

IMPACT OF PARENTS' GENDER ON TYPE & LEVEL OF PERCEIVED PARENTING STRESS DUE TO HAVING MENTALLY CHALLENGED CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

The present study assessed and compared the type and level of perceived stress among the parents of 150 mentally challenged children across their gender. Sample was drawn randomly in equal proportions from three categories of mental challenge viz. mild, moderate and severe from 3 RCI (Rehabilitation Council of India) recognised special schools of Delhi. The level of stress perceived by parents were assessed using Family Interview for Stress and Coping in Mental Retardation (Section-I). Findings of the study revealed that mothers from LIG, irrespective of their child's degree of mental challenge perceived more stress in daily care of the child, marital adjustment, interpersonal relations and social life as compared to fathers. While MIG mothers felt more stress than fathers in giving extra inputs for the care of the child and by the disturbed behavior of the child. The predominant reason for these variations is probably Indian family values wherein mothers are held solely responsible for family nurturing even though this perspective is changing over time with education which is visible among parents of MIG.

KEYWORDS: Fathers, Family Stress, Low Income Families, Mental Retardation, Middle Income Families, Mothers