

## Attitudes toward Persons with Disabilities: A Relationship of Age, Gender, and Education of Students

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### ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to see the relationship between students' attitude towards disability with reference to age, gender and education. The main aim of this study was to assess whether older students has positive attitude than younger; whether boys and girls have different attitude towards disability and whether the there is any impact of education on attitude toward disability? Method: Data was collected from general population through random sampling technique from six different schools. Participants were selected from the four classes (9, 10 11, and 12) with equal number of Boys and girls. To assess the Attitude towards disability, the Harold E. Yunker J. R. Block Janet H. Youinng 6 point scale with 20 items scale was administered. Results: In this study positive correlation was found between ATDP & Age, ATDP & Education, and Negative correlation between ATDP and Gender was found. Conclusions: Participant's Age and Education have positive relationship with their attitudes towards disability; negative relationships was found between gender and attitude towards disability.

**Keywords:** *Attitude (positive) towards disability, Age, Gender, Education*

In India, disability perceived either as punishment for misdeeds in the present and past lives of the Person with Disability, or the wrong deeds of their parents or family. Despite the fact that disability advocates are working to change attitudes toward persons with disabilities, public perception of such individuals is still largely negative (Pruett, et. el 2008).

Attitudes are comprised of three components: affective, cognitive, and behavioral. The affective component represents the emotional portion of an attitude, whereas the cognitive component refers to ideas, beliefs, and opinions. The behavioral component describes a person's willingness to interact with the subject at hand and the manner in which they do so. It is important to understand the components of attitudes since understanding attitudes should

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help predict behavior toward persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the relationship between attitudes and behavior is complex, and attitudes only account for a small part of behavior.

Deal (2006), a professional with a disability, found that people with disabilities who voluntarily met up with other people with disabilities collectively held the most positive attitudes towards disability. Thus, the role of people with disabilities in changing attitudes to disability may be very significant. "Disabled people must be at the heart of this process, influencing policy makers and service providers. Therefore, it is my opinion that disabled people must acquire greater awareness of the rights of people belonging to other impairment groups in order to recognize discriminatory practice toward other members of the disabled in-group. This includes those disabled people who may have contact with large numbers of other disabled people, who, under other circumstances they would not normally associate with.

Now the era is of inclusion. Our motto should be to create barrier free environment so that children with special needs can learn easily with their non-disabled peers. But in fact our society is still lack behind in the field of special education. There are so many magnificent laws of India but these laws are not totally or vastly used. So the society people are still not aware about the disability area. The grassroots level of this field is so pathetic, the community people do not know the types of disability, their expectation, their desirous, the way of life style, the laws due to lack of knowledge or awareness. As a result some misconceptions are prevailed or running in the society. Still the society people curve their dignity and rights. Society is now think that the disabled people may not be the productive member of the society Several studies have been done to examine attitudes and ideas towards people with disabilities and to identify causes for thinking errors and misconceptions. Several age groups have been examined from elementary educational levels to medical students' opinions to see if their conceptual framework about disabilities was important to occupation choices.

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Participants*

The total number of the participants in this study were 60 (N=60). Participants were students (boys and girls 30 each) from normal population. All participants age was between 13-19 years. This sample was drawn from general population. The participants in this study were from Jaunpur district (U.P).

#### *Description of tools*

- 1. Personal data sheet:** An especially designed Personal data sheet including Age, Gender, Education, etc. was used.
- 2. Attitudes toward Disabled Persons:** The Measurement of Attitudes toward Disabled Persons developed by Harold E. Yuker, J. R. Block, Janet H. Youinng (1970). This is 6 point scale with 20 items. Participants had to respond on +3 for agree very much, +2 for agree pretty much, +1 for agree a little, -1 for disagree a little, -2 for disagree

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pretty much, -3 for disagree very much. Reliability coefficient of ATDP Scale was .73. Construct validity was found of this test.

### *Procedure*

**Research Design:** In this study, participants were selected through random sampling technique. The sample was drawn from higher secondary Schools from Jaunpur City. The number of students was 60. A brief demographic data sheet was developed for this purpose. After taking informed consent from school authority and each participant, questionnaire was administered to students. Each student had separately filled the questionnaire. The cover page gave information about the study, brief instructions on how to respond to the questions was given.

Data was analyzed by using SPSS software 20 version. The frequencies and correlation among the ATDP, age, gender, and education was assessed.

In limitations, we can say that study sample size was small. The sample was drawn from six English Medium Schools only. The study was conducted in Jaunpur only. Hence generalizations are difficult to draw.

## RESULT

*Table-1, The table shows the frequencies and percentage of all Age, Gender, Socioeconomic status, and domicile*

Variable	Years	f	%
Age	13	4	6.7
	14	9	15.0
	15	12	20.0
	16	10	16.7
	17	10	16.7
	18	8	13.3
	19	7	11.7
Gender	Male	30	50.0
	Female	30	50.0
Education	IX	20	33.3
	X	16	26.7
	XI	13	21.7
	XII	11	18.3

*Mean Age of participants - 16 years (16.08, S.D=1.79)*

*Table-2*

Variable	Age		Gender		Education	
	r	sig	r	sig	r	sig
ATDP	0.037	0.780	-0.080	0.544	0.150	0.253

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The above table showing that the relationship between Attitude towards disability (ATD) & Age, ATD & Gender, and ATD & Education.

### DISCUSSION

“An attitude is an idea (*cognitive* component) charged with emotion (*affective* component) which predisposes a class of actions (*behavioural* component) to particular class of social situations” Triandis et al, 1984, p. 21).

This study aimed to describe the attitude of person towards the person with disability, and to assess the role of Age, gender and Education. Attitudes refer to beliefs that are directed towards a person, object or event, and may facilitate positive or negative reactions (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Attitude can be one of the most difficult barriers to recreation participation experienced by persons with disabilities (Bedini, 2000). Goffman (1963) wrote of persons with disabilities as possessing a stigma, an undesired differentness from what is anticipated. Bedini (2000) further touched on the implications of differentness, indicating that persons who are different are often avoided or rejected on the basis of societal stigmatization.

In this study the result shows (Table-1) that mean age of participant was 16 years (16.08, S.D=1.79). The participants in this study 50% boys and 50% were girls. The number of students belonging to IX, X, X, and XI standard were 19, 12, 16, 13 respectively. In this study the age of 13,14,15,16,17,18,and 19 years students were 4,9,12,10,10,8,and 70 respectively.

The table-2 shows the relationship between ATDP and age; ATDP and Gender; and ATDP and Education of the participants. The Positive correlation between ATDP and Age was found .In many researches, the relationship of age to attitudes of non-disabled people toward disabled persons is quite contradictory, the studies using the ATDP, no significant relationship between age and ATDP scores (Siller & Chipman, 1965) though two reported significant relationships(Wilson, 1963 and Siller, 1964) . Children as young as preschool ages, however, often display favoritism towards a group of peers who shares similar characteristics, displaying a negatively biased view and relative discrimination towards peers with characteristics they perceive as different from their own (Nabors & Keyes, 1995; Diamond & Tu,2009). On the other hand, young children’s awareness of others or their playmate preferences, which usually begin forming at early ages (Guralnick, et. al. 1996), might be most malleable during this developmental period.

In this study, negative correlation was found between male and female participants (Gender) on attitude towards disability. In some Prior studies, the relationship between gender and attitude towards persons with disabilities havemixed results. In one study, differences were found between females and males, with females having a higher mean attitude score. In keeping with the findings of previous studies, this showed the role of gender in defining peoples’ attitudes. Studies have shown that compared to women, men tend to have more

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negative attitudes towards people with disability (McConkey et al, 1983). In a study, women scored significantly higher than men on the ATDP. Females also generally report more empathy and sympathy than do males (Lennon & Eisenberg, 1987). Indian Females are also more emotional than males. In this used tool, there are many items that are considered as negative if respondent has sympathetic feelings and perception. Thus the negative correlation was found between attitude towards persons with disability and gender.

It is very contradictory whether positive attitudes of the person towards disability are due education or due to age? In spite of age-confounding research difficulties, most studies concluded that educational level is positively correlated with more favorable attitudes toward persons with disabling conditions (Jabin & Norma, 1967; Siller & Jerome, 1964; Tunick et al, 1979). It is seen that play-groups children started to differentiate disabled children on the basis of they (disabled) can't act or perform like them (Normal). Through learning and contact with reality people started to realize (positive attitude) that disabled can do most of mental as well physical work if opportunity provided to them.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion we can say that attitudes toward persons with disabilities are a reflection of the social value with which such persons are regarded and are of grave concern for their perceived ramifications on behavior and rehabilitation outcomes. Research findings indicating that there are no significant relationship in attitudes towards persons with disabilities reference to their age, gender, and education was found, though positive correlations were found between attitudes towards disability and age, attitudes towards disability and education; and negative correlation attitudes towards disability and gender was found in this study.

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