

Research Paper

## Resilience and Perceived Stress among Siblings of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Correlational Study

Raseena A.<sup>1\*</sup>, Manoj R.<sup>2</sup>, Abida K<sup>3</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Siblings of individuals with intellectual disabilities often face emotional difficulties. These struggles might affect their daily experience. Stress tends to build quietly, even when nothing seems wrong. This research looks into whether resilience is linked to less stress in these siblings. 150 participants took part and answered two sets of questions designed to measure inner strength and daily stress. How each person handled pressure was matched against their ability to stay strong during hard times. Patterns began appearing once all answers were gathered. Some stayed calm without much effort. Others felt strain more deeply. A form asking about personal background was completed by everyone involved. When looked at through SPSS (software for studying numbers) the link appeared between how resilient someone was and how much stress they felt, focusing on siblings of individuals who are facing challenges.

**Keywords:** Resilience, perceived stress, siblings, intellectual disability, psychological well-being

Intellectual Disability is a long-term developmental condition that influences a person's thinking, learning ability, communication and everyday functioning. The condition usually becomes noticeable in early childhood when an individual shows delay in learning, language development, and problem-solving and social skills. Intellectual disability has an estimated prevalence of around 1–3% worldwide. The effect is not limited to the person however; it has wide-ranging impact on functioning of whole family. Parents often adjust their daily lives, emotional states and responsibilities to accommodate the individual with intellectual disability, while siblings also become an important part of family support system. Family roles and expectations often shift in families of typically developing siblings of individuals with ID. They might have to take on more responsibility, get less attention from their parents or face emotional issues because from their brother's or sister's condition. Such daily experiences and events can shape their psychological functioning, social interactions, and identity formation. While some siblings do indeed acquire empathy, maturity and a greater sense of responsibility through these experiences, others can be left with worries about their sibling's future and social stigma plus the stress of juggling personal needs maybe in direct conflict with family expectations.

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Dr. M.G.R Educational and Research Institute

<sup>2</sup>Head of the Department, Department of Psychology, Dr. M.G.R Educational and Research Institute

<sup>3</sup>Deputy Head – Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Dr. M.G.R Educational and Research Institute

\*Corresponding Author

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## **Resilience and Perceived Stress among Siblings of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Correlational Study**

Perceived stress is an important psychological factor influencing such experiences. It describes how people perceive and assess the demands and challenges in their lives. Siblings often go through stress related to caregiving responsibilities, a minimal parent presence, social stigma and stress over their sibling's behavior or long-term future. Not everyone handles stress in the same way. Each person has their own coping strategies and many siblings build resilience which helps them remain emotionally stable while dealing with challenges. Resiliency helps individuals manage stressors and Social support from family; friends and the wider community can enhance resilience and help relieve stress. Cultural factor also matter; for instance, given the strong family ties often mean that sibling support each other emotionally.

There has been growing research around intellectual disability over the years but little attention has been given to siblings, particularly in India. However, most of the research has been mainly focused on parental stress without exploring the psychological experience of siblings. Understanding this relationship is important because siblings tend to be lifelong sources of support within the family therefore they have more commitment towards their siblings with intellectual disability this expectation is insisted from an early age such pressure increase the stress and that leads to health issue.

One reason this research exists is to look at how resilience connects with stress in siblings of individuals who have intellectual disabilities. Instead of focusing only on challenges, it checks how these siblings manage emotional weight along with daily hurdles. To gather data, we have handed out two forms: one called PSQ-30, which measures perceived stress, another named CD-RISC-25, built to track resilience under pressure. The findings of the study provide useful insights. Counselors, teachers and parents can use this information to support siblings and promote their emotional wellbeing.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

One hundred eighteen sibling parent pairs participated in the research led by Adelia, H., Agustini, N., and Apriyanti, E. (2025), drawn from Indonesian special education school. These siblings were between seven and seventeen years old. Instead of interviews, researchers used written surveys to understand personal strengths during difficult situation. Alongside resilience, they looked closely at spiritual beliefs, care from others around them, and how parents guide their children. What stood out was how deeply inner belief shaped a child's ability to cope more than any other element studied. Support networks also mattered, yet not quite as much as private moments of faith or reflection. Parenting ways played a clear role too, especially those rooted in warmth and consistency. Culture soaked into every layer, quietly shaping responses and reactions within families raising multiple children, one with challenges. Though measured together, each factor carried its own weight in building emotional toughness.

Looking into siblings of people with developmental challenges, Alon (2025) checked how stress shows up depending on gender, kind of disability, and religious belief. A total of 465 siblings both men and women took part by filling out standard surveys about their feelings, stress levels, and personal faith. Males experienced more strain than females. When the disabled sibling had autism or cerebral palsy, the stress ran deeper than when Down syndrome was involved. Faith practices and where a person comes from seemed to ease some of the pressure faced. Background beliefs often softened the weight siblings carried.

## Resilience and Perceived Stress among Siblings of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Correlational Study

Looking into teens with siblings facing intellectual disabilities, Sun Xiaohui and Zhou Mingyang pulled together 27 pieces of research covering 1,414 young people. Though some feelings ran deep in both good ways and tough ones, how each teen handled things varied widely. Family closeness mattered so did whether parents made time, what kind of help came from others, how children managed stress, plus how strong the disability was. Support at home or through services often shaped inner strength more than expected. When care systems stepped in thoughtfully, emotional balance tended to follow.

Hayden, N. K., along with Hastings, R. P., Totsika, V., and Langley, E., took a close look at how older brothers and sisters manage emotionally when growing up alongside a child who has an intellectual disability or not. Instead of grouping everyone together, they separated families into two distinct sets: one featuring 257 siblings living with a brother or sister who has intellectual disabilities, another including 7,246 whose siblings do not. Aged from 5 to 15 here caregivers stepped in by filling out the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, known as SDQ, giving insight into daily struggles and strengths. Unlike what some assume, life wasn't easier across the board; those sharing a home with a disabled sibling tended to report more emotional strain and behavior related hurdles. Though differences existed it showed when home life played a bigger role. Support that centers on the whole family seemed to lift siblings' spirits.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Problem statement***

When one person in a family has intellectual disabilities, their siblings sometimes carry quiet struggles. Though these feelings weigh heavily, they're seldom talked about. Looking closely at how they cope reveals unnoticed strength. Support grows clearer when we see both strain and endurance together.

#### ***Aim***

Looking at how one sibling handles tough moments might tell us something about their resilience and stress levels when their siblings have intellectual disabilities. This research examines whether higher resilience, reflected in bounce back easily and if this links to stress.

#### ***Objectives***

1. To find the level of perceived stress among siblings of individuals with intellectual disabilities.
2. To find the level of resilience of siblings of individuals with intellectual disabilities.
3. To find out if there is a relationship between Stress and resilience among siblings of people with intellectual disabilities.

#### ***Hypotheses***

H1: There is a significant relationship between resilience and stress among siblings of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

#### ***Research design***

This study uses quantitative research to explore how closely the variables are linked among the siblings of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

## Resilience and Perceived Stress among Siblings of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Correlational Study

### *Sample and sampling technique*

Among those studied were 150 siblings of individuals identified with learning challenges. Selection happened through purposive sampling, based on each person's willingness to join.

### **Inclusion criteria**

1. Siblings of individuals diagnosed with Intellectual Disability.
2. The participants aged seven or older, who had grown up around a brother or sister with Intellectual disabilities. Not everyone joined only those who could share clear answers made it into the group.
3. The participants whoever can understand English well enough to fill out the forms. The participants stepping forward on their own, agreeing clearly after understanding what they were part of.

### **Exclusion criteria**

1. People who do not have siblings with intellectual disability.
2. Sometimes siblings hardly talk to the one who has an intellectual disability.
3. People found the forms confusing. Others simply could not finish them. Those people opting out of the research right away.
4. Participants who do not show involvement or permission when asked.

### *Variables of the study*

- Independent Variable – resilience (factor that influence)
- Dependent Variable – perceived stress level (outcome that changes based on the situation)

### *Statistical analysis*

The analysis happened through IBM SPSS Statistics, version 20. Because normal distribution wasn't present across variables, non-parametric methods followed after normality checks. Descriptive statistics were measured like frequencies, percentages, averages, spreads, middle values, and range spans were worked out for both group traits and test results. To see how resilience linked with stress, Spearman's method ranked connections, with significance set at a 0.05.

### *Tools used*

- a) Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ; Levenstein et al., 1993)
- b) Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25; Connor & Davidson)

### *Tool description*

- a) **Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ):** Starting off, the PSQ - developed by Levenstein and team back in 1993 - holds thirty questions about how often someone deals with stressful thoughts, emotions, or scenarios during regular days. Instead of ticking boxes blindly, each item lands on a four-level range going from Almost, sometime, often and usually. What it picks up includes emotional tension, mental load, along with bodily signs tied to feeling stressed. A handful of entries question numbers like 1, 7, 10, plus others sprinkled throughout are flipped when scoring. After adding everything, minus thirty then divided by ninety turns the sum into what's called the PSQ Index. The final score places people into low, medium or high stress level.

## Resilience and Perceived Stress among Siblings of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Correlational Study

- b) **Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25):** The Connor and Davidson CD-RISC-25 test made of twenty-five questions. Each answer gets marked between zero (Not true at all) to four (True nearly all the time). All points added together give a total from zero to one hundred bigger the number, the stronger someone handles pressure.

### *Procedure*

From special schools, rehabilitation center, or therapy clinics 150 sibling of individuals with intellectual disabilities were participated in this research. Selection happened on purpose, matching research needs plus personal willingness to join. Before anything started, each person heard clear details about the research goal, privacy rules, and freedom to step away anytime. Everyone agreed they understood and agreed. A short background survey went first, then two well-known mental health tools followed: the CD-RISC-25 checked how tough things feel when life pushes hard; the PSQ looked at daily stress levels people noticed themselves. Twenty minutes stood as the average time needed for finishing the forms. Once gathered entered in software made by IBM, known as SPSS Statistics at version 20. From there, a method called Spearman’s rank-order correlation measured how closely resilience linked with stress among participants.

## RESULTS

This section presents data gathered to examine how resilience connects with stress in siblings of individuals with intellectual disabilities. From Chennai, 150 individuals joined the research; each had a sibling facing intellectual disabilities who were ready to participate.

Split into six categories (7–12, 13–18, 19–25, 26–40, 41–65, plus anyone past 65) the people covered life’s circle. From childhood through later years showed up in each slice.

The collected data were shown through basic statistics and tables. At its core, the study checks how people rate their stress against their ability to bounce back. Whether stress levels often link with resilience. Any difference caused because of sex.

### BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE POPULATION

*Table 4.1.1: Age Distribution of the Sample (N=150)*

**Table 4.1.1:** what is your age?

Age	Frequency	Percent
7-12	1	0.7
13-18	8	5.3
19-25	59	39.3
26-40	49	32.7
41-65	33	22.0
65+	0	0

Looking at Table 4.1.1, the spread of ages among those taking part becomes clear. A large share is between 19 and 25 years nearly two out of every five (39.3%). Next, set of participants are from 26 to 40 years (32.7%). Those aged 41 to 65 represent slightly less than one-quarter (22.0%), only about (5.3%) fall into the 13–18 range. Even smaller (0.7%) is the number of children aged 7 to 12, not a single individual was recorded above 65.

**Resilience and Perceived Stress among Siblings of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Correlational Study**

**Table 4.1.2: Gender Distribution of the samples (N=150)**

**Table 4.1.2:** what is your gender?

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	49	32.7
Female	101	67.3

Looking at Table 4.1.2, the breakdown by gender becomes clear. A majority of those involved identify as women (67.3%) nearly two-thirds. In contrast just under one-third report being men (32.7%).

**Table 4.1.3: Levels of intellectual disability of the siblings (N=150)**

**Table 4.1.3:** what is the level of intellectual disability of your siblings?

<b>level of intellectual disability of your siblings</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Mild	40	26.7
Moderate	50	33.3
Severe	50	33.3
Profound	5	3.3
Don't knows/ not informed	5	3.3

Table 4.1.3 presents how intellectual disability levels are spread across the siblings of those involved in the study. Both moderate and severe level of intellectual disability were equally represented each accounting for (33.3%) of the participants siblings. Mild cases come next, making up nearly a quarter at (26.7%). At the lower end, only (3.3%) fall into the profound category; another (3.3%) selected "unsure" when asked about their sibling's condition level.

**Table 4.1.4: Birth order of the sample (N=150)**

**Table 4.1.4:** what is your birth order?

<b>Birth order</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Elder child	54	36
Younger child	77	51.3
Middle child	19	12.7

Looking at Table 4.1.4, birth order reveals a clear pattern among participants. Younger siblings make up just over half of the group specifically (51.3%). Coming after them are those who are older than their siblings, accounting for (36.0%). Meanwhile, middle born siblings represent only (12.7%).

**Table 4.1.5: Social economic status of the sample (N=150)**

**Table 4.1.5:** what is your Social economic status?

<b>Social economic status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Low	14	9.3
Middle	124	82.7
High	12	8

Looking at Table 4.1.5, we see how participants are spread across economic levels. A large share (82.7%) falls into the middle socio-economic status category. Those with lower socio-economic standing make up just under one-tenth (9.3%). The highest group accounts for (8.0%).

**Resilience and Perceived Stress among Siblings of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Correlational Study**

**Table 4.2.1 indicates the descriptive statistics**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Gender	150	1	2	1.67	.493
TOTAL PSQ	150	52	120	100.32	19.021
TOTAL CDRS	150	35	100	79.49	14.058
Valid N (listwise)	150				

Look at Table 4.2.1 it shows how stress and resilient people felt. On average stress score (TOTAL PSQ) at 100.32 (SD = 19.02) with scores spread between 52 and 120, and most participants reported high strain ranging from 52 to 120. Just 5 rated their stress as low, while 34 fell into the moderate stress and 111 had high stress. Resilience mean score was (TOTAL CDRS) 79.49 (SD = 14.06), hitting a lowest point at 35 and peaking at 100, Only 10 (6.7%) struggled with staying strong under stress, 31 (20.7%) managed okay when things got tough. And 109 (72.7%) handled challenges well, standing firm through difficulty.

**Table 4.2.2 indicates the Test of Normality**

	<b>Kolmogorov- smirnov<sup>a</sup></b>			<b>Shapiro-Wilk</b>		
	<b>Statistic</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Statistic</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
TOTAL PSQ	.195	150	.000	.830	150	.000
TOTAL CDRS	.205	150	.000	.846	150	.000

Table 4.2.2 indicates tests of normality were conducted to determine the distribution of perceived stress and resilience scores. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests indicated that both perceived stress and resilience scores significantly deviated from normal distribution ( $p < .001$ ). Therefore, non-parametric statistical tests were employed for further analysis.

**Table 4.2.3 indicate Relationship between Resilience and Perceived Stress  
Nonparametric Correlations  
Spearman’s rho**

	<b>TOTAL PSQ</b>	<b>TOTAL CDRS</b>
<b>TOTAL PSQ</b>		
Correlation coefficient	1.000	.523**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
N	150	150
<b>TOTAL CDRS</b>		
Correlation Coefficient	.523**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
N	150	150

**\*\*.** *The Correlation was found to be statistically significant at the 0.01 level.*

To look at how resilience connects with perceived stress, Spearman’s rho correlation was used. A clear positive correlation showed up higher stress often came alongside higher resilience ( $\rho = .523, p < .01$ ). Those facing more stress seemed to build higher resilience inner strength over time. Facing constant care duties and tough emotions might push siblings to adapt by growing more resilient. Stress didn’t block resilience it appeared alongside it.

**Resilience and Perceived Stress among Siblings of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Correlational Study**

**Table 4.2.4 indicates Gender Differences in Perceived Stress**

	<b>TOTAL PSQ</b>
Mann-Whitney U	2040.000
Wilcoxon W	3265.000
Z	-1.743
Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)	.081

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

Females and males showed similar patterns in total PSQ scores when tested with a Mann–Whitney U test. Results landed at  $U = 2040.00$ ,  $Z = -1.743$ ,  $p = .081$  ( $p > .05$ ), no significant difference. Hence, gender does not influence TOTAL PSQ scores.

**Table 4.2.5 indicates Gender Differences in Resilience**

	<b>TOTAL CDRS</b>
Mann-Whitney U	2127.000
Wilcoxon W	3352.000
Z	-1.394
Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)	.163

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

A check using the Mann–Whitney U method looked at total CDRS score differences between males and females. The analysis did not show a statistically significant difference between the two groups. The obtained values were  $U = 2127.00$ ,  $Z = -1.394$  and ( $p > .05$ ). Hence, gender does not have a significant effect on TOTAL CDRS scores.

## **DISCUSSION**

The aim of the present study was to assess resilience and perceived stress in siblings of individuals with intellectual disabilities and whether these variables differed by gender. Parents of individuals with intellectual disabilities may have difficulty coping as well, and siblings are particularly vulnerable. They may have more care giving responsibilities, and feel emotionally connected to their sibling’s illness. These experiences may impact their mental health and so it is important to better understand both the stress they experience and the resilience that develops over time.

The findings indicated that many participants reported a high level of perceived stress. This implies that stress was a stronger part of everyday life for siblings of men with intellectual disability. There could be several reasons for the stress such as continuous care activities at home, emotional attachment with the brother/sister, societal stigma surrounding disability and anxiety about future caregiving. Yet the range of stress levels among participants suggests that individual circumstances matter, too. Family factors like sibling support, personal coping styles and family environment are possible moderators of the way siblings see stressful situations and apply problem-solving interference.

While participants were experiencing a wide range of stress, still there are people reported moderate to high levels of resilience. This shows that siblings are usually able to handle challenges. They may learn to accept situation when things do not go as planned and become more patient and flexible. Over time, living in such environments can silently mold their

## **Resilience and Perceived Stress among Siblings of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Correlational Study**

capacity to handle any worse situation and they are able to manage high-stress situations positively.

Another notable finding of the study was the positive relationship between resilience and perceived stress. The results showed that those who reported more stress also have more resilience. This discovery might suggest siblings facing ongoing care duties slowly grow tougher through practice. Not by removing pressure entirely, but because repeated hardship teaches navigation. Each time family struggles appear again, inner qualities like steady effort, deeper feelings, and calm judgment take root bit by bit. Over months or years, handling these moments builds a sturdier way to respond when life presses hard.

Looking at how gender plays into stress and resilience, the research checked if being male or female changed things for brothers and sisters. No clear gap appeared when comparing boys and girls stress feelings and ability to bounce back stayed about the same across both groups. Growing up along with a sibling with intellectual disability seems to shape emotional experiences in both the genders. Because family duties and close bonds are commonly shared among individuals in many households across India, roles aren't split sharply by gender, possibly explaining why patterns feel so alike.

Sometimes life feels heavy when a brother or sister has an intellectual disability. Still, many individuals find quiet strength through these experiences. Emotions run deep, yet learning to handle them builds inner toughness over time. Support matters - someone listening can make space for honest feelings. When coping skills grow, stress doesn't take over so easily. Guidance helps them understand situation that may feel confusing or difficult. Well-being isn't only about dealing with problem but it also affects how they relate to other people. Stronger siblings often mean calmer homes. Growth happens slowly, even without notice. Help offered today echoes in future moments between family members.

### **CONCLUSION**

This research looked into how resilience connects with felt stress in brothers and sisters of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Raised in these homes, siblings frequently encounter distinct emotional situations. Some step into helper roles, carry shared feelings, yet also deal with outside judgments about their sibling's challenges. Such moments shape the way they handle pressure, build ways to cope and highlight why their mental balance matters.

Results show that when stress goes up, so does resilience. Because life throws more at them, some brothers and sisters grow better at handling pressure. Not by avoiding tough feelings but by moving through them, staying steady becomes possible. With time, people learn to stay calm under pressure, think before reacting, and adjust when plans change suddenly linked to gender. Siblings growing up in the same family usually experience similar pressure. Sharing daily duties might explain why their ways of handling tough moments turn out so alike. Emotions run parallel, shaped more by home life than by gender.

One key takeaway from the research is Siblings of individuals with intellectual disabilities need real emotional care. When they build inner strength, handle tough moments better, their daily life improves family bonds stay strong too. When things get tough, having someone around eases the weight. It takes time to grow strong through challenges progress shows up

## Resilience and Perceived Stress among Siblings of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Correlational Study

in tiny moments. Emotional support plays an important role in their lives. It helps them remain calm and cope better during difficult days.

### *Limitations of the study*

1. A handful of people from one region took part in the research results might not match what happens elsewhere.
2. The data gives some useful information, but it also has limits because of its source. Since participants filled out the survey themselves, some of their answers may have been given to look socially acceptable instead of being completely honest.
3. A snapshot of data gave insight into how resilience links with felt stress right then, yet drawing firm conclusions about what drives what wasn't possible. Though useful for spotting patterns, timing limits ruled out clear cause tracing.
4. One thing missing from the research was tracking how socioeconomic status at home might affect outcomes. Family backing wasn't measured either, even though it could shift what happens.

### *Future scope of the study*

1. One way ahead might involve future teams pulling data from wider areas, mixing urban centers with rural spots so results stretch further. Instead of sticking to familiar groups, scientists could reach people across varied traditions this shift often reveals patterns missed before.
2. Researchers can conduct longitudinal studies to understand how resilience and perceived stress shifts in levels. Tracking these patterns gives a clearer picture of personal struggles through different life stages.
3. Siblings might benefit more when upcoming research builds activities aimed at boosting their ability to handle stress.

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**Resilience and Perceived Stress among Siblings of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Correlational Study**

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***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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