

Resilience among Parents of Intellectual Disabled Children with Reference to Socio-Economic Status and Gender

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ABSTRACT

Parents of children with intellectual disabilities often face a variety of emotional, social, and economic challenges while fulfilling their caregiving responsibilities. Resilience plays a crucial role in helping parents adapt positively to these challenges and maintain their psychological well-being. The present study aimed to examine resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities in relation to gender and socioeconomic status. A 2×2 factorial descriptive research design was employed for the study. The sample consisted of 200 parents of children with intellectual disabilities, selected from special schools, inclusive schools, and rehabilitation centers. Data were collected using the Resilience Scale developed by Singh et al. (2016). The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as Mean and Standard Deviation, along with Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed significant differences in resilience with respect to gender and socioeconomic status. Male parents demonstrated higher resilience than female parents, and parents in the high socioeconomic status group exhibited greater resilience than those in the low socioeconomic status group. These results suggest targeted support strategies for female and lower SES parents, which can inform policy and practice to enhance parental resilience and well-being.

Keywords: *Resilience, Parents, Intellectual Disability, Socioeconomic Status, Gender, Children with Intellectual Disabilities*

Parenting a child with intellectual disabilities presents unique challenges that can significantly affect the psychological, social, and emotional well-being of family members. Intellectual disability is characterised by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour, which originate during the developmental period. Children with intellectual disabilities often require continuous support, specialised educational services, healthcare interventions, and assistance in daily living activities. As primary caregivers, parents play a critical role in meeting these needs, often facing greater responsibilities and stress than parents of typically developing children. The diagnosis of intellectual disability in a child often brings profound changes to family dynamics. Parents may experience emotional reactions such as shock, denial, anxiety, guilt, frustration, and uncertainty regarding their child's future. In addition to emotional challenges, families frequently encounter social stigma, financial burdens, limited access to specialised services, and difficulties in balancing caregiving

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responsibilities with occupational and personal commitments. These challenges can adversely affect parental mental health, family relationships, and overall quality of life.

Despite these adversities, many parents demonstrate remarkable resilience. Resilience refers to the ability of individuals to adapt positively, recover from difficulties, and maintain psychological well-being in the face of adversity. It is not merely the absence of stress or hardship but a dynamic process involving positive adaptation to challenging life circumstances. Resilient parents are better able to cope with caregiving demands, utilize available resources effectively, maintain optimism, and foster a supportive family environment. Research has shown that resilience serves as a protective factor against psychological distress and contributes to improved family functioning and well-being.

Multiple personal, social, and environmental factors influence parental resilience. Among these, socioeconomic status (SES) has been identified as an important determinant. Socioeconomic status generally encompasses factors such as income, education, occupation, and access to resources. Parents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may have greater access to healthcare services, educational opportunities, social support networks, and financial resources, which can facilitate effective coping and adaptation. Conversely, parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may face additional challenges due to financial constraints, limited access to services, and increased caregiving stress. Therefore, socioeconomic status may significantly influence the resilience levels of parents raising children with intellectual disabilities.

Gender is another factor that may affect parental resilience. Mothers and fathers often experience caregiving responsibilities differently due to societal expectations, cultural norms, and family roles. Mothers typically assume primary caregiving responsibilities and may experience greater emotional and physical demands associated with child care. Fathers, while also affected by their child's disability, may cope differently and often focus on financial support and external family responsibilities. These differences in caregiving experiences may contribute to variations in resilience between male and female parents. Understanding gender-based differences in resilience can help professionals design targeted support services that address the specific needs of both mothers and fathers. The growing emphasis on family-centred approaches in special education and rehabilitation highlights the importance of understanding factors that promote resilience among parents. Resilient parents are more likely to engage actively in their child's education, rehabilitation, and social development, thereby contributing positively to the child's overall outcomes. Examining resilience in relation to socioeconomic status and gender can provide valuable insights into the diverse experiences of families of children with intellectual disabilities and help identify groups that may require additional support.

In the Indian context, where disability services and support systems vary considerably across regions and socioeconomic groups, understanding parental resilience is particularly significant. Although considerable research has focused on parental stress and burden, comparatively fewer studies have examined resilience as a positive psychological resource among parents of children with intellectual disabilities. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities and to compare resilience levels based on socioeconomic status and gender. The findings are expected to inform the development of effective family support programs, counselling interventions, and policies to enhance parental well-being and strengthen family resilience. By identifying key resilience

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factors, policymakers and practitioners can design targeted interventions that address specific needs of diverse parent groups, ultimately improving family outcomes.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Cheng, Xuxu, and Deng (2024) examined resilience among 324 parents of children with intellectual disabilities in China. The study investigated the relationship between resilience, self-regulation, and career burnout. The findings revealed that career burnout had a significant negative effect on parental resilience, whereas self-regulation positively predicted resilience. Furthermore, self-regulation moderated the adverse impact of career burnout on resilience. The study highlighted the importance of psychological resources in strengthening resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities.

Laçın and Doğan (2024) conducted a comparative study involving 1,194 parents of children with and without intellectual disabilities. The study focused on parenting behaviours and parental self-efficacy. The findings indicated that parents of children with intellectual disabilities reported lower levels of parental self-efficacy and experienced greater caregiving challenges than parents of typically developing children. The study emphasised that self-efficacy and positive parenting practices are important factors associated with effective adaptation and resilience among parents.

Biggs, Zhang, and Ling (2024) explored stress and resilience among families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities during the post-pandemic period using a mixed-method approach. The study found that parents experienced considerable stress due to disruptions in educational and support services. However, family cohesion, social support, adaptive coping strategies, and access to community resources enhanced resilience and helped families maintain psychological well-being.

Sardar, Mohanan, and Ganeshsundaram (2024) investigated the effectiveness of an expressive arts-based counselling intervention for parents of children with intellectual disabilities in Bangkok. The mixed-method study demonstrated significant improvements in resilience, perceived social support, self-efficacy, and overall well-being among participating parents following the intervention. The findings suggested that structured counselling and psychosocial support programs can effectively strengthen parental resilience.

Tejakum, Truesdale, Melville, and Cairns (2025) conducted a systematic review to identify factors that challenge and promote resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities. The review revealed that social support, family cohesion, coping skills, self-efficacy, financial stability, and access to services were major protective factors associated with resilience. In contrast, caregiving burden, financial stress, social isolation, and limited support services were found to hinder resilience. The review emphasised the need for family-centred interventions and policy initiatives to enhance resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities.

RESEARCH GAP

The review of recent literature indicates that various psychological, social, and environmental factors influence resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities. Most contemporary studies have focused on self-regulation, social support, parental self-efficacy, counselling interventions, and coping mechanisms. However, limited empirical research has

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specifically examined resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities in relation to socioeconomic status and gender, particularly in the Indian context. Therefore, the present study seeks to compare resilience levels among parents based on socioeconomic status and gender to address this gap in the existing literature.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Parents of children with intellectual disabilities often face emotional, social, and financial challenges that may affect their well-being. Resilience helps parents cope effectively with these challenges and maintain positive family functioning. Understanding resilience is essential for promoting parental mental health and enhancing support for children with intellectual disabilities. Socioeconomic status and gender may influence parents' ability to adapt to caregiving demands. However, limited studies have examined resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities in relation to these variables, particularly in the Indian context. The findings of the present study will help special educators, counsellors, and rehabilitation professionals develop appropriate family support programs and interventions. The study will also contribute to the existing literature on parental resilience and family well-being.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the level of resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities.
- To compare the resilience of male and female parents of children with intellectual disabilities.
- To compare the resilience of parents of children with intellectual disabilities belonging to different socioeconomic status groups.
- To examine the interaction effect of gender and socioeconomic status on resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities.

Hypotheses of the Study

H01 There is no significant difference in resilience between male and female parents of children with intellectual disabilities.

H02 There is no significant difference in resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities belonging to different socioeconomic status groups.

H03 There is no significant interaction effect of gender and socioeconomic status on resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities.

Variables

Independent Variables

1. Gender: Male & Female Parents
2. Socioeconomic Status: Low & High Socioeconomic Status

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Dependent Variable

1. Resilience of Parents of Children with Intellectual Disabilities

Research Design

The present study adopted a 2×2 factorial descriptive research design. The study was conducted to examine resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities in relation to gender and socioeconomic status. The two independent variables were Gender (Male and Female) and Socioeconomic Status (Low and High), while Resilience served as the dependent variable. The design enabled the researcher to study the main effects of gender and socioeconomic status as well as their interaction effect on resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities. Since the variables were studied in their natural settings without any manipulation, the descriptive research method was considered appropriate for the present investigation.

Sample of the Study

The sample of the present study comprised 200 parents of children with intellectual disabilities. The participants were selected from special schools, inclusive schools, and rehabilitation centers. The sample was distributed equally across the levels of the independent variables, namely Gender and Socioeconomic Status, following a 2×2 factorial descriptive design.

Distribution of Sample

Gender	Low Socioeconomic Status	High Socioeconomic Status	Total
Male Parents	50	50	100
Female Parents	50	50	100
Total	100	100	N= 200

Thus, the study included 100 male and 100 female parents, with equal representation from low- and high-socioeconomic-status groups, ensuring balanced participation across all categories of the research design.

Tool:

Resilience Scale

The Resilience Scale, developed by Singh et al. (2016), was used to assess parents' resilience in the present study. The scale was specifically designed and standardised for the Indian population. It comprises 31 items distributed across four dimensions, namely self-efficacy, emotional regulation, resourcefulness, and future planning/goal orientation. Respondents are required to indicate their responses to each item, which collectively provide a measure of their level of resilience. Reliability and Validity: The scale has demonstrated strong psychometric properties. The English version reported a high reliability coefficient (Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$), indicating excellent internal consistency. The reliability coefficients for the four subscales were also satisfactory, each exceeding $\alpha = .80$. Concurrent validity was established by comparing them with other standardised measures of similar constructs. The Hindi version of the scale also showed high reliability, with an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .93. Furthermore, the reliability coefficients of the four subscales ranged from .70 to .88, indicating acceptable to high internal consistency. The Hindi-translated version was validated and found suitable for use in research involving Hindi-speaking populations.

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Modified Kuppuswamy Socioeconomic Status Scale (2024)

The Modified Kuppuswamy Socioeconomic Status Scale is one of the most widely used instruments for assessing the socioeconomic status of urban families in India. The scale evaluates socioeconomic status based on three parameters: education, occupation, and the monthly family income of the head of household. Scores obtained on these dimensions are summed to derive a total SES score, which classifies families into five socioeconomic categories: Upper, Upper Middle, Lower Middle, Upper Lower, and Lower. The income component of the scale is periodically updated using the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) to account for inflation and changing economic conditions. The updated version remains a reliable and valid measure for research in education, psychology, health, and the social sciences.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained permission from the heads of selected special schools, inclusive schools, and rehabilitation centres before collecting the data. Parents of children with intellectual disabilities were approached personally, and the purpose of the study was clearly explained to them. Informed consent was obtained from the participants, and they were assured that the information provided would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. The Resilience Scale, developed by Singh et al. (2016), was administered to the selected parents. Necessary instructions for completing the scale were provided, and participants were encouraged to respond honestly. The completed questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness, and subsequently scored according to the guidelines prescribed in the test manual. The collected data were then organised and prepared for statistical analysis.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS Version 20.0. Descriptive statistics, including Mean and Standard Deviation (SD), were computed to understand the distribution of resilience scores among parents of children with intellectual disabilities. To examine the main effects of Gender and Socioeconomic Status, as well as their interaction effect on resilience, a Two-Way Analysis of Variance (2×2 ANOVA) was employed. The level of significance was set at 0.05 for hypothesis testing.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table-1: Shown the Mean, SD & F value between male & female parents of intellectually disabled children.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	F
Male Parent	100	74.56	11.14	95.10 $p < .01$
Female Parent	100	57.88	12.98	

Table 1 presents the mean, standard deviation, and F-value for resilience scores among male and female parents of children with intellectual disabilities. The mean resilience score of male parents ($M = 74.56$, $SD = 11.14$) was higher than that of female parents ($M = 57.88$, $SD = 12.98$). The F value ($F = 95.10$) was significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a statistically significant difference in resilience between male and female parents. Hence, the null hypothesis

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stating that there is no significant difference in resilience between male and female parents of children with intellectual disabilities was rejected.

The higher resilience observed among male parents may be attributed to differences in caregiving roles and responsibilities. In many families, mothers are more directly involved in the day-to-day care, educational support, and rehabilitation activities of children with intellectual disabilities, which may expose them to greater emotional and physical stress. Fathers, on the other hand, often focus on financial and external family responsibilities and may experience comparatively lower caregiving burden. Consequently, male parents may develop greater confidence and emotional stability in managing family challenges, leading to higher resilience scores. The findings suggest that female parents may require additional emotional, social, and counselling support to strengthen their resilience and cope effectively with the demands of raising a child with intellectual disabilities.

Table-2: Shown the Mean, SD & F value between parents of intellectually disabled children with high and low socioeconomic status.

Socio-economic status	N	Mean	SD	F
Low SES	100	48.17	8.99	251.54 $p<.01$
High SES	100	70.56	10.94	

Table 2 presents the mean, standard deviation, and F value for resilience scores among parents of children with intellectual disabilities in low- and high-socioeconomic-status groups. The mean resilience score of parents from the high socioeconomic status group ($M = 70.56$, $SD = 10.94$) was considerably higher than that of parents from the low socioeconomic status group ($M = 48.17$, $SD = 8.99$). The F value ($F = 251.54$) was significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a statistically significant difference in resilience between the two socioeconomic status groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities with respect to socioeconomic status was rejected.

The higher resilience observed among parents belonging to the high socioeconomic status group may be attributed to their greater access to financial resources, educational opportunities, healthcare facilities, rehabilitation services, and social support networks. These resources may help them cope more effectively with the challenges associated with raising a child with intellectual disabilities. In contrast, parents from the low socioeconomic status group may experience additional stress due to financial constraints, limited access to support services, and reduced opportunities for assistance, which may adversely affect their resilience. The findings suggest that socioeconomic status plays a significant role in influencing the resilience of parents of children with intellectual disabilities.

Table-3: Shown the Mean, SD & mean difference between the interaction of gender and socio-economic status of parents with intellectually disabled children for resilience.

Gender	Socio-economic status	N	Mean	SD	F
Male parents	Low SES	50	63.20	15.85	42.36 $p<.01$
	High SES	50	81.92	18.11	
Female parents	Low SES	50	44.14	17.13	
	High SES	50	75.62	20.88	

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Table 3 shows the results of the ANOVA conducted to examine differences in resilience among four groups of parents of children with intellectual disabilities based on gender and socioeconomic status. The obtained F value ($F = 42.36$) was significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in resilience among the four groups of parents was rejected. A comparison of group means revealed that male parents belonging to the high socioeconomic status group ($M = 81.92$) had the highest resilience scores, followed by female parents from the high socioeconomic status group ($M = 75.62$), male parents from the low socioeconomic status group ($M = 63.20$), and female parents from the low socioeconomic status group ($M = 44.14$). The findings indicate that both gender and socioeconomic status are associated with variations in resilience. Parents from high socioeconomic status groups demonstrated greater resilience, possibly due to greater access to financial resources, educational opportunities, social support, and rehabilitation services. Conversely, parents from low socioeconomic status groups, particularly female parents, may face greater caregiving and economic challenges, which could adversely affect their resilience.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined resilience among parents of children with intellectual disabilities in relation to gender and socioeconomic status. The findings revealed significant differences in resilience between male and female parents, with male parents demonstrating higher resilience. Parents in the high socioeconomic status group exhibited significantly greater resilience than those in the low socioeconomic status group. The one-way ANOVA further indicated significant differences among the four groups formed on the basis of gender and socioeconomic status. Male parents in the high socioeconomic status group had the highest resilience scores, whereas female parents in the low socioeconomic status group had the lowest. The findings suggest that socioeconomic resources and family circumstances play an important role in enhancing parental resilience. Therefore, counselling, social support, and family-centred intervention programs should be provided, particularly for parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds, to strengthen their resilience and overall well-being.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Special educators and rehabilitation professionals should organise regular parent counselling, resilience-building, and stress-management programs, particularly for parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds, to enhance their coping skills and psychological well-being.

Schools and rehabilitation centres should strengthen family support services by providing parent education, guidance, and access to community resources, enabling parents to actively participate in the educational and developmental progress of their children with intellectual disabilities.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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