

# Psychological Well-Being of Parents of Mentally Challenged and Normal Children

## Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the psychological well-being of parents of mentally challenged children and normal children. The sample size was 80 parents (40 parents of mentally challenged children and 40 parents of normal children.) Parents of mentally challenged children were selected from different special child school of Ahmedabad city of Gujarat state. Parents of normal children were selected from the same area. Personal Data Sheet and Psychological Well-Being Scale were used to collect required data. Data were analyzed by 't' test. Findings of the study revealed that it is significant difference between parents of mentally challenged and normal children in relation to their psychological well-being. Psychological well-being of parents of normal children is higher than parents of mentally challenged children.

**Keywords:** Psychological Well-Being, Parents of Mentally Challenged Children, Parents of Normal Children.

## Introduction

Birth of every child is greatest experience in every couple's life. It brings change in different components of life of physical, psychological, emotional, social, and financial. Parenting is an abundant responsibility for both mother and father for preparing the child for society. Every parents have their own expectations and dreams for their children. Parents are the primary role model for their children. Children always observed their parents behavior and adapt their behavior and attitudes. Parents have great impact on their children's language, behavior and also personality development. Children learn that how to cope with stress of daily life, how to be good employee, good spouse, parents and also good human being through their parents.

Genetics, brain injury, delivery complications and other factors could affect the child's normal development of brain which leads to be responsible of abnormal cognitive, behavior, psychological and physical patterns and also socio-emotional problems. The Intelligence Quotient (IQ) 70 and below that indicated the range of mental retardation from mild to profound level. The birth of a child with mental retardation could be an unacceptable and challenging incidence which creates frustration, depression and also feeling of hopelessness and helplessness. It affects parenting skills, parenting attitude, and their interpersonal relationship which in reversed effects the psychological, emotional, interpersonal and personality development of the child. Various evidence indicated that the parents of the mentally retarded children face emotional, social and economic problems that are often limiting, destructive and conclusive in nature (Khamis, 2007). Generally parents of special child have more fear about their own future and also their child's future which leads to adverse effect on the wellbeing.

Usually mentally challenged children are ignored and isolated from the society. They are part of our society and they should be given equally important for our social constitution. They have special ways of education and training as compared to normal children. The responsibility of the family is to take care of and rear the children, to establish a healthy relationship among the members as well as to assist the children independence (Dyson, 2000).

Well-being means the absenteeism of illness. In Myers (2000), opinion, mental wellbeing implies how people evaluate their lives. Mental



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wellbeing or life satisfaction is the biggest man's wish and his most important goal that affects people's mental health more than any other factor (Diener et al, 2003). Well-being is a concept which includes individual, social and psychological dimensions as well as health-related behaviours. Moreover well-being can be defined as two perspectives: (a) According to clinical perspective, well-being means the absence of negative conditions. (b) According to psychological perspective well-being means the prevalence of positive attributes. Life contentment, pleasant emotions, less negative moods-these three aspects are related to concept of well-being. Diener (2000) noticed that well-being means emotional and cognitive evolution of life. According to (Hayman, 1990, p.8) defined that in general "psychological wellbeing is a mental condition characterized by pleasant feelings of good health, exhilaration, high self-esteem and confidence, and it often associated with regular physical activity".

#### **Review of Literature**

Researchers have shown mothers of mentally retarded children compared to those of the normal children have generally lower health levels (Ahmadpanah, 2001), more stress and lower psychological wellbeing level. David E Gray, William J Holder (2009) studied of psycho-social well-being among an Australian sample of parents of children with autism. A variety of independent variables including: socio demographic information, health and treatment status of the child and coping behaviors were assessed in terms of their effects on parental depression, anxiety and anger. The results of regression analysis indicated that fathers, and those parents who received more social support, had lower scores of depression, anxiety and anger. The age of symptom onset was positively related to depression, but was not significant in terms of anxiety and anger. Parents with older children, females and larger families reported lower scores of anger. These independent variables were not significantly related to depression or anxiety. Neither the type nor the extent of coping behaviors was significantly related to any of the measures of psycho-social well-being used in this study. Jane M Urray Cram, Anna P Nieboer (2011) found that parental stress has been identified as a major affecter of caregivers' psychological well-being and a risk increaser for unwillingly placing children with disabilities in the care of others. They observed that parental stress and the child's depressive feelings strongly affected psychological well-being and an indirect relation of restricted caregiver social activities through parental stress. To protect psychological well-being of caregivers, support services should address depressive feelings among children with intellectual disabilities, facilitate caregivers' social activity, and reduce stress. Narmin Boromand, Mohammad Narimani and Tavakol Mosazadeh (2014) studied on psychological wellbeing factors among the parents of the mentally retarded children with those of the normal children. There is a significant difference between the parents of the normal children and those of the mentally retarded children with regards to the psychological wellbeing factors. Irum Hayat, Mahwish

Zafar (2015) investigated the relationship between coping strategies and psychological well-being among parents with down syndrome children. Results showed significant correlations between psychological well-being and coping strategies. Those parents who relied more on active avoidance coping, reported lower levels of psychological well-being as compared to those who relied on problem-focused coping strategies. Fathers scored significantly high on psychological well-being than mothers. Data analysis suggested significant differences in parental psychological well-being and coping strategies with the increasing age of the children. Gender differences were also explored which suggested that parents with girl-child had comparatively higher levels of psychological wellbeing than parents with boy-child.

All over the world, research work is being done to identify parental attitudes, depression, anxiety, frustration, adjustment, mental health etc. It helps specialists working in the field of mental retardation, researchers, society and parents to outspread a healthier and more sympathetic and inspiring atmosphere and relationship with special need children. There are numbers of researches done on the difficulties of the parents of children with intellectual disabled. But very few researches are done in the area of psychological wellbeing of parents of mentally disabled children. Parent's psychological well-being and mental retardations have been considered in this research.

#### **Objective of the Study**

To study psychological well-being of parents of mentally challenged and normal children.

#### **Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of psychological well-being of parents of mentally challenged and normal children.

#### **Method**

##### **Participants**

The sample chosen for this research is the parents of mentally challenged and normal children. In this research 40 parents of mentally challenged children and 40 parents of normal children (total 80) were taken as sample. Only those parents were selected whose children's age is between 10 to 20 years.

##### **Instruments**

##### **Psychological Well Being Scale**

The measure developed by Devendra Singh Sisodia and Pooja Choudhary was used. The scale consists of fifty statements having five alternatives from strongly agree to strongly disagree. All statements are of positive manner. It has five sub areas named - Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental Health, and Interpersonal Relations. The total score obtained by the sample suggests its overall concept of well-beingness. The higher the score more is the well-being. Test-retest reliability for the scale is 0.87 and content validity is 0.94.

##### **Procedure**

To collect the data the researcher approached to the principal of the special child school and obtained permission for data collection. Parents who expressed interest to participate in the study were approached by

the researcher and explained purpose of the study to participants and also informed that their information will be used for the research purpose only and it will remain confidential. After established rapport, psychological well-being scale was administered to every subject. Parents of mentally challenged children were purposively selected from various special child schools of Ahmedabad city of Gujarat state. Same procedure was done with data collection of parents of

normal children. The responses of scale have scored as per scoring key, which has given in the manual of the scale. The obtained data from 80 subjects were analyzed with the help of mean and 't' test.

#### Results and Discussion

In order to study psychological well-being of parents of mentally challenged and normal children 't' test was conducted.

**Table1: Showing Result of 't' on Score of Psychological Well-Being of Parents of Mentally Challenged and Normal Children**

| Group                                   | N  | Mean   | Standard Deviation | MD     | SED   | t Value |
|---|----|--------|--------------------|--------|-------|---------|
| Parents of Mentally Challenged Children | 40 | 326.9  | 31.8               | 117.15 | 1.134 | 103.3*  |
| Parents of Normal Children              | 40 | 444.05 | 19.65              |        |       |         |

\*P<.01, NS=Not Significant

**Table 2: Showing Mean Scores of Psychological Well-Being of Parents of Mentally Challenged and Normal Children**

| Group | Parents of Mentally Challenged Children | Parents of Normal Children |
|-------|---|----------------------------|
| MEAN  | 326.9                                   | 444.05                     |
| N     | 40                                      | 40                         |

As revealed in the table 1, calculated t is 103.3, which is significant at 0.01 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. So, it can be concluded that there is significant difference between the mean scores of psychological well-being of parents of mentally challenged and normal children. Table 2 shows that the mean score of parents of mentally challenged children is 326.9 and the mean score of parents of normal children is 444.05. So, it can be concluded that parents of normal children have higher psychological well-being than parents of mentally challenged children by getting high mean score. Researches of Jane M Urray Cram, Anna P Nieboer (2011), Narmin Boromand, Mohammad Narimani and Tavakol Mosazadeh (2014) and Irum Hayat, Mahwish Zafar (2015) are also support this result.

Every parents want mentally and physically healthy child. But some parents though not by their choice and cause of some circumstances they have a child with mentally disability. Usually it is seen that mentally challenged children are ignored and isolated from the society. Their parents have to face difficulties to accept the rejection of their children and cope with non-acceptation.

Mothers of mentally challenged children have to face constant struggle to complete house hold work, sometimes responsibilities of job including extra care of their disabled children as they cannot do such daily work by themselves as compared to normal children. Because of stress and multiple conflicts, they have more psychological and emotional problems, health relate issues as compared to mothers of normal children. Generally, fathers of mentally challenged children tack more time to accept and cope with the situation. Mostly they hide their true feelings and do not discuss their problems with others that create more problematic for them to adjust in a healthy manner.

Parents of mentally challenged children feel more pressure and anxiety as they have to own the major responsibilities of bringing up their child. The birth of a child with mental retardation could be a challenging incidence which creates frustration, depression. It affects parenting skills, parenting attitude, and their interpersonal relationship. They have more marital problems because of the conflict of distribution the supplementary demands for caring of the child. Because of all these factors parents of mentally challenged children have less psychological well-being as compared to normal children.

#### Conclusion

In the light of findings it can be concluded that it is significant difference between parents of mentally challenged and normal children in relation to their psychological well-being. Psychological well-being of parents of normal children is higher than parents of mentally challenged children.

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