**Exploring the Impact of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress on the Quality of Life of Mothers with Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

*Aishwarya Sibey, Assistant Professor, Jyoti Nivas College Autonomous, Bengaluru, India*

*Paul Raj, Assistant Professor, Jyoti Nivas College Autonomous, Bengaluru, India*

Caregivers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) often face significant challenges that impact their physical, emotional, and mental well-being, with prominent issues such as depression, anxiety, stress, and reduced quality of life. Despite the established understanding of these impacts globally, limited research has explored these issues within the Indian context, particularly among mothers who are primary caregivers. This study aimed to address this gap by examining the levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and quality of life among 173 mothers of children with ASD aged 35 to 50. Given the added stresses posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this research is especially timely and relevant to ongoing global discussions on caregiver mental health.

Using a correlational design, this study employed the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS) and the World Health Organization Quality-of-Life Brief Version (WHOQOL-BREF) to assess this group's psychological state and quality of life. The findings revealed a significant negative correlation (p < .001) between levels of depression, anxiety, and stress and the domains of quality of life, including physical health, psychological well-being, social relationships, and environmental quality. These results suggest that the psychological burdens of caregiving in ASD directly undermine caregivers' quality of life, highlighting the critical need for targeted mental health support and quality-of-life interventions.

The study contributes to a nuanced understanding of how ASD caregiving affects maternal well-being in India and underscores the importance of culturally tailored support systems. In light of the increased caregiving demands and psychological stress exacerbated by modern lifestyles, this research offers insights relevant to current global health trends and foundational to developing intervention programs to enhance caregivers' resilience and overall quality of life.

**Biography of the Presenting Author**

**Paul Raj** serves as an Assistant Professor of Psychology and Coordinator of Postgraduate Psychology Programmes at Jyoti Nivas College Autonomous, Bengaluru, India. In this role, he has established three postgraduate programs in psychology and instructs a diverse range of courses, encompassing Foundations of Psychology, Lifespan Development, Cognitive Psychology, Research Methods, Health Psychology, and Positive Psychology. Additionally, he offers certificate courses in Basic Counselling Skills and Learning Disabilities. Paul Raj's academic journey includes an MSc in Counselling Psychology and an M.Phil. in Learning Disabilities. His doctoral research focused on Cognitive Functioning and Mathematical Abilities among Primary School Children in Rural and Urban Areas in Karnataka, India. His research interests extend to child and adolescent development, neuropsychology, specific learning disorders, and positive psychology. Furthermore, Paul Raj has contributed significantly to the field of psychology through his publications. He has authored three books, contributed to two book chapters, and published five articles in esteemed journals, showcasing his dedication to advancing psychological knowledge.

**Details of the presenting author to be mentioned in the certificate:**

Name: Paul Raj

Affiliation: Assistant Professor & Coordinator, PG Department of Psychology, Jyoti Nivas College Autonomous, Bengaluru

Country: India