



**MOTHER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study examined the mothers' attitude towards their mentally retarded children. For these purpose 92 mothers from four school of Cuddalore town was selected. Mother's knowledge and attitude towards mentally retarded children developed by G.Bajbai was used. The result showed that the mothers' have positive attitude towards their wards who are mentally retarded. With respect to background variables, it is found that mother's locality and mother's employment status doesn't influence their attitude. But Mother's Educational status influences their attitude and knowledge towards their mentally retarded children.

**KEY WORDS:** Attitude and knowledge towards mentally retarded children, Mother's attitude.

**INTRODUCTION**

Mental retardation is one form of disability. It is the individuals with IQ score less than 70 or less of intelligence. Mental retardation is caused by several factors like genetic reasons, prenatal conditions of the embryo, medication of mother during the period of pregnancy etc... Mental retardation has been a social stigma and it is indicative of the illiteracy and the lack of scientific knowledge among the individuals in the society.

In developing countries, the proportions and numbers may be significantly higher and on the rise. A recent World Bank study (Poverty and Disability: a Survey of the Literature, 1999) noted that "The proportion of disabled children in developing countries is generally higher than in developed countries... It is estimated that 6 to 10% of children in India are born disabled and that, because of low life expectancy, possibly a third of the disabled population are children."

In this scenario the mothers of such mentally retarded children play a critical role because they face lot of stress from society and as well as in handling these children in practical day-today life.

**MEANING**

The definitions of mental retardation are many, among them the definition of the American Association for Mental Retardation (AAMR) which is: "mental retardation refers to substantial limitation in present function. It is characterized by significantly sub-average intellectual functioning existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skill areas: Communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure and work. Mental retardation manifests before age 18.

**PROBLEMS FACED BY PARENTS OF MENTALLY CHALLENGED CHILDREN**

Raising a child who is mentally challenged requires emotional strength and flexibility. The child has special needs in addition to the regular needs of all children, and parents can find themselves overwhelmed by various medical, care giving and educational responsibilities. Such parents face issues like:

1. Emotional issues
2. Physical exhaustion and stress
3. School related issues
4. Financial concerns

Hence the present study aims to identify the mother's knowledge and attitude towards the mental retardation in such a conflicting situation.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

1. To identify the attitude of mothers towards their mentally retarded children.
2. To identify the knowledge of mothers of mentally retarded children towards mental retardation.
3. To identify the role of background variables like sex, locality

**VARIABLES OF THE STUDY:**

**Mother's knowledge and attitude towards mentally retarded children**

It is the mother's attitude and knowledge towards their mentally retarded children. It is the amount of knowledge that they have towards mental retardation. Its causes, factors and ways to rise mentally retarded children. Likewise it refers to the attitude towards mentally retarded children. It could incline towards positive or negative.

**BACKGROUND VARIABLES**

The following are the background variables used in the present study:

**Locality:** It refers to the mothers from different locality like urban and rural.

**Educational status:** It refers to the educational status of the mothers like educated or uneducated.

**Employment status:** It refers to the mother's employment status like whether employed or unemployed.

**SAMPLE:**

Random sampling procedure was adopted to draw the sample from the population of student teachers. Mothers of mentally retarded children constituted the sample of the present study. The sample consists of 92 mothers of mentally retarded children in Cuddalore town. The data was collected from the four school for mentally challenged children at Cuddalore.

**TOOLS USED IN THE STUDY:**

**Mothers' knowledge towards mentally retarded**

This tool was constructed by G.Bajbai, (1988). It consists of 30 statements to test the knowledge and attitude mothers towards mentally retarded children. For knowledge there are responses like true, false and don't know. For attitude there are five responses namely strongly agree, agree, don't know, disagree and strongly disagree.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:**

**Table 1 shows the correlation between knowledge and attitude towards mentally retarded children among their mothers**

Variables	n	df	r-value	Level of significance
Knowledge	92	90	.334	Significant at .05
Attitude				

From table. 1, it is evident that there is significant positive correlation between knowledge and attitude towards mentally retarded children among their mothers.

**Table 2 shows the Mean, standard deviation and 't'-value of the mother's attitude and knowledge towards mentally retarded children with respect to the background variables locality, educational status and employment status.**

Dependent variable	Groups	n	Mean	S.D	t- value	df	Level of significance
Mother's attitude and knowledge towards mentally retarded children	Rural mothers	33	42.81	14.16	1.509	90	Not Significant
	Urban mothers	59	47.10	12.40			
	Educated mothers	62	48.34	11.76	3.134	90	Significant at 0.05
	Uneducated mothers	30	39.51	14.16			
	Employed mothers	19	42.46	13.26	1.232	90	Not Significant
	Unemployed mothers	73	46.42	13.07			

From table 2, it is evident that rural and urban mothers does not differ in their attitude and knowledge towards mentally retarded children ( $t= 1.509 < 0.05$ ). Likewise employed and unemployed mothers do not differ in their attitude and knowledge towards mentally retarded children ( $t=1.232, 0.05$ ). Educated and uneducated mothers differ mentally retarded children were in their attitude towards mentally retarded children ( $t=3.134 > 0.05$ ).

#### **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:**

1. There is significant positive relationship between mothers' knowledge and attitude towards their mentally retarded children.
2. Locality doesn't influence mothers' attitude and knowledge towards mentally retarded children.
3. Mother's employment status doesn't influence mothers' attitude and knowledge towards mentally retarded children.
4. Educational status of mothers influences mothers' attitude and knowledge towards mentally retarded children.

#### **IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY:**

1. Mother's attitude towards their mentally retarded children is very important for the life of MR Child and hence it has to be promoted towards positive side.
2. Knowledge of the Mother on mental retardation must be increased by education so that they can easily bring up such children.
3. Education of the mother is essential as it promotes desired knowledge and attitude towards bring up of these MR children in the society.

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