

DEGREE OF MENTAL CHALLENGE-A STRONG PREDICTOR OF LEVEL AND TYPE OF PARENTAL STRESS

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ABSTRACT

The present study assessed and compared the type and level of perceived stress by the parents of 150 mentally challenged children from 3 RCI (Rehabilitation Council of India) recognized special schools of Delhi across child's degree of mental challenge. Sample was drawn randomly in equal proportions from three categories of mental challenge under study viz. mild, moderate and severe from both low and middle income groups. The levels of stress perceived by parents were assessed using Family Interview for Stress and Coping in Mental Retardation, Part I developed by NIMHANS. From the present study, it was observed that under LIG, mothers with severely challenged children perceived more stress because of giving extra efforts in daily care of the severely challenged child, prevailing family emotional problems; faced more financial expenditure because of the severity of child's disability and received less social support when compared with the mothers of mildly and moderately challenged children. However, fathers of severely challenged children perceived more stress due to the family emotional problems, had more social embarrassment and financial stress as compare to fathers who had mildly and moderately challenged children. Among MIG, mothers and fathers with severely challenged children perceived more stress due to the daily care of the child, personal problems, more financial expenditures; siblings of mentally challenged child and family worries were also affected more. Besides these changes, social life of parents of severely challenged children altered more when compared to those with mildly and moderately challenged children.

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

INTRODUCTION

Marriage and bearing children brings happiness in one's life. Every child is blessed with certain mental capabilities. However, not every child is capable of using these mental abilities and is often regarded as mentally retarded/mentally challenged. Mental retardation/challenge is a condition of incomplete development of the mind, which is especially characterized by impairment of skills, usually detected during the developmental period, which finally contribute to overall level of intelligence. The American Association of Mental Retardation (2002) defines an individual with mental retardation or mental challenge as someone having substantial, sub-average intellectual and adaptive behavioral functioning with onset before 18 years of age and limitations in at least two of the following areas: (a) communication, (b) home living, (c) social skills, (d) community use, (e) self-direction, (f) safety, (g) functional academics, (h) leisure, or (i) work activities. Intellectual functioning also known as IQ (intelligence quotient), this refers to

a person's ability to learn, reason, make decisions, and solve problems. As per the classification given by NIMH (National Institute for Mentally Handicapped) person having IQ in the range of 50-70 are mildly challenged, 35-49 are moderately challenged and 20-34 are severely challenged and persons having IQ below 20, is considered as profound.

Universally, the families exist in all human societies and it is described as a social institution responsible for child production, child rearing, and emotional and economic support for its members (Lamanna and Reidman 2003). Children spend most of their time with their parents and they imitate and learn from them, therefore parents play an important role in the growth and development of their children. Parents share the responsibility of bringing up their children in such a way that as adults they become effective members of the society. However, becoming the parent of a child who has a disability is a time of great stress and change (Thompson 2000). As the child is diagnosed with mental retardation it can cause high level of stress in parents because of the challenges, difficulties and frustrations that they face in everyday life.

Stress is a universal phenomenon. It can be defined as the arousal of mind and body in response to demands made upon them (Blonna 2000). Having a child with mental challenge often cause distress among their family members and can bring adjustments and long-lasting effects in the life of the whole family.

Schatz and Hamdan-Allen (1995) reported that IQ was positively related to each of the Vineland domains. A similar trend was present for daily living skills. However, Bruschini et al. (2003) found that severe and profound mentally retarded patients had lower bladder control than mild and moderate. However findings of Narayan et al. (1993), Tucker and Fox (1995), Mutua and Dimitrov (2001) & Grigal and Neubert (2004) reported an influence of disability over parental expectations.

Keeping in view the above discussion, it can be concluded that child's degree of disability affects the social functioning, daily skills of an individual and parental expectations. So, it might be possible that stress perceived by the parents of mentally challenged children can be affected by degree of child's disability. Therefore, the present study has been taken up with the following objectives:

- To assess and compare the type and level of perceived stress among parents of mentally challenged children across child's degree of disability.
- To investigate statistical differences in the type and level of perceived stress among parents of mentally challenged children across child's degree of disability.

METHODOLOGY

A multistage purposive cum random sampling technique were used to select the sample. The present research study was carried out exclusively in Delhi. Delhi, was purposively selected as it is one of the nearest region that has appropriate number of RCI (Rehabilitation Council of India) recognized special schools meant exclusively for mentally retarded (MR) children. Out of the nine RCI recognized institutes for MR children in Delhi, three institutes namely NIMH (National Institute for Mentally Handicapped), Manovikas and C.B.S Memorial were randomly selected as research base for the present study. It was observed that in all the three institutes under study, the population of mentally challenged children from high income group (HIG) was extensively low, thus, only those belonging to low income group (LIG) or middle income group (MIG) were considered for the present study. Out of the total population of LIG and MIG mentally challenged children, 75 mentally challenged children were selected from each social class by randomly drawing 25 from

each level of mental challenge. Thus, the sample for the present study comprised of 150 mentally challenged children and their families. The Directors of the selected institutions were contacted, who provided all the necessary required details pertaining to the enrolled MR children and their families. The required samples were drawn and then, first common meeting was organized by the researcher with the families of MR children. Assurance was given to the families that the information provided by them will be kept confidential and utilized only for the research purpose. The parents were contacted for data collection on the place of their choice-institute or their home where they were interviewed and observations made by the researcher. Self-designed general questionnaire was used to study the socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents. The type and level of stress perceived by parents were assessed using Family Interview for Stress and Coping in Mental Retardation (Section-I) developed by NIMHANS. The scale entails detailed assessment of the stress in families with mentally challenged children. The data collected was classified and tabulated in accordance with the objectives to arrive at meaningful and relevant inferences. The data was analyzed using statistical techniques like frequency, percentage, mean and Analysis of variance.

RESULTS

Distribution pattern of parents on perceived level of stress across child's degree of mental challenge can be clearly seen from the Table 1(a & b). In LIG, majority of mothers of mildly, moderately and severely challenged children (92.0 percent, 80.0 percent and 80.0 percent) showed moderate level of stress. While, 56.0 percent of fathers of mildly challenged children and fathers of moderately and severely challenged children in equal percentage (60.0 percent) perceived low level of stress. However, among families of MIG, proportion of mothers of moderately and severely challenged children were more i.e. 84.0 percent, who had moderate level of stress. Only 60.0 percent of fathers with mildly challenged children showed low level of stress.

The picture under the component leisure time and activity is quite different. In low income families, leisure time and activity of 60.0 percent and 56.0 percent of mothers with severely and moderately challenged children found somewhat affected. However, more proportion of fathers of mildly challenged children (64.0 percent) reported minimally affected leisure time and activity. In MIG, the proportion of mothers with mildly and moderately challenged children who had somewhat decreased leisure time and activity were more (72.0 percent). Whereas, among fathers, more proportion of fathers with mildly challenged children (56 percent) reported minimally affected leisure time and activity.

An overview of low income families revealed that 64.0 percent, 60.0 percent and 52.0 percent of mothers of mildly, moderately and severely challenged children minimally felt that other family members were neglected. However, among fathers, all the fathers with mildly challenged children and majority of fathers with moderately (88.0 percent) and severely (84.0 percent) challenged children minimally felt that other members were neglected because of child's situation. An overview of middle income families showed that, 96.0 percent of fathers of mildly and severely challenged children minimally felt that others were neglected due to child's condition. However, more than half of the mothers of moderately challenged children (52.0 percent) felt that others were somewhat neglected.

Table 1 (a & b) elucidates that among low income families, out of all degree of mental challenge, more proportion of mothers with moderately challenged children (64.0 percent) found to be mildly affected by the disturbed behavior of the child. Whereas, exactly equal percentage of fathers of mildly challenged children reported that they were not at all affected by the disturbed behavior of the child In MIG, among all, 76.0 percent of mothers of moderately challenged children were

found to be mildly affected by the disturbed behavior of child. Whereas, just more than half (52.0 percent) of the fathers of moderately challenged children also found to be affected mildly.

Placement of Table 1(a & b)

An overview of the table 1 (a & b) depicts that in LIG families, 60 percent of mothers of both mildly and moderately challenged children reported mild personal distress. While exactly equal percentage of fathers (60.0 percent) of mildly challenged children showed no personal distress and in case of middle income families, more percentage of mothers of moderately challenged children (80.0 percent) as compare to others had mild distress. Similarly, in majority, 72.0 percent of fathers of moderately challenged children also showed mild level of personal distress.

On marital problem component, among LIG, approximately all the mothers and fathers of mentally challenged children irrespective of their child's degree of mental challenge showed mild marital distress. Likewise LIG, MIG parents irrespective of child's degree of mental challenge also reported mild marital problems.

Similarly, majority of mothers and fathers irrespective of their child's degree of mental challenge showed moderate level of other interpersonal problems among low income families. However, the proportions of mothers with moderately and severely challenged children were more at this level. Whereas, 88.0 percent of fathers of moderately challenged children were more as compare to fathers with mildly and moderately challenged children (80.0 percent). Under MIG, except fathers of severely challenged children (76.0 percent) all mothers and fathers of mentally challenged children irrespective of their child's degree of mental challenge found to have mild interpersonal problems.

In another component, except LIG mothers (72 percent) and fathers (72 percent) of moderately challenged children, majority of parents of all the mentally challenged children from both LIG and MIG found to have no effect on siblings and other family worries.

Under altered social life component, LIG mothers with moderately challenged children were in more percentage (76.0 percent) and reported moderately altered social life. Whereas, all the fathers who had mildly challenged children also reported moderately altered social life In MIG, social lives of most of the parents were found to be altered mildly. Out of which, in majority mothers of moderately challenged children (64.0 percent) and fathers of mildly and severely challenged children (96.0 percent) found at mild level.

On the other hand, all the LIG parents who had mildly challenged children reported no social embarrassment. Surprisingly, 100.0 percent of mothers with severely challenged children also had no social embarrassment. However, among MIG almost all the parents reported no social embarrassment due to the child's condition.

In the financial implications component, under low income families, majority of parents reported severe level of financial stress. Among all, more proportion of mothers with moderately challenged children (76 percent) found to have severe financial stress. While, 72.0 percent of fathers of mildly challenged children also perceived severe stress. Under MIG, in majority, exactly equal percentage of mothers and fathers of severely challenged children (72.0 percent) reported mild level of financial stress while percentages of fathers of mildly and moderately challenged children were low at this level.

DISCUSSIONS

Results from the Table 2 (a & b) shows that there is significant difference between the level of stress among

mothers and fathers across their child's level of mental challenge. In the present study it was found that maximum stress among parents was associated with child's severe level of mental challenge as compare to mild and moderate. Among mothers from low income families significant differences were noticed across child's level of mental challenge in all the components. Along with the severity of mental challenge high level of stress was found to be associated. Severity of child requires more efforts from mothers in daily care; therefore they perceived more stress when the child was severely challenged irrespective of family's income class. Mothers from both the income class who had severely challenged children had more sadness, worries, persistent distress due to severity of child's mental disability, hence reported significant difference across child's level of mental challenge. Similarly, whether the mother was from low or middle income families had same kind of worries towards the future and welfare of the siblings of special need child. Mothers of severely challenged children were found to be more worried as compared to mild and moderately challenged children. Severity of child's intellectual ability requires more attention of mothers. Hence, it was found that social life of mothers of severely challenged children from both the income class were altered more, so were found at home more often, looking after the child. In the same way, more expenditure of money was found to be spent on the treatment, medication and training of the severely challenged children by the parents.

Placement of Table 2 (a & b)

In India, fathers play a role of bread winning member for family. Most of the time work outside to earn money, so had only few hours to be spent with the special need child. Fathers from low income families even after returning home did not pay much attention to the child and consider that his duty is only to earn money, while mother is only responsible for taking care of the child. Therefore, whether the child is mild, moderate or severe same level of daily care stress were perceived by them. Whereas, among middle income families a quite different picture was observed Although father was working but in spite of being busy in job, after returning home shares responsibilities of daily care of child with the mother. So, across the child's level of mental challenge fathers of severely challenged children put more efforts in taking care of the child as compare to others. Likewise mothers, fathers of severely challenged irrespective of their income class also perceived more personal distress, siblings of special need child and family worries found to be affected more, social life altered more and financial expenditures were also high. Whereas, fathers from low income group who had severely challenged children were found to perceived more marital problems and other interpersonal problems This might be due to the lack of proper understanding; more disagreements on major issues regarding the child's welfare due to child's severity; because of spending less time with the child however, child demands more. Contradictory to it, fathers from middle income families were found to be more understanding, cooperative, take consent of mothers before taking any decision for the child's welfare. Therefore, child's level of intellectual ability did not influence their marital problems and other interpersonal problems.

The above mentioned findings was supported by Sethi et al. (2007) who revealed that high level of stress and burden was associated with increased level of disabilities. It was maximum in the caregivers of children with severe to profound mental retardation. Multiple stressors seemed to be responsible for the stress and burden experienced by the caregivers. Gosch (2001) and Pisula and Gorska (2002) also noticed that parents of severe and profoundly retarded children had higher stress.

CONCLUSIONS

It has been obtained from the study that child's degree of mental challenge had an impact on type and level of stress perceived by the mothers and fathers of mentally challenged children. Child's degree of mental challenge was found to be significantly affecting parental stress. LIG mothers with severely challenged child were more stressed due to daily care of the child, emotional problems, family's social problems and more financial expenses. While LIG fathers who had severely challenged children reported more family emotional stress, more social embarrassment and financial stress when compared to the fathers of other mentally challenged children. However, MIGs mothers and fathers with severely challenged children perceived more stress due to the daily care of the child, personal problems, more financial expenditures; siblings of mentally challenged child and family worries were also affected more. Besides these changes, social life of parents of severely challenged children altered more. On the whole it can be concluded that whether the mentally challenged children from low income class or middle income class it is child's learning ability or I.Q, level of mental retardation that becomes a contributing factor in raising the stress perceived by the parents of MR children. With the severity of child's mental disability, the type and level of stress perceived by the parents of MR children also becomes severe. Parenting is a rewarding and wonderful experience, is often accompanied by high levels of stress. As child's disability become severe, it compels parents to devote maximum part of their time in taking care of the special need child and resulting in stress, which can be eradicated up to a certain extent by developing better, motivating home environment for MR children. Although presence of mentally challenged child require parental support and attention but severely challenged child demands more attention, care and vigilance of family members. So, emphasis should be given on putting more efforts by the whole family in improving the child's situation. Patience is the level of endurance that is required when living with a child with mental retardation and it is highly required when the child's mental challenge is in severe form. Therefore, family members should hold up their patience in order to overcome the stress and after school, home based training should be practiced daily.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Emphasis should be given to strengthen the healthy and motivating environment at home which finally leads to a strong bonding between family and the child, thereby leads to improvement in child's condition.
- Parents of severely challenged children should work patiently and should ensure that extra efforts to be made by them as compare to other parents by considering the child's situation.
- New innovative techniques as per the interest of the child should be used by the parents to make learning in an easy way.

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APPENDICES

Table 1(a): Frequency and Percentage Distribution of LIG Parents of Mentally Challenged Children on the Type & Level of Perceived Stress across Parent's Gender & Child's Degree of Mental Challenge

Areas of Perceived Stress	Subscales	Levels of Stress	Score range	LIG (n=75)											
				Mildly Challenged Children (n ₁ =25)				Moderately Challenged Children (n ₂ =25)				Severely Challenged Children (n ₃ =25)			
				Mothers		Fathers		Mothers		Fathers		Mothers		Fathers	
				n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Daily Care	Extra inputs for care	Nil	0-3	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
		Low	4-7	1	4.00	14	56.00	3	12.00	15	60.00	3	12.00	15	60.00
		Moderate	7-11	23	92.00	10	40.00	20	80.00	10	40.00	20	80.00	6	24.00
		High	12-15	1	4.00	1	4.00	2	8.00	0	0.00	2	8.00	4	16.00
		Very high	16+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Decreased leisure time and activity	Nil	0-2	3	12.00	2	8.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00
		Minimal	3-5	11	44.00	16	64.00	8	32.00	11	44.00	10	40.00	13	52.00
		Somewhat	6-8	11	44.00	7	28.00	14	56.00	14	56.00	15	60.00	11	44.00
		Definitely	9-11	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	12.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Totally	12+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
	Neglect of others	Nil	0-2	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
		Minimal	3-5	16	64.00	25	100.00	15	60.00	22	88.00	13	52.00	21	84.00
		Somewhat	6-8	9	36.00	0	0.00	7	28.00	1	4.00	12	48.00	4	16.00
		Definitely	9-11	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	12.00	2	8.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Totally	12+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
	Disturbed behaviour	Nil	0-1	8	32.00	16	64.00	3	12.00	8	32.00	3	12.00	9	36.00
		Mild	2-3	14	56.00	8	32.00	16	64.00	13	52.00	14	56.00	12	48.00
		Moderate	4-5	2	8.00	1	4.00	3	12.00	2	8.00	5	20.00	1	4.00
Severe		6-7	1	4.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	2	8.00	3	12.00	3	12.00	
Very high		8+	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	8.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
Family Emotional Stress	Personal distress	Nil	0-8	10	40.00	15	60.00	7	28.00	10	40.00	9	36.00	10	40.00
		Mild	9-17	15	60.00	10	40.00	15	60.00	12	48.00	11	44.00	13	52.00
		Moderate	18-26	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	12.00	2	8.00
		Severe	27-35	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	2	8.00	0	0.00
		Very severe	36+	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	8.00	2	8.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Marital problems	Nil	0-6	0	0.00	1	4.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00
		Mild	7-13	24	96.00	24	96.00	25	100.00	25	100.00	24	96.00	24	96.00
		Moderate	14-20	1	4.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	0	0.00
		Severe	21-27	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
		Very high	28+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Social Stress	Other interpersonal problems	Nil	0-2	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
		Mild	3-5	2	8.00	5	20.00	1	4.00	3	12.00	0	0.00	5	20.00
		Moderate	6-8	23	92.00	20	80.00	24	96.00	22	88.00	25	100.00	20	80.00
		Severe	9-11	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
		Very severe	12+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Effect on siblings and other family worries	Nil	0-4	24	96.00	25	100.00	18	72.00	18	72.00	22	88.00	20	80.00
		Mild	5-9	1	4.00	0	0.00	7	28.00	7	28.00	3	12.00	5	20.00
		Moderate	10-14	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
		Severe	15-19	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
		Very high	20+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Financial Implications	Altered social life	Nil	0-8	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	8.00	0	0.00
		Mild	9-17	13	52.00	0	0.00	3	12.00	3	12.00	7	28.00	5	20.00
		Moderate	18-26	12	48.00	25	100.00	19	76.00	22	88.00	16	64.00	18	72.00
		Severe	27-35	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	8.00
		Very severe	36+	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	12.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Social embarrassment	Nil	0-6	25	100.00	25	100.00	20	80.00	20	80.00	25	100.00	21	84.00
		Mild	7-13	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	8.00	2	8.00	0	0.00	4	16.00
		Moderate	14-20	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
		Severe	21-27	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	8.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
		Very high	28+	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	8.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Financial Implications	Nil	0-2	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
	Mild	3-5	8	32.00	7	28.00	4	16.00	7	28.00	9	36.00	8	32.00	
	Moderate	6-8	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	8.00	1	4.00	0	0.00	2	8.00	
	Severe	9-11	17	68.00	18	72.00	19	76.00	17	68.00	16	64.00	15	60.00	
	Very severe	12+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	

Table 1(b): Frequency and Percentage Distribution of MIG Parents of Mentally Challenged Children on the Type & Level of Perceived Stress: Across Parent’s Gender & Child’s Degree of Mental Challenge

Areas of Perceived Stress	Subscales	Levels of Stress	Score Range	MIG (n=75)												
				Mildly Challenged Children (n ₁ =25)				Moderately Challenged Children (n ₂ =25)				Severely Challenged Children (n ₃ =25)				
				Mothers		Fathers		Mothers		Fathers		Mothers		Fathers		
				n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Daily Care	Extra inputs for care	Nil	0-3	0	0.00	1	4.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
		Low	4-7	3	12.00	15	60.00	2	8.00	14	56.00	3	12.00	13	52.00	
			Moderate	7-11	20	80.00	7	28.00	2	8.00	10	40.00	21	84.00	12	48.00
			High	12-15	2	8.00	2	8.00	2	8.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	0	0.00
			Very high	16+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Decreased leisure time and activity	Nil	0-2	2	8.00	4	16.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	
		Minimal	3-5	5	20.00	14	56.00	7	28.00	13	52.00	10	40.00	12	48.00	
		Somewhat	6-8	18	72.00	7	28.00	1	4.00	12	48.00	15	60.00	12	48.00	
		Definitely	9-11	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
		Totally	12+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
	Neglect of others	Nil	0-2	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
		Minimal	3-5	14	56.00	24	96.00	1	4.00	23	92.00	16	64.00	24	96.00	
		Somewhat	6-8	11	44.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	2	8.00	9	36.00	1	4.00	
		Definitely	9-11	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
		Totally	12+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
	Disturbed behaviour	Nil	0-1	3	12.00	8	32.00	0	0.00	6	24.00	2	8.00	9	36.00	
		Mild	2-3	16	64.00	11	44.00	1	4.00	13	52.00	8	32.00	8	32.00	
		Moderate	4-5	3	12.00	5	20.00	5	20.00	5	20.00	13	52.00	6	24.00	
		Severe	6-7	3	12.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	2	8.00	2	8.00	
		Very high	8+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
Family Emotional Stress	Personal distress	Nil	0-8	10	40.00	9	36.00	5	20.00	7	28.00	5	20.00	8	32.00	
		Mild	9-17	14	56.00	16	64.00	2	8.00	18	72.00	19	76.00	17	68.00	
		Moderate	18-26	1	4.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
		Severe	27-35	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	0	0.00	
		Very severe	36+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
	Marital problems	Nil	0-6	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
		Mild	7-13	24	96.00	24	96.00	2	8.00	25	100.00	24	96.00	24	96.00	
		Moderate	14-20	0	0.00	1	4.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	
		Severe	21-27	1	4.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
		Very high	28+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
	Other interpersonal problems	Nil	0-2	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
		Mild	3-5	23	92.00	24	96.00	2	8.00	24	96.00	23	92.00	19	76.00	
		Moderate	6-8	2	8.00	1	4.00	2	8.00	1	4.00	2	8.00	6	24.00	
		Severe	9-11	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
		Very severe	12+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
Effect on siblings and other family worries	Nil	0-4	21	84.00	23	92.00	2	8.00	22	88.00	23	92.00	24	96.00		
	Mild	5-9	4	16.00	2	8.00	1	4.00	3	12.00	2	8.00	1	4.00		
	Moderate	10-14	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00		
	Severe	15-19	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00		
	Very high	20+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00		
Social Stress	Altered social Life	Nil	0-8	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
		Mild	9-17	14	56.00	24	96.00	1	4.00	23	92.00	15	60.00	24	96.00	
		Moderate	18-26	11	44.00	1	4.00	7	28.00	2	8.00	9	36.00	1	4.00	
		Severe	27-35	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	8.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	0	0.00	
		Very severe	36+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
	Social embarrassment	Nil	0-6	22	88.00	25	100.00	2	8.00	24	96.00	24	96.00	24	96.00	
		Mild	7-13	3	12.00	0	0.00	2	8.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	
		Moderate	14-20	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
		Severe	21-27	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
		Very high	28+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
Financial implications	Nil	0-2	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00		
	Mild	3-5	9	36.00	12	48.00	1	4.00	17	68.00	18	72.00	18	72.00		
	Moderate	6-8	16	64.00	13	52.00	8	32.00	8	32.00	7	28.00	7	28.00		
	Severe	9-11	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00		
	Very severe	12+	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00		

Table 2(a): Mean Differences in the Stress Perceived by the LIG Parents of Mentally Challenged Children across Child's Degree of Mental Challenge

Areas of Perceived Stress	Subscales	LIG Mothers (n ₁ =75)			LIG Fathers(n ₂ =75)		
		Mildly Challenged Children n _{1a} =25	Moderately Challenged Children n _{1b} =25	Severely Challenged Children n _{1c} =25	Mildly Challenged Children n _{2a} =25	Moderately Challenged Children n _{2b} =25	Severely Challenged Children n _{2c} =25
Daily Care Stress	Extra inputs for care	9.04 ^a	10.80 ^b	12.20 ^c	6.40	7.23	7.89
	Decreased leisure time and activity	6.50 ^a	8.12 ^b	9.65 ^c	5.20	6.04	7.01
	Neglect of others	5.34 ^a	6.60 ^a	8.17 ^b	4.20	4.68	5.50
	Disturbed behaviour	3.43 ^a	4.68 ^a	6.84 ^b	1.89	2.50	3.22
Family Emotional Stress	Personal distress	8.97 ^a	10.80 ^b	12.96 ^c	8.56 ^a	10.50 ^b	12.34 ^c
	Marital problems	2.90 ^a	5.16 ^b	7.23 ^c	1.88 ^a	4.18 ^b	5.67 ^c
	Other interpersonal problems	3.21 ^a	4.65 ^a	6.23 ^b	1.88 ^a	3.55 ^b	4.78 ^c
	Effect on siblings and other family worries	3.56 ^a	5.13 ^b	7.20 ^c	2.96 ^a	4.64 ^b	6.56 ^c
Social Stress	Altered social Life	7.56 ^a	8.96 ^a	10.12 ^b	5.86	6.74	7.44
	Social embarrassment	1.09 ^a	2.10 ^b	3.67 ^c	0.76 ^a	1.83 ^b	3.20 ^c
Financial Stress	Financial implications	6.96 ^a	8.43 ^b	9.53 ^c	6.76 ^a	8.10 ^b	9.32 ^c

Note: 1. Means with different superscripts differ significantly at p<0.05

2. Higher the score, higher the level of perceived stress

Table 2(b): Mean Differences in the Stress Perceived by the MIG Parents of Mentally Challenged Children across Child's Degree of Mental Challenge

Areas of Perceived stress	Subscales	MIG Mothers (n ₁ =75)			MIG Fathers (n ₂ =75)		
		Mildly Challenged Children n _{1a} =25	Moderately Challenged Children n _{1b} =25	Severely Challenged Children n _{1c} =25	Mildly Challenged Children n _{2a} =25	Moderately Challenged Children n _{2b} =25	Severely Challenged Children n _{2c} =25
Daily Care Stress	Extra inputs for care	9.01 ^a	10.76 ^b	11.98 ^c	5.86 ^a	6.80 ^b	7.89 ^c
	Decreased leisure time and activity	6.32 ^a	7.65 ^b	8.75 ^c	5.85 ^a	6.95 ^a	7.98 ^b
	Neglect of others	5.20 ^a	6.30 ^b	7.33 ^c	4.35 ^a	5.53 ^b	6.47 ^c
	Disturbed behaviour	2.85 ^a	4.05 ^b	6.17 ^c	0.92 ^a	2.00 ^b	3.2 ^c
Family Emotional Stress	Personal distress	8.34 ^a	10.44 ^b	12.63 ^c	8.20 ^a	10.16 ^b	12.17 ^c
	Marital problems	1.70	2.35	3.03	0.85	1.59	2.27
	Other interpersonal problems	1.50	1.89	2.76	0.67	1.44	2.32
	Effect on siblings and other family worries	3.18 ^a	5.03 ^b	6.98 ^c	2.48 ^a	4.37 ^b	6.34 ^c
Social Stress	Altered social life	7.12 ^a	8.19 ^b	9.22 ^c	6.20 ^a	7.29 ^b	8.32 ^c
	Social embarrassment	0.98	1.95	2.78	0.65	1.43	2.32
Financial Stress	Financial implications	5.73 ^a	7.32 ^b	8.39 ^c	5.56 ^a	6.84 ^b	8.16 ^c

Note: 1. Means with different superscripts differ significantly at p<0.05

2. Higher the score, higher the level of perceived stress