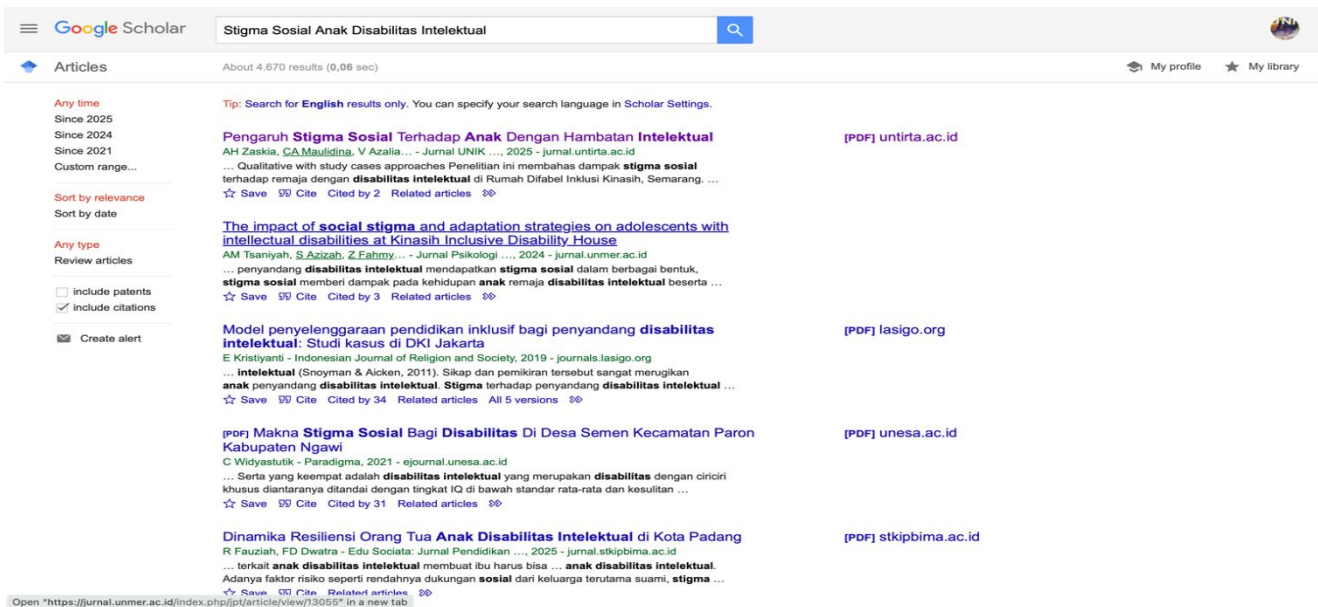


Figure 1. Social Stigma of Children with Intellectual Disabilities

- 3) Evaluation of the criteria for social stigma associated with children who have intellectual disabilities
The subsequent phase involves validating the identified scientific publications to ascertain their alignment with the subject, research inquiries, and established criteria. Upon verification, it was determined that the selected data comprised articles published between 2020 and 2025, totaling 10 articles that particularly examined social stigma in children with intellectual disabilities, which the researchers would evaluate in this study.
- 4) Enhancement of quality
A quality assessment (QA) was conducted on the findings of a literature search about the education of children with special needs, particularly those with autism. The quality evaluation in this study includes the following criteria:
QA1: Does the journal article provide information regarding the societal stigma associated with children who have intellectual disability within society?
QA2: Does the journal paper provide insights into the impact of social stigma on individuals with intellectual disabilities?
QA3: In what ways does societal stigma affect individuals with intellectual disabilities?
- 5) Data Acquisition
The subsequent stage involves selecting a journal informed by the outcomes of the quality evaluation for further examination.
- 6) Data Analysis
- 7) The final step involves analyzing the data acquired by addressing research questions derived from the collected literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In compiling this study, the researcher realized that the social stigma against children with intellectual barriers is not a simple issue. From the various journals that researchers have read, it is clear that stigma still often appears in the immediate environment which should be a safe space for children, families, communities, and even educational institutions. This situation prompted researchers to further examine how previous researchers viewed and discussed this issue. As a first step, the researchers summarized some of the relevant journals and presented them in the following table (Table1).

Table 1. The Effect of Social Stigma on Children with Intellectual Disabilities

No.	Author, Year, Title	Method	Result
1.	Feaster, D., & Franzen, A. (2020). From stigma to acceptance: Intellectual and developmental disabilities in Central China.	Qualitative (Grounded Theory)	This research shows that there are challenges faced by families in the process of accepting their child's disability, such as the absence of support from the family and community, lack of resources (information, funding, services), seeking healing and healing interventions at a considerable cost. Families expect improvements in the child's situation, such as cognitive function, survival skills, and social skills. Social change with more acceptance than judgment, has many opportunities in education, work, and housing, and a society that has an understanding of the condition of children with disabilities so that there is acceptance by society. And families hope there are more resources regarding information, funding, and services for children with disabilities.
2.	Mampaso Desbrow, J., Moraleda Ruano, Á., Galán-Casado, D., & Ruiz-Vicente, D. (2024). Stigmatising young people with intellectual disability: Perceptions of the main stakeholders at a Spanish university.	Qualitative	This study discusses the significant differences in the perception of stigma in intellectual disabilities based on gender and its potential based on the role in universities. The results of this study show that significant differences in these perceptions depend on their gender and role in the university. Based on gender, women are less likely to express stigmatizing attitudes and tend to be more willing to talk about intellectual disability issues. Regarding their roles, there are significant differences in administrative and service groups, lecturers, students without disabilities compared to the perceptions of students with intellectual disabilities regarding ideas related to their social status.
3.	Siyabulela Mkabile, Kathrine L. Garrun, Mary Shelton, Leslie Swartz. (2021). African families and caregivers experiences of raising a child with intellectual disability: A narrative synthesis of qualitative studies.	Qualitative	This study focuses on the experiences of caregivers, parents or families in African countries in raising children with intellectual disabilities. And identified six themes including; 1) an understanding of ID, which focuses on issues such as the meaning of ID, cultural beliefs, treatment-seeking behaviors, stigma and discrimination; 2) concerns about the future, including death issues, employment issues, issues about marriage and issues about surrogate caregivers; 3) the burden of care, which mostly refers to mental health issues and depression in caregivers; 4) lack of services, including gaps in education, health and social services; 5) coping strategies and 6) stigma and discrimination. In the discussion of stigma and discrimination, the results of the study show that most of those involved are related to children with intellectual disabilities, be they

			caregivers, parents or families. They experience stigmatization due to negative cultural beliefs that consider individuals with intellectual disabilities as "cursed" or "spirit-possessed" as a result of sinful acts or punishments from god. In fact, some societies advise caregivers or parents to kill their children so many parents and caregivers today feel the need to hide their child's condition for fear of feeling embarrassed or humiliated and worried that people are reluctant to marry their families
4.	Kurnia Utami Nursholichah, Amilia Febrian Mufarrohah, Bono Sety. (2024). Social stigma against children with disabilities.	Qualitative	The results of the study show that the negative stigma of the community in the village is still very strong, both towards children and their families. This is due to the ignorance of the community as well as the lack of empathy and sympathy in social interactions. As a result, labels such as "stupid child," "naughty child," "cursed child," or "family burden" appear, making children with disabilities more vulnerable to bullying behavior from peers. This phenomenon emphasizes the importance of increasing public education and social inclusion to reduce stigma and discrimination.
5.	Vyda Mamley Hervie. (2023). Social inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in Accra, Ghana: Views of parents/guardians and teachers.	Qualitative	This study examined social inclusion for children with intellectual disabilities from the perspective of parents/guardians, and teachers in Accra, Ghana. Results show that children with intellectual disability barriers face challenges related to beliefs about intellectual disability, parental neglect, financial difficulties, as well as regarding labeling and stigma. In addition, evidence suggests that children with intellectual disability barriers benefit from special education in terms of improved communication, relationships with teachers and peers, as well as acquiring skills to deal with the challenges they face.
6.	Alvaro Moraleda Ruano, Diego Galan-Casado. (2024). Stigma toward individuals with intellectual disabilities and severe mental disorder: analysis of postgraduate university student' perceptions.	Quantitative	This study investigated the stigma of severe mental disorders and intellectual disabilities among 572 master's students in Spain, focusing on gender differences and student proximity. The results showed that there was no difference in stigma based on gender, but the more often a person interacted with individuals with severe mental disorders and intellectual disabilities, the lower the stigma they had. The study highlights the need for interventions to reduce discrimination and improve understanding. Direct contact has been shown to be effective

			in reducing stigma.
7.	Jansen-van Vuuren, J. & Aldersey, H.M. (2020). Stigma, Acceptance and Belonging for People with IDD Across Cultures.	Literature review	This study discusses the stigma against individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) is still widespread globally. Effective interventions include approaches at the individual level (e.g. life skills training and self-advocacy), family (psychosocial support), community (anti-stigma and social inclusion campaigns), as well as multi-level approaches such as inclusive arts and social media. Culture greatly influences forms of stigma and acceptance, so interventions must be adapted to their local context. A new focus has also emerged on the importance of "belonging" or a sense of belonging in the community.
8.	Fabella Gita Amanda & Maulana Rezi Ramadhan. (2024). The Application of Effective Family Communication in the Intellectual Independence of Children with Special Needs Persons with Disabilities at the SLB C Terate Foundation	Qualitative	This research shows that families of children with disabilities face many challenges in supporting their children's independence. Starting from the difficulty of building effective communication, the need for continuous guidance, to the importance of providing space for children to learn independently. They hope that their children can develop the ability to think, socialize, and make decisions on their own, despite the challenges. They also want a more open and accepting society, so that these children can have the opportunity to study, work, and live a decent life like other children. This research confirms that strong emotional support, open communication, and cooperation with teachers are essential to help children with disabilities grow into more confident and independent individuals.
9.	Aninda Ma'rufatus Tsaniyah, Siti Azizah, Zulfa Fahmy, Irma Masfia. (2024). The impact of social stigma and adaptation strategies on adolescents with intellectual disabilities at Kinasih Inclusive Disability House.	Qualitative	This research has an in-depth focus on the social stigma inherent in people with intellectual disabilities and the impact they have and strategies to deal with existing social stigma. The social stigma that adolescents with intellectual disabilities get is in the form of labeling, qualifications, and discrimination that negatively impacts adolescents with intellectual disabilities.
10.	Hannah A Pelleboer-Gunnink, Jaap Van Weeghel, Petri JCM Embregts. (2021). Public stigmatisation of people with intellectual disabilities: a mixed-method population survey into stereotypes and their relationship with familiarity and discrimination.	Qualitative	The results show that the stereotypes that the general public most often encounter towards people with intellectual disabilities are; "Friendly", "needs help", "not intelligent". These stereotypes are not associated with high levels of explicit discrimination. However, due to the valence of positive and negative stereotypes, subtle forms of discrimination can be expected such as limited opportunities to choose and self-determination. This may affect the opportunity for rehabilitation and may be opposed by the protest components in anti-

			stigma efforts.
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After reviewing 10 previously reviewed journals, the researcher identified that social stigma against children with intellectual disabilities is still a significant global problem, covering various contexts, both in the family, community, and academic institutions. This phenomenon is reflected through various forms of negative treatment, prejudice, and discrimination that are not only experienced by the children themselves, but also felt by parents, other family members, and caregivers who are directly involved. This challenge shows that efforts to deconstruct stigma still require serious attention from various parties, especially in building a more inclusive and supportive environment.

In the discussion of the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 9th, and 10th journals, there is a negative perspective on stigma and discrimination that is still attached to children with intellectual barriers influenced by culture and other impacts. The 4th journal highlights that the stigma of the community in the village is still very strong with the emergence of labels such as "stupid child," "naughty child," "cursed child," or "family burden" thus making children with disabilities more vulnerable to bullying behavior from peers. Meanwhile, the 3rd journal discusses that in African countries, children with intellectual disabilities experience stigma and discrimination due to beliefs in a negative culture that considers individuals with intellectual disabilities as "cursed" or "possessed by spirits" resulting from sinful acts or punishments from God. Even some societies advise caregivers or parents to kill their children so many parents and caregivers today feel the need to hide their child's condition for fear of feeling embarrassed or humiliated and worried that people are reluctant to marry their families. This is in line with the 7th journal which highlights that culture greatly influences the form of stigma and acceptance, so interventions must be adapted to the local context. Furthermore, in the 5th journal, it emphasizes that even at the international level, especially in Accra, Ghanaian children with intellectual barriers in the scope of inclusion still receive a negative stigma. The same thing also happened in the 9th journal which discussed the social stigma that adolescents get with intellectual barriers in the inclusion environment. Moreover, the 10th journal confirms that individuals with intellectual barriers are often recognized as stereotypes such as "friendly", "need help", or "not intelligent". Although this assumption does not show negative stigma directly, it can lead to subtle discrimination.

From an economic point of view, the stigma against children with intellectual barriers arises not only because of the condition of the child himself, but also as a result of an unequal and unsupportive socio-economic system. The 1st journal reveals the challenges faced by families in China, where they feel a lack of support, both from their own family members and from the surrounding community. This is exacerbated by the lack of available information, limited services accessible, and high costs of intervention and treatment. This situation puts families in a difficult position, so children with intellectual disabilities are often seen as a burden. The 3rd journal presents similar conditions in different parts of Africa, which face limitations in the provision of basic services such as education, health, and social support. This inequality creates a large access gap for poor families to meet the needs of children with intellectual disabilities, resulting in social stigma that thrives on the perception that these children will not be able to be independent without major economic support. Meanwhile, the 5th journal highlights the situation in Accra, Ghana, where children with intellectual disabilities often experience neglect from their own parents. This condition is closely related to the economic difficulties faced by families, which force them to prioritize other needs that are considered more urgent. The three journals show that in a vulnerable economic context, the stigma against children with intellectual disabilities is not only born from social prejudice, but is also influenced by real limitations in access to services, funding, and adequate systemic support.

Meanwhile, in the 1st and 8th journals, there is a discussion that is in line with the expectations of families who have children with intellectual disabilities. In the 1st journal in China, the family expects an improvement in the child's situation, such as cognitive function, survival skills, and social skills for his survival. They expect social change with more acceptance than judgment, they also hope that their children can have opportunities to be educated, work, and live, and also the thinking of a society that has an understanding of the condition of children with disabilities so that there is acceptance by society. This is directly proportional to the 8th journal, in Terate families expect their children to be able to develop the ability to think, socialize, and make decisions on their own, despite the challenges that exist. They also want a more open and accepting society, so that these children can have the opportunity to study, work, and live a decent life like other children.

Not only that, in the 2nd and 6th journals there is a discussion about the difference in the perception of stigma based on gender in the academic environment. In the 2nd journal, in Spain women are less likely to

show behaviors that stigmatize children with intellectual barriers. Whereas in the 6th journal, there was no difference in stigma based on gender, but the more often a person interacts with individuals with intellectual barriers, the lower the stigma they have.

Social stigma according to Erving Goffman is an attribute or sign attached to a person that significantly damages his self-image and social identity, so that the individual is considered "not as whole" as others who are considered normal. In his book "Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity" (1963), Goffman explained that stigma arises when a person has characteristics that differ from the norms of his social group, which then leads to rejection and exclusion. Goffman distinguishes stigma into three main types: physical stigma (such as physical disability), character stigma (such as behavior perceived as deviant), and group stigma (based on ethnicity, religion, or nation). According to him, people who are affected by stigma actually want to be considered normal and have the right to fair treatment, but often they experience discrimination and social isolation.

Furthermore, the process of social stigma formation was described by researchers such as Link and Phelan who developed Goffman's concept into a social-cognitive mechanism. They say stigma occurs through stages that include negative labeling, the formation of stereotypes, the emergence of prejudice, and finally discrimination against certain individuals or groups. This is in line with the journal written by Raden Savira, et al. (2022) Social stigmatization obtained by children with special needs is when people direct negative views, use negative language or refuse to touch family members. Poor social stigmatization of children with special needs is caused by a lack of knowledge.

In the life of families with children with intellectual barriers, economic pressure is one of the most real challenges felt. Many parents have to face significant costs for therapy, special education, and children's health needs. In the midst of limited economic conditions, all of these needs are often an additional burden that affects emotional stability, relationships in the household, and self-view as parents. Some of them feel that they have to sacrifice work or personal time to accompany their children, but at the same time, they are also required to continue to be financially strong. Feelings of tiredness and depression often arise not because of a lack of affection, but because of worry about not being able to meet the needs of children in their entirety.

Research by Bellaputri et al. (2022), illustrates that in addition to financial pressure, challenges also arise from within the family environment itself. There are parents who do not get balanced support from their spouse or even extended family. When parenting roles are carried out unequally, the burden becomes heavier and the feeling of loneliness becomes more pronounced. This is exacerbated by the view of society that still views children with intellectual barriers negatively, which indirectly also hurts parents' self-esteem. The accumulation of all this pressure can foster a stigma that not only comes from the outside, but also takes root in the family itself. This is in accordance with the findings in the 1st, 3rd, and 5th journals which emphasized how economic limitations and lack of family support reinforce the emergence of stigma against children with intellectual barriers. When families feel alone, isolated, and burdened, then the stigma not only becomes something that comes from the outside, but also grows in the way parents see themselves and their children. This is where the importance of a more humane support system comes in, which not only provides access, but also a safe space to grow together without fear or shame.

Economic pressure is often referred to as the root of the stigma experienced by children with intellectual disabilities, but in reality, there is another influence that is no less profound, namely the influence formed by gender roles in our society. Sometimes, without realizing it, the way we view and treat these children is also influenced by who they are, male or female, and how that role is interpreted by the environment. In the academic and social environment, gender also influences how a person views individuals with intellectual barriers. The findings in the 2nd journal reveal that women tend to show a less stigmatizing attitude, in contrast to men who in some cases still show discriminatory tendencies. Meanwhile, in the 6th journal, although no differences in stigma were found based on gender, it was stated that the frequency of interactions was actually a much more influential factor to reduce the stigma.

In academic and social spaces, for example, women tend to show a more inclusive attitude towards children with intellectual barriers. They are less likely to exhibit stigmatizing behavior, perhaps because women's own social experiences often make them more sensitive to marginalized groups. But interestingly, other findings also suggest that it's not a matter of men or women, but rather of how often someone interacts. The closer and more often a person encounters individuals with disabilities, the less likely they are to stigmatize. This means that experiences and encounters are much more empathetic than just social backgrounds.

However, the problem does not stop there. When we talk about girls with intellectual disabilities, there is a fact that states that they are much more vulnerable. In a journal written by Habiba and Setiawan (2021), it is stated that mothers are often the only reliable protectors. They not only care, but also try to explain complicated things about body boundaries, about security, about inappropriate treatment. Mothers became the first teachers of self-protection, even though they themselves were sometimes not given room to breathe. Many of them go through this all without the full assistance of their partner, with unequal roles and unfair social expectations.

In such a system, girls carry not only the label "special needs," but also "women," two things that require them to constantly prove that they too deserve to be valued, understood, and protected. The stigma they face is not only because of intellectual limitations, but also because society is not really ready to accept diversity in its full sense. So, talking about stigma is not enough just about fostering empathy. We also need to talk about justice, who bears the heavier burden, who is often silenced, and who is still forgotten. And when we talk about change, perhaps the first thing we need to change is the way we view who deserves to be heard.

Negative stigmas should be eliminated because the impact is not only detrimental to one individual but also affects their family, caregivers and those closest to them. The existence of stigma in society causes a person to be judged negatively just because he has differences, both in terms of physicality, character, and group. As a result, individuals who are affected by stigma are often shunned, treated badly/discriminatory, receive negative labels, and lack of support to grow and develop optimally in children. This is according to the results of a study in the 3rd journal that discusses concerns about a child's future, including death problems, employment problems, problems about marriage, and problems about surrogate caregivers as well as the burden of care for caregivers who suffer from mental health and depression.

However, in reality, the social stigma that exists in society is still strongly attached in rural areas to include several countries, both developed and developing countries. The researcher found various results of discussions in the form of negative points of view such as, "cursed child", "not intelligent", "family burden", and the like. The challenges felt by several parties include children, parents, families, and caregivers. Then there is the emergence of family expectations, to the amount of stigmatization that tends to be different from everyone depending on the situation and conditions that affect it. This negative stigma is caused by the lack of education and understanding of the public and even their own families about disabilities, especially children with intellectual disabilities, so that social phenomena that are detrimental to many parties and still occur today. The Chairman of the National Commission on Disabilities, Dante Rigmalia, said that children with special needs are currently still seen as individuals who must be pitied, and not given rights. Even in community settings they often appear more isolated and less involved in social activities. This can reinforce the existing stigma, where society labels and discriminates. The impact is not just discourse, but these children face discrimination, emotional exclusion, and violence that they should never experience. This is not an assumption, but a reality that keeps repeating itself, and needs to be changed urgently through a more honest and fair collective consciousness. (Dewi, 2025)

To overcome this problem, tactical steps are needed involving various parties. The main thing that needs to be emphasized is to change the perspective of people around you regarding children with intellectual disabilities. Starting from the family environment that needs to accept the condition of their family members who experience intellectual barriers and provide full support so that the child's ability to develop and be independent in carrying out daily activities. Then the next step is to provide education to the community by showing the abilities of children with intellectual barriers, one of which can be by opening a special studio around the nearest home or school to deepen the interest in talents that children have. In the school environment, teachers must be more concerned and protect children with intellectual barriers so that their abilities can develop optimally. The next step is to involve the government. The government must also take part by providing support related to inclusive education, health, and social services. In addition, the last effort that must be applied by various schools, communities, and governments is to replace negative labeling or negative stigma in a more positive direction, for example, instead of using the term "cursed child", it is better to replace it with "child of heaven" because in fact every child is the most beautiful gift of God. The term "not intelligent" can be changed to "unique", reflecting that each child has diverse potential, including those with intellectual disabilities. Rather than calling it a "family burden", it is more appropriate to use the term "special child", whose existence is part of the spiritual journey and helps to ease our steps towards His pleasure and grace.

CONCLUSION

The social stigma that exists in society is still strongly inherent in rural areas, to several countries, both developed and developing countries. Lack of information and education about children with intellectual disabilities is the main trigger for negative stigma. Negative labeling such as, "cursed child", "unintelligent", "family burden", and the like has a significant impact on the life of children with intellectual barriers, families, and people directly involved with the child, namely caregivers. In addition, cultural influences also greatly affect the existence of negative stigmas in the scope of society. So to overcome the social stigma that still exists today is by building awareness and concern for children with intellectual barriers, starting from the family, then the school environment, and the community environment. That way, every role of parents, family, peers, and the community will be moved to make a positive contribution that is beneficial for children with intellectual barriers. Ideally, there will be a harmonious family that loves its family members who experience intellectual barriers, a more inclusive social atmosphere in the school environment and a community environment that supports the optimal growth and development of children. Then slowly remove the negative stigma by changing it in a more positive direction.

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DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

No known financial conflicts of interest or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this manuscript.

DECLARATION OF ETHICS

The research and writing of this manuscript adhere to ethical standards of research and publication, in accordance with scientific principles, and are free from plagiarism.

DECLARATION OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCCES

Generative Artificial Intelligence and other assistive technologies were not excessively utilized in the research and writing processes of this manuscript.

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