

COPING STRATEGIES FOR PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG PARENTS OF MENTALLY CHALLENGED CHILDREN ACROSS THEIR GENDER

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ABSTRACT

The present study compared the coping strategies for stress among parents of 150 mentally challenged children drawn randomly in equal proportions from two social classes viz. Low and Middle Income Group across three levels of mental challenge. The coping stress was assessed using Family Interview for Stress and Coping in Mental Retardation, Part II developed by NIMHANS. In the present research study significant differences were recognized only in child rearing practices of mothers and fathers. The predominant reason for the variation is scarcity of time among fathers, which is probably due to their busy working schedule at their respective work place. This contributes to the difference in their way of handling the child or caring for the child. Whereas, mothers devoted maximum amount of time in child's care to improve child's condition and also found to be more involved with the child. Therefore, found to be better coped up in child rearing practices. Findings of the study also revealed that both mothers and fathers irrespective of their social class had same level of awareness regarding child's disability, nearly equal expectations and attitudes towards child and received same level of social support.

KEYWORDS: Coping Stress, Fathers, Low and Middle Income Groups, Mental Retardation, Mothers