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**Title of the Thesis**            **A Study on Perceived Stress, Quality of Life and Coping Strategies of Parents of Children with Special Needs**

### **ABSTRACT**

*Keywords: perceived stress, quality of life, coping strategies, parents, children with special needs*

Most parents react in a negative way, both emotionally and behaviorally, when their child gets diagnosed with any form of disability. The presence of a child with cognitive delay has been seen to predict of stress among parents. A large part of the negative impact of this crisis event is reduced if one has the adequate coping resources to handle it. Parenting children with special needs may also have an adverse effect on their general well-being, and put parents at risk for mental illness, marital dissatisfaction, problems with finances and decreased physical health. The present study was thus carried out with an aim to assess the perceived stress experienced by parents having children diagnosed with different forms of disabilities and see the impact of disabilities on coping patterns and quality of life. A total of 90 parents were purposively selected for the study which included 30 parents of children with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), 30 parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and 30 parents of children with Mental Retardation (MR) from Delhi NCR. The parents were assessed on three scales – Parental Stress Scale, Ways of Coping Questionnaire and WHO Quality of Life-BREF. Comparison of

means and correlation was obtained and results showed significant differences among the three parental groups on perceived stress with parents of children with SLD and parents of children with MR showing least and highest stress consecutively. Significant differences were also found among the three parental groups on all the four dimensions of Quality of Life, except on the Physical and Environment domain between parents of children with ASD and parents of children with MR. significant differences were also found on 7 coping dimensions among the three parental groups, except for Acceptance coping strategy. Correlation coefficients were not significant for all the three variables except between Quality of Life and Coping strategies which showed a positive relationship. The study findings suggest comprehensive assessment and intervention for both children with special needs and their parents as well as evolve policies that addresses holistic and transactional interaction among child, parent and environment.