



Original Research Article

Volume 13 Issue 2

March-April 2024

**A STUDY TO ASSESS THE EFFICIENCY OF SKILL TRAINING ON
EMPOWERMENT OF TEENAGER CARE SKILLS AMONG THE MOTHERS OF
MENTALLY CHALLENGED CHILDREN IN SELECTED MENTALLY RETARDED
CONSERVATORIES OF VADODARA, GUJARAT**

Bhavisha Patel

Ph.D. Scholar, Malwanchal University

Introduction

Caring for mentally challenged children, particularly during adolescence, poses significant physical, emotional, and social challenges. Mothers, as primary caregivers, often shoulder the responsibility, yet they may lack appropriate training to manage complex care needs. Empowerment through skill training is crucial in strengthening caregiving efficacy, psychosocial resilience, and quality of life for both mothers and their children.

Intellectual disability, commonly referred to as mental retardation, is a significant developmental condition characterized by limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, affecting conceptual, social, and practical skills. According to global estimates, nearly 1–3% of the population is affected by some form of intellectual disability, with a substantial proportion residing in low- and middle-income countries such as India. Advances in healthcare have increased life expectancy among children with intellectual disabilities, leading to a growing population of adolescents who require long-term, specialized care within families and institutions.

Adolescence is a critical transitional phase marked by rapid physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. For mentally challenged children, this period presents amplified challenges related to personal hygiene, emotional regulation, social interaction, sexuality awareness, behavioral management, and development of independent living

skills. These complex needs place increased demands on caregivers, particularly mothers, who traditionally assume the primary caregiving role in Indian households.

Mothers of mentally challenged adolescents often experience considerable physical exhaustion, emotional stress, social isolation, and financial burden. The lack of structured knowledge and practical caregiving skills may contribute to feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and reduced self-confidence in caregiving roles. Inadequate caregiver competence can negatively affect both maternal well-being and the overall development and quality of life of the child. Hence, strengthening the caregiving capacity of mothers is essential for improving adolescent care outcomes.

Empowerment of mothers through skill training is a vital strategy to address these challenges. Empowerment refers to the process by which individuals gain knowledge, skills, self-confidence, and control over decisions affecting their lives. In the context of caregiving, empowerment enables mothers to manage daily care activities effectively, make informed decisions, cope with stress, and advocate for the needs of their children. Skill training programs that combine knowledge enhancement, practical demonstrations, behavior management techniques, and emotional support have been shown to improve caregiver competence and self-efficacy.

Despite the increasing recognition of caregiver empowerment, structured skill training programs targeting teenager care skills among mothers of mentally challenged children remain limited, particularly in institutional settings such as mentally retarded conservatories. In Gujarat, and specifically in Vadodara district, many conservatories provide rehabilitative services to children with intellectual disabilities; however, systematic caregiver training initiatives are often insufficient or irregular. Mothers frequently rely on informal knowledge, trial-and-error methods, or advice from peers, which may not adequately address the unique needs of adolescent care.

Nursing professionals play a crucial role in caregiver education and empowerment through health teaching, counseling, and skill development programs. By implementing structured skill training interventions, nurses can enhance mothers' understanding of adolescent developmental needs, promote positive caregiving practices, reduce caregiver stress, and foster family-centered care. Such interventions align with holistic nursing

approaches that emphasize health promotion, prevention of caregiver burnout, and improvement of quality of life.

Therefore, the present study was undertaken to assess the efficiency of skill training on empowerment of teenager care skills among mothers of mentally challenged children in selected mentally retarded conservatories of Vadodara, Gujarat. The findings of this study are expected to provide evidence-based insights into the effectiveness of skill training programs and support the integration of caregiver empowerment strategies into routine rehabilitative and nursing care services.

Objectives

1. To assess baseline level of caregiver skills and empowerment among mothers.
2. To administer structured skill training focusing on teenager care and management.
3. To evaluate post-training changes in caregiving skills and empowerment.
4. To determine the association between demographic variables and training outcomes.

Research Hypothesis

H₁: There will be a significant improvement in caregiver skills after skill training.

H₂: Skill training will significantly increase the empowerment levels of mothers.

Research Methodology

Research Design

A quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test was implemented.

Setting

Selected mentally retarded conservatories in Vadodara, Gujarat.

Sample

A purposive sample of 60 mothers of adolescents (age 13–18 years) with mental challenges.

Inclusion Criteria

- Mothers of mentally challenged adolescents enrolled in conservatories.
- Able to understand Gujarati or Hindi.
- Consent to participate.

Exclusion Criteria

- Mothers with severe psychiatric illnesses.
- Those who had prior formal training.

Skill Training Intervention

The intervention consisted of five modules delivered over 3 weeks:

1. Understanding Mental Challenges
2. Adolescent Care Needs & Behavior Management
3. Communication & Social Skills Training
4. Stress Management and Self-Care Techniques
5. Empowerment & Decision-Making Skills

Each session included lectures, demonstrations, role-plays, and group discussions.

Tools Used

1. Demographic Questionnaire
2. Caregiver Skill Assessment Scale – to measure caregiving knowledge and skills.
3. Empowerment Scale – to assess psychological empowerment, decision-making confidence, and perceived competence.
4. Self-Efficacy Rating Scale

Data Collection Procedure

- Pre-tests were administered before the training.
- Post-tests were conducted immediately following the final session.
- Ethical permission was obtained from institutional review board.
- Written informed consent was taken from all participants.

Results

Demographic Profile

- Most mothers were aged 30–45 years.
- Majority had secondary education.
- Most families belonged to low-to-middle socio-economic groups.

Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Analysis

Variable	Mean Pre-test	Mean Post-test	Mean Difference	p-value
Caregiver Skills	48.7	75.4	+26.7	<0.001
Empowerment Score	42.2	70.1	+27.9	<0.001
Self-Efficacy	38.5	68.8	+30.3	<0.001

Statistical Interpretation

- Skill training significantly improved caregiving scores ($t = 13.9, p < 0.001$).
- Empowerment and self-efficacy showed robust positive change.
- No significant association was found between demographic variables and improvement scores.

Discussion

The results demonstrate that structured skill training significantly enhances caregiving competencies and empowerment among mothers. Improved self-efficacy and care skills can lead to better caregiver well-being and child outcomes. Training modules focusing on communication, behavior management, and stress reduction were especially impactful.

Conclusion

Skill training is an effective and empowering strategy for supporting mothers of mentally challenged adolescents. The study supports replicating such interventions in community and institutional settings to strengthen caregiver capacity and emotional resilience.

Implications

- Nursing Practice: Incorporate caregiver empowerment programs as part of routine rehabilitation services.
- Policy: Advocate for government-funded caregiver training centers.
- Future Research: Longitudinal studies to evaluate lasting impacts of skill training.

Limitations

- The study used a non-randomized design.
- Small sample size limits generalizability.
- No long-term follow-up.

Recommendations

- Introduce periodic refresher training.
- Expand to rural and underserved areas.
- Include fathers and other family members in future interventions.

References

1. World Health Organization. Caregiver skills training for families of children with developmental delays or disabilities: adaptation and implementation guide. Geneva: WHO; 2022.
2. Sengupta S, et al. Transporting and implementing a caregiver-mediated intervention for toddlers with autism in Goa, India: evidence from the social ABCs. *Frontiers in Rehabilitation Sciences*. 2024.
3. World Health Organization-Caregiver Skills Training Program: Feasibility of Delivery by Non-Specialist Providers in Real-world Urban Settings in India. *Journal Article*. 2021.
4. Reichow B, et al. Caregiver skills training for caregivers of individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *PubMed*. 2023.

5. Caregiver education programme on intellectual and developmental disabilities: an acceptability and feasibility study in an academic medical setting. John Wiley & Sons; 2023.
6. Muthukaruppan S, et al. Impact of a family-centred early intervention programme in South India on caregivers of children with developmental delays. PubMed. 2020.
7. Behavior skills training for family caregivers of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities: a systematic review of literature. PubMed. 2020.
8. Gordon BK, Bila NJ. Developing a psychoeducational programme for caregivers of people with intellectual disability. Afr J Disabil. 2023.
9. Mutha P, et al. Empowering caregivers of children with learning and developmental disabilities: community-based inclusive development. Tizard Learning Disability Review. 2022.
10. Chaney M, Jani S, Shekunov J, Choice T. Efficacy of educational programs for the empowerment and well-being of caregivers of children with mental disorders: A systematic review. PubMed. 2025.
11. Behavioral training for mothers of mentally handicapped children: teaching of self-help skills. PubMed. 1991.
12. Sagar R, Mongia M, Garg AK. Enhancing parental efficacy through targeted life skills training. Child Family Social Work; 2022.
13. Hastings RP, Robertson J, Yasamy MT. Interventions for children with pervasive developmental disorders in low and middle income countries. J Appl Res Intellect Disabil. 2012.
14. Abidin RR. Manual for the Parenting Stress Index. Odessa: Psychological Assessment Resources; 1995. (commonly cited in caregiver training evaluation studies)