

## **A Study To Assess The Role Of Parents In The Care Of Mentally Challenged Children As Perceived By Parents And Caretakers With A View To Develop An Information Booklet Regarding Care Of Mentally Challenged Children In The Selected Special Schools Of Tamilnadu**

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**Abstract:** *This study compared the parent's perception of their role and care takers perception of parent's role in care of mentally challenged children. The conceptual framework adopted for the study was based on Dorothy Orem self care deficit model. The research methodology adopted was Descriptive approach and comparative research design. The structured interview schedule and structured questionnaire was utilized to collect the data. The study was conducted in selected five special schools of Tamilnadu with 50 parents of the mentally challenged children studying in the special schools and 50 care takers who are taking care of those children in the same. The data analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results: There was a significant difference between the perception scores of parents and caretakers .There was a significant association between the perception scores of parents and the parent's relation with the child. The information booklet had high acceptability and utility among the parents and care takers.*

**Keywords:** *Role, perception, mentally challenged children, care takers, Special Schools.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Every parent wants their child to be physically and developmentally perfect. Often some children have a temporary or permanent physical or mental disability. The birth of a child with a disability, or the discovery that a child has a disability, can have profound effects on the family. But "Every child is special" The same holds true for a disabled child also. Each child and every family is unique. <sup>1</sup>As per NSSO survey on disability 2002, the prevalence rate of mentally challenged children in rural India between the ages of 0-19 years as per 1, 00,000 populations reveals that maximum number of mentally children was between the ages of 15-19. The prevalence rate of mentally challenged children in urban India between the ages of 0-19 years as per 1, 00,000 population reveals that maximum numbers of mentally children were between the ages of 10-20 years. <sup>2</sup>Parents are the prime educators until the child attends an early year setting of the school and they remain a major influence on their children's learning throughout school and beyond. The school teachers and parents both have crucial roles to play in case of Mentally Challenged children. <sup>3</sup>Perception of parents towards retardation is effective on relation with the child and social contacts of parents and family .Positive perception towards retardation will be followed by improvement of quality of life and family stability which will cause parents to try to make the abilities of their child appeared. The positive perceptions play a central role in the coping process and assist us in dealing with the traumatic and stressful events. Not only do they benefit the parents and the siblings in coping with the child, the disability, and the difficulties associated with it; but it also helps the family unit as a whole. The way in which a family functions, is influenced by the parent's perception of their child's difficulties. <sup>4</sup>There was relation between the perception of care-givers towards retardation with their occupation and level of educations. Care-givers having a lower level of education had a weaker perception towards the retarded persons. Employee care-givers had a better perception towards mental retarded persons and house-keepers had a lower perception in this regard. Researchers believe that, the occupation of parents and their ability to provide the required expense of family and retarded person is effective in increase of their obligation for taking care of mentally challenged children. Therefore, health care-givers could identify these risky exposed groups and take a step to improve their perception by presenting more supports. Researchers hope that, more attention be made to mental retardations and their families and also consider huge plans to promote the perception of care-givers of retarded persons by responsible throughout the society.<sup>5</sup> It was established that the information booklet was effective in increasing the knowledge and attitude of parents regarding the management of mentally challenged children

of age 3-12, the mean post test knowledge scores ,26.05 and post test attitude 135.25 was higher than the mean pretest knowledge and attitude scores.

## II. Research Methodology

Comparative research design was adopted in the study to compare the perception scores of parents and caretakers regarding role of parents in the care of mentally challenged children and identify the association with selected variables. The independent variable of the study was the role of the parents and the dependent variable was the perception of the parents and care takers regarding the parent's role in the care of mentally challenged children and attribute variables were background factors of parents and care takers. The structured interview schedule and structured questionnaire were developed and utilized to collect data from the parents and care takers. The tool was validated by 11 experts and found valid. The reliability of the structured interview schedule and structured questionnaire and opinionnaire was established by cronbach alpha and the tool was found to be reliable .Pilot study was conducted to check the feasibility of the study and establishing the reliability of the tool in the Bishop Sargeant School for mentally challenged children of Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu. The final study was conducted in selected five special schools of Tamilnadu with 50 parents of the mentally challenged children studying in the special schools and 50 care takers who are taking care of those children in the same school selected by purposive sampling.

## III. Results

The study reveals that majority (80%) were mothers between the age group of 35 and above (48%) belonging to nuclear family (64%) and educated up to secondary grade (46%) following Hindu religion (76%). Majority of the mothers were house wives (76%) with a family income above 10,000 (58%). Regarding age of the child, the parents who had children between the ages of 9-12 with IQ 50-69-49 [80%] and were taken cared by the parent's at home [84%]. Most of the Parents had information about the care of mentally challenged children [54%] from special educators [38%].

Regarding the care takers Majority were females [88%] between age of 35 and above [64%] and were graduate [56%] with special training in care of mentally challenged children [72%] with experience between 6-10 years [60%]. Among the parents 88% perceived their role performed always and only 66% perceived that parents perform their role always. The obtained mean difference [10.54], between the parent's and caretaker's perception scores was found to be statistically significant as evident from the 't' value 3.07 for df[98] at 0.05 levels. Therefore the obtained mean difference is not by chance which indicates that parents have more perception about their role than care takers.

Mean ,mean difference[M <sub>D</sub> ], Standard Deviation difference [S <sub>D</sub> ],standard Error mean difference [SE <sub>MD</sub> ] and 't' value of the perception scores of parents and care takers in the care of mentally challenged children. N=100					
Group	Mean score	M <sub>D</sub>	S <sub>D</sub>	SE <sub>MD</sub>	't'
Parents	153.12	10.54	17.16	3.42	3.07*
Care takers	142.58				
*t'=1.98 df=98 , P< 0.05 *Significant at 0.05 level of significance					

The computed chi square value [10.94] to establish the association between the perception scores and relation with the child was found to be statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance for degree of freedom one. The computed chi square value to establish the association between the perception scores of parents and care takers with the selected background data was not found to be statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance for degree of freedom three.

## IV. Discussion

The present study was aimed at assessing the role of parents in the care of mentally challenged children as perceived by parents and care takers. It was found that there is a significant difference between the perception scores of parents and care takers. Findings of the study revealed that both mother and father of mentally challenged children participated in the study but majority were mothers .These findings were in agreement with Seen& Yurtsever (2007) who found men participated less than woman in the provision of care of disabled ones<sup>6</sup>. Findings of the study revealed that majority of the parents perceived that they always perform their role in the care of mentally challenged children. These findings were in agreement with Mohebbi .Z et.al (2012), who found in their study that most of the parents had neutral perception towards their mentally challenged<sup>4</sup>. These findings were also in agreement with G.S.K. MBWILO et.al (2010) who found that one third of the participants claimed that they had perceived the presence of mentally challenged children in their families positively<sup>7</sup>. Finding of the study revealed that the information booklet on care of mentally challenged children

was found to be acceptable and useful by the parents and care takers .These findings were in agreement with Neeru Singh (2011)<sup>5</sup> and Sangeetha Sharma (2000)<sup>8</sup>.

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