

Influence of social class on type and level of coping stress among parents of mentally challenged children

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■ **ABSTRACT** : The present study assessed and compared the type and level of coping stress by the parents of 150 mentally challenged children. The sample for the present study comprised of mothers and fathers of 150 mentally challenged children drawn randomly in equal proportions from two social classes under study viz. LIG and MIG across the three levels of mental retardation. The type and levels of coping stress by parents were assessed using Family Interview for Stress and Coping in Mental Retardation (Part II) developed by NIMHANS. The study revealed that social class had an impact on the level of coping. MIG mothers and fathers were observed to be better coped up. They were found to be more aware regarding child's condition, adopting better child rearing practices and also had more expectations and better attitudes towards the child's condition. Interestingly, the predominant reason was better educational level and financial status of MIG families as compared to the LIG.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Family stress, Mental disability, Mental retardation, Economic class, Social support

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