

Research Paper

## Impact of Satisfaction with Life on Well-Being of Mothers with Intellectually Disabled Children in India

Shravani Bongu<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Bhaskar Naidu<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to understand the relation between well-being and satisfaction of life among mothers with intellectually disabled children in India. The sample consisted of 100 mothers who had children with either mild or moderate levels of Intellectual Disability. The Adult Well-Being Scale by Snaith et al was used to measure the mother's level of anxiety, depression, inward directed irritability and outward directed irritability. The Satisfaction with Life by Diener, Emmons, et al was used to measure whether the mother had different levels of satisfaction, a state of neutrality, or different levels of dissatisfaction. A qualitative analysis was also conducted to understand the mother's perception of adequate psychological support. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to test the hypothesis along with Multiple Regression Analysis. The results revealed a moderate negative correlation between well-being and life satisfaction, indicating that the higher level of depression, anxiety, inward irritability and outward irritability led to lower levels of life satisfaction. The findings highlight the importance of considering interventions to elevate a mother's level of well-being to improve her satisfaction with life.

**Keywords:** *Satisfaction with Life, Well-Being, Mothers of Intellectually Disabled Children*

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), "Well-Being" is defined as a state of happiness and contentment, with low levels of distress, overall good physical and mental health and outlook, or good quality of life. The APA also defines "Life Satisfaction" as the extent to which a person finds life rich, meaningful, full, or of high quality. Both of these constructs are essential parts of determining a person's overall quality of life.

A child's diagnosis of an intellectual disability does not only affect the child but also alters the life of the child's caregiver, primarily the mother. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition* (DSM-5) defines intellectual disabilities as neurodevelopmental disorders that begin in childhood and are characterized by intellectual difficulties as well as difficulties in conceptual, social, and practical areas of living.

<sup>1</sup>PhD Research Scholar, Osmania University

<sup>2</sup>Emeritus Professor

\*Corresponding Author

Received: September 07, 2024; Revision Received: September 20, 2024; Accepted: September 23, 2024

## Impact of Satisfaction with Life on Well-Being of Mothers with Intellectually Disabled Children in India

Caring for a child with an intellectual disability is a highly exhausting experience that reshapes the life of the entire family, with mothers often assuming the primary caregiving role. In India, where societal expectations and cultural norms place a significant emphasis on maternal responsibility, these mothers face unique challenges. Their daily lives are marked by constant caregiving, standing up for their children's needs, and managing the emotional, social, and financial stresses that come with raising a child with special needs.

Research has consistently shown that mothers of children with intellectual disabilities experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression compared to mothers of typically developing children (Cuzzocrea et al., 2016; Saloviita et al., 2020). These emotional and psychological challenges can have a severe impact on their overall well-being and life satisfaction. Well-being, in this context, includes emotional states such as anxiety, depression, and irritability, which can be significantly influenced by the continuous demands of caregiving. On the other hand, life satisfaction reflects how content these mothers feel with their lives, considering all the personal, social, and economic factors that influence their day-to-day experiences. Adequate psychological support refers to different types of support from family to religion, that the mother feels is sufficient for her to live a fulfilling life.

Several studies have highlighted the relationship between caregiving stress and life satisfaction. For instance, Gerstein et al. (2009) found that higher levels of parenting stress were associated with lower life satisfaction among mothers of children with developmental disabilities. Similarly, Weiss (2002) reported that the psychological distress experienced by these mothers often leads to decreased life satisfaction, emphasizing the need for emotional support and coping strategies. This study seeks to understand the relationship between well-being and life satisfaction among mothers of children with intellectual disabilities in India.

The purpose is to explore how various well-being states—such as depression, anxiety, and irritability—affect the overall life satisfaction of these mothers. Understanding this relationship is essential for several reasons. First, it highlights the areas where these mothers might need more support, whether from their families, communities, or mental health professionals. Second, it provides insights that could inform the development of interventions aimed at improving both the well-being and life satisfaction of these mothers. When mothers are supported and their emotional needs are met, they are more likely to experience higher life satisfaction, which in turn benefits their children and the broader family dynamic.

Through the analysis of data collected from 100 mothers of children with mild or moderate intellectual disabilities, this study aims to provide a clearer picture of how these mothers navigate their emotions and what factors are most influential in determining their overall life satisfaction. By bringing attention to these critical issues, this research hopes to contribute to better care strategies and policies that enhance the quality of life for both mothers and their children with intellectual disabilities.

### **METHODOLOGY:**

#### *Statement of the Problem:*

The present research aims to explore the relationship between Satisfaction with Life, Well-Being, and Perceived Psychological Support among 100 mothers of intellectually disabled children.

## Impact of Satisfaction with Life on Well-Being of Mothers with Intellectually Disabled Children in India

### *Objectives:*

- To assess the overall life satisfaction levels among mothers of children with mild or moderate intellectual disabilities in India.
- To evaluate the levels of depression, anxiety, and inward/outward irritability among these mothers.
- To examine the relationship between well-being and life satisfaction among these mothers.
- To assess the extent to which well-being components predict life satisfaction among mothers of children with intellectual disabilities.
- To evaluate the differences in life satisfaction and well-being among mothers who perceive they have adequate psychological support compared to those who do not.

### *Hypotheses*

- Mothers of children with intellectual disabilities will report moderate to low levels of life satisfaction.
- There will be high levels of depression, anxiety, and irritability among these mothers.
- There will be a significant negative correlation between well-being (depression, anxiety, and irritability) and life satisfaction among these mothers.
- Well-being will significantly predict lower levels of life satisfaction among these mothers.
- Mothers who perceive they have adequate psychological support will report higher levels of life satisfaction and better well-being.

### *Operational Definition:*

- **Depression:** In this study, depression refers to a psychological state characterised by feelings of sadness, hopelessness accompanied with physiological symptoms such as lack of sleep or hunger.
- **Anxiety:** In this study, anxiety refers to a psychological state characterised by apprehension, uncertainty, tension, and fear with no certain reason.
- **Outward Directed Irritability:** In this study, outward directed irritability refers to feelings of anger, frustration, and annoyance that is expressed overtly or onto others.
- **Inward Directed Irritability:** In this study, inward directed irritability refers to feelings of anger, frustration, and annoyance which are expressed onto oneself.
- **Life Satisfaction:** In this study, life satisfaction refers to a feeling of contentment in that life is going according to how one deems it should go.
- **Adequate Psychological Support:** In this study, adequate psychological support refers to a perception of the mother of having support through various channels such as family, friends, support groups, professional counseling, therapy, and religious community.

### *Description of Tools:*

#### **Adult Well-Being Scale by Snaith et al**

The scale is the Irritability, Depression, and Anxiety Scale developed by Snaith et al in 1978. This scale allows respondents 4 possible answers for each item. Four aspects of well-being are covered: Depression, Anxiety, Inward Directed Irritability and Outward Directed Irritability. It is an 18 item scale.

## Impact of Satisfaction with Life on Well-Being of Mothers with Intellectually Disabled Children in India

### Satisfaction With Life Scale by Diener, Emmons, et al

This scale was developed by Diener, Emmons, et al in 1985. It has 5 items out of which the participant has to choose 1 number out of a 7 range subscale. The total of this scale is calculated and the response is classified into extremely satisfied, satisfied, slightly satisfied, neutral, slightly dissatisfied, dissatisfied, and extremely dissatisfied.

### Qualitative Analysis of Perception of Support

This is a qualitative analysis conducted through the interview method which asked about the following dimensions:

- Attributing Adequate Support
- Sources of Support
- Frequency of Support
- Satisfaction of Support

### Sample Size

A sample size of 100 mothers of intellectually disabled children were selected through random sampling. The mothers have children of Mild or Moderate levels only. The intellectual disabilities include Down Syndrome, Delayed Development and Fragile X Syndrome.

### Procedure

In order to conduct this study, mothers were contacted either through schools where their children were studying at or through google form links which were circulated among mothers support groups. The mothers were first given a consent form, where they understood that the purpose of the study was confidential and they could willingly participate in it or not. After taking their consent, they were presented with the two questionnaires which they had to answer back to back. The instructions were clearly stated at the start of each questionnaire and they were asked to revert at any time if they had any further questions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the results after statistical analysis from the questionnaires provided to the mothers.

*Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Life Satisfaction Among Mothers of Children with Mild ID or Moderate ID*

Life Satisfaction Level	Frequency (N=100)	Percentage
Satisfied	39	39%
Neutral	17	17%
Dissatisfied	44	44%

The table shows that 44.0% of the mothers report dissatisfaction with their lives, while only 39.0% are satisfied, indicating moderate to low levels of life satisfaction among the majority of the sample.

**Impact of Satisfaction with Life on Well-Being of Mothers with Intellectually Disabled Children in India**

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Well-Being Components among Mothers of Children with Mild or Moderate ID**

<b>Well-Being Component</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Percentage Above Clinical Threshold (%)</b>
Depression	7.18	2.82	61%
Anxiety	6.32	3.74	66%
Outward Directed Irritability	2.72	2.86	49%
Inward Directed Irritability	3.10	3.12	74%

The data indicates that a significant proportion of mothers exhibit high levels of depression (61.0%), anxiety (66.0%), and inward directed irritability (74.0%), reflecting the emotional challenges they face.

**Table 3 Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Well Being Components and Life Satisfaction Among Mothers of Children with Mild or Moderate ID**

<b>Well-Being Component</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Depression	-0.428	0.001**
Anxiety	-0.448	0.001**
Outward Directed Irritability	-0.485	0.001**
Inward Directed Irritability	-0.472	0.001**

Note: \*\* $p < 0.001$

All components of well-being show a significant negative correlation with life satisfaction, indicating that higher levels of depression, anxiety, and irritability are associated with lower life satisfaction among the mothers.

**Table 4 Multiple Regression Analysis of Well-Being Predicting Life Satisfaction Among Mothers of Children with Mild or Moderate ID**

<b>Predictor Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE B</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Depression	-0.31	0.11	-0.42	-2.82	0.006**
Anxiety	-0.33	0.14	-0.44	-2.86	0.005**
Outward Directed Irritability	-0.41	0.13	-0.47	-3.08	0.003**
Inward Directed Irritability	-0.35	0.13	-0.46	-2.88	0.005**
Constant	22.80	2.40		9.50	<0.001**

Note: \*\*  $p < 0.01$

The regression analysis shows that all components of well-being (depression, anxiety, and irritability) significantly predict lower life satisfaction. This suggests that mothers with higher levels of these negative emotional states are more likely to report lower life satisfaction.

## Impact of Satisfaction with Life on Well-Being of Mothers with Intellectually Disabled Children in India

*Table 5 Comparison of Life Satisfaction and Well-Being Between Mothers Who Perceive Adequate Psychological Support vs. Those Who Do Not*

Perception of Support	N	Mean Life Satisfaction Score	Mean Well-Being Score	t-value	p-value
Adequate Psychological Support	53	22.3	4.35	3.48	0.001**
Inadequate or No Psychological Support	47	18.5	6.72		

Note. \*\*p<0.01

The table shows that mothers who perceive they have adequate psychological support report significantly higher life satisfaction and better overall well-being (lower mean well-being score) compared to those who perceive inadequate or no support. This suggests that psychological support plays a crucial role in enhancing life satisfaction and reducing emotional distress.

### CONCLUSION

The study aimed to explore how the well-being of mothers caring for children with intellectual disabilities affects their life satisfaction, and whether perceived psychological support makes a difference.

**Hypothesis 1** suggested that these mothers would report moderate to low levels of life satisfaction. This hypothesis was **accepted**. The results showed that a significant number of mothers (44%) were dissatisfied with their lives, confirming that the challenges of caregiving can lower overall life satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 2** proposed that these mothers would experience high levels of depression, anxiety, and irritability. This was also **accepted**. The study found that a majority of the mothers reported high levels of these negative emotional states, which indicates the emotional toll of their caregiving responsibilities.

**Hypothesis 3** suggested that there would be a significant negative correlation between well-being (depression, anxiety, and irritability) and life satisfaction. This hypothesis was **accepted**. The findings showed that as depression, anxiety, and irritability increased, life satisfaction decreased, highlighting the strong link between well-being and how satisfied these mothers feel with their lives.

**Hypothesis 4** proposed that well-being would significantly predict life satisfaction. This was **accepted** as well. The results showed that depression, anxiety, and irritability were strong predictors of lower life satisfaction, meaning that poor well-being directly impacts how these mothers feel about their lives.

**Hypothesis 5** suggested that mothers who perceive they have adequate psychological support would report higher life satisfaction and better well-being. This hypothesis was **accepted**. The study found that mothers who felt supported had higher life satisfaction and lower levels of depression, anxiety, and irritability. This shows that psychological support

## Impact of Satisfaction with Life on Well-Being of Mothers with Intellectually Disabled Children in India

plays a crucial role in helping these mothers manage their emotional challenges and improve their overall quality of life.

### **Implications:**

The present study would help in creating tailor-made interventions for mothers who are low in well-being and how to increase their life satisfaction. These interventions would in turn lead the mother to be her better self and create a positive environment for her child to grow in. The study also sheds light on the importance of understanding the psychological aspects of what a mother faces with her child with intellectual disabilities and what are the different ways to support her psychologically. It would be a way to promote support services for the mother. Clinicians could also use the findings to see how to improve the mental health of the mother. The study should also pave the way in support forms from the government and another institutions to recognize the issues these mothers are going through and how to further support them. The present study can show the importance of how a mother can improve various areas of her life in order to create a more positive environment for the child. The present study could be a stepping stone for a future longitudinal study which could study whether mothers develop personally as they age and if they are faced with different difficulties at different ages of the child.

### **REFERENCES**

- Barros, L., Azevedo, J., & Coelho, V. (2016). Parenting a child with autism spectrum disorder: The role of family support and parenting stress. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 46(10), 3328-3341. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-016-2863-4>
- Beck, A. T., & Alford, B. A. (2009). *Depression: Causes and treatment* (2nd ed.). University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bonis, S. (2016). Stress and parents of children with autism: A review of literature. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 37(3), 153-163. <https://doi.org/10.3109/01612840.2015.1116030>
- Brown, H. K., Ouellette-Kuntz, H., Hunter, D., Kelley, E., Cobigo, V., & Lam, M. (2011). Beyond an autism diagnosis: Children's functional independence and parents' unmet needs. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 41(10), 1291-1302. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-010-1148-y>
- Cappe, E., Wolff, M., Bobet, R., & Adrien, J. L. (2011). Quality of life, psychological characteristics, and adjustment in parents of children with autism spectrum disorders. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 5(1), 64-72. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2010.02.004>
- Chou, Y. C., Pu, C. Y., Lee, Y. C., Lin, L. C., & Kroger, T. (2009). Effect of perceived stigmatization on the quality of life among caregivers of children with intellectual disabilities in Taiwan. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 22(6), 594-604. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-3148.2009.00514.x>
- Cuzzocrea, F., Larcana, R., Costa, S., Gazzano, C., & Levantini, V. (2016). Parental stress, coping strategies and social support in families of children with a disability. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 25(1), 155-166. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-015-0217-7>
- Gerstein, E. D., Crnic, K. A., Blacher, J., & Baker, B. L. (2009). Mothers' and fathers' perceptions of problematic child behavior: Attributions, coparenting, and family distress. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 39(6), 854-863. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-009-0698-4>

## Impact of Satisfaction with Life on Well-Being of Mothers with Intellectually Disabled Children in India

- Hastings, R. P., & Beck, A. (2004). Practitioner review: Stress intervention for parents of children with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 45(8), 1338-1349. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2004.00357.x>
- Iadarola, S., Hernandez, B., McEachin, J., & Shih, W. (2015). Service utilization and caregiver strain among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 45(10), 3032-3046. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-015-2460-1>
- Pisula, E., & Kossakowska, Z. (2010). Sense of coherence and coping with stress among mothers and fathers of children with autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 40(12), 1485-1494. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-010-1001-3>
- Saloviita, T., Itälina, M., & Leinonen, E. (2020). Explaining the parental stress of fathers and mothers caring for a child with intellectual disability: A double ABCX model. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 54(4), 367-377. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2788.2010.01266.x>
- Weiss, M. J. (2002). Hardiness and social support as predictors of stress in mothers of typical children, children with autism, and children with mental retardation. *Autism*, 6(1), 115-130. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361302006001009>
- Weiss, M. J., & Lunsy, Y. (2011). The impact of caregiving stress on the mental health of parents of individuals with developmental disabilities. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 23(4), 311-325. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10882-011-9236-5>

### **Acknowledgment**

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Bongu, S. & Naidu, B. (2024). Impact of Satisfaction with Life on Well-Being of Mothers with Intellectually Disabled Children in India. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(3), 2534-2541. DIP:18.01.247.20241203, DOI:10.25215/1203.247