

Needs-assessment of parents of mentally challenged children regarding their education level

■ Jyoti Agrahari and Vidya Dayal

Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, KANPUR (U.P.) INDIA
(Email: abhianju3@gmail.com)

ARTICLE INFO:

Received : 23.05.2013
Revised : 00.00.2013
Accepted : 00.00.2013

KEY WORDS:

Need assessment, Mentally challenged children, Education level

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE :

Agrahari, Jyoti and Dayal, Vidya (2013). Needs-assessment of parents of mentally challenged children regarding their education level, *Adv. Res. J. Soc. Sci.*, 4 (2) : 148-152.

ABSTRACT

The objective of the investigation was to study the Needs of parents of mentally challenged children. For this purpose, 90 parents were selected having mentally challenged children with different degrees of mental retardation. The children were attending certain schools/institutions in Lucknow and Kanpur cities and they were selected randomly. A self-constructed Parental Needs-Assessment Scale was used to study the information needs of parents related to child rearing and welfare of children, service and counseling needs related to family functioning. Findings revealed that parents of mentally challenged children expressed maximum needs related to information about child rearing, welfare of children and service needs whereas they expressed less needs related to counseling in the matter of family functioning. Parents' needs were also examined with respect to their education level. The data were analyzed in terms of frequency, percentage and 't' value. Significant differences were found in the needs of certain groups of parents. Implications of the findings of the study are meant for people and institutions working for the mentally challenged children.

INTRODUCTION

The needs of parents in terms of their disabled children are unique and few more complex than the needs of parents of normal children (Hidangmayun and Khadi, 2012). Parenting a mentally challenged child especially is a daunting and exhausting task for the parents. Parents of mentally challenged children are faced with the stress of continually withering their child's struggle with everyday tasks, social interactions and education. They line with the knowledge that there will be no end in right for their struggles and their children may require expectable for there struggles. Their children may require expectable assistance for the duration of their lines. Parents also face their own troubling emotional reactions and adaptations to having a mentally challenged child. Given the exceptional amount of stress involved in caring for mentally challenged children, it is not surprising that parents need help with respect to information/services which could make the task of parenting easier (Rangaswamy and Bhavani, 2008).

In order to have better understanding of need, parents of mentally challenged children which plays a crucial role in development of child both normal and challenged, the present study was undertaken. The needs of parents of mentally challenged children regarding their educational level. The study was conducted with the following objectives :

- Information needs related to child rearing,
- Information needs related to welfare of children,
- Service needs related to welfare of children,
- Counseling needs related to family functioning.

METHODS

An interview schedule and Parental Needs Assessment Scale were used for collection of data. The sample comprising of 90 parents of mentally challenged children was selected through random sampling from Kanpur and Lucknow cities of Uttar Pradesh. The data were collected using survey method and appropriate statistical analysis e.g. frequency, percentage

and 't' value, were used to analyse the data.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

As shown in Table 1, with respect to the category of parents with mentally challenged children having low education, out of the total 4 parents, maximum parents (100 per cent) each, expressed the need to know about their role in handling child's behaviour, types of special toys and educational play materials to be provided to children, disciplining the child, integrating therapy in daily routine, taking physical care of child and promoting maximum development of children (need statements 1, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10, respectively), 75.0 per cent parents each, wanted to know how they should talk their children and treat their children (need statements 3 and 5, respectively), 50 per cent parents wanted to know how they should play with child (need statement 2), whereas 25.0 per cent parents wanted information regarding bringing up disabled child along with normal siblings.

With respect to the category of parents with mentally challenged children having middle education, out of the total 16 parents, maximum parents (93.8 %) each, expressed the need to know about their role in handling child's behaviour and integrating therapy in daily routine (need statements 1 and 7,

respectively), 87.5 per cent parents each, wanted to know how they should treat their children and promote maximum development of children (need statements 5 and 10, respectively), 81.3 per cent parents each, wanted to know how they can play with child, types of special toys and educational play materials that can be provided to children, how to discipline the child, and take physical care of child (need statements 2, 4, 6 and 8, respectively), 75.0 per cent parents wanted to know how they should talk to their children (need statement 3), whereas 62.5 per cent parents wanted to know how they can bring up disabled child along with normal sibling (need statement 9).

With respect to the category of parents with mentally challenged children having high education, out of the total 70 parents, maximum parents (94.3 %) expressed the need to know about their role in promoting children's maximum development (need statement 10), 72.9 per cent parents each, needed to know about how to handle child's behaviour and take physical care of child (need statements 1 and 8, respectively), 71.4 per cent parents wanted to know about how to discipline their child (need statement 6), 67.1 per cent parents wanted to know how they should play with children (need statement 2), whereas 65.7 per cent parents each, wanted to know how they can talk

Table 1: Information needs of parents related to child rearing regarding their level of education

Need statements	Parents of mentally challenged children			Total parents (n=90) f (%)
	Parents with low education (n=4)	Parents with middle education (n=16)	Parents with high education (n=70)	
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	
Handling child's behaviour	04 (100)	15 (93.8)	51 (72.9)	68 (75.6)
Playing with child	02 (50)	13 (81.3)	47 (67.1)	59 (65.6)
Talking to the child	03 (75)	12 (75.0)	46 (65.7)	59 (65.6)
Types of special toys & educational play materials for children	04 (100)	13 (81.3)	45 (64.3)	60 (66.7)
Treating the child	03 (75)	14 (87.5)	46 (65.7)	61 (67.8)
Disciplining the child	04 (100)	13 (81.3)	50 (71.4)	65 (72.2)
Integrating therapy in daily routine	04 (100)	15 (93.8)	45 (64.3)	62 (68.9)
Taking physical care of child	04 (100)	13 (81.3)	51 (72.9)	66 (73.3)
Bringing up disabled child along with normal sibling(s)	01 (25)	10 (62.5)	38 (54.3)	48 (53.3)
Promoting maximum development of children	04 (100)	14 (87.5)	66 (94.3)	81 (90.0)

Table 2: Information needs of parents related to child rearing regarding their level of education

Need statements	Parents of mentally challenged children			Total parents (n=90) f (%)
	Parents with low education (n=4)	Parents with middle education (n=16)	Parents with high education (n=70)	
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	
Govt. schemes for children	04 (100.0)	13 (81.3)	58 (82.9)	73 (81.1)
Vocational training opportunities for children	04 (100.0)	14 (87.5)	53 (75.7)	69 (76.7)
Legal rights of children	04 (100.0)	15 (93.8)	62 (88.6)	79 (87.8)
Govt./Non-Govt. institutional services	04 (100.0)	13 (81.3)	63 (90.0)	78 (86.7)

to their children and treat their children (need statements 3 and 5, respectively).

As shown in Table 2, with respect to the category of parents with mentally challenged children having low education, out of the total 4 parents, all parents (100 %) expressed the need to know about the government schemes for disabled child, vocational training opportunities, legal rights and government and non-government institutional services for the disabled child (need statements 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively).

With respect to the category of parents with mentally challenged children having middle education, out of the total 16 parents, maximum parents (93.8 %) expressed the need to know about the legal rights of the disabled child (need statement 3), 87.5 per cent parents wanted information regarding vocational training opportunities for disabled children (need statement 2), whereas 81.3 per cent parents wanted information regarding government schemes for disabled child and government and non-government institutional services for the disabled child (need statements 1 and 4, respectively).

With respect to the category of parents with mentally challenged children having high education, out of the total 70 parents, maximum parents (90.0 %) expressed the need to know about the government and non-government institutional services for the disabled child (need statement 4), 88.6 per cent parents wanted information regarding legal rights of the disabled child. (need statement 3), 82.9 per cent parents wanted information regarding government schemes for disabled child

(need statement 1), whereas 75.7 per cent parents wanted information regarding vocational training opportunities for disabled children (need statement 2).

As shown in Table 3, with respect to the category of parents with mentally challenged children having low education, out of the total 4 parents, maximum parents (100 per cent) wanted services that can provide financial assistance to parents of disabled children (need statement 3), 75.0 per cent parents wanted long-term respite care service for their children (need statement 2), whereas 50.0 per cent parents wanted short-term respite care service (need statement 1).

With respect to the category of parents with mentally challenged children having middle education, out of the total 16 parents, maximum parents (68.8 %) wanted services that can provide financial assistance to parents of disabled children (need statement 3), 50 per cent parents wanted short term respite care services (need statement 1), whereas 31.3 per cent parents wanted long-term respite care service for their children (need statement 2).

With respect to category of parents with mentally challenged children having high education, out of the total 70 parents, maximum parents (62.9 %) wanted services that can provide financial assistance to parents of disabled children (need statement 3), 55.7 per cent parents wanted short term respite care services (need statement 1), whereas 51.4 per cent parents wanted long-term respite care service for their children (need statement 2).

As shown in Table 4, with respect to the category of

Need statements	Parents of mentally challenged children			Total parents (n=90) f (%)
	Parents with low education (n=4) f (%)	Parents with middle education (n=16) f (%)	Parents with high education (n=70) f (%)	
	Short-term respite care	02 (50.0)	08 (50.0)	
Long-term respite care	03 (75.0)	05 (31.3)	36 (51.4)	42 (46.7)
Agencies to provide financial assistance to parents	04 (100.0)	11 (68.8)	44 (62.9)	57 (63.3)

Need statements	Parents of mentally challenged children			Total parents (n=90) f (%)
	Parents with low education (n=4) f (%)	Parents with middle education (n=16) f (%)	Parents with high education (n=70) f (%)	
	Adapting home according to child	03 (75.0)	12 (75.0)	
Involving family members in dealing with problems of child	–	09 (56.3)	38 (54.3)	47 (52.2)
Making spouse understand & accept child	03 (75.0)	08 (50.0)	26 (37.1)	37 (41.1)
Explaining child's condition to other siblings	–	09 (56.3)	25 (35.7)	34 (37.8)
Explaining child's condition to relatives	03 (75.0)	07 (43.8)	26 (37.1)	36 (40.0)
Dealing with others who ask about the child	03 (75.0)	08 (50.0)	26 (37.1)	37 (41.1)
Dealing with and overcoming initial shock/depression	03 (75.0)	07 (43.8)	32 (45.7)	42 (46.7)

parents with mentally challenged children having low, out of the total 4 parents, only 75.0 per cent parents each, wanted counseling in relation to adapting their home according to child's needs, in making their spouses understand and accept their child, in explaining their child's condition to relatives, in dealing with others who ask about their child and in dealing with and overcoming initial shock. (need statements 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7, respectively), whereas none of the parents expressed need for involving family members in dealing with problems of their disabled child and in explaining their child's condition to other siblings (need statements 2 and 4, respectively).

With respect to the category of parents with mentally challenged children having middle education, out of the total 16 parents, maximum (75.0 %) wanted counseling regarding adapting their home according to needs of their disabled child (need statement 1), 56.3 per cent parents each, needed help in involving family members in dealing with day to day problems of disabled child and in explaining their child's condition to other siblings (need statements 2 and 4, respectively), 50.0 per cent parents each, wanted help with respect to making their spouses understand and accept their disabled children and in dealing with others who ask about their child (need statements 3 and 6, respectively), whereas 43.8 per cent parents each, wanted help in explaining the condition of their disabled children to relatives and dealing with and overcoming initial shock / depression (need statements 5 and 7, respectively).

With respect to the category of parents with mentally challenged children having high education, out of the total 70 parents, maximum parents (60.0 %) wanted counseling in the matter of adapting their home according to needs of their disabled child (need statement 1), 54.3 per cent parents needed help in involving family members in dealing with day to day problems of disabled child (need statement 2), 45.7 per cent parents wanted counseling in relation to dealing with the shock of having a disabled child and over coming depression (need

statement 7), 37.1 per cent parents each, wanted help in making their spouses understand and accept their disabled children, explaining child's condition to relatives and in dealing with others who ask about the child (need statements 3, 5 and 6, respectively), whereas 35.7 per cent parents wanted help in explaining child's condition to other siblings (need statement 4).

As shown in Table 5 with respect to 'Information needs of parents related to child rearing', the difference in the means (need) expressed by parents with low education vs. parents with medium education and parents with low education vs. parents with high education, were found to be non-significant (t values 0.010 and 1.440, respectively) at 5 per cent level of significance (18 d.f.). Whereas, the difference in the means (need) expressed by parents with medium education vs. parents with high education was significant (t value 3.282*) at 5 per cent level of significance (18 d.f.). With respect to 'Information needs related to welfare of children', the differences in means (need) expressed by parents with low education vs. parents with medium education and parents with high education vs. parents with low education was significant (t values 4.450* and 3.011*, respectively) at 5 per cent level of significance (6 d.f.).

Whereas, the difference in means (need) expressed by parents with medium education vs. parents with high education was non-significant (t value 0.249) at 5 per cent level of significance (6 d.f.). With respect to 'Service needs of parents', the differences in the means (need) expressed by parents with low education vs. parents with medium education and parents with low education vs. parents with high education were non-significant (t values 1.566 and 1.329, respectively) at 5 per cent level of significance (4 d.f.). Whereas, the difference in means (need) expressed by of parents with medium education vs. parents with high education was significant (t value 3.464*) at 5 per cent level of significance (4 d.f.). With respect to

Table 5 : Difference in needs expressed by parents regarding their level of education						
Education of parents	Parents with low education	Parents with middle education	Parents with middle education	Parents with high education	Parents with high education	Parents with low education
AREA-I Information needs related to child rearing						
Mean of Needs	82.5	82.6	82.6	68.3	68.3	82.5
t-value	0.010		3.282*		1.440	
AREA-II Information needs related to welfare of children						
Mean of Needs	100.0	86.0	86.0	84.5	84.5	100.0
t-value	4.450*		0.249		3.011*	
AREA-III Service needs						
Mean of Needs	75.0	49.3	49.3	55.3	55.3	75.0
t-value	1.566		3.464*		1.329	
AREA-IV Counseling needs related to family functioning						
Mean of Needs	53.6	53.6	53.6	43.6	43.6	53.6
t-value	0.012		1.854		0.388	

* indicate significance of values at P=0.05, respectively

Need Area 'Counseling needs of parents related to family functioning', the differences in the means (need) expressed by parents with low education vs. parents with medium education, parents with medium education vs. parents with high education and parents with high education vs. parents with low education were non-significant (t values 0.012, 1.854 and 0.388, respectively) at 5 per cent level of significance (12 d.f.).

Conclusion :

Findings revealed that parents of mentally challenged children expressed maximum needs related to information about

child rearing, welfare of children and service needs whereas they expressed less needs related to counseling in the matter of family functioning, with respect to their education level.

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