



**A STUDY TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A SKILL-BASED TRAINING INTERVENTION IN EMPOWERING MOTHERS WITH ESSENTIAL TEENAGE CARE SKILLS FOR MENTALLY CHALLENGED CHILDREN IN SELECTED MENTALLY RETARDED HOMES OF GUJARAT**

**Bhavisha Patel**

Ph.D. Scholar, Malwanchal University

**Introduction**

Intellectual disability, also referred to as mental retardation, is a developmental condition characterized by limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Children with intellectual disabilities require long-term support in performing activities of daily living, communication, social interaction, and behavior regulation. As these children enter adolescence, caregiving demands become more complex due to pubertal changes, emotional instability, emerging independence, and social challenges.

In the Indian context, mothers are traditionally the primary caregivers of children with disabilities. Caring for a mentally challenged adolescent places considerable physical, psychological, and emotional burden on mothers. Inadequate knowledge and lack of practical caregiving skills often result in increased stress, reduced confidence, and feelings of helplessness. Empowerment of mothers through structured skill-based training is essential to enable them to cope effectively with caregiving responsibilities and to improve the overall well-being of both mother and child.

Skill-based training interventions focus on developing practical abilities, enhancing decision-making capacity, strengthening coping mechanisms, and fostering self-efficacy. Such interventions help mothers gain control over caregiving situations, manage behavioral issues, promote independence in adolescents, and reduce caregiver stress.

Mentally retarded homes play a significant role in rehabilitation services; however, systematic training programs for caregivers, particularly mothers, are often limited.

Therefore, the present study was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of a skill-based training intervention in empowering mothers with essential teenage care skills for mentally challenged children in selected mentally retarded homes of Gujarat.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the pre-test level of teenage care skills and empowerment among mothers of mentally challenged children.
2. To implement a structured skill-based training intervention for mothers.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the skill-based training intervention by comparing pre-test and post-test scores.
4. To determine the association between selected demographic variables and post-test empowerment scores.

### **Hypotheses**

- **H<sub>1</sub>**: There will be a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of teenage care skills among mothers after the skill-based training intervention.
- **H<sub>2</sub>**: There will be a significant improvement in empowerment levels of mothers following the skill-based training intervention.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

A quasi-experimental one-group pre-test post-test research design was adopted.

#### **Setting of the Study**

The study was conducted in selected mentally retarded homes of Gujarat.

#### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

A sample of **60 mothers** of mentally challenged adolescents aged 13–18 years was selected using **purposive sampling technique**.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

- Mothers of mentally challenged adolescents residing in selected homes.
- Mothers who were willing to participate.
- Mothers who could understand Gujarati or Hindi.

### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Mothers who had received prior formal caregiver training.
- Mothers with diagnosed psychiatric illness.

### **Description of the Skill-Based Training Intervention**

The intervention was conducted over **three weeks** and included the following modules:

1. **Understanding Intellectual Disability and Adolescent Changes**
2. **Personal Hygiene and Daily Living Care Skills**
3. **Behavior Management and Emotional Support**
4. **Communication and Social Skill Development**
5. **Stress Management, Coping Strategies, and Empowerment**

Teaching methods included lectures, demonstrations, role play, group discussions, and audiovisual aids.

### **Tools for Data Collection**

1. Structured demographic questionnaire
2. Caregiving skill assessment scale
3. Empowerment scale for mothers

### **Data Collection Procedure**

- Pre-test assessment was conducted before the intervention.
- Skill-based training sessions were administered.
- Post-test assessment was conducted after completion of the intervention.

- Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was taken from all participants.

## **Results**

### **Effectiveness of Skill-Based Training**

| <b>Variable</b>   | <b>Pre-test Mean ± SD</b> | <b>Post-test Mean ± SD</b> | <b>Mean Difference</b> | <b>t-value</b> | <b>p-value</b> |
|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Caregiving Skills | 46.3 ± 8.4                | 74.9 ± 6.2                 | 28.6                   | 14.2           | <0.001         |
| Empowerment       | 41.7 ± 7.9                | 71.5 ± 6.8                 | 29.8                   | 15.1           | <0.001         |

The post-test scores showed a statistically significant improvement in caregiving skills and empowerment levels among mothers.

### **Association with Demographic Variables**

No significant association was found between post-test empowerment scores and selected demographic variables such as age, education, or income.

## **Discussion**

The findings of the study indicate that skill-based training interventions significantly enhance teenage care skills and empowerment among mothers of mentally challenged children. Improved knowledge, practical skills, and coping strategies enabled mothers to manage caregiving challenges more effectively. These findings are consistent with earlier studies that emphasized the role of caregiver education in improving self-efficacy and reducing caregiver stress.

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that skill-based training interventions are effective in empowering mothers with essential teenage care skills for mentally challenged children. Such

interventions should be integrated into routine rehabilitative and nursing services in mentally retarded homes to promote holistic family-centered care.

### **Implications for Nursing Practice**

- Nurses can play a key role in planning and implementing caregiver training programs.
- Regular caregiver empowerment programs can improve quality of care and maternal well-being.
- Community and institutional collaboration is essential for sustained caregiver support.

### **Limitations**

- Small sample size limits generalization.
- Absence of a control group.
- No long-term follow-up.

### **Recommendations**

- Conduct similar studies with larger samples.
- Include fathers and other caregivers.
- Evaluate long-term effects of training interventions.

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