



# PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY MOTHERS OF INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED CHILDREN DURING COVID-19

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**Abstract:** The study investigates the problems experienced by mothers of intellectually disabled children. The sample consisted of 100 mothers of intellectually disabled children enrolled in special educational schools in Jaipur and Udaipur city. Problems of mothers were assessed by questionnaire developed by the investigator. The major findings of the present study point out that in the time of pandemic mothers were facing more psychosocial problems than physical problems.

**Keywords:** Mothers, physical and psychosocial problems, Covid-19.

## INTRODUCTION

Intellectual disability is the currently used term to refer to mental retardation (Einfeld and Emerson 2008). It involves problems with general mental abilities that affect functioning in two areas: intellectual functioning such as problem solving, learning, judgement etc other area is adaptive functioning which includes activities of daily life such as communication, independent living. American Association of Mental Retardation (AAMR) defined "mental retardation, a disability characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills". This term may have different meaning and values for different peoples like parents, friends, relatives, teachers, professionals etc.

The birth of a child with any disability has its own psychological implications on parents specially mothers. Mothers have to face unexpected situations and problems for rest of the life. Problem is not only limited to the child itself but sometimes family, relatives and society also creates problems. Mothers slowly learn to cope with the fact and try to help the child by putting 100% efforts. Special schools play an important role in decreasing the burden of the mothers and in developing basic skills in child.

In present time of covid-19 children are not able to go to the special schools which is creating problems for mothers as they have to look after the child with other responsibilities. It is difficult to take care of an intellectually disabled child as mothers don't have technical knowledge and the can't help it very much. Mothers face physical problems, emotional problems, psychological problems, social problems etc. Till now, there are many studies on problems of mothers of intellectually disabled children but the pandemic is ones in life time situation. Thus, there is a need to carry out this research to discover physical and psychosocial problems mothers are facing in this pandemic so that necessary programs and guidelines can be developed to address the parents of intellectually disabled.

Hence the study is undertaken to understand problems faced by mothers of intellectually disabled children during covid-19.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To explore the physical and psychosocial problems faced by mothers of intellectually disabled children during covid-19.

## METHODOLOGY

The sample of the study was 100 mothers of intellectually disabled children enrolled in coeducational school, 50 mothers from Udaipur and 50 from Jaipur. Random sampling method was used for sample selection. Data was collected through google forms sent on their mail ids and WhatsApp. A questionnaire was prepared by the investigator and was used to assess the physical and psychosocial problems of mothers. By using data percentage, MPS, corelation and chi- square was calculated.

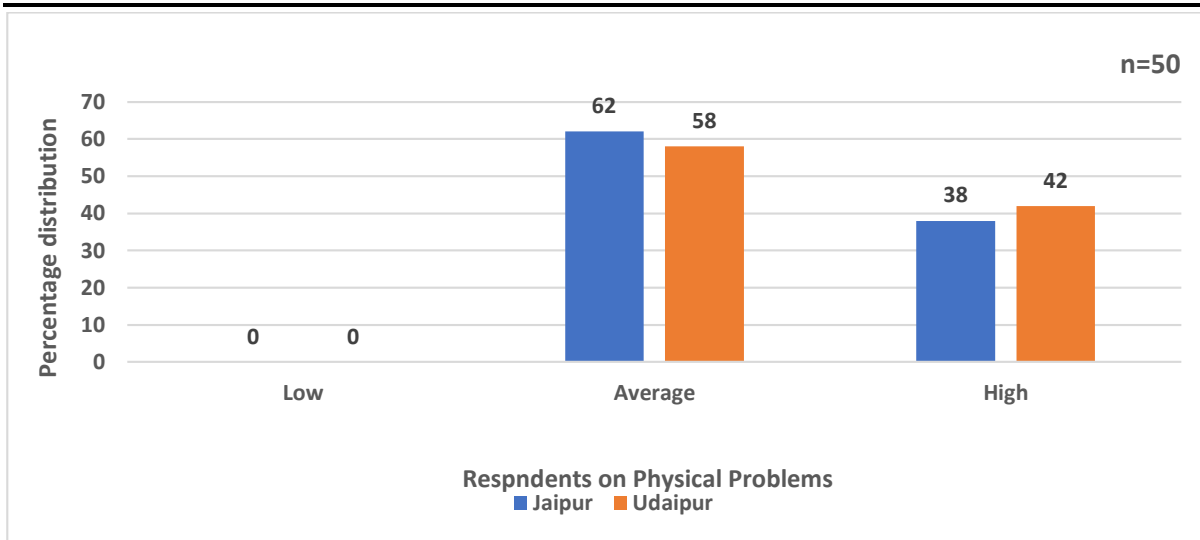
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mothers of intellectually disabled children faced problems on daily basis and these problems were mainly related to their children, family members and sometimes their own issues. Before the time of pandemic, intellectually disabled children of these mothers were getting training and therapies from professionals but Covid-19 pandemic changed a lot. These children were not able to receive required professional help and support. They were also not being able to attend the schools or learning centres. Mothers of these children were affected directly because they had to look after their children, family members and themselves too. This caused physical and psychosocial problems in the mothers of intellectually disabled children.

**Table1: Percentage distribution of respondents on physical problems.**

n=100

Level of physical problems	Jaipur n=50 (%)	Udaipur n=50 (%)	Total n=100 (%)
Low	-	-	-
Average	31 (62)	29 (58)	60
High	19 (38)	21 (42)	40



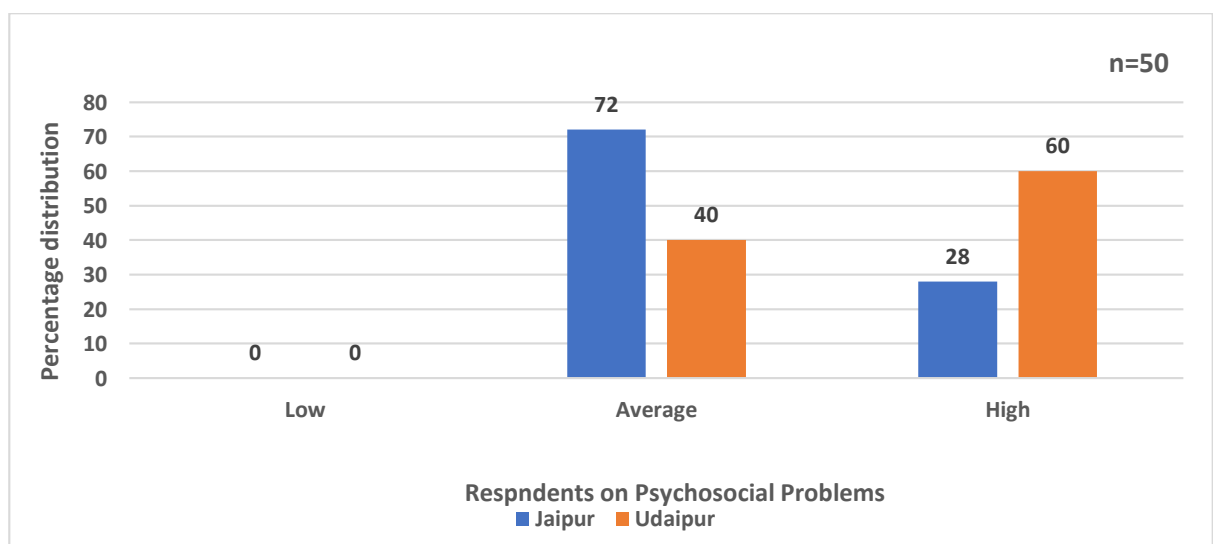
**Fig.1: - Percentage distribution of respondents on physical problems**

- Physical problems-** Physical problems experienced by the mothers of intellectually disabled children in Jaipur and Udaipur were depicted by the data presented in the table 1 and fig.1. Table envisaged that in Jaipur 62 percent of mothers experienced the problem at average level and 38 percent were at higher level of physical problem. Like Jaipur similar trend was noticed in Udaipur that 58 percent mothers faced the problem at average level and 42 percent mothers at high level.

**Table 2: Percentage distribution of respondents on psychosocial problems.**

n=100

Level of psychosocial problems	Jaipur n=50 (%)	Udaipur n=50 (%)	Total n=100 (%)
Low	-	-	-
Average	36 (72)	20 (40)	56
High	14 (28)	30 (60)	44



**Fig.2: - Percentage distribution of respondents on psychosocial problems:**

**Psychosocial problems-** It was noticed in psychosocial problems that mothers of both the cities experienced problems from average to high level. Aforementioned table and fig. envisaged that in Jaipur psychosocial problems were experienced by 72 percent mothers at average level and 28 percent at high level. In Udaipur 40 percent mothers faced psychosocial problem at average level and 60 percent at high level. Thus, number of mothers facing psychosocial problem in high range were higher in Udaipur than those in Jaipur.

**Table3: Physical problems experienced by mothers of intellectually disabled children (MPS)**

n=100

1.	PHYSICAL PROBLEMS:	MPS
1.1	Your daily working routine has been changed as your child is staying at home.	84.4
1.2	Now you need to give more time to your child's daily care.	40.2
1.3	Your physical health gets affected because you need to take care of your child whole day.	69.4
1.4	Due to over burden of work, you feel physical stress.	46.4
1.5	In this period of time are you able to manage time for yoga or exercise.	48.2
1.6	You feel yourself energetic for whole day	49.2
1.7	During this pandemic you had physical health problems	46.6
1.8	Due to more physical work, you lost body weight in this pandemic	59.2
1.9	Due to excessive workload your sleeping pattern has been changed	43.8
1.10	Other family members take care of your child.	78.4
1.11	In this period of time, you had many health-related issues	76
1.12	you feel tired after helping your child in online classes	85
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60.1</b>

The aforementioned table reveals the physical problems experienced by the mothers of intellectually disabled children. In the time of pandemic because children having intellectual disability spent more time at home, mothers faced problems in their daily routine and their percent was 84.4. The percentage was lower i.e., 40.2 in mothers who invested more time in taking care of their children but this percentage increases to 69.4 percent when they invested their whole day in taking care of their children. Less than 50 percent mothers felt energetic for the whole day because of their engagement in yoga, exercise and other physical activity. Period of pandemic caused health related issues among mothers and their percentage was also 76. Overall the physical problems mothers experienced were between the range of 40-85 percent and the total MPS score was 60.1 percent.

**Table 4: Psychosocial problems experienced by mothers of intellectually disabled child (MPS)**

n=100

2.	PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS	MPS
2.1	<b>You are so much occupied with your child that you are not getting time to relax your mind</b>	50.4
2.2	<b>You feel disappointed because your child is not getting any professional help in this period of time.</b>	71.6
2.3	<b>Other family members are neglected because of your over burden</b>	76.8
2.4	<b>You have frequent fight or arguments with your spouse because you are mentally tiered</b>	80
2.5	<b>You feel yourself more irritable and stressful due to the present-day situation</b>	79.2
2.6	<b>Due to busy routine, you are not able to socialize with friends and family members.</b>	58
2.7	<b>You feel stressed when you are not able to help your child with his/her activities</b>	48.6
2.8	<b>You get angry on others without any reason just because of over burden.</b>	73
2.9	<b>You talk to your spouse when feel low because of having so much of responsibility</b>	77
2.10	<b>You feel bad that you are not able to take care of your child as their teachers do.</b>	50.6
2.11	<b>You feel happy that you are having more time with your child.</b>	71.6
2.12	<b>you feel bad when you are not able to attend phone calls or video calls of family members/friends because you are busy</b>	67.4
	<b>TOTAL</b>	67.5

The table 4 clearly envisaged the psychosocial problems faced by the mothers having intellectually disabled children in the time of pandemic situation. Mothers having the highest percentage i.e., 80 percent reported that they felt mental tiredness which leads to frequent fights and arguments with their spouses. Higher frustration, irritability and stress were noticed by 79.2 percent mothers in pandemic period.

Table 4 states that 50 percent mothers didn't feel mentally relaxed because they were so much occupied by their intellectually disabled children. Deficiency in getting professional help for their children caused disappointment among 71.6 percent mothers. It was noticed in 58 percent mothers that their socialisation with family members and friends was affected in negative sense due to their busy routine. Inability to take care of their children and attending phone calls or video calls of family members and friends induced disappointment among 50.6 percent and 67.4 percent mothers respectively. 71.6 percent mothers felt positive when they got sufficient time to spend with their children. It was noticed in 77 percent mothers

that when they felt low because of excessive responsibilities, they interacted with their spouses. 67.5 percent was total MPS calculated for all psychosocial problems.

**Table 5: Correlation of problems experienced by mothers with child's age.**

Sub Aspects	Mothers Age (in years)	Frequency	Mean	SD	Level of Sig.
Physical problems	25-35	64	36.98	3.926	
	36-45	36	34.47	4.766	
	Total	100	36.08	4.394	-.254* 0.05
Psychosocial problems	25-35	64	40.14	4.324	
	36-45	36	41.22	4.022	
	Total	100	40.53	4.229	.068 NS

Table 5 reveals that in case of physical problems slightly higher mean-scores i.e.; 36.11 were obtained by mothers of intellectually disabled children in 7-9 years of age as compared to mothers having the child in 10-12 years of age. Thus, the total mean scores obtained by mothers were 36.08 i.e., medium level of problems.

Similar trend was also noticed in case of psychosocial problems i.e., mothers of intellectually disabled children in 7-9 years age group obtained slightly high mean score i.e., 40.93 in comparison to mothers having 10-12 years old child. The total mean score i.e., 40.53 which showed medium level of problems. Further, mothers also experienced non-significant differences in physical and psychosocial areas of problems with the age of children.

## CONCLUSION

COVID 19 has become a global issue in last one year, it has been recognised to have implications on the health care, social welfare system and have implied restriction in moving place to place, school office, market is partially open. every individual is facing problem in this pandemic. After perusing this research, it is clear that mothers are facing both physical and psychosocial problems in this pandemic. It is seen that mothers are facing more psychosocial problems.

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