Mother’s knowledge and attitude towards mentally challenged children - A critical study

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Abstract
Mental challenges have been a communal stigma and it is symptomatic of the illiteracy and the deficiency of scientific knowledge among the individuals in the society. A mentally challenged child is unwelcome to the society and as well to the family and they are often considered as an ill fate to the family. Parents face lot of stress during their life time with their mentally challenged children. A mother who has awareness takes care of the entire family very well. Particularly the role of the mother is irreplaceable in the early days of any child. In India particularly baby care has been only the mother’s responsibility. Especially the mothers of mentally challenged children play an indispensable role. They are the ones who prerequisite every assistance and reassurance promising in their problematic situations. In this scenario the mothers of such mentally challenged children play a critical role because they face lot of stress from society and as well as in handling these children in practical day-to-day life. Hence the present study is planned to identify the mother's knowledge and attitude towards the mentally challenged in such a conflict situation.

Key Words: Mentally challenged Children, Attitude of mothers, Mother’s knowledge, communal stigma

1 Introduction
Mentally challenged is one form of disability It is the individual with I.Q score less than 70 or less of intelligence. Mental challenges have been a social stigma and it is indicative of the illiteracy and the lack of scientific knowledge among the individuals in the society. A mentally challenged child is unwelcome to the society and as well to the family and they are often considered as a ill fate to the family. Parents face lot of stress during their life time with their mentally challenged children. They are neglected and marginalized by the individuals.

Mentally Challenged denotes to considerable restraint in present-day function. It is categorized by suggestively sub-average knowledgeable working existing simultaneously with connected restrictions in two or more of the following pertinent adaptive ability areas: Communiqué, personal-care, home-based living, societal skills, communal use, fitness and protection, efficient instructors, freedom and effort.

Knowledge mentions to the mothers’ understanding to up keeping of their mentally confronted children. The elementary awareness concerning the cause of mentally challenged is essential to get an understanding of such mental challenges in their kids, the fundamental facets in keeping up these children, its challenges like communal humiliation entirety set up the knowledge about mentally challenged.

Attitude is defined as the person’s propensity to respond absolutely or undesirably to particular individual, article, condition, organization or occasion. An attitude is a conjectural paradigm that represents a person’s degree of approximating or abhorrence for an entry. The attitude controls awareness, inspiration and accomplishment and is proceeding to them.
2 Need for the study

In the existing eternities it has been found that there is an escalation in the birth of the mentally challenged children in the nation. Several factors contribute to this type of birth and the most important factor is the maternal literacy and their maturity. By means of the maternal maturity such mishaps could be stopped in the early stages. Proper literacy of the mother plays a vital role in the development of maturity and thus it in turns helps them to be informed. Thus the present study is needed to identify the knowledge of mothers towards mentally challenged children and understand the problem of their wards. Hence the present study is focused on the prevalence of such maturity among the mothers. Thus the present study helps to understand the understanding of mothers towards their mentally challenged children. Thus by understanding of the mentally challenged a literacy Programme could be developed to promote the mothers’ knowledge of mentally challenged and thereby they could handle the stress and problems caused in handling the mentally challenged children.

3 Review of related literature

Manisha Gohel. Et.al., (2011) conducted a study entitled “Psychosocial impact on the parents of mentally children in Anand”. The result of the study is there were 45% having mild, 46% with moderate and 9% with severe mental retardation, out of which 69% were male and 31% were female. There was no significant association found between specific thoughts of parents & type of mental retardation. There was no significant loss of support to parents from spouse, family, in laws, relatives, friends and neighborhood. Unemployed fathers had significantly (P value -0.04) more negatively affected relationship than the rest of the fathers. There was not significant association found between type of mental retardation and sibling effects.

F Ahasiubong, A Obembe, M. Ekpo (2002) conducted a study entitled “The opinions and Attitudes of Mothers to Mental Retardation in Lagos, Nigeria”. The results of the studies are there is an amplified inescapable approach to children with mental retardation. Consequently, efforts intended at altering parental and by extension communal attitudes commanded for these children are essential for their upkeep and existence. There is also need for administration and generous organizations to reach-out to parents of these children so as to decrease the associated encumbrance and anguishes among them.

4 Objectives of the study

- To identify the knowledge of mothers towards their mentally challenged children.
- To identify the attitude of mothers of mentally challenged children towards mental challenges.
- To identify the roles of background variables like locality, educational and employment status.

5 Hypotheses of the study

a. Mother’s knowledge towards mentally challenged is high
b. Mother’s attitude towards mentally challenged children is high
c. There is no significant difference between the mother’s knowledge towards mentally challenged children with respect to locality, educational status and employment status.
d. No significant difference between the mother’s attitudes towards mentally challenged children with respect to locality, educational status and employment status.
e. There is significant relationship between the knowledge and attitude towards mentally challenged among their mothers.
6 Sampling & Techniques used

The sample consists of 93 mothers of mentally challenged children in Cuddalore district in Tamilnadu, South India. The data were collected from school for mentally challenged in Cuddalore district. G. Bajbai’s questionnaire on Knowledge and Attitude towards Mentally Challenged Children is used as tool for collection of data. The scores obtained were subject to statistical treatment using proper Statistical techniques. For this purpose Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, and Correlation were use. The result so obtained are interpreted and discussed in the light of problem factors to make the result meaningful.

7 Data Analysis

7.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of Mothers’ Knowledge and Attitude towards Mentally Challenged Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers’ Knowledge</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>19.15</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers’ Attitude</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>13.20</td>
<td>5.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2 Differential Analysis

Table 2 Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation and ‘t’ - value of Mothers’ Knowledge towards Mentally Challenged Children with respect to different variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>’t’</th>
<th>’p’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Mother</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17.72</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>2.566</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Mother</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>19.94</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated Mother</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20.19</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>3.821</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uneducated Mother</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16.89</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Mother</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.89</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>0.304</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed Mother</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>19.21</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3 Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation and ‘t’ - value of Mothers’ Attitude towards Mentally Challenged Children with respect to different variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>‘t’</th>
<th>‘p’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Mother</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12.54</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Mother</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>13.57</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated Mother</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>14.07</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>2.254</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uneducated Mother</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11.31</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Mother</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.68</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>1.337</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed Mother</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>13.60</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 4 showing the correlation coefficient between Knowledge and Attitude towards mentally challenged children among their mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>r-value</th>
<th>Level of significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge &amp; Attitude</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.334</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8 Findings

- There is significant mean difference between mother’s knowledge towards mentally challenged children among rural and urban mothers and educated and uneducated mothers.
- There is no significant mean difference between mother’s knowledge towards mentally challenged children among employed and unemployed mothers.
- There is no significant mean difference between mother’s attitude towards mentally challenged children among rural and urban mothers and employed and unemployed mothers.
- There is significant mean difference between mother’s attitude towards mentally challenged children among educated and uneducated mothers.
- There is significant relationship between the knowledge and attitude towards among mothers.

### 9 Recommendations

- Knowledge of the mother on mentally challenged must be increased by education so that they can easily bring up such children and deal effectively with the problems of their children.
- Education of the mother is essential as it promotes desired knowledge and attitude towards bringing up of these mentally challenged children in the society.

### 10 Conclusion & Suggestions for further research

Thus it is concluded that mother’s role for mentally challenged children is inevitable and hence their knowledge and attitude must be promoted through training or at least through informal education. The improvement in their attitudes can bring a positive change in their day to day care of...
the child. The mothers need constant supervision and encouragement from professional staff so that they may change their attitudes more favorable. Thus by doing so they can take care of such children and thereby the incidence of mental challenged in the society is minimized. Suggestions for further research are as follows:

- A study involving more research variables related to mental challenges could be undertaken.
- The same study could be replicated for a different sample.
- The study could be designed involving large sample in a wider perspective.
- Similar studies could be done in different localities.

References