

Challenges Encountered by Parents and Teachers in Handling Children with Mental Retardation

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Abstract

Teachers are having more responsibilities than anyone else to cater to the needs of disabled children. Dedication and determination in the profession are essential for doing service to the community, especially disabled community. If they are not committed to this cause, they do injustice to the profession. Parents' role is very crucial to develop the child with mental retardation because of various factors like social stigma, unaware of the developmental milestones etc. Parents are to be educated to develop the child with mental retardation a proper manner. Almost all parents are psychologically affected by knowing their child is mentally retarded. The investigators who are in special education field, wanted to study the challenges faced by teachers and parents in handling children with mental retardation.

Keywords: Children with Mental Retardation, Special Education, Challenges, Parents, Teachers, Inclusive Education, Developmental Milestones, Psychological Impact

INTRODUCTION

Every individual human being is unique and differently abled. Individuals differ from each other in terms of intellectual capacity, physical strength, emotionality, spirituality and sociability. Mental retardation is one of the disability conditions of several disabilities. Without understanding the nature of disability condition of children with mental retardation, we simply refuse to accept them. We have to train these children to cope with other non-disabled children in their studies and environment. These children with mental retardation need more training for a longer period.

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To study the impact of independent variable such as gender, locality, educational status, family status, onset of children's disability, distance between home and centre and marriage pattern on the dependent variable 'challenges of parents' in handling children with mental retardation.
- ❖ To analyse the impact of independent variables such as gender, locality, professional qualification, marital status, and children's disability on the dependent variable 'challenges of teachers' in handling children with mental retardation.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

A total of 50 parents and 50 teachers were selected from 14 schools through random sampling technique.

RESEARCH DESIGN

An exploratory research approach similar to that of a survey was used for the present study.

PROCEDURE

The tools namely, Parent's challenges on Mental Retardation Scale (PCMRS) and Teacher's challenges on Mental Retardation Scale (TCMRS) were used to collect data. The data were collected from the parents and the teachers of Erode and Coimbatore Districts in Tamilnadu. The t test was applied for analysing the data and interpreting the results.

Table 1:

Challenges of Parents in Handling Children with Mental Retardation

Variable	Number of Parents	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	t'	df	p	Result
Male	34	149.29	15.46	2.099	48	0.046	

Female	16	138.56	17.49					No Significant difference at 0.01 level
Rural	25	147.8	13.51	0.817	48	0.419		No Significant difference at 0.01 level
Urban	25	143.92	19.54					
Literate	38	144	15.95	-1.306	48	0.21		No Significant difference at 0.01 level
illiterate	12	151.75	18.5					
Joint	8	157.5	12.126	2.772	48	0.016		No Significant difference at 0.01 level
Nuclear family	42	143.64	16.68					
Male Children	35	143.63	16.59	-1.462	48	0.155		No Significant difference at 0.01 level
Female Children	15	151.07	16.44					
By Birth	29	146.28	18.51	0.213	48	0.8.2		No Significant difference at 0.01 level
After Birth	21	145-.29	14.36					
Distance Below 10 kms	14	149.57	19.59	0.882	48	0.388		No Significant difference at 0.01 level
Distance Above 10 kms	36	144.42	15.56					
Close Relative Marriage	7	158.14	22.16	1.644	48	0.145		No Significant difference at 0.01 level
Outside Marriage	43	143.86	15.08					

The table 1 shows the results obtained from the parents regarding the challenges faced by them in handling children with mental retardation. It also reveals that there was no significant difference between male and female; rural and urban; literate and illiterate; male children and female children; by birth and after birth; distance below 10 kms and distance

above 10 kms; and close relative marriage and outside marriage with regard to challenges of parents faced in handling children with Mental Retardation. Significant difference was found between joint family and nuclear family of parents with regard to challenges faced in handling children in the Mental Retardation.

It was inferred that male parents, parents of rural area, illiterates, joint family, parents having female children, disabled child by birth, child's centre below 10 kms distance, and close relative marriage faced more challenges than their corresponding attributes of variables.

Table 2:

Challenges of Teachers in Handling Children with Mental Retardation

Variable	Number of Teacher	Mean	(SD)	't'	df	p	Result
Male	21	134.190	2.136	15.531	48	0.000	No Significant difference at
Female	29	83.276	17.474				
Rural	33	89.182	22.950	-11.26	48	0.00	No Significant difference at 0.01 level
Urban	17	34.706	2.592				
No Special Education	28	109.86	28.64	1.47	48	0.149	No Significant difference at 0.01 level
Having Special Education	22	98.05	27.91				

The table 2 shows the results obtained from the teachers regarding the challenges faced by them in handling children with mental retardation. It also reveals that there was no significant difference between teachers having no special education and teachers having special education with regard to challenges of teachers faced in handling children with Mental Retardation. Significant difference was found between male and female; rural and urban; Married and Unmarried: teachers having disabled children and teachers with no disabled children with regard to challenges faced in handling children in the Mental Retardation.

It was inferred that male teachers, teachers of urban area, no special education, unmarried, and having no disabled children faced more challenges than their corresponding attributes of variables.

DISCUSSION

Male Parents encountered more challenges in handling children with mental retardation than female parents due to the reason that male parents faced social stigma and they thought that their prestige are lost. When compared to urban areas, parents of rural areas faced more challenges because these parents did not have more awareness in handling children with mental retardation. In joint family system, the parents of the disabled child were blamed due to the birth of disabled child. Hence, parents of joint family had more challenges in handling the children with MR than nuclear family.

Male teachers had no patients in handling children with MR. Therefore, male teachers faced more challenges in handling children with MR than female teachers. Urban teachers faced more challenges than rural teachers in handling children with MR because urban teachers' involvement with the children was less. Unmarried teachers encountered more challenges than married teachers due to the reason that they felt lot of difficulties in daily living activities and education of children with MR.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) Parental education on awareness about mental retardation is very much needed in handling children with MR.
- ii) For successful implementation of mass campaign programme for orienting parents, the health professionals, administrators and teachers should be sensitized on disability management.
- iii) All teachers of schools should be sensitized through short-term, long-term in- service training programmes on disability management.
- iv) A great emphasize should be given in the curriculum of teachers education on disability studies. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) should make the disability studies as one of the core curricular aspects in all levels of teacher education programmes.

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