



**STRESS AMONG THE PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH MENTAL RETARDATION-  
MANAGEMENT OF STRESS THROUGH COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE**

**K. Uma Devi**, Academic consultant –Special Education (MR) Department of Education,  
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad.

***Abstract***

*The present study has shown that Stress among the parents of children with Mental Retardation-Management of stress through Counseling and Guidance. The aim of present study is to find out the level of stress among the parents of children with Mental Retardation and Management of stress through counseling & Guidance. To find out the relationship between stress level and parents characteristics viz.. Age, sex, occupation, income and education. To provide proper counseling & guidance. Information of their stress, Anxiety and depression levels of pre-test and post-test. This research is a experimental design used by survey method. The result of the study indicate that there is significant difference between pre-test and post test.*

**Introduction**

Each child is unique in this world. The birth of a child whether disabled or non-disabled is known to produce pressure since it includes adjustments & extra responsibilities for various members of the family. The birth of a child with disability is an unanticipated event. No family- regardless of race, ethnicity or socio economic status- is immune to childhood disability. Most parents experience mental worries, extra demands, strained relations, loss of support and social interactions are also reduced. Parents may grieve over their devalued status in the community because they have produced a child who is less valued. The aim of present study is to find out the level of stress among the parents of children with Mental Retardation and Management of stress through counseling & Guidance.

**Statement of the Problem**

“Stress among the parents of children with Mental Retardation-Management of stress through Counseling and Guidance”

### **Operational Definitions of Terms**

**Stress** – In this study stress means Physical as well as Mental health problems.

**Parents**- In this study parents means father and mother of the disabled child.

**Mental Retardation**- In this study Mental Retardation means all levels of mental retardation and all age group of Mental Retardation.

**Counseling and Guidance**- The intervention techniques will be taught to the parents to help them reduce their stress level and cope with the child’s disability. Methods for diversion of parents of Mental Retardation Children are being explored, so that parents can employ them easily and reduce their stress levels.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out the level of stress among the parents of children with Mental Retardation.
2. To provide proper Counseling & Guidance
3. To find out if any difference is present in the stress level, between the males and females having children with Mental Retardation.
4. To find out the relationship between stress level and parents characteristics viz...Age, Gender, Education, and Socioeconomic status.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There will be a significant difference in the stress level between the males and females having children with Mental Retardation. In the pre-testing phase.
2. There will be a significant difference in the pre-test scores and post-test scores of stress among male and females having children with Mental Retardation.
3. Intervention techniques through providing proper counseling and Guidance would have a significant effect on the parents stress level. i.e. the overall scores of pre-test and post test would differ significantly.
4. There will be a significant difference in the relationship between stress level and parents characteristics viz Age, Gender, Education and Socio Economic status.

## **Method**

The experimental design used by survey method of research was used in the study.

## **Sample**

A Sample size of the study 180 parents (Male Female) of children with Mental Retardation from four institutions. A random sampling technique was used to select the sample.

## **Tools**

The tools used for the collection of data were as follows.

- Standardized Questionnaire.
- Depression, Anxiety, Stress scale 42 (DASS42) developed by Lovibond & Lovibond (1995)

## **Statistical Techniques Used**

To analyses and interpret the data following statistics were used-

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- 't' test and ANNOVA

## **Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

1. Gender made no difference on stress i.e both experienced more or less the same levels of stress during the pre-test. However in the post-test, father's stress levels reduced more than the mothers stress level.
2. Looking at the age in the pre-testing phase the age below 35 and above 35 did not make any difference. However in the post-test people who were below 35 experienced more stress that people who were above 35.
3. Turning to the education gratification both people below 10<sup>th</sup> class and above 10<sup>th</sup> class more or less experienced to same level of stress. The pre-testing phase. However education did not make any difference even in the post testing phase both have again similar score on stress.
4. Lastly, a check on socio-economic status injected that people with higher income group experienced slightly more stress compared to other two groups. During the pre testing phase. But looking at the post-testing phase they were the one who had a major change in their outlook indicating that intervention definitely had an impact on reducing stress.

However, there was no significant differences on the 't' test in any of these characteristics.

**Sex**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	F	51	28.3	28.3	28.3
	M	129	71.7	71.7	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

The frequency distribution of gender for the whole sample[N=180] out of 180 parents of children with mental retardation 129 are male[71.7] and 51 are females [28.3%]

**Age**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	Below-35	45	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Above-35	135	75.0	75.0	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

The frequency distribution of Age for the whole sample [N=180] out of 180 parents of children with mental retardation 45 are below 35 years [25.0] and 135 are above 35 years [75.0 %]

**Education**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	Below-10 <sup>th</sup>	100	55.6	55.6	55.6
	Above-10 <sup>th</sup>	80	44.4	44.4	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

The frequency distribution of education of the whole sample[N=180] out of 180 parents of children with mental retardation 100are educated below 10<sup>th</sup> class [55.6%] and 80 are educated above 10<sup>th</sup> class [44.4%]

**Economic Status**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	Low	33	18.3	18.3	18.3
	Middle	141	78.3	78.3	96.7
	High	6	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

The frequency distribution of income/Socio-economic status of the whole sample[N=180] out of 180 parents of children with mental retardation 33 [18.3%] belongs to lower income group.141 parents [78.3%] belongs to middle income group and 06 parents [3.3%] belongs to high income group.

**Family**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	Nuclear	120	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Joint	60	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

The frequency distribution of nature of family of the whole sample [N=180] out of 180 parents of children with mental retardation 120 are [66.7%] from nuclear family and 60 parents are [33.3%] from joint family.

**Descriptive**

**T-Test**

The mean, Standard deviation and 't' ratio for the scores of stress among male and female on pre-test

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>'t' value</b>
Stress	Males	129	30.18	6.93	.884
	Females	51	29.17	6.825	

The males (129) mean score of on stress is 30.18 and the SD is 6.93. The mean scores of females (51) on stress is 29.17 and SD 6.82. The 't' ratio is .884 which is found to be not significant. This indicates that both males and females are both prone to high stress levels.

The mean, Standard deviation and 't' ratio for the scores of stress among male and female on post-test

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>'t' value</b>
Stress	Males	129	19.81	6.84	1.867
	Females	51	17.68	7.01	

The mean for the post test of stress is 19.81 for male and SD is 6.84 The mean for post test of stress of females (51) is 17.68 and the SD is 7.01 the 't' ratio 1.867 which is again not significant indicating that there is no significant difference among father & mother of the children with mental Retardation i.e both of them have seen a considerable reduction in stress levels. Through intervention this shows that the intervention was very effective and they have really entitled all the suggestions that have been given to them for a month long and could help

them anxiety is check and fall out& their depression which contributed towards reduced stress levels.

The mean, Standard deviation and 't' ratio for the scores of stress among male and female on pre-test

Gender		No	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' ratio
Stress	Pre Test	180	29.90	6.89	14.659.**
	Post Test	180	19.21	6.93	

Significant difference at 0.01 level.

The mean for the pre-test 29.90 and the SD is 6.89. for the post test the mean is 19.21 and the SD is 6.93 and the 't' ratio is 14.65 which is found to be highly significant. The 't' ratio indicates that there is a significant reduction is stress level on evident from the means of the father, and mothers i.e the fathers mean in the pre-test is 30.18 and in the post test it is 19.81. in the same way the mothers mean in the pre-test is 29.17 and in the post-test it is 17.68. this clearly indicates that intervention has linked in reducing stress.

The mean, Standard deviation and 't' ratio for the pre-test scores of stress among the age groups i.e. above 35 years and below 35 years

Teat	Age	No	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value	
Pre	Stress	Above 35 years	135	29.94	6.97	.162
		Below 35 years	45	29.75	6.71	

An attempt was made to see whether the age factor has any impact in experiencing stress. The sample was segregated into age group above 35 year and below 35 years. and a 't' ratio wascalculated to see the significant difference of experiencing stress due to age the mean of people who are above 35 years is 29.94 and the SD is 6.97 in the pre-test phase. The mean of thepeople who nare below 35 years is 29.74 and the SD is 6.71 and the 't' ratio is .162 which is found not to be significant indicated that for experiencing stress when having a mental retarded chaild age did not matter.

The mean, Standard deviation and 't' ratio for the post-test scores of stress among the age groups i.e. above 35 years and below 35 years

Teat	Age	No	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value	
Post	Stress	Above 35 years	135	18.94	6.96	.880

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Below 35 years	45	20.00	6.86
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A 't' ratio was calculated to see the significant difference among people in the same way the mean, SD of 't' ratio was calculated for the post also. The mean of people who are above 35 years is 18.94 and SD is 6.96 in the post test phase. The mean of the people who are below 35 years is 20.00 and SD is 6.86 and the 't' ratio is .880 which is found not to be significant indicated that for experiencing stress when having a children with mental retardation age did not matter.

The mean, Standard deviation and 't' ratio for the pre-test scores of stress among the education groups i.e below 10<sup>th</sup> class and above 10<sup>th</sup> class.

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<b>Teat</b>		<b>Age</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>'t' value</b>
Pre	Stress	Below 10 <sup>th</sup> class	100	30.09	6.88	.681**
		Above 10 <sup>th</sup> class	80	29.66	6.95	

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An attempt was made to see whether the education factor has any impact in experiencing stress. Here again the sample was segregated into a group below 10<sup>th</sup> class and above 10<sup>th</sup> class. And a 't' ratio was calculated to see the significant difference of experiencing stress due to level of education. The mean of people who are below 10<sup>th</sup> class is 30.09 and the SD is .6.88 in the pre test phase. The mean of the people who are above 10<sup>th</sup> class is 29.66 and the SD is .6.95 and the 't' ratio is .691\*\* which is found not to be significant indicated that for experiencing stress when having a mental retarded child education did not matter.

(7) The mean, Standard deviation and 't' ratio for the Post-test scores of stress among the education groups i.e below 10<sup>th</sup> class and above 10<sup>th</sup> class.

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<b>Teat</b>		<b>Age</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>'t' value</b>
Post	Stress	Below 10 <sup>th</sup> class	100	19.46	6.37	.592
		Above 10 <sup>th</sup> class	80	18.90	7.61	

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A 't' ratio was calculated to see the significant difference among people in the same way the mean, SD of 't' ratio was calculated for the post test also. The mean of people who are below 10<sup>th</sup> class is 19.46 and SD is 6.37 in the post test phase. The mean of the people who are above 10<sup>th</sup> class is 18.90 and SD is 7.61 and the 't' ratio is .592 which is found not to be significant indicated that for experiencing stress when having a children with mental retardation education did not matter. However in all the cases the intervention programme has initiated and aided in reducing the stress levels.

### **One way**

The Mean, Standard deviation and 't' value for the pre-test and post- test scores of stress among the socio economic groups i.e low income group , middle income group and high income group.

<b>Test</b>		<b>No</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>'f' Value</b>
<b>Pre</b>	Low	33	29.57	6.01	.231
	Middle	141	29.90	7.22	
	High	6	31.66	2.33	
	Total	180	29.90	6.89	
<b>Post</b>	Low	33	19.42	4.83	.133
	Middle	141	19.2`	7.43	
	High	6	17.83	4.99	
	Total	180	19.21	6.93	

To check whether economic status has any impact in experiencing stress. When 'f' test on ANOVA was calculated the samples was segregated in to 3 levels. I.e. Low class, Middle class, and High class. The 'f' value is .231 for the pre-test which is not significant and similarly the 'f' value for the post-test is .133 which is also not significant. Whether one belongs to this indicates that higher income group a lower income group experiencing the stress does not differ. Thus, it can be implied, that though one is a father or a mother or one may be of older age group or younger whether, one has education or is not highly educated, and when one is economically better off a not stress is experienced when they are in charge of a child with mental retardation. It can be infected that hence stress is an emotional reaction; it is present and experienced by all in the same way. Gender, Age, Education and Socio economic status does not help us in experience it less or more. Some cannot be aloud of stress when one of their children has some kind of disability.

### **Conclusion**

The present Study has shown that parents of children with mental retardation undergo immense stress. However, when the investigator gave them some suggestions as to divert themselves from their daily works, by practicing these small tips, for parents could to certain extent handle their stressful situation. This study throws some light on certain new methods techniques of reducing stress. As many of time, people have been total to practice, going meditation, exercise are some relaxation therapies, parents with mental retardation child, say that could not follow their schedules as they are suppose to be done in some isolation and also require high level of isolation. But when the intervention suggesting some day today diversion likes painting,



embroidery or other similar hobbies to be pursued. Parents especially mother found this more relaxing as they could mingle and interact with others around them while doing these actions unlike what they have to do while practicing yoga & meditation. Thus they showed more enthusiasm for their activities & felt more relaxed and happy by practicing these hobbies and diversion for a month and reported less stress.

Hence, the major impact of this study is to teach parents who have any kind of disabled child to find sometime for themselves and pusher any activity which they like best, so that they can relax doing it.

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