

ABSTRACT

Exploring Entrepreneurship as a Coping Strategy for Mothers of Visually Challenged Children

Mothers of visually challenged children face persistent emotional, social, and economic challenges arising from intensive caregiving responsibilities, societal stigma, financial insecurity, and limited institutional support. These stressors often lead to elevated parenting stress, reduced self-esteem, and diminished personal and social well-being. The present study investigates the effectiveness of entrepreneurship as a coping strategy to alleviate stress and enhance the overall quality of life of mothers of visually challenged children. Anchored in Resource Management Theory, the study conceptualises time, energy, and financial resources as critical constraints and examines how these can be effectively reorganised through life skills development and entrepreneurial engagement. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, and the study was conducted in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, across four systematic phases. Phase I, a cross-sectional survey, comprised a total sample of 423 mothers of visually challenged children drawn from eight special schools and organisations to assess socio-economic characteristics, factors leading to stress, parenting stress levels, and personal and social well-being. Phase II employed a pre-test and post-test intervention design with a sub-sample of 50 mothers, who participated in a structured Life Skills Training (LST) and handskills training programme focusing on stress management, decision-making, positive thinking, and income-generating skills. Phase III involved 20 trained mothers who established and operated a small-scale vending enterprise on the school campus (St. Louis Thai Store), while Phase IV evaluated the impact of entrepreneurship and satisfaction levels through detailed case studies of 10 mothers. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, independent and paired t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and correlation analysis to examine differences and relationships between socio-demographic variables, stress factors, parenting stress, and personal and social well-being. The findings revealed statistically significant differences at the 1 per cent level, indicating that socio-demographic variables significantly influenced stress and well-being outcomes. Post-intervention results demonstrated a significant reduction in parenting stress and substantial improvement in life skills, emotional resilience, self-confidence, decision-making ability, financial

independence, and personal and social well-being among the mothers. The study further establishes that entrepreneurship, when supported through structured training, institutional backing, and community-based frameworks, functions not only as a viable economic intervention but also as a powerful psychosocial coping mechanism. The integration of livelihood creation with emotional and social support contributed to enhanced resilience, improved caregiving capacity, and sustainable empowerment of mothers of visually challenged children. The study recommends the incorporation of inclusive livelihood initiatives, school-based entrepreneurial models, and supportive policy frameworks to promote the long-term well-being and socio-economic security of caregivers of children with disabilities.

Keywords: Coping strategy, Entrepreneurship, Life skills training, Mothers of visually challenged children, Parenting stress, Quality of life, Resource management, Visual impairment.