

Research Paper

## An Assessment of Psychological Wellbeing and Resilience in Mothers of Children with Special Needs

Sakshi Patidar<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Shahin Ghani<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the levels of Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) and Resilience in mothers of children with special needs, specifically those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Intellectual Disability (ID), and examined the relationship between these two variables. A non-probability purposive sample of 30 mothers having children with special needs, aged 25-40 years, and who were selected from private NGOs and registered clinics. The study utilized the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being (PWB), and the Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ), for assessment. Further data was analyzed using Pearson's correlation analysis. The scores obtained were high scores in the areas of Personal Growth, and purpose in life, where 50% of women demonstrated the developing level of resilience, 30% indicated the established phase of resilience and 20% were found to be in the strong Resilience phase, yet the population of concern didn't have the exceptional level of resilience. The study also reveals the correlation between the different variables of psychological wellbeing and the Resilience phase the patient was in, where the results show the correlation between the variables but no to a greater extent, where the results highlighted the positive correlation in the areas of Autonomy and positive relations with others. And a negative correlation between the variables such as environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life and self-Acceptance. The study concludes that mothers of children with special needs possess an improved sense of Personal Growth and Purpose in Life, and sufficient capacity for Resilience. Although the overall correlations were weak, the findings suggest that interventions targeting the key dimensions of PWB (such as Environmental Mastery and Self-Acceptance) and resilience could be beneficial. The results have implications for therapeutic programs aimed at enhancing the psychological well-being and resilience of parental caregivers.

**Keywords:** *Psychological Wellbeing, Resilience, Mothers of Children with Special Needs*

Mothers of children with special needs, due to extended caring, emotional commitment, and social barriers, frequently develop a unique psychological profile. These characteristics are not static; rather, they change over time in response to the child's needs, support networks, and stress. They encounter a number of challenges, including Increased Sensitivity to Emotions, Prolonged Stress and Anxiety

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Barkatullah University

<sup>2</sup>Assist Professor, Dept of Psychology, PMCOE Govt. Hamidia College, Bhopal

\*Corresponding Author

Received: December 25, 2025; Revision Received: March 11, 2026; Accepted: March 15, 2026

## **An Assessment of Psychological Wellbeing and Resilience in Mothers of Children with Special Needs**

Stress, anticipatory concern about the child's future, and fear of social neglect can result from ongoing caregiving duties. It is frequently stated that there is an increased susceptibility to depression, burnout, and emotional tiredness. Social demands and feelings of guilt ("Am I doing enough?") might intensify self-criticism. Fear of making mistakes might lead to perfectionist tendencies. This lowers their psychological well-being and causes various issues related to their ongoing stress, which makes them less resilient and lowers their quality of life.

The psychological wellbeing of mothers of children with special needs is a complicated and very human subject. It lies at the upmost of chronic adjustment, stress, hope, and responsibility. According to Carol Ryff, there are certain dimensions of psychological wellbeing which tends to be affected are self-acceptance which entails having a good outlook on oneself, recognizing one's talents and limitations, and accepting one's prior life experiences, The capacity to build warm, dependable, and fulfilling interpersonal connections that are marked by compassion, understanding, and empathy is known as positive relationships with others. Autonomy is the capacity to control conduct in accordance with one's own standards rather than those of others, as well as a sense of independence and self-determination. Environmental mastery is a measure of a person's ability to efficiently manage daily life, take advantage of possibilities in their surroundings, and design environments that suit their requirements, wherein Personal growth stresses ongoing development, openness to new experiences, and the sensation of gradually reaching one's potential and Purpose in Life including objectives, direction, and a sense of meaning that give life importance.

Mothers of children with special needs may have lower levels of resilience because persistent, long-term stressors constantly drain resilience, not because they lack strength, the pressures of providing care can weaken this ability. Chronic and unrelieved stress, caregiver burnout, a lack of social and emotional support, ongoing worry about the child's future, emotional suppression, and guilt are the reasons for the decreased resilience.

*Parameswari, S., & Eljo, J. O. J. G. (2016).* Conducted a study on psychological well-being among the parents of children with intellectual and experimental disabilities under IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science. They studied the position of cerebral well-being among the parents of children with intellectual and experimental disabilities, In this study the results shows that further than partial 56.8 of the repliers are having low position of cerebral good.

*Sinha, D., Verma, N., et.al, (2016).* In their study of parenthood styles, maternal stress and adaptability among parents of children having autism complaint, parents of children having specific learning complaint and parents of children not diagnosed with any psychiatric complaint in the Annals of International Medical and Dental Research, the results concludes perceived position of stress in a parent is affected by the type of disability, time spent with the child and gender of the parent and child whereas maternal adaptability is affected by parenthood styles.

*Rajan, A. M. (2016).* In his exploration on adaptability and impact of children's intellectual disability on Indian parents, in the Journal of Intellectual Disabilities, the results revealed that parenthood a child with intellectual disability posed them with both positive and negative factors. Their evaluations about the condition of the child significantly told their

## **An Assessment of Psychological Wellbeing and Resilience in Mothers of Children with Special Needs**

adaptability. The positive comprehensions about the child's disability operated as a defensive element, whereas their negative evaluations acted as a threat element of adaptability.

*Mohan, R., & Kulkarni, M. (2018)*, Studied adaptability in Parents of Children with Intellectual Disabilities, under *Psychology and Developing Societies*, The ideal of this study was to understand the experience of parents of children with intellectual disabilities. The narratives were analysed using the predicated proposition system and the dominant themes with respect to adaptability that surfaced were acceptance, cognitive adaption, positive affect (PA), social support and self-efficacy.

A study by *Rakap, S., & Vural- Batık, M. (2023)*, the impact of family burden on cerebral health in parents of children with special requirements, softening goods of adaptability and social support, under *Journal of applied exploration in intellectual disabilities*, results revealed negative associations between adaptability, social support, and depression- anxiety symptoms. Both adaptability and social support played moderating places in the association between family burden and cerebral health. The study highlights the negative goods of family burden on the cerebral health of parents of children with disabilities, but also suggests that adaptability and social support can alleviate these goods.

*Yıldırım, A., Kumaş, Ö., & Yazıcıoğlu, T. (2024)*, In their work on Social support, adaptability and life satisfaction in families with special requirements children. Under *Journal of pediatric nursing*, This study aimed to probe the intricate connections among adaptability, life satisfaction, and perceived social support in Turkish families raising children with special requirements, emphasizing the significance of understanding these variables for enhancing family well- being. The findings revealed a positive correlation between life satisfaction and adaptability among these families and a strong association between perceived social support and life satisfaction.

*Kodakkadan, Fathima (2024)*, in their work on Stress and adaptability in parents of autistic children- across-cultural exploration, under *Anglia Ruskin Research Online (ARRO)*. The study was aimed at examining maternal responses to stress and adaptability and contributing factors in a sample of parents of autistic children from the UK and India using a mixed-styles design. The findings indicate that the reported position of maternal stress is advanced, and adaptability is lower in the Indian sample as compared with their UK counterparts. Factors contributing to elevated stress and lower adaptability among Indian parents included poorer internal health, lower perceived social support, advanced position of negative maternal station towards the child.

*Begum, Y. & Sudhakar, G. (2024)*, In their work on Anxiety and Stress among Parents of Children with Intellectual Disability, published under *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, The purpose of the study is to determine anxiety and stress position among parents of children with intellectual disability and also to find significant difference in anxiety and stress situations grounded on demographic variables( gender, age, education, family type, occupation and profitable status). The result indicated a significant difference in anxiety and stress situations among parents with respect to gender. Also, there's a significant positive correlation between anxiety and stress situations of parents of children with intellectual disability.

## **An Assessment of Psychological Wellbeing and Resilience in Mothers of Children with Special Needs**

*Priya, P. F., Bhavanani, A. B., et.al, (2025).* In their work on Mental Health Status of Maternal Caregivers of Special requirements Children in Puducherry. Under the Rambam Maimonides medical journal, This exploration aimed to give perceptivity into the cerebral well- being of maternal caregivers, slipping light on their challenges and requirements for better support and intervention, the result shows that the stress of managing their child's requirements can negatively impact maternal caregivers' physical and cerebral health. furnishing comforting and promoting healthy life choices can significantly enhance caregivers' overall well- being.

Another study by *Sudeep, P.K. & Venkatesan, S,( 2025)*, on Resilience, Self- Compassion, and Quality of Life Among Indian Parents of Children and Adolescents with Cerebral Paralysis, published under International Journal of Indian Psychology, This study aimed to assess the situations of adaptability, self-compassion, and quality of life among parents of children and adolescents with CP in Karnataka, India, and examine how these cerebral coffers relate to caregivers' well- being. Results revealed moderate- to-high situations of adaptability and self-compassion among caregivers, with significant associations between advanced adaptability and better cerebral and environmental QoL.

### **Objectives**

1. To assess the psychological wellbeing of mothers of children with special needs.
2. To measure the resilience ability in these mothers.
3. To assess the relationship between Psychological Wellbeing and Resilience.

### **Hypothesis**

1. **H0.** There is no significant positive relationship between resilience and psychological wellbeing in mothers of children with special needs.
2. **H1.** There is a significant positive relationship between resilience and psychological wellbeing in mothers of children with special needs.

### **Variables**

- Independent variable- IV Psychological wellbeing
- Dependent Variable- DV Resilience Ability.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample**

Non- probability purposive sampling method consisting the sample of 30 mothers of children with Autism spectrum disorder or intellectual disability, between the age criteria of 25-40 yrs, selected from the private NGOs and registered clinics.

### **Inclusion criteria**

- The mothers between the age criteria of 25-40 yrs.
- The mothers of the children with Autism spectrum disorder or intellectual disability.

### **Exclusion criteria**

- In the study the father or the other caregivers are not included.
- The study does not include the mothers of children with other developmental disorders.
- Mothers with any diagnostic psychological conditions are not included.

## An Assessment of Psychological Wellbeing and Resilience in Mothers of Children with Special Needs

### *Tools Used*

- 1. Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being-** Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB), 54-item medium form, developed by Carol Ryff (1989), is a multidimensional measure of well-being that goes beyond happiness and life satisfaction. It emphasizes positive functioning and human development. It has 6 Dimensions: Autonomy – independence, self-determination, ability to resist social pressures. Environmental Mastery – ability to manage life situations and surroundings. Personal Growth – openness to new experiences, continuous development. Positive Relations with Others – warm, trusting interpersonal relationships. Purpose in Life – having goals, sense of direction, meaning. Self-Acceptance – positive attitude toward oneself, acceptance of strengths and weaknesses. Test usually uses a 6-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree), its reliability test–Retest reported to be 0.81–0.85 over 6 weeks (Ryff, 1989), Indicates reasonable stability over time. The test's Validity shows Criterion Validity with Higher PWB scores linked to better physical health, lower stress hormones, healthier biomarkers (e.g., cortisol, inflammation), and longevity. Predicts resilience and positive adaptation in different life contexts. And Cross-Cultural Validity where the scale has been validated in multiple countries and languages (e.g., English, Hindi, Chinese, Spanish). Factor structures sometimes differ, but the six-dimensional model is generally supported.
- 2. Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ)-**The Nicholson Mc Bride Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ) is a widely used self-report tool designed to measure resilience—an individual's capacity to cope effectively with stress, pressure, and adversity. It was developed by psychologist Dr. Derek Mowbray through Nicholson McBride Resilience, a UK-based consultancy. It is a 12-item questionnaire, Response Type is a 5-point Likert scale (from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*). The Dimensions Measured are Confidence – belief in one's abilities to handle challenges, Adaptability – ability to adjust to changing circumstances, Purposefulness – having clear goals and direction, Social Support – capacity to seek and maintain supportive relationships, Problem-solving – skills in tackling difficulties constructively. Its scoring and Interpretation are, Scores typically range from 0–60, Higher scores indicate greater resilience, Interpretations are often grouped (e.g., *very resilient*, *resilient*, *moderately resilient*, *vulnerable*). The NMRQ has been shown to demonstrate good internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  around 0.85 in some studies). It has face validity and construct validity, being aligned with resilience theory and correlating with stress, wellbeing, and coping measures.

### *Procedure and Statistical Analysis*

The sample was collected the mothers with children having autism spectrum disorder or intellectual disability are been firstly assessed on the psychological wellbeing variable with the help of Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being, and then they were assessed with their resilience ability by using Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ), data was analysed using Pearson's  $r$ , correlation method to assess the of relationship between psychological well-being, and resilience.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Table no.1.1 shows the mean average score, of the psychological well being among the mother's of the children with special needs.

Sno.	Category	Mean Score
1	Autonomy	3.48
2	Environmental Mastery	3.50
3	Personal Growth	4.03
4	Positive Relations	3.38
5	Purpose In Life	4.15
6	Self-Acceptance	3.29

Table no.1.1 shows the mean average score, of the psychological well being among the mother's of the children with special needs.

Where the results shows the, score of 3.48, 3.50, 3.38, 4.15, 3.29, in the areas of Autonomy, Environmental mastery, Personal relations with others, and Self Acceptance, indicating moderate or average level of psychological wellbeing in these areas, whereas the table also shows the score of 4.03, and 4.15, in areas of Personal Growth, and purpose in life, indicating high or above average level of psychological wellbeing, in the mothers of children with Special needs, as represented by graph 1.1.

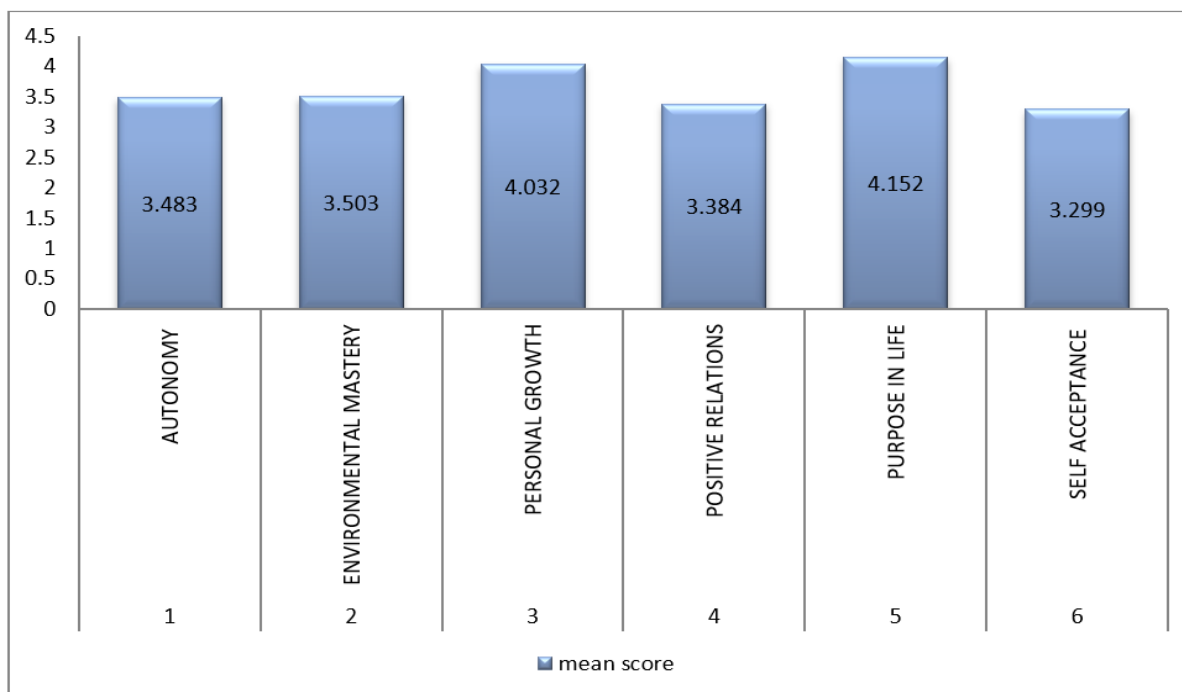
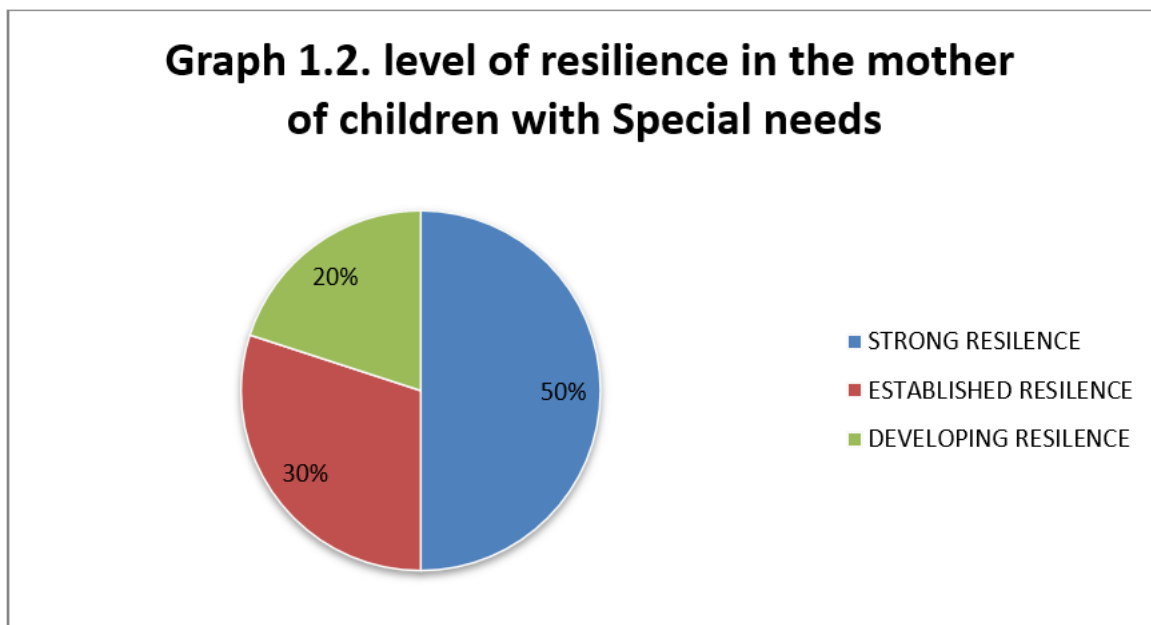


Table 1.2 showing the level of resilience in the mother of children with Special needs.

Sno.	Scorer's Category	Resilience Level	No. of Participants	Percentage
1	0-37	Developing Resilience	15	50%
2	38-43	Established Resilience	9	30%
3	44-48	Strong Resilience	6	20%

## An Assessment of Psychological Wellbeing and Resilience in Mothers of Children with Special Needs

The above table depicts the level of resilience in the mother of children with Special needs, where the results revealed that the mothers do show the ability to Resilience in life with the difficulties they are facing, but at the different category, the table shows that 50% of women's shows the developing level of resilience, 30% indicating the established phase of resilience and 20% demonstrating the strong Resilience phase, yet the population of concern didn't had the exceptional level of resilience, represented by graph 1.2.



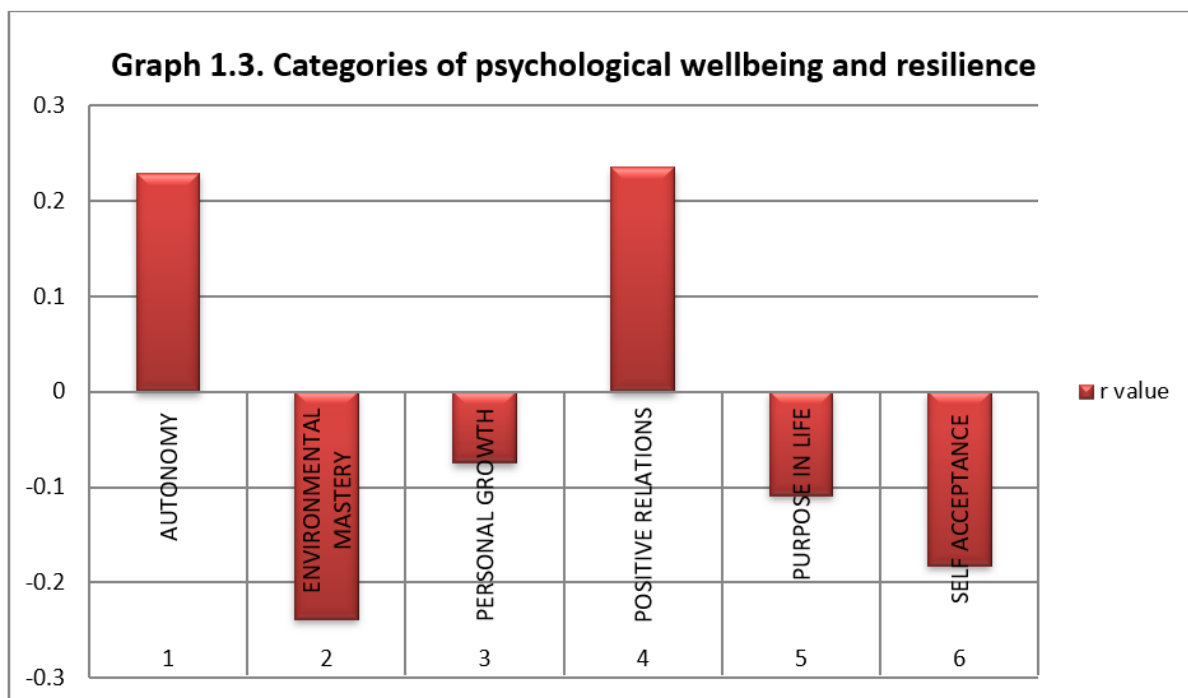
*Table no.1.3 shows the correlation between the different variables of psychological wellbeing with level of Resilience.*

Sno.	Psychological Wellbeing	r Value
1	Autonomy	0.229
2	Environmental Mastery	-0.238
3	Personal Growth	-0.074
4	Positive Relations	0.235
5	Purpose In Life	-0.108
6	Self-Acceptance	-0.182

*N= 30, df= N-2= 30-2= 28. \*P< 0.05= 0.361, \*\*P<0.01=0.463.*

Table no.1.3 shows the correlation between the different variables of psychological wellbeing with the Resilience phase the mother is in, where the results revealed the correlation between the variables but not to a greater extent, where the results show the positive correlation in the areas of Autonomy and positive relations with others, with the score of 0.229, and 0.235, the results show the negative correlation between the variables such as environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life and self Acceptance, with the score of -0.238, -0.074, -0.108, and -0.182, shown in graph 1.3.

## An Assessment of Psychological Wellbeing and Resilience in Mothers of Children with Special Needs



### DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to assess the psychological wellbeing of the mothers of children with Special needs, and assessing and identifying the varied levels of resilience besides evaluating the correlation between them, results obtained revealed that the mothers had moderate or average level of psychological wellbeing in the areas of Autonomy indicating the extent to which the mother viewed herself as being independent and depicted ability to resist social pressures. Also, They seemed concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others and relied on judgments of others to make important decisions, conforms to social pressures and to think and act in certain ways. The moderate score in the area of environmental mastery meant the Lack of sufficient ability or moderate extent to managing everyday affairs feels unable to change or improve surrounding context, and at times is unaware of surrounding opportunities, lacks sense of control over external world.

The average score obtained in maintaining positive relations with others, implied that the mothers faces a little difficulty in trusting others, found it difficult to be warm, open, and concerned about others, is isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships, unwillingness to make compromises to sustain important ties with others. The average score in self-Acceptance meant feeling dissatisfied with self, is disappointed with what has occurred in past life, feels troubled about certain personal qualities, and wished to be different than what he or she was. The High scores in the area of personal Growth meant a feeling of continued development looks forward for new things, sees herself as growing and expanding as the child's health's favors, and is open to new age experiences, and challenges she faced, had sense of realization of her potentials, saw improvement in self and behavior over time, and was changed in ways that reflect more self-knowledge and effectiveness for her child. The High scores in the area of purpose in life depicted the goals in life and a sense of directedness, the ability of mothers to hold beliefs that give life purpose, with aims and objectives for living.

## An Assessment of Psychological Wellbeing and Resilience in Mothers of Children with Special Needs

The varying levels of resilience emphasized that the mothers have the ability to resilient in life despite the immediate and permanent problems they are facing with their children's, revealing sufficient ability to not always feel at the mercy of events, they had in fact benefited significantly from developing aspects of your behavior. And with some mothers established a phase where they do not give up on any small things rather tries to build paths for their current situations and wellbeing. Wherein the results also shows that some of them even set records of keeping themselves up in all the struggles they are facing and still being trying to go with the flow with accepting the child's developing conditions.

The result also shows the correlation between the psychological wellbeing and resilience ability was found to be there, whereas the score seems too weak to be significant with the values as  $N=30$ ,  $df=N-2=30-2=28$ .  $*P<0.05=0.361$ ,  $**P<0.01=0.463$ .

It can be concluded from the study that psychological wellbeing in the mothers of children with Special needs depicted the improved areas of Personal Growth and purpose in life, with sufficient ability to feel resilience and to resiliently deal with the problems they face in life, and indicates correlation between the psychological wellbeing and resilience ability of them.

### **Limitations of the Study**

- In correspondence with the sample size.
- The sample of other developmental disorders were not taken into consideration.

### **Future Implications of the Study**

- The study can also be used with other caregivers as their variables.
- Further generalization can also be made by using a larger sample size.
- The study can be an effective example for building resilience and improving the psychological well being of mother's.
- The study can be applied in the settings for therapeutic purpose.

## **REFERENCES**

- Begum, Y. & Sudhakar, G. (2024). Anxiety and Stress among Parents of Children with Intellectual Disability. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(3), 3109-3120. DOI: 10.25215/1203.301 <https://www.ijip.in>.
- Cheng, S., Li, X., & Deng, M. (2024). The resilience of parents of children with intellectual disabilities: An effort from self-regulation and career burnout. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 50(4), e13286. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.13286>.
- Hefferon, K., & Boniwell, I. (2019). *Positive psychology: Theory, research and applications* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Kodakkadan, Fathima (2024). Stress and resilience in parents of autistic children - cross-cultural research. Anglia Ruskin Research Online (ARRO). Thesis. <https://hdl.handle.net/10779/aru.25342672.v1>.
- Kumar, K., & Deepalatha, R. (2019). Resilience and Vulnerability in Parents of Child with Intellectual Disability (ID). *International Journal of Health Sciences and Research*, 9(5), 322-331.
- Kumaraswamy, H. (2023). *The impact of perceived social support on psychological distress among parents of children with developmental delay* (M.Phil. dissertation, NIEPMD, Chennai). Retrieved from <https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s33837a451cd0abc5ce4069304c5442c87/uploads/2024/11/202411041739949916.pdf>

## An Assessment of Psychological Wellbeing and Resilience in Mothers of Children with Special Needs

- Mohan, R., & Kulkarni, M. (2018). Resilience in Parents of Children with Intellectual Disabilities. *Psychology and Developing Societies*, 30(1), 19-43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0971333617747321>
- Parameswari, S., & Eljo, J. O. J. G. (2016). A study on psychological well-being among the parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 21, 8-12.
- Priya, P. F., Bhavanani, A. B., Ramanathan, M., Subramaniam, K., Sarkar, S., & Lokeshmaran, A. (2025). Mental Health Status of Parental Caregivers of Special Needs Children in Puducherry. *Rambam Maimonides medical journal*, 16(3), e0016. <https://doi.org/10.5041/RMMJ.10551>
- Rajan, A. M. (2016). Resilience and impact of children's intellectual disability on Indian parents. *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities: JOID*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744629516654588>.
- Rakap, S., & Vural-Batik, M. (2023). Mitigating the impact of family burden on psychological health in parents of children with special needs: Buffering effects of resilience and social support. *Journal of applied research in intellectual disabilities: JARID*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.13179>.
- Sinha, D., Verma, N., & Hershe, D. (2016). A comparative study of parenting styles, parental stress and resilience among parents of children having autism spectrum disorder, parents of children having specific learning disorder and parents of children not diagnosed with any psychiatric disorder. *Annals of International Medical and Dental Research*, 2(4), 106-111.
- Snyder, C. R., & Lopez, S. J. (2007). *Positive psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Snyder, C. R., & Lopez, S. J. (Eds.). (2002). *Handbook of positive psychology*. Oxford University Press.
- Sudeep, P.K. & Venkatesan, S. (2025). Resilience, Self-Compassion, and Quality of Life Among Indian Parents of Children and Adolescents with Cerebral Palsy. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 13(2), 4070-4082. DIP:18.01.360.20251302, DOI:10.25215/1302.360.
- Yıldırım, A., Kumaş, Ö., & Yazıcıoğlu, T. (2024). Social support, resilience and life satisfaction in families with special needs children. *Journal of pediatric nursing*, 80, 16-23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedn.2024.11.001>.

### **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:** Patidar, S. & Ghani, S. (2026). An Assessment of Psychological Wellbeing and Resilience in Mothers of Children with Special Needs. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 14(1), 1492-1501. DIP:18.01.147.20261401, DOI:10.25215/1401.147