Mental retardation or Intellectual disability is one of the commonest disabilities during the developmental period. It is a particular state of functioning that characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual and adaptive behaviour (AAMR 2002). A mentally retarded child is one who is below average IQ and difficulty in changing the way of functioning appropriate to the various situations in everyday life. Mentally retarded children have some limitations and so they are differ from normal children. In spite of this, they are our strength, treasure and our hope. They are not only the member of our society but also maker of the country like other children. Mentally retarded children have also fundamental rights for education, security and protection and right to live respectfully as other citizen. Then why they are neglected by us. As a special problem, the care, attention, special education and training of the mentally retarded children is of the utmost importance and significance.

At present situation mental retardation of children is increasing internationally and becoming a major study for us. Although mentally retarded children are increasingly widespread, they are still poorly understood by most of our society. So study on children with mental retardation is a vital issue in the context of present society. Till today, very few researches have attempted to study on mental retardation of children in this region.

Keeping in view the above rational the study entitle “A CRITICAL STUDY OF MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FOUR INSTITUTES OF GUWAHATI CITY- ASSAM” was taken up.

The main objectives of the present study are:

- To study about the different causes of mental retardation of children.
- To find out the various problems of mentally retarded children at different level.
- To study about the preventive approach of mental retardation of children.
• To study about education and training of mentally retarded children at different level of retardation.
• To study about the role of parents, teachers, society and institutions in general which can play a vital role in order to improve the environment of the mentally retarded children.

METHODOLOGY

The present study which is an attempt to study the causes, problems of mentally retarded children and prevention of mental retardation, and study about their education falls in the category of Descriptive research.

The research design was developed to examine the variables in a situation that has already occurred. No attempt was made to control or manipulate the situation. The design was selected to control the study methodology.

For the present study the samples were 120 mentally retarded children (MRC), ages ranging from 6-18 years, including mild, moderate, severe & profound retarded children of four non-government institutions of Guwahati city of Assam; 60 parents of mentally retarded children and 20 teachers including coordinator of above stated four institutions.

At the present study, the simple random sampling method was adopted for collection of data.

Techniques of Data Collection

In the present study, Interview schedule, Observation, and Case study methods were applied for gathering the data relevant to the study.

Structured interview schedule-I, with 50 items for parents of MRC was devised by the investigator to identify the available causes of MR were prenatal problems, natal and neo-natal problems and postnatal problems, psycho-social problems, Hereditary, accident, and other causes of mental retardation. Structured interview schedule for the
background data comprised for such items as age parity, education, occupation, religion, monthly family income.

Interview schedule-II, was prepared by the investigator with 30 items in open and close-ended forms for the teachers to know the various problems and education of mentally retarded children and educational management for them.

Both participant and non-participant observation method were used for gathering data according to principal objective of the study.

The case study was intended to provide some information on the historical background, and the current conditions of the mentally retarded children. The investigator conducted a direct personal investigation to the parents and teachers. Through this investigation, the researcher tried to know about the causes or factors related with mental retardation and about the various problems of mentally retarded children.

**Data Collection Procedure:**

Based on the objectives of the study a structured interview schedules were prepared to obtain necessary information for the study. Observation and case study methods were also used for data collection.

The final study was conducted at four institutions. The verbal consent was taken from the teachers and parents of MRC to take part in the study. For the collection of data self introduction was given and rapport was established with the parents of MRC and the teachers. However, the role of the investigator was explained. The sample was selected according to the sampling criteria. The investigator was actively involved with these institutions. Within the appropriate schedule, data collection was completed.
Analysis of Data:

After collection of data, collected data were analyzed in the form of descriptive statistical analysis, according to objectives of the study as well as open analysis. As the analysis of data, taking into consideration the objectives and hypothesis of the study the collected data was analyzed, by employing descriptive statistical techniques.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals the following major findings:

- Most of the pregnant women were over-aged and majority of children coming from nuclear family.
- Psychosocial problems were the major cause of mental retardation of children that include broken home, inadequate relationship of the family, aggressive nature of parents, depression of children, lack of affection, and poor economic condition. Most of these, poor economic condition was the main problem.
- Nutritional disorder and hypertension at prenatal period, LBW of the baby at natal & neonatal period and mal nutrition of children at postnatal period were the highly responsible for mental retardation.
- The major problem of mentally retarded children were behavioural problem that included self injurious, destructive, aggressive, hyperactivity, restless, rebellious, withdrawn and stereotype behaviour. Most of them were hyperactivity.
- The main problems of mild, moderate, severe mentally retarded children are gradually academic problem, negativism and problems of self help skill.

Mental retardation can be minimized through the certain preventive measures at prenatal, natal & neonatal, postnatal and territory level. For the improvement of the problems of MRC proper care, individual attention, special education and training are the most essential. To drive out the causes of mental retardation and to solve the problems conscious people, Government, NGOs and parents should have the full responsibility and accountability. Every child has right to live with proper care and opportunities.