



## A Study On Mothers Challenges in Extending Care For Mentally Challenged Children

### KEYWORDS

Mental health, children, care givers

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**ABSTRACT** *Mental retardation is an intellectual disorder .In spite of advanced medical technology, our knowledge about mental retardation is still unknown .The disorder represents tip of the iceberg where the submerged portion needs to be identified. Mental retardation is defined as significantly sub average general intellectual functioning, associated with significant deficit or impairment in adaptive functioning, which manifests during the developmental periods. Mental retardation is a condition, which is caused not only biological factors but also psychosocial factors. The Objective of the study is to find out various problem faced by the mothers and the family as a whole of the mentally retarded, and identify the problems inadequacies of the mentally retarded through mothers experience. Research design adopts in this study is a descriptive one. The Sampling for the study was the mothers of the mentally retarded child, whose children are studying in the special school located in Coimbatore, the researcher has adopted purposive sampling method. Tools used in the study are interview schedule.*

### Introduction

Mental retardation is an intellectual disorder where there will be some change in development of physical and behavioural characteristics. Benda (1952) stated, a mentally deficient person is a person who is incapable of managing himself and his affair or being taught to do and who requires supervision, control and care for his own welfare and the welfare community. It may be caused by factors which affect the embryo or foetus during development. It may affect the infant during the Childs early years of growth and development .With present diagnosis it is possible to make positive and precise identification of the causes of mental retardation. The levels of mental retardation is classified according to their intellectual levels, mild (55-69), moderate (40-54), severe (25-39), profound (less than 24). According to Madhav (2001) the prevalence of mental retardation was observed to have a national rate of 4.2 per 1000 population. Across the globe in all nations we have a certain percentage of children born with mental retardation.

For most families, birth is a time for happiness and celebration. However, families with children suffering from mental retardation often experience mixed emotions. Raising a child with mental retardation is a physically and mentally challenging task which often interferes with normal family routines. The primary reaction of the parents upon learning of their child's mental retardation diagnosis at birth is despair and shock. Nothing prepares parents and other family members for the arrival of a mentally retarded child, and it is perceived as heralding a time of physical and emotional stress. A change in family dynamics is observed; family members experience a range of emotions including denial, shock, anger, grief, guilt.

### Research Methodology:

The research worker makes an attempt to study the mothers challenges in extending care for mentally challenged children. The objective of the study is to find out various problem faced by the mothers and the family as a whole of the mentally retarded, and to identify the problems and inadequacies of the mentally retarded through mothers ex-

perience. Research design adopt in this study is a descriptive one which is a fact finding of the study is to find out various problem faced by the mothers and the family as a whole investigation ,it describes socio-economic condition, about the mental retardation , physical condition and development , and problem faced by the parents. After this an Interview Schedule was prepared. **Universe** consisted of mothers of mentally retarded children whose children's are studying in the special school which is located in Coimbatore. Purposive sampling method was adopted for selection of the sample in this study.

**Tools of Data Collection** was Interview Schedule for securing relevant information through the Questions. The interview schedule was prepared in English with minimum number of question to collect the data from the mothers of the mentally retarded children.

### Findings

**Table -1**

**Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents**

S.No	Socio-demographic profile	Majority of respondents	Percentage
1	Age	20-31 years	43
2	Educational qualification	Secondary	46
3	Occupation	House wife	72
4	Income	2000-5000	35
5	Nuclear Family	39	85
6	Rented House	38	83
7	Urban Area	43	93

The above table shows that majority of the respondents 43% belongs to the age group of 20-31 years and 46% have completed only secondary level education, 72% of respondents were house wives. Majority of respondents 35% family income reported as Rs.2000-5000 per month. The majority of the respondents 85% reported living in nuclear families. It was stated that 83% are living in rented house, whereas 93% respondents residing in urban areas.

**Table - 2**  
**About the Mentally Challenged Children**

S.No	About retarded children	Majority of respondents	Percentage
1	Onset of occurrence (After birth)	17	37
2	Main cause(chromosomal abnormality)	16	35
3	Degree of mental retardation (Moderate)	27	59
4	Health condition(often ill healthy)	26	57

The above table shows that majority of the respondents 37% have suspicion after birth, whereas others have suspicion at the age of 4-5yrs, Majority of respondents 35 % of respondents said that the cause is due to chromosomal abnormality. Majority of the children 57 % fall ill healthy frequently. Majority of 59% children have moderate degree of mental retardation.

**Table - 3**  
**Difficulties Faced by Mothers of Mentally Challenged Children**

S.No	Difficulties faced by mothers	Majority of respondents	Percentage
1	Anxious about future	44	96
2	Difficulty in social get together	37	80
3	Face problem with neighbours	42	91
4	Financial problem	36	76
5	Fear of society	28	61
6	Difficulty in giving bathing	32	70
7	Difficulty in feeding	40	87
8	Difficulty in talking(limited words)	23	50
9	Difficulty in bed time(sleeping late)	25	54

The above table shows that majority of the respondents 96% say that they were anxious about their children's future, around 80% of respondents face difficulty in social get together and in entertaining the guests. Majority of the respondents 91 percent face problem with their neighbours regarding their child's health condition 76% of respondents have financial problem in looking after their children. Majority of 59% children have moderate degree of mental retardation. Majority of respondents are having difficulty in bathing. About 87% respondents having difficulty in feeding. Another 50% children's have vocabulary limited to few words. Around 54% of respondents children have difficulty in bed time.

### Discussion

Families are not fully equipped to cope with the problems that arise while bringing up a child with mentally retarded. Raising the child with mentally challenged required more emotional strength and flexibility. The child needs special attention than the normal child, either the special needs of child are minimal or complex. Parents of children with mental retardation face a multitude of challenges. In society families with retarded children face problems like housing, social gatherings, insecure feeling if the retarded child is girl, shopping and other family outings. Feeding, bathing, clothing infants is easier than doing for challenged child. By these mothers are playing extraordinary role, these additional responsibility on parent leads to physical exhaustion. Many institutions are opened now days to train up the retarded children. The expenses for raising a child with mentally challenged are more expensive than the nor-

mal child. The expenses can arise from medical care, care givers expenses, private education and specialized transportation. The care of the child may be last for life long. Hence forth voluntary organizations have to provide awareness and training to caretakers in handling retarded children. Awareness needs to be established in the society about conditions that are still regarded as taboo such as mentally retarded to create a safe and healthy environment for the upbringing of afflicted children. Social support also alleviates the additional stress that affected families put upon themselves.

### Conclusion

The study shows the various problem and inadequacies of a mentally retarded children's mother. In general mothers always play a vital role in the family; if there is a mentally retarded child at home she has to do lot of work in managing the child. By this study researcher analyze the various problems and burn outs of the mothers. To reduce their burn outs various activities like yoga, group discussions, picnics, small trips can arranged for mothers. Social workers may appoint in the home for the mentally challenged institutions in order to provide interventions for parents to reduce their burn outs. The most important aspect of work with the mentally retarded children is in the attention of parents in order that they understand the problems of their children and their role better. They should be helped to handle the feeling of frustration and guilt and to educate the community to accept the child is equally important but it is a challenging one.

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