

Parent Opinions and Attitudes on Toys for Children with or Without Developmental Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

Toys are needed paraphernalia for all children. This study employs a cross sectional purposive sample survey to target parents of 267 children (Mean Age: 3.99; SD: 1.39) below six years including 158 boys (Mean Age: 3.89; SD: 1.32) and 109 girls (Mean Age: 4.13; SD: 1.48) with and without developmental disabilities to elicit their opinions and attitudes on toys. A 25-item open ended 'Opinion Elicitation Probe on Toys' and another 20-item Likert type 'Toy Attitude Scale' was exclusively developed for use in this study. Results show that parents view their children as unable to make choices on procurement of toys and requiring guidance in their routine use. There have apprehension if toys, which involve money, would benefit their children. Parent attitudes reflect that toys are unaffordable or dispensable luxuries. They are aware that children love toys and that are different toys for various age groups. Dispensing toys to children with special needs is deemed risky or unsafe. They are undecided whether boys and girls require the same or different toys. It is felt that teaching children to read and write is better option than waste time on engagement with toys. Many parents are against technology driven digital toys. It is concluded that there is need for prescriptions on just how many minimum number or variety of toys each child must be necessarily given or made available without amounting to infringement upon their basic rights to own toys.

Keywords: Toys-Parents-Opinions-Attitudes

Toys are essential components in a child's environment and parents are obliged to supply them. Toys guarantee joy. Yet, they are also instruments of hard work and achievement. Therefore, toys that discourage by failure or frustrate a child must be avoided. The age, gender, stage of development and natural inclinations of a given child are crucial considerations during purchase or providing toys for children. Grandiose claims on

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educational benefits of toys are being made to attract the middle-class market for children's goods in the contemporary consumer culture. Clichés like 'learning while playing', 'benefit in mental stimulation, coordination of mind and muscle, and general sense of training', or 'toys are for joys', are used as promos for expensively branded toys (Gardner, Golinkoff, Hirsh-Pasek & Heiney-Gonzalez, 2012; Seiter, 1995).

Some parents worry if toy weapons predispose children to violence. They are skeptical of toy-based programs (Muehling, Carlson & Laczniak, 1992). They often blame toy manufacturers for the kind of gadgets that are available in the market. The toy makers have their defense. It is the parent, not the toy maker, who will ultimately decide which toy to buy. It is argued that it is not toy guns but feelings of deep hurt, rejection and unfulfilled longing to be loved in children that lie at the root of their violence. Media and societal influences are persuasive factors in parent thinking and toy purchasing (McLary, 2004).

Myoungsoon (2002) found that mothers of 3-5 year-olds had a discrepant view on the role of toys in child development. Mothers rarely considered cultural appropriateness and durability of toys, reliable manufacturers, designs and color of toys. The younger parents spent more money on buying toys for their children than the older parents. Gender was major consideration in purchase of toys. The longer the child played with toys, the higher value the mother put on the toy in terms of the child's interests in play and developmental appropriateness. Ulfa and Djamaludin (2016) found that parents' perception of toys was based on quality of product, emotional value and suitability of the price. With regard to quality, they looked for safety, environmentally friendly materials and whether they could function properly. In terms of notional value, they looked for safety and comfort for children.

Educational interventions for children with (or without) developmental disabilities (CWDD) are best when they are individualized informal, play-driven or functional instead of when they are rigorous, formal, classroom or curriculum based teaching (Venkatesan, 2015a; 2015b). The ongoing efforts to organize events like 'Special Arts, Sports and Games' for such children is recognition of this truth. While the diverse role of toys for children in the discovery of their world around, as wonderful outlet or means to inspire curiosity, to explore, provide opportunities for social and emotional growth, or stimulate their intellect, imagination and creativity is widely acknowledged (Tomopoulos et al. 2006; Goldstein, 1994; Kapellaka, 1992), research on this theme is low or almost negligible (Lieber & Beckman, 1991; Rubin & Howe, 1985).

Despite a long list of merits, the use (or overuse!) of toys with children is also fraught with dangers, demerits and drawbacks. It can spoil the child, make them overly acquisitive, and make them feel entitled. Some children may turn disorganized with many toys littered all over and around them. Over use of some types of sedentary toys may reduce a child's physical movements and leave them solitary, asocial, without group engagement, decreased interpersonal communication and overweight. Gadgetry driven electric or electronic toys

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may prevent them from playing with everyday objects or lead to make idiosyncratic usage of them (as in children with autism) and create sensory overload (Riddick, 1982; p. 149).

A significant contribution in this area has been the development and validation of an 'Activity Checklist for Preschool Children with Developmental Disabilities' (ACPC-DD; Venkatesan, 2004a) and its add-on titled as 'Toy Kit for Kids with Developmental Disabilities: User Manual' (Venkatesan, 2004/2010). The 3-tier 'Toy Kits' have been exclusively designed, assembled, developed and standardized for children with developmental disabilities between 0-2 years (infant level), 2-4 years (toddler level) and 4-6 years (preschool level). A utility analysis of the assembled toy kits based on ratings of consumer judgments has received favorable feedback for some of its high end features like having a 'supporting manual', 'reinforcement value', 'entertainment attraction', 'education worth', while being fair on lower end values related to minimum cost (Venkatesan, 2012). Despite positive reviews on the 'toy kits' (Venkatesan, 2012; Karande, 2011; Srivastava, 2011), one is unsure whether the children are indeed being given play materials.

Against this rather unclear background, many pertinent questions arise particularly in Indian settings. Are children with or without disabilities being provided with toys? The chances are that they might not be provided toys given their generally poor past behavioral record of apparently limited repertoire of responses, lack of unprompted reciprocity, condensed curiosity, diminished diversity, unappealing monotony, and failure to demand for toys. There are and can be questions even on whether parents themselves appreciate that toys are needed for such children in the same lines as one reckons food, clothing, shelter and/or medical attention are primary requirements for them. If so, what are their notions, knowledge, attitude, opinion, thoughts or feelings on toys vis-à-vis their CWDD? It was the objectives of this study to profile the parent knowledge, opinion and attitudes about toys vis-à-vis CWDD.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a cross sectional purposive sample survey design. The key terms used in this investigation are, 'opinion', 'attitude', 'knowledge', 'toys' and 'developmental disabilities'.

Operational Definitions

'*Opinion*' is 'a message, expression, personal belief, sentiment or judgment about something that is not founded on proof or certainty'. It is a subjective statement or thought about an issue or topic and is a result of feeling, emotion, or interpretation of facts. The 'opinion' responses to statement must be viewed as 'agree', 'disagree', and/or 'cannot say', rather than as 'right' or 'wrong'. It is also a tendency to behave toward that object so as to keep or get rid of it.

'*Attitude*' is a critical hypothetical construct that determines the nature, quality, intensity or extensity of relationship between a subject and object. It is a relatively enduring organization

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of beliefs, feeling actions, likes or dislikes for the idea, object, event, or situation. It may be positive, negative or neutral. One can also have a conflicted, ambivalent or undecided attitude stance which means that they have simultaneously positive as well as negative toward an object at the same time. It typically covers three judgment components: thought (cognition), feeling (affect) and action (behavior). Attitudes can be reformed using techniques like coercive persuasion, emotional appeals, role playing, brain washing, debating, indoctrination, etc. Although the knowledge level underlying an attitude is vital in determining it, one can have attitudes even without having knowledge about it. Opinions and attitudes are measured by the intensity or degree to which one holds or leaves them. Attitudes have a strength or resistance to change. Strong attitudes are highly resistant to change while weak ones are susceptible. Opinions are fleeting and change rapidly (Eagly & Shelly, 1993).

The term '*knowledge*' refers to 'a theoretical or practical familiarity, awareness or the subject matter. It is the sum totality of facts, figures and information gained by experience. Knowledge levels are measured in terms of known facts that may be right, wrong and/or can't say. The term '*toy*' denotes an object used for play. It may be a model or miniature replica for something. The various attribute of toys, such as, its availability, ownership, accessibility, and/or classification needs to be demarcated and understood separately.

Sample

The study targeted parents of 267 children (Mean Age: 3.99; SD: 1.39) below six years including 158 boys (Mean Age: 3.89; SD: 1.32) and 109 girls (Mean Age: 4.13; SD: 1.48) were recruited for this study ($t: 1.353$; $p: >0.05$). It covered children with and without developmental disabilities drawn from the clinical population seeking services in the investigating agency, a national level institution serving such a cause. Additional sample was drawn from special schools in the city. Typical children were recruited from neighborhood crèches, play pens, preschools, kindergartens and Montessori schools. CWDD refers to 'diverse group of chronic conditions that is due to physical or mental impairments'. These conditions affect areas of life, such as, language, mobility, learning, self help and independent living. The various categories of CWDD included herein are those with specific or global developmental delays, sensory, multiple or intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, specific speech delays, at risk cases and autistic disturbances with or without associated problem behaviors, and/or seizure disorder. Children from the limits of Municipal Corporation were considered urban and those from village Panchayats were deemed rural. The distribution of sample characteristics is given in Table 1. To ascertain the socio-demographic status, an adapted, updated, revised and truncated version of NIMH Socio-Economic Status Scale (NIMH-SES; Venkatesan, 2011) was used. The original 5-tier SES was reduced to 3-tier scale by clubbing the first and last two layers as 'low', 'middle' and 'high' class. However, the 4-point criteria of deciding on the SES level based on (i) pooled monthly income; (ii) highest education in family; (iii) occupation; and, (iv) immovable-movable familial properties was retained.

Table 1 Distribution of Sample Characteristics

Variables	N	HI	DD	ESD	MD	TC	Probability
Gender							
Boys	158	30	49	31	23	25	Cramer's:0.188; P: 0.052; X ² : 9.408; df: 4; p: 0.052
Girls	109	26	16	25	20	22	
Age Groups							
0-2 years	34	5	13	10	3	3	Cramer's: 0.225; p: 0.001; X ² : 27.075; df: 8; p: 0.001
2-4 years	81	21	8	14	23	15	
4-6 years	152	30	44	32	17	29	
Residence							
Rural	150	36	40	26	26	22	Cramer's:0.184;P: 0.059; X ² : 9.080; df: 4; p: 0.059
Urban	117	20	25	21	17	34	
SES							
Low	149	39	44	23	14	29	Cramer's: 0.348;P: 0.000; X ² : 64.661; df: 8; p: 0.00
Middle	89	15	15	31	15	13	
High	29	2	6	2	18	1	
Total	267	56	65	47	43	56	

[HI: Hearing Impairment; DD: Developmental Disabilities; ESD: Expressive Speech Delays; MD: Multiple Disabilities; TC: Typical Children]

Instruments

The following two tools were used for data collection in this study: (a) Socio-demographic Data Sheet; (b) Data Elicitation Probe; and, (c) Toy Attitude Summated Rating Scale.

1. The **socio-demographic data sheet** is investigator constructed device to elicit details from respondents about themselves and/or about their CWDD. It mainly covered questions related to the child's age, gender, diagnosis, and area of residence. In the absence of standardized measures, a 25-item open ended
2. **Opinion Elicitation Probe on Toys** was exclusively developed for use in this investigation. It opened with a question on or about toy availability (or otherwise) for a given child, before proceeding to statements phrased in simple language. The responses to statements on this tool at a nominal level of measurement were assigned numerical values of 'zero' or one'. All 'don't know' or 'can't say' options were filtered. The placement of questions was randomized although it was ensured that all of them were covered either by means of personal interview or respondents themselves ticking the preferred answers on their own. Examiners were vigilant to make behavior observations of respondents during data collection. The tool was piloted on a sample of 30 parents before editing, rewording, rephrasing or simplifying the statements to its final form. In the pilot phase, apart from using unstructured interview techniques, the preliminary format of this tool was deliberately kept open ended and filled with cafeteria questions to allow respondents to select statements or answers best representing their view.
3. Another 20-item Likert type **Toy Attitude Scale**, exclusively developed for this study, required respondents to answer favorably or unfavorably towards the phenomenon of toys vis-à-vis CWDD. Each item was to be scored along a 5-point scale: Strongly

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disagree-Disagree-Neutral-Agree-Strongly Agree. After pre-testing the initial draft of this tool on 10 respondents, it was also verified against the impressions of three professional colleagues in the field. Their suggested change (if any) was incorporated. Caution was exercised to avoid use of words or phrases that suggested any technical jargon, to ensure that the questions were brief or that the instructions given are adequate and easily understood. The maximum score on this tool is 100. The total score indicates the respondent's degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Although a few items or statements in this scale have been intentionally worded with negative valence; eventually, high scores on this instrument indicate and is interpreted as favorable attitude. During piloting, the inter-observer agreement coefficient was calculated as 0.96 and the 2-week test-retest reliability coefficient was found to be 0.92, which is interpreted as 'excellent' as per set standards (Cicchetti & Sparrow, 1981; Anastasi & Urbina, 1997).

Procedure

Data collection involved individualized interviewing of parent respondents. The responses were recorded verbatim before compiling them into discrete or meaningful categories during data analysis and statistical treatment. The frequency counts of respondents on 'YES/NO' answers for **Opinion Elicitation Probe on Toys** and the 'strongly disagree-strongly agree' continuum on **Toy Attitude Scale** was taken. The collected data was tabulated before applying non-parametric statistics. Consensual validation between examiners not below the rank of post graduation in clinical psychology was used to verify the data at every stage in the study. Home, school and/or field visits were undertaken to collect data wherever possible and especially for the samples of rural and typical children.

RESULTS

The findings are presented as: (i) Parent Opinions on Toys; and, (ii) Parent Attitudes on Toys.

- 1. Parent Opinions on Toys:** The opinions of parent respondents with regard to toys vis-à-vis their children were elicited through Opinion Elicitation Probe on Toys (Table 2). The 25-statements were to be expectedly answered as either 'YES' or 'NO'. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. A few selected key items are indicated below, wherein majority of parents answered with an emphatic 'YES':

- 4* Parents should adjust their expectations according to child's ability;
- 6* Toys cannot change the ability of CSWN;
- 7*Since children are too young to choose, parents should decide while buying toys;
- 8*Toys do not play any important role in the child's overall development;
- 9*Toys do not encourage imagination and creative thinking in children;
- 10*Since parents spend money on toys, they should help children learn as much in short span of time;
- 12*When a child makes a mistake while playing with toys, it must be corrected by parents immediately;

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13*Making frequent comparisons with peers help children to play better with their own toys;
15*Using toys must be a regular habit during activities of daily life like bathing, eating, or bed time;

19*Children cannot differentiate toys of different weights and textures;

20*Toys have no role in development of senses related to vision, hearing, smell or touch;

21*If detachable dolls are provided, children might separate legs, hands and neck to examine them;

22*If toy is too advanced, kids may not know how to play, if it is too primitive, they might become easily bored; and,

25*Child oriented programs on television can be used as alternative for toys.

Table 2 Distribution of Scores in Opinion Elicitation Probe on Toys

No	Response	Groups					Overall	Cramer's V	Sig.
		HI	DD	TC	MD	ESD			
	N	56	65	56	43	47	267		
1	Yes	48	61	53	36	36	234	.202	.027
	No	8	4	3	7	11	33		
2	Yes	42	53	54	31	39	219	.218	.013
	No	14	12	2	12	8	48		
3	Yes	22	13	21	12	20	88	.183	.063
	No	34	52	35	31	27	179		
4*	Yes	35	38	51	27	32	183	.259	.001
	No	21	27	5	16	15	84		
5	Yes	45	49	30	31	33	188	.204	.025
	No	11	16	26	12	14	79		
6*	Yes	48	53	11	36	39	187	.568	.000
	No	8	12	45	7	8	80		
7*	Yes	46	45	27	26	35	179	.252	.002
	No	10	20	29	17	12	88		
8*	Yes	48	57	20	35	40	200	.468	.000
	No	8	8	36	8	7	67		
9*	Yes	48	48	8	38	40	182	.606	.000
	No	8	17	48	5	7	85		
10*	Yes	44	31	41	19	33	168	.290	.000
	No	12	34	15	24	14	99		
11	Yes	44	48	33	35	34	194	.173	.092
	No	12	17	23	8	13	73		
12*	Yes	28	46	47	31	40	192	.283	.000
	No	28	19	9	12	7	75		
13*	Yes	9	30	19	16	9	83	.251	.002
	No	47	35	37	27	38	184		
14	Yes	52	57	53	38	43	243	.095	.664
	No	4	8	3	5	4	24		
15*	Yes	4	13	43	12	6	78	.559	.000
	No	52	52	13	31	41	189		
16	Yes	28	39	30	30	26	153	.130	.338
	No	28	26	26	13	21	114		

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17	Yes	31	37	27	21	23	139	.076	.817
	No	25	28	29	22	24	128		
18	Yes	42	45	47	28	38	200	.157	.158
	No	14	20	9	15	9	67		
19*	Yes	44	45	8	32	31	160	.488	.000
	No	12	20	48	11	16	107		
20*	Yes	46	47	7	37	38	175	.583	.000
	No	10	18	49	6	9	92		
21*	Yes	23	18	35	9	19	104	.291	.000
	No	33	47	21	34	28	163		
22*	Yes	11	25	31	6	10	83	.327	.000
	No	45	40	25	37	37	184		
23	Yes	19	38	22	16	18	113	.189	.049
	No	37	27	34	27	29	154		
24	Yes	45	41	35	27	33	181	.151	.196
	No	11	24	21	16	14	86		
25*	Yes	27	39	44	26	27	163	.207	.022
	No	29	26	12	17	20	104		

Note: ‘*’ indicates significant results obtained for statements mentioned above

Figure 1: Frequency of ‘yes’ responses in Opinion Elicitation Probe on Toys for various statements

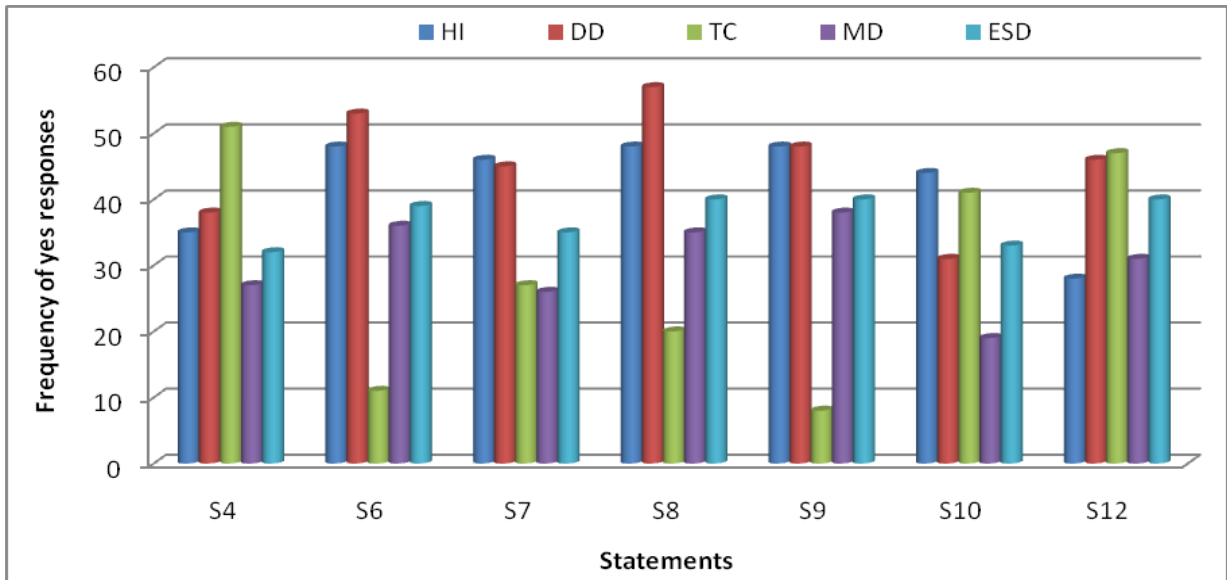
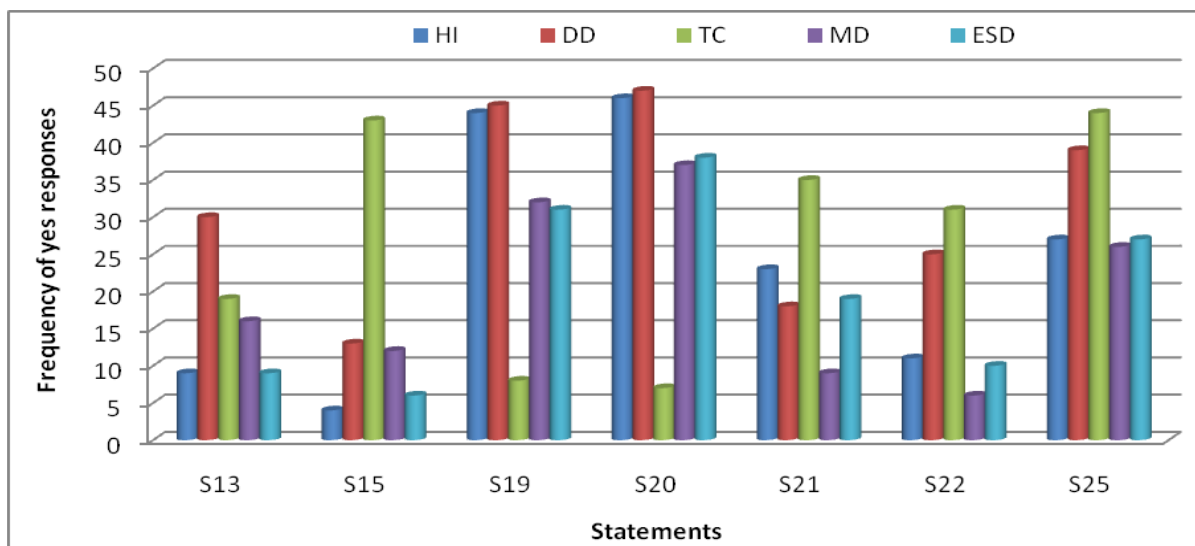


Figure 2: Frequency of 'yes' responses in Opinion Elicitation Probe on Toys for various statements



From the foregoing, it is apparent that the parent respondents view their children as passive dependent creatures. Evidently, they believe that their children cannot make choices about the procurement of toys as also they need to be guided in their routine use. Having spent money on the purchase, parents expect their children to learn as much in short time. They have apprehension and doubt if toys would be of any benefit for their CWDD. It is presumed that these children may be unaware of handling or playing with toys. If the toy was more advanced, it is felt that the children may require guidance or other children to model their use.

2. Parent Attitude on Toys: Parent attitudes show a uniform trend of agreement ($p > 0.05$) that toys are unaffordable or dispensable luxuries. They are aware that children love toys and that there might be different toys appropriate for different age groups. However, it is felt that giving toys to CWSN is risky or unsafe. They appear to be divided on whether children by two years or so can really appreciate the risks involved in the use of toys. They are unsure whether boys and girls require the same or different toys. Among the positive benefits of giving toys to children, parents agree that they help them to rehearse and play the adult roles. Although it is 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' that toys are the best teaching instruments, they fear that toys could teach unwanted violence and aggression. It is believed that toys make children to live in a world of fiction and fantasy. They dread if children start mimicking and imitating the animals or characters in the toys used by them. It is felt that teaching children to read and write is a better option than to waste their time on engagement with toys. Many parents are particularly against contemporary technology driven digital toys. The respondents are aware that if no toys are given, children tend to invent toy value out of things surrounding them. Wherein toys are to be procured most parents feel that it should be done only on specific occasions (Table 3).

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Table 3: Distribution of Responses on Toy Attitude Scale

No	Items	Response	Groups					Overall	Cramer's V	Sig.
			HI	DD	TC	MD	ESD			
1	Toys are unaffordable luxuries for children	N	56	65	56	43	47	267	.106	.743
		SD	3	2	3	0	3	11		
		D	16	21	19	14	15	85		
		N	14	14	9	10	12	59		
		A	15	21	20	9	10	75		
		SA	8	7	5	10	7	37		
2	Children can and do grow even without toys	SD	27	38	32	23	23	143	.067	.989
		D	3	1	2	2	2	10		
		N	15	15	11	9	13	63		
		A	11	11	11	9	9	51		
		SA	27	38	32	23	23	143		
3	Giving toys to children is unsafe	SD	1	0	2	1	1	5	.105	.764
		D	4	9	2	3	3	21		
		N	4	3	2	2	3	14		
		A	36	48	43	30	34	191		
		SA	11	5	7	7	6	36		
4	Toys are the best teaching instruments	SD	3	4	4	7	3	21	.116	.515
		D	-	-	-	-	-	-		
		N	-	-	-	-	-	-		
		A	25	32	27	14	23	121		
		SA	28	29	25	22	21	125		
5	Toys teach children unwanted violence and aggression	SD	1	0	0	0	0	1	.093	.902
		D	5	7	4	4	4	24		
		N	8	11	5	5	7	36		
		A	29	39	36	24	26	154		
		SA	13	8	11	10	10	52		
6	Toys can be a source of outlet for the child's unfulfilled aggression	SD	4	4	4	3	4	19	.093	.899
		D	26	37	25	14	22	124		
		N	7	7	8	6	5	33		
		A	14	14	12	13	12	65		
		SA	5	3	7	7	4	26		
7	Toys make children to live in a world of make believe fantasy	SD	3	4	2	6	3	18	.092	.911
		D	22	26	17	13	18	96		
		N	5	4	4	4	3	20		
		A	22	28	27	18	19	114		
		SA	4	3	6	2	4	19		
8	Teaching children to read and write is better option than to waste their time playing with toys	SD	4	2	5	5	4	20	.093	.906
		D	21	21	22	16	16	96		
		N	3	3	0	3	3	12		
		A	23	34	26	17	21	121		
		SA	5	5	3	2	3	18		
9	The make-and-break toys actually teach	SD	2	1	2	1	2	8	.103	.792
		D	7	9	4	5	8	33		
		N	3	7	1	4	3	18		

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No	Items	Resp onse	Groups					Overall	Cramer's V	Sig.
			HI	DD	TC	MD	ESD			
	children assembly and construction skills.	A	26	27	23	14	17	107		
		SA	18	21	26	19	17	101		
10	Digital toys are a bane of the modern technology driven world	SD	6	7	8	9	6	36	.115	.594
		D	14	8	9	5	9	45		
		N	14	25	11	14	13	77		
		A	21	24	28	14	18	105		
		SA	1	1	0	1	1	4		
11	The competition and rivalry that happens between children can be traced partly to the kind of aggressive toys that they are given to play with by their elders	SD	2	1	2	5	2	12	.143	.148
		D	26	41	38	20	24	149		
		N	15	13	5	10	12	55		
		A	10	3	6	5	6	30		
		SA	3	7	5	3	3	21		
12	There are different toys for different ages	SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	.096	.834
		D	2	2	0	1	2	7		
		N	1	1	0	1	1	4		
		A	37	40	41	23	31	172		
		SA	16	22	15	18	13	84		
13	All children loves and needed toys	SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	.093	.800
		D	1	0	0	0	0	1		
		N	-	-	-	-	-	-		
		A	21	25	18	17	18	99		
		SA	34	40	38	26	29	167		
14	Boys need to be given different toys than what is given to girls	SD	10	8	13	8	8	47	.074	.989
		D	2	4	1	3	2	12		
		N	21	25	24	15	19	104		
		A	5	6	3	3	4	21		
		SA	10	8	13	8	8	47		
15	If no toys are given, children somehow learn to devise, develop or make their own toys with things around them in their surroundings	SD	2	1	2	5	2	12	.122	.464
		D	8	10	2	7	7	34		
		N	1	4	1	1	1	8		
		A	38	41	43	25	32	179		
		SA	7	9	8	5	5	34		
16	Toys allow children to role play and rehearse their later adult life	SD	2	1	2	5	2	12	.094	.891
		D	6	7	8	5	6	32		
		N	4	7	3	4	3	21		
		A	34	39	32	24	29	158		
		SA	10	11	11	5	7	44		

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No	Items	Response	Groups					Overall	Cramer's V	Sig.
			HI	DD	TC	MD	ESD			
17	Some dolls and toys can also influence the self image, perception of body size or shape in children	SD	4	8	3	3	4	22	.102	.801
		D	34	33	32	19	26	144		
		N	9	14	13	10	9	55		
		A	7	9	6	6	6	34		
		SA	2	1	2	5	2	12		
18	Children who play with toys may start imitating or mimicking those animal or machine sounds	SD	2	1	2	5	2	12	.103	.785
		D	1	3	2	1	2	9		
		N	3	3	0	2	3	11		
		A	43	51	44	31	34	203		
		SA	7	7	8	4	6	32		
19	By the age of 2 ½ years, children have a good sense of what is safe to eat and are not likely to put small toys in their mouth	SD	-	-	-	-	-	-	.087	.911
		D	23	25	28	22	19	117		
		N	9	8	5	4	7	33		
		A	20	28	17	13	17	95		
		SA	4	4	6	4	4	22		
20	Toys should be purchased only on special occasions	SD	4	8	6	4	4	26	.094	.891
		D	8	8	8	4	6	34		
		N	4	8	4	5	4	25		
		A	36	40	38	29	32	175		
		SA	4	1	0	1	1	7		

Although the ‘Socio-Demographic Data Sheet’ mentions heading like respondent educational qualifications, and occupation, sibling details related to their ages and education, as well as family details covering nature, type, status and size of family, the derived data did not have sufficient numbers in order to make meaningful comparisons on those variables.

DISCUSSION

Play is not synonymous with toys (Rubin & Howe, 1985). The use of appropriate toys or teaching aids is essential to engage kids constructively. Children vary in their types of play and toy preferences depending on their physical and mental age levels (Venkatesan, 2010; 2004; Frashner, Nurss & Brogan, 1980). Toys need to be safe, simple, user friendly, washable, age-appropriate and above all ‘teaching-task’ oriented. They need not be expensive to be engaging. Of course, toys entertain kids. But, they should also educate, albeit tacitly. Further, precautions need to be taken to clean and disinfect the toys, avoid purchase or use of toys for purposes that intend to harm or hurt others, such as those illustrated by toys which serve as chokers, impalers, hit-backs, deafeners, crushers, burners, and head injurers.

Research on toys vis-a-vis children with or without disabilities is admittedly irregular, inchoate and incomplete. The beneficial role of toys in amelioration of children is conceded

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(Lear, 1996; Riddick, 1982; Clark & Roberta, 1979; Kawin, 1934). Ae-Hawa et al (2003) reviewed the findings of 13 intervention studies published between 1975 and 1999 on 3-5 year children with disabilities to conclude that positive outcome is associated with playing with *social toys*. *Beneficial effects of toy play in children with multiple disabilities in inclusive classroom settings are recorded* (DiCarlo & Reid, 2004; DiCarlo, Reid & Stricklin, 2003). Research has also focused on toy preferences in children (Thomas, 1984; Frashner, Naurss, & Brogan, 1980), toy selection by parents (Christensen & Stockdale, 1991; Peretti & Sydney, 1984; Kesner & Sunal, 1980; Allen, 1968), the need or utility of toy libraries (Brodin & Bjorck-Akerson, 1992; Jackson, Robey, Watjus & Chadwick, 1991; Johnson, 1978) and toy safety issues (Wu et al. 2013; Taylor, Morris & Rogers, 1997; Hillery, 1994; Dawson, 1990) in the context of CWDD. It appears that parents in the Indian scene are typically unaware of these several important nuances related to toys and children.

As derived in this study, gender stereotyping appears is a crucial variable in choice or dispensing of toys, their made availability and patterns of use (Venkatesan, 2014; Martin, Eisenbud & Rose, 1995; Caldera, Huston & O'Brien, 1989; Robinson & Morris, 1986). Cherney and London (2006), for instance, found that boys spent more time on leisure activities like engagement in sports, watching television and playing computer games than girls did. Giddings and Halverson (1981) noted that children spent 20 per cent of their waking time in play, wherein boys played more with vehicles and girls spent more time with dolls involving domestic role play and dressing up. Although common sense tells that different age groups of children are attracted by different types of toys, it is now shown that older children and/or those from urban areas show higher toy index than younger ones.

Venkatesan (2014) painted a rather dismal portrait of the CWDD as a rural girl, who is either an infant or toddler, without sufficient social exposure, or possibly, even multiply handicapped, with no toys made available for stimulation in the home settings. This implies that the best opposite polarity among such children is another hypothetical urban male child with hearing impairment staying in joint family and exposed to school, who appears to have availability for somewhat or slightly better number of toys. However, admittedly, at that time, there was still no comparative norms on toy availability in unaffected or so called non-disabled children to make meaningful comparisons or state how much toy-starved these children are in the country. Most of the toys have certain amount of educational purpose in it. They may have incorporated sounds and movement to stimulate the sensory touch of the children or bright color shape to trigger their visual perception. However, without proper guidance, CWDD will be just playing with toys without any purpose in it. At times, if not properly guided, toys may be used by children as agents for demolition, devastation, damage and destruction. In that sense, the purpose behind each toy is lost (Hiedemann & Hewitt, 1992).

Hello Barbie, CogniToys Dino, and Amazon Echo are new generation Internet connected toys and gadgets for children. They are being marketed in the west by emphasizing their potential educational and developmental benefits as well as for their interactivity, open-

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ended, and dynamic content. Even as these gen-next toys have privacy and new vulnerability threats not previously experienced in the realm of toys, the notions that parent respondents in this study carried with regard to toys vis-à-vis their children were far too behind.

In sum, this study has shown that research on toys vis-à-vis their CWDD is still an uncharted terrain. Parent opinions or attitudes appear to have not yet crystallized on this almost unheard theme in our country. This information is likely to help expand on the scope of toys in the upgrading informal, individualized, developmentally appropriate, activity-oriented, learner paced, ecologically interactive and play-based interventions for such children. Information on Toy Based Education for CWDD can be even passed on to fellow professionals in the field of disability rehabilitation. Even though toys by themselves cannot be substitutes for warm, loving and dependable relationships, more important, it is the playing process that is vital. While doing so, it also contrasts the dismal ground reality wherein parents continue to be wary of dispensing toys to children. There is need to educate parents and enhance their toy awareness, while simultaneous efforts are needed to make toys more appealing, affordable, available and accessible for CWDD. The study throws open the possibility of providing access to CWSN to various types of toys in a low priced, constructive and facilitative manner. This is a real challenge and chance for the toy manufacturing and marketing industry in the country. There is need for prescriptions on just how many minimum number or variety of toys each child must be necessarily given or made available so that it does not fall into range of infringement to fulfill their basic child right to own a toy.

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