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# STUDIES ON SELF-DESTRUCTIVE INTELLIGENCE SYNDROME ON INDIAN AGRICULTURAL SCIENTISTS

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## ABSTRACT

*Data of eighty-nine Principal Scientists of Indian Council of Agricultural Research were generated on research contribution, professional exposure and professional experience with respect to 'self – destructive intelligence syndrome'(SDIS).Indian agricultural with low, moderate, high and very high Professional Experience were found to be equally or similarly vulnerable to the SDIS. About 33.7% of the scientists were at a satisfactory level and they were advised to maintain it, while about 66.3% of the scientists were vulnerable towards SDIS and they were advised to take steps to increase feedback, self awareness and contact with the real world. Around 11% of the Indian Agricultural Scientists had the SDIS virus far advanced and were leading for a big self-induced problem. Ten scientists were found to be very highly vulnerable and 49 scientists were found to be vulnerable to SDIS virus. They were involved in general administration along with research and enjoyed the privilege of power and prestige at par with other administrative services. SDIS attacks only those professionals who are at the top of their respective professions and are entitled to make decisions on their own, Indian Agricultural Scientists also fall in this category of being at the top of their professions and they possess full authority to take decisions.*

**Key words:** Indian Agricultural Scientists; Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR); Self – Destructive Intelligence Syndrome (SDIS); Super Cognitive Intelligence Possessing Individuals (SCIPIs); Research Contribution; Professional Exposure; Professional Experience

## INTRODUCTION

'Super Cognitive Intelligence Possessing Individuals' (SCIPIs) using the terminology coined and developed by **Feinbereg & Tarrant (1995)** for intellectually superior and academically bright individuals. **Feinbereg & Tarrant** have attempted to attract the attention of people with regard to the vulnerability of these SCIPI towards 'Self – Destructive Intelligence Syndrome' (SDIS). They maintain that SCIPI carry, concealed in their psyches, potential for 'self–destruction' **(Feinberg** and **Tarrant,** 1995**)** which is largely self-induced and puts them at a risk where their intellect betrays them especially at critical moments. **Hyatt and Gottlieb (1987)** discussed why smart people fail and **Watson, 2001)** discusses why smart people do dumb things. These individuals are vulnerable to this syndrome, which acts as a negative factor in their dealings with their own selves and their surroundings. The same intellectually superior and academically bright individuals who excel in one or various walks of life suddenly or miserably fail in those very aspects because of the prevalence of SDIS. **Deolal (1996)** validated the measurement of SDIS scale in the Indian context. Study for SDIS was conducted by **Joshi (2002)** on intellectually superior and academically bright students at the tertiary stage of education and by **Chaudhary (2002)** on University and College teachers in relation to Gender and Academic factors.

After independence, the contribution of Indian agricultural scientists has been phenomenal. Till 1965, India was 'Ship to Mouth' and it was the Indian agricultural scientists who systematically and scientifically has brought India to become the second largest scientific force that has increased the food production nearly seven times, whereas, the Indian population has grown more than 3.5 times. Today, our country is not only self-sufficient in food production but also exports in many agricultural areas. Their systematic, scientific and coordinated approach has put Indian agriculture on sound footings. In past, Indian agricultural scientists were trained in various developed countries, however, today our scientists have the capability to provide expert advices at various forums at international level. Under such circumstances, it can be very likely that SDIS may start showing symptoms among the senior agricultural scientists with high intelligence quotient (IQ) working especially at managerial post at project level and managerial level, however, human intelligence is a complex system of separate processes (**Detterman, 1986).**

The psychologist ***Aaron Stern*** said that "Success, by definition, breeds narcissism". Moreover, the society in which we flourish celebrates narcissism. Our world promotes isolation as well as hubris. Impersonality is the essence of our way of life. The computer is the central symbol of this development. E-mail is the antithesis of personal contact. Technology has rescued us from many of the inconveniences that use to beset our lives. At the same time, technology is cutting us off from human interaction ***(Feinberg & Tarrant,*** 1995***)***.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the present study was to understand the self-destructive intelligence syndrome of Indian Agricultural Scientists in Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) on the basis of differences in the quantum of their research contribution, professional exposure and professional experience and their relationship.

## DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The sample consists of 89 Indian Agricultural Scientists of ICAR. These 89 scientists have been selected from those who are designated as Principal Scientists or higher in the rank. About 350 Principal Scientists were contacted and received 97 responses out of which 89 were considered for the sample. The scores of these 08 (97-89 = 08) scientists were in the extremes (either exceptionally very-very high or very-very low). Hence it was decided to exclude these 08 scientists from the sample so that the nature of the distribution of the scores may tend to take the shape of a normally distributed curve. The 89 sample scientists included only 2 women scientists. The Agricultural Scientists were categorized on the basis of their research contribution, professional exposure and professional experience. Among the 89 agricultural scientists, 70 were Principal Scientists and 19 Principal Scientists with research management positions.

The data collection was done via e-mail, by post and through personal contact. The e-mail ID's and addresses of different Institutes and Scientists were collected from ICAR web site www.icar.nic.in and the lists of ICAR Institutes, National Bureaus, Directorates, National Co-ordinations, National centers in different areas of specializations like Crop Sciences,

Horticulture, National Resource Management, Agricultural Engineering, Animal Sciences, Fisheries, Agricultural Education and Agricultural Extension are available at the website www.icar.nic.in. Three tools were employed to collect the relevant data i.e. Personal Data Schedule and SDIS..

The SDIS Challenge – A Self – Diagnostic Tool' containing 70 items is followed following ***Feinberg &Tarrent*** *(1995).* This tool measures one's vulnerability to SDIS and it contains 70 items with 3 point scale. The respondent has a choice to provide his/her opinion either 'True', 'False' or 'uncertain'. 2 points are provided for each response marked 'True', 0 point is provided for each response marked 'false' and 1 point is awarded for each response marked 'uncertain'. Marks on all the 70 items were added together and this addition provided the score of an individual scientist on SDIS measurement scale.

## DATA ANALYSIS

To determine the nature of the distribution of the scores, values of Skewness and Kurtosis were calculated. Values of Mean, Median Mode and standard Deviation were computed in order to understand the pattern of distribution of the scores pertaining to the two variables **(Downie and Heath, 1970; Kurtz and Mayo,1979)**.

The significance of a t-ratio was determined on the basis of the values of degrees of freedom (df) computed by using the formula df = $(N_1-1) + (N_2-1)$. The data were statistically analyzed with the help of a computer using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science).

**Interpreting the SDIS measurement scale scores**

SDIS measurement scale is a three point scale which contains 70 items and is uni-dimensional in nature. The higher the SDIS measurement scale score the higher is the vulnerability of the respondent towards SDIS, whereas a low score reflects lower degree of susceptibility to SDIS. Individuals were put in any one of the following four categories on the basis of the scores in SDIS measurement scale and then, the interpretation of the score may be made on the basis of the description provided**(Table 1)**.

**Table 1: Categories based on the Scores of Self – Destructive Intelligence Syndrome Measurement Scale**

| Category | Score Range | Number of scientists | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 110-140 Very High Score | 10 | Individual Self – Destructive Intelligence Syndrome virus is far advanced. Individual is heading for a big self – induced problem. |
| 2. | 80-110 High Score | 49 | Individual is vulnerable, he/she should take steps to increase feedback, self – awareness and contact with the real world. |
| 3. | 30-80 Moderate | 30 | Individual immunity is at satisfactory level he/she should maintain it. |
| 4. | 0-30 Low score | - | Individual may be too modest and cautions, he/she should push the envelope a little. |
| | **Total** | **89** | |

**Table 2: Frequency Distribution of SDIS Scale' scores of the Indian Agricultural Scientists (N=89).**

| S.No. | SDIS Scores | No. of Scientists |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | 42-49 | 3 |
| 2. | 50-57 | 3 |
| 3. | 58-65 | 4 |
| 4. | 66-73 | 12 |
| 5. | 74-81 | 11 |
| 6. | 82-89 | 14 |
| 7. | 90-97 | 17 |
| 8. | 98-105 | 11 |
| 9. | 106-113 | 9 |
| 10. | 114-121 | 5 |
| | **Total** | **89** |

**Table 3: Values of Mean, Median, Mode, Standard Deviation, Standard Errors of Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation and other relevant statistics with respect to the Self Destructive Intelligence Syndrome related 'SDIS' scores for the Indian Agricultural Scientists (N=89).**

| Sl.No. | Statistics | Symbol | Self Destructive Intelligence Syndrome Scale Scores |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Mean | M. | 86.78 |
| 2. | Median | Mdn. | 87.00 |
| 3. | Mode | Mo. | 87.44 |
| 4. | Standard Deviation | S.D. | 18.07 |
| 5. | S. Error of mean | $SE_M$ | 1.92 |
| 6. | S. Error of Median | $S.E._{Mdn.}$ | 1.92 |
| 7. | S. Error of standard Deviation | S.E.S.D. | 1.35 |
| 8. | Tenth Percentile | $P_{10}$ | 61.00 |
| 9. | Twenty fifth Percentile | $P_{25}$ | 73.50 |
| 10 | Seventy-fifth Percentile | $P_{75}$ | 99.00 |
| 11 | Ninetieth Percentile | $P_{90}$ | 112.00 |

**Table 4: Values of Skewness and Kurtosis of the Self Destructive Intelligence Syndrome related 'SDIS' Scale' scores for the Indian Agricultural Scientists (N=89).**

| Variable | Statistic | Value | Nature |
|---|---|---|---|
| SDIS | Sk | -0.367 | Slightly Negatively Skewed |
| | Ku | 0.267 | Very Slightly Platy kurtic |

**Table 5: Values of the t-ratios for determining the significance of differences between the mean SDIS Scale' Scores of Research Contribution wise groups of scientists (N=89).**

| S.No. | Research Contribution wise Groups | N | Mean | SD | t-ratio | df |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Low | 22 | 79.00 | 18.106 | $t_{12}$= 1.656 | 43 |
| 2. | Moderate | 23 | 87.83 | 17.645 | $t_{13}$= 1.940 | 42 |
| 3. | High | 22 | 89.27 | 16.999 | $t_{14}$= 2.177* | 42 |
| 4. | Very high | 22 | 90.95 | 18.326 | $t_{23}$= 0.280 | 43 |
| | | | | | $t_{24=}$ 0.583 | 43 |
| | | | | | $t_{34}$= 0.316 | 42 |

*Significant at 0.05 level of significance

**Table 6: Values of the t-ratios for determining the significance of differences between the mean SDIS Scores of Professional Exposure wise these groups of the scientists (N=89).**

| S.No. | Professional Exposure wise Groups | N | Mean | SD | t-ratio | df |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Low | 21 | 80.71 | 16.69 | $t_{12}$= 1.779 | 43 |
| 2. | Moderate | 24 | 89.88 | 17.68 | $t_{13}$= 0.726 | 41 |
| | | | | | $t_{14}$= 1.907 | 41 |
| | | | | | $t_{23}$= 1.096 | 44 |
| | | | | | $t_{24}$= 0.305 | 44 |
| | | | | | $t_{34}$= 1.298 | 42 |

*Significant at 0.05 level of significance

**Table 7: Values of the t-ratios for determining the significance of differences between the mean SDIS Scores of Professional Experience wise groups of scientists (N=89).**

| S.No. | Professional Experience wise Groups | N | Mean | SD | t-ratio | df |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Low | 17 | 83.35 | 14.573 | $t_{12}$= 0.361 | 45 |
| 2. | Moderate | 30 | 85.07 | 16.191 | $t_{13}$= 1.035 | 37 |
| 3. | High | 22 | 89.64 | 21.480 | $t_{14}$= 0.989 | 35 |
| 4. | Very high | 20 | 89.10 | 19.825 | $t_{23}$= 0.875 | 50 |
| | | | | | $t_{24=}$ 0.789 | 48 |
| | | | | | $t_{34}$= 0.084 | 40 |

*Significant at 0.05 level of significance

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Nature of Distribution of the scores pertaining to the constructs SDIS

The nature of the distribution of the scores pertaining to SDIS was understood by computing the values of various appropriate descriptive statistics. The frequency distribution with regard to the SDIS of the total sample scientists have been presented in **Table2**. The comparatively smaller values of the standard errors of mean, Median and Standard Deviation indicate that these statistics do not show larger deviations from their corresponding parameters **(Table 3)**. Hence, this may be accepted as reasonable approximations of the values of the corresponding parameters. In addition to the above, the values of skewness and kurtosis were computed so that the nature of the distributions of the SDIS Scale scores may be understood more comprehensively**(Table 4)**.The distributions are only slightly negatively skewed and Slightly Platy Kurtic in nature. The slight differences from the standard values seem to be functionally tolerable. Hence, these distributions were accepted to be tending towards the form and shape of a Normal Distribution Curve.

### Research Contribution, Professional Exposure and Professional Experience wisedifferences in the SDIS of the Indian Agricultural Scientists.

The significance of difference in the mean SDIS Scale Scores of the Research Contribution wise four groups of Indian Agricultural Scientists **(Table 5)**, five t-ratios were found to be insignificant, whereas the groups of scientists having low Research Contribution and very high Research Contribution have been found to differ in their mean SDIS Scale Scores. Scientists having very high Research Contribution were found to be significantly higher in their mean SDIS Scale Scores as compared to the scientists having low Research Contribution. Scientists having very high Research Contribution were found to be more vulnerable to SDIS Virus.

The significance of differences in the mean SDIS Scale Scores of the Professional Exposure wise four groups of Indian Agricultural Scientists were not significant **(Table 6)**. Scientists with low, moderate, high and very high Professional Exposure were found to be equally or similarly vulnerable to the SDIS. Hence, Professional Exposure does not appear to be a factor to influence the extent of the spread of SDIS virus. Scientists with very high, high, moderate or low Professional Exposure are all equally or similarly vulnerable towards the SDIS. Alternatively, it

may also be said that Agricultural Scientists with very high, high, moderate and low Professional Exposure are all equally or similarly immune to the SDIS virus.

The significance of differences in the mean SDIS Scale Scores of the Professional Experience wise four groups of Indian Agricultural Scientists were not significant **(Table 7)**. Scientists with low, moderate, high and very high Professional Experience were found to be equally or similarly vulnerable to the SDIS. Professional Experience of the Indian Agricultural Scientists and the vulnerability/immunity to SDIS virus are independent of one another. It may be said that differences in Professional Experience are not associated with corresponding differences in the vulnerability towards SDIS virus.

The immunity towards SDIS of about 33.7% of the Indian Agricultural Scientists is at a satisfactory level and they are advised to maintain it. About 66.3% of the scientists are vulnerable towards SDIS and they are advised to take steps to increase feedback, self awareness and contact with the real world. About 11% of the Indian Agricultural Scientists had the SDIS virus far advanced and were leading for a big self-induced problem.

**Vulnerability of Indian Agricultural Scientists to SDIS Virus**

Among the sample, 10 scientists were found to be very highly vulnerable and 49 scientists were found to be vulnerable to SDIS virus. This finding indicates that about 66.3% of the scientists are vulnerable to SDIS virus. This may be because of the following reasons:

1. Indian Agricultural Scientists are involved in general administration along with research, they enjoy the privilege of power and prestige *at par* with administrators in the Indian Administrative Services, Indian Police Services, Provincial Civil Services, Indian Defense Services etc. As these scientists enjoy absolute powers, they may be arrogant and hence are vulnerable to SDIS.
2. It needs to be pointed out that SDIS attacks only those professionals who are at the top of their respective professions and are entitled to make decisions on their own Indian Agricultural Scientists also fall in this category of being at the top of their professions and they possess full authority to take decisions.
3. Indian Agricultural Scientists can be termed as Super Cognitive Intelligence Possessing Individuals who are vulnerable to SDIS.

**Socio-Educational Implications**

1. Scientists having low Research Contribution and scientists having very high Research Contribution differ in their SDIS. Scientists with very high Research Contribution are more vulnerable to the attack of SDIS virus. It seems that Research Contribution wise comparatively higher attainments may enhance arrogance, hubris, narcissism and unconscious need to fail. Such a situation may lead to a far advance stage of vulnerability towards the SDIS. These scientists should be advised to be more modest, humane and develop humility so that they may not get harmed by their superior intellect.
2. A majority of the Indian Agricultural Scientists studied in this investigation (66.3%) have been found to be vulnerable to SDIS. They are advised to take steps to increase feedback, self awareness and contact with the real world, if they wish to save themselves from falling prey into the hands of this virus. About one third (33.7%) of the Indian Agricultural Scientists have been found immune to the attack of SDIS. This finding clearly implies that these scientists are not leading towards the major catastrophe of self-disaster. 11% of the total sample (N=89) have the SDIS virus for advanced, it is feared that they may be leading for a big self-induced problems.
3. Thirty-three percent of the sample Indian Agricultural Scientists was found to be immune to the SDIS. This implies that danger of the spread of SDIS is not imminent for these scientists. A major implication of the conclusion is that about a third of the Indian Agricultural Scientists may not be very arrogant and are expected not to face self induced problems in the immediate future.
4. Being a SCIPI (Super Cognitive Intelligence Possessing Individual) is the first requisite for the vulnerability towards SDIS. *Mortimer Feinberg* and *John J. Tarrant,* the authors of the book titled 'Why Smart People Do Dumb Things', on which this investigation based, have proclaimed that the SDIS virus is present in the brains of Super Cognitive Intelligence Possessing Individuals. As these individuals are intellectually very superior, they are supposed to acquire higher professional positions and it is found that during the course of their professional lives, their superior intelligence may lead them to commit monumental blunders which either destroy their academic/professional career or they are bunked by their own or next generations for their cunningness and stupidity. This implies that as soon as the SDIS virus gets activated in their brains, it leads to their disaster.

## CONCLUSION

Majority of the total sample scientists (66.3%) are found to be vulnerable and 11% possess the SDIS virus far advanced. This may be said to be an alarming situation. Concerted efforts are required to bring this situation to the attention of these scientists who are very important for the society. They should handle themselves appropriately so that the nation may get the benefits of their superior intellects for the welfare of humanity.


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