



**COPING ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE MOTHERS OF SPECIAL CHILDREN- A PRELIMINARY STUDY**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Caring for a family member with a special challenging problem is a significant chronic stressor in humans. In fact, caregiver stress is currently seen as a human model of chronic stress in the stress literature. As a need based interventions with mothers can help them reduce their stress and increase their coping levels, this study was conducted on the effectiveness of coping enhancement program for the mothers of special children.

**Objective:** The overall objective of this study was to establish whether the Coping enhancement program could be utilized when the population of interest is caregivers of special children with psychiatric, behavioral or emotional disorders.

**Study design:** A survey cum quasi experimental, one group pretest post test design was used for this study.

**Materials and methods:** The present study was conducted in three phases- Assessment of stress, coping level and coping factors of mothers of special children, development of a coping enhancement programme and administering the coping enhancement programme to mothers. The effectiveness of the program was judged by the difference between the pretest and post test score. The population selected for the study were the mothers of the special children admitted in special schools of Puducherry Union Territory.

**Results:** The coping enhancement programme was found to be significantly effective among mothers handling special children in coping with their stress and thus it may result in enhancing the quality of life of the special children.

**KEYWORDS :** Special children, caregiver stress, coping enhancement program, Puducherry.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Parental stress on taking care of children with disability and the demands it raises, increases a dysregulation and affects the emotional and family relationships. (Heykyung Oh, 2009). As parents go through tremendous amount of stress, and in order to alleviate the stress experienced, intervention programs are required to enhance the coping levels, as it is been observed that increase in the levels of stress in mothers, may have a negative impact on the child with disability. (Erjona, 2013) The literature on caregivers obviously indicates that the strength of prolong caregiving is associated with a multitude of health problems. From the emotional strains of providing care, to the physical toll and social dishonor identified with caring for a special child, the caregiving skill places an additional toll on the body. As a need based interventions with mothers can help them reduce their stress and increase their coping levels, it is decided to conduct a study on the effectiveness of coping enhancement program with mothers of special children. This paper addresses the pilot study findings of the research titled "Effectiveness of the coping enhancement program on the mothers of the special children" funded by ICSSR-IMPRESS (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Delhi).

**RESULTS:**

The results of the study are presented under following subheads in the form of tables and figures:

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic variables of the study:**

Socio-Demographic Variables	N (%)	Socio-Demographic Variables	N (%)
<b>Age (in years)</b>		<b>Monthly income of the family</b>	
Less than 5 years	8(47.1)	Less than rs.10000	4(23.6)
6-10 years	8(47.1)	Rs.10001-20000	3(17.6)
11-15 years	0	Rs.20001-30000	5(29.4)
More than 15 years	1(5.8)	More than rs.30000	5(29.4)
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Category of disorder</b>	

Male	3(17.6)	Autism	6(35.3)
Female	14(82.4)	Autistic spectrum disorder	2(11.8)
<b>Religion</b>		CP	1(5.9)
Christian	3(17.6)	Developmental delay	1(5.9)
Hindu	12 (70.6)	Hyperactive	2(11.8)
Muslim	2(11.8)	MR	1(5.9)
<b>Total number of children</b>		Speech delay	3(17.6)
1	7(41.2)	Stuttering	1(5.9)
2	9(52.9)	<b>Degree of severity</b>	
3	1(5.9)	Mild	2(11.8)
<b>Birth order of the special child</b>		Moderate	15(88.2)
1	17(100)	Severe	0
2	0	<b>Location of the residence</b>	
3	0	Urban	17(100)
<b>Number of years of schooling</b>		Rural	0
Less than 1 year	11(64.7)	<b>Type of family</b>	
1-5 years	5(29.4)	Joint	2(11.8)
More than 5 years	1(5.9)	Nuclear	15(88.2)

Table 1 shows frequency and Percentage wise distribution of socio-demographic variables among the special children. Out of the 17 special children, Majority of the special children 8 (47.1%) of study population were in the age group are both Less than 5 years and 6-10 years. Most of the special children were female 14 (82.4%). Most of the special children were Hindu 12 (70.6%). All of the special children's birth order was first 17 (100%).

Most of number of years of schooling were less than 1 year 11(64.7%). All of the special children belong urban 17 (100%). Most of the special children were nuclear family 15 (88.2%). Most of the special children's monthly income of the family 5(29.4%) were both Rs.20001-30000 and More than rs.30000. Most of the special children's disorder was Autism 6 (35.3%). Most of the special children were moderate severity 15 (88.2%).

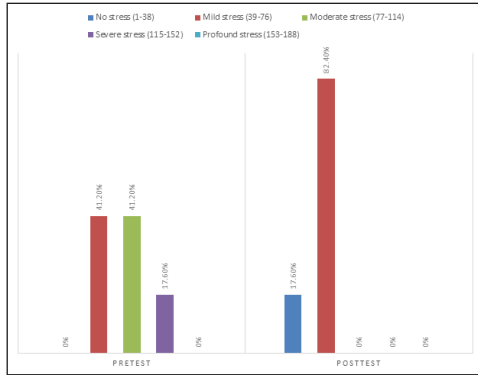


Fig.1. pretest and posttest level of stress experienced by the mothers of special children. (N = 17)

Fig.1 denotes that pretest, majority of the mothers of special children 7 (41.2%) had mild and moderate stress and 3 (17.6%) had severe level of stress respectively. In posttest, majority of the mothers of special children 14 (82.4%) had mild stress and 3 (17.6%) had no stress respectively.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of pretest and posttest of coping (domains -wise) of the mothers of special children. (N = 17)

COPING (DOMAINS -WISE)	PRETEST		POSTTEST	
	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Active coping	6.23	2.25	4.35	2.02
Acceptance coping	8.29	3.03	4.82	2.40
Planning	7.17	3.55	3.52	2.09
Seeking support	12.88	4.67	6.52	2.18
Religion	10.41	4.58	5.58	2.62
Finance	8.17	4.27	4.88	2.47
Mental Engagement	8.88	5.06	5.23	2.90
Emotions	8.76	5.56	5.82	3.08
Avoidance & Denial	10.47	5.19	6.52	2.40

Table 2 clarifies pretest, majority of the mothers of special children 12.88±4.67, 10.47±5.19, 10.41±4.58, 8.88±5.06, 8.76±5.56, 8.29±3.03, 8.17±4.27, 7.17±3.55, and 6.23±2.25 had seeking support, avoidance & denial, religion, mental engagement, emotions, acceptance coping, finance, planning and active coping. In posttest, majority of the mothers of special children 6.52±2.40, 6.52±2.18, 5.82±3.08, 5.58±2.62, 5.23±2.90, 4.88±2.47, 4.82±2.40, 4.35±2.02, and 3.52±2.09 had Avoidance & Denial, seeking support, emotions, religion, mental engagement, finance, acceptance coping, active coping, and planning.

Table 3: Pretest and posttest level of facilitating factors of coping in mothers of special children. (N = 17)

LEVEL OF FACILITATING FACTORS OF COPING	PRETEST		POSTTEST	
	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Not helpful (1-21)	0	0	2	11.8
Mildly helpful (22-42)	7	41.2	13	76.5
Moderately helpful (43-63)	5	29.4	2	11.8
More helpful (64-84)	5	29.4	0	0
Very much helpful (85-104)	0	0	0	0
Total	17	100	17	100

Table 3 explains frequency and percentage wise distribution of pretest and posttest level of facilitating factors of coping in mothers of special children. In pretest, majority of the people 7 (41.2%) had mildly helpful and 5 (29.4%) had both moderately and more helpful respectively. In posttest, 13 (76.5%) had

mildly helpful and 2 (11.8%) had both moderately and not helpful respectively.

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of pretest and posttest of facilitating factors of coping (domains -wise) of the mothers of special children. (N = 17)

FACILITATING FACTORS OF COPING (DOMAINS -WISE)	PRETEST		POSTTEST	
	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Spiritual	5.23	3.25	3.29	1.92
Social support	13.11	6.36	8.05	2.81
Financial support	9.64	5.15	5.70	2.51
Recreation	10	3.98	5.52	2.00
Miscellaneous	9.76	2.48	7.11	2.34

Table 4 describes mean and standard deviation of pretest and posttest of facilitating factors of coping (domains -wise) of the mothers of special children. In pretest, majority of the mothers of special children 13.11±6.36, 10±3.98, 9.76±2.48, 9.64±5.15, and 5.23±3.25 had social support, Recreation, Miscellaneous, Financial support and Spiritual. In posttest, majority of the mothers of special children 8.05±2.81, 7.11±2.34, 5.70±2.51, 5.52±2.00, and 3.29±1.92 had Social support, Miscellaneous, Financial support, Recreation and Spiritual.

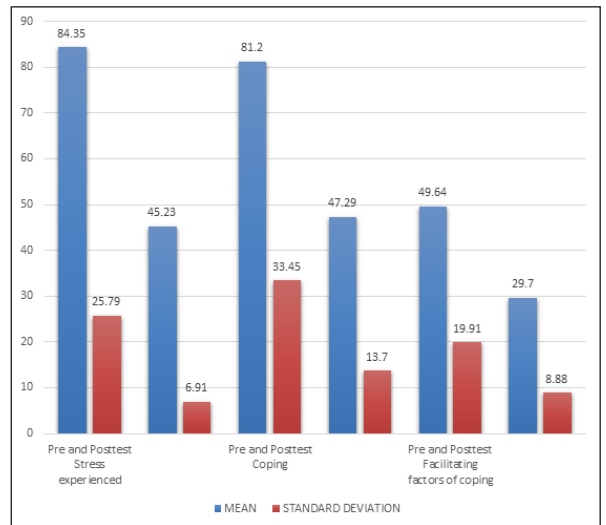


Fig:2 Mean and standard deviation of comparison of the pre-test and post- test of stress experienced, coping and facilitating factors of coping of the mothers of special children.

The above figure shows that the mean score of coping enhancement program on stress experienced in the pre-test was 84.35± 25.79 and the mean score in the post- test was 45.23± 6.91. The calculated paired 't' test value of t = 7.42 shows statistically highly significant difference between comparison of the pre-test and post- test of stress experienced of the mothers of special children.

The mean score of coping enhancement program on coping in the pre-test was 81.2± 33.45 and the mean score in the post- test was 47.29± 13.70. The calculated paired 't' test value of t = 5.74 shows statistically highly significant difference between comparison of the pre-test and post- test of coping of the mothers of special children.

The mean score of coping enhancement program on facilitating factors of coping in the pre-test was 49.64± 19.91 and the mean score in the post- test was 29.7± 8.88. The calculated paired 't' test value of t = 4.91 shows statistically highly significant difference between comparison of the pre-test and post- test of facilitating factors of coping of the

mothers of special children.

**Table -5:Correlation between pretest level of stress experienced, coping and facilitating factors of coping of the mothers of special children. (N=17)**

CORRELATION		MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	PEARSON CORRELATION r-VALUE	'p' VALUE
P R E S T	Stress experienced	2.76	0.75	0.561	0.019* S
	Coping	81.29	33.45	0.943	0.000** HS
	Coping	81.29	33.45		
	Facilitating factors of coping	49.64	19.91	0.654	0.004* S
	Facilitating factors of coping	49.64	19.91		
Stress experienced	84.35	25.79			

\*-p < 0.05 significant \*\*-p < 0.001 highly significant

Table 5 demonstrates Correlation between pretest level of stress experienced and coping of the mothers of special children indicates the positive correlation and shows the results Pearson correlation r- value is (0.561), p-value is (p=0.019) are statistically significant.

Correlation between pretest level of coping and facilitating factors of coping of the mothers of special children indicates the positive correlation and shows the results Pearson correlation r- value is (0.943), p-value is (p=0.000) are statistically highly significant.

Correlation between pretest level, facilitating factors of coping and stress experienced of the mothers of special children indicates the positive correlation and shows the results Pearson correlation r- value is (0.654), p-value is (p=0.004) are statistically significant.

**Table 6: Association between pretest level of coping experienced mothers of special children with respect to selected variables. (N=17)**

SL. NO	SELECTED VARIABLES	PRETEST LEVEL OF COPING						chi-square X	df	p-value
		MILDLY HELPFUL		MODERATELY HELPFUL		MORE HELPFUL				
		N	%	N	%	N	%			
1	Gender						6.67	2	0.035* S	
	Male	3	50	0	0	0				0
	Female	3	50	6	100	5				100
2	Religion						12.98	4	0.011* S	
	Christian	3	50	0	0	0				0
	Hindu	1	16.7	6	100	5				100
	Muslim	2	33.3	0	0	0				0

\*-p < 0.05 significant,

The table 6 depicts that the selected variable Gender and religion had shown statistically significant association between the level of coping of mothers of special children with chi-square value at p < 0.05 level.

**MAJOR FINDINGS OF THIS PILOT STUDY**

- Out of the 17 special children, Majority of the special children 8 (47.1%) of study population were in the age group are both Less than 5 years and 6-10 years.
- Most of the special children were female 14 (82.4%).
- Most of the special children were Hindu 12 (70.6%).
- All of the special children's birth order was first 17 (100%).
- Most of number of years of schooling were less than 1 year

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- Most of the special children's disorder was Autism 6 (35.3%).
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- In pre-test, majority of the mothers of special children 7 (41.2%) had mild and moderate stress and 3 (17.6%) had severe level of stress respectively. In posttest, majority of the mothers of special children 14 (82.4%) had mild stress and 3 (17.6%) had no stress respectively.
- Pre-test, majority of the mothers of special children 12.88±4.67, 10.47±5.19, 10.41±4.58, 8.88±5.06, 8.76±5.56, 8.29±3.03, 8.17±4.27, 7.17±3.55, and 6.23±2.25 had seeking support, avoidance & denial, religion, mental engagement, emotions, acceptance coping, finance, planning and active coping. In post test, majority of the mothers of special children 6.52±2.40, 6.52±2.18, 5.82±3.08, 5.58±2.62, 5.23±2.90, 4.88±2.47, 4.82±2.40, 4.35±2.02, and 3.52±2.09 had Avoidance & Denial, seeking support, emotions, religion, mental engagement, finance, acceptance coping, active coping, and planning.
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- Correlation between pretest level of stress experienced and coping of the mothers of special children indicates the positive correlation and shows the results Pearson correlation r- value is (0.561), p-value is (p=0.019) are statistically significant.
- Correlation between pretest level of coping and facilitating factors of coping of the mothers of special children indicates the positive correlation and shows the results Pearson correlation r- value is (0.943), p-value is (p=0.000) are statistically highly significant.
- Correlation between pretest level, facilitating factors of coping and stress experienced of the mothers of special

children indicates the positive correlation and shows the results Pearson correlation r- value is (0.654), p-value is (p=0.004) are statistically significant.

- The socio demographic variable Gender and religion had shown statistically significant association between the level of coping of mothers of special children with chi-square value at  $p < 0.05$  level.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

- The above pilot study clearly gave an outline of the coping enhancement programme is significantly effective among mothers handling special children. And this study implies the feasibility and reliability of the tool, material and methods. Further future study is recommended to do with higher volume of samples.