

# A Study of Social Support in Physically Disabled Students in an Educational Institute of Kanpur

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** People with disabilities are the world's largest minority, yet they are routinely excluded from most educational, economic and social opportunities. Persons with physical disabilities have to face problems not only because of their handicap but also due to non-addressal of their socio-emotional needs. **Objective:** 1) To study the bio-social characteristics of physically disabled students and 2) To study the profile of social support in physically disabled students. **Study design:** Cross-sectional study. **Study setting:** Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Technology for Handicapped, U.P., Kanpur. **Study subject:** All the physically disabled diploma stream students present at the time of data collection were taken as study subjects. Data was collected by interview method using a predesigned & pretested Questionnaire. **Results:** Physically disabled students predominantly belonged to age-group 18-20 years (47.62%), Hindu religion (95.24%), OBC Caste (47.14%) and social class V (51.90%) as per modified BG Prasad social classification. 88.57% of families provide required support to their physically disabled children, while 27.14%, 20.48% & 14.29% parents avoid taking them to social gatherings, make undue interference & show discriminatory behaviour respectively. 87.14% of students were well behaved by their siblings, 87.14% students can rely on their friends and about same percentage of normal children interact well with them. 90.95% of the students were treated by community satisfactorily. Majority of the students (>50%) accepted that family economy was affected adversely by their disability. **Conclusion:** In the present study, majority of the students were getting support from their parents, siblings, friends and community at large.

**Key words:** Social Support, Physically disabled.

## Introduction:

Despite being the world's largest minority, persons with disabilities are largely ignored. Globally, there are over 650 million persons with disabilities, and around one third of these are youth. Nearly 80% of youth with disabilities live in developing countries, and although the actual figures are uncertain, it is clear that youth with disabilities form a significant proportion of the youth population in every society

It is not surprising that the physically challenged fight two battles: the battle to overcome the limitations imposed by their physical condition and the battle to be accepted by others. Physical disability in itself may not be as bad physical experience as the social one, especially in those cases where the handicap is visible

If such scenario is often present right from the early years of childhood through adolescence, this low self-esteem leads to a feeling of inferiority, social withdrawal, social rejection and ultimately they fall prey to multitude of health problems and psychosocial disorders. Thus individual life, family life and community suffers adversely. The nature

and magnitude of social support available to youth with disabilities is a severely under-researched area, realizing dearth of studies on this aspect, the present study was planned.

## Material and Methods:

Present Cross-sectional study was carried out during the year 2009-2010 at Government institute i.e. Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Technology for Handicapped, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. All the physically disabled diploma stream students in the age group of 15 years and above in Ist, IInd & IIIrd years were included in the study thus comprising a total of 220 students. The social classification was done according to modified B. G. Prasad social classification (AICPI, April 2010). Data was collected by interview method using a predesigned & pretested Questionnaire. Statistical Analysis was done using percentages.

## Results:

Table - I reveals that maximum (47.62%) students belonged to age group 18-20 years followed by 32.38% students in the age group 21-23 years & least 10% each in age group 15-17 years & 24 years and above.

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**Table-1 Distribution of physically disabled students according to their socio demographic characteristics**

Socio-demographic characteristics	No.	%
<b>Age group (Years)</b>		
15-17	21	10.00
<b>18-20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>47.62</b>
21-23	68	32.38
24 and above	21	10.00
Total	210	100.00
<b>Religion</b>		
<b>Hindu</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>95.24</b>
Muslim	10	4.76
Christian	0	0.00
Others	0	0.00
Total	210	100.00
<b>Caste</b>		
General	67	31.91
<b>OBC</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>47.14</b>
SC/ST	44	20.95
Total	210	100.00
<b>Social Class</b> (According to modified BG Prasad social classification)		
I	03	1.43
II	18	8.57
III	14	6.67
IV	66	31.43
<b>V</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>51.90</b>
Total	210	100.00

It was also seen that most of the students (95.24%) were Hindus while Muslims were only 4.76%. None of the students belonged to Christian & other religions.

It was observed that maximum (47.14%) students were OBCs followed by 31.91% General & least (20.95%) belonged to SC / ST.

It was noted that majority of students (51.90%) belonged to social class V, followed by 31.43% social class IV, 8.57% social class II, 6.67% social class III and least (1.43%) belonged to social class I.

Table - 2 revealed that 27.14% of the parents avoids taking their physically disabled children to social gathering, 20.48% parents unduly interfere in the affairs of their physically disabled children while about 14.29% do discriminate among their siblings.

It was also observed that maximum 20.32% physically disabled students were not getting support from parents whereas this percentage was relatively low i.e. 12.86% in case of siblings and friends and lowest (9.05%) in case of community.

**Table- 2 Distribution of physically disabled students according to social support (n=210)**

Level of support	Nature of support	YES		NO	
		No.	%	No.	%
Parents	Take to social gatherings	153	72.86	57	27.14
	No undue interference	167	79.52	43	20.48
	No discrimination among siblings	180	85.71	30	14.29
Siblings	Positive support	183	87.14	27	12.86
Friends	Positive support	183	87.14	27	12.86
Community	Positive support	191	90.95	19	9.05

(\*multiple response)

It was also found that overall 88.57% of families provide required support to their physically disabled children and 86.67% of normal children interact well with them.

Table - 3 shows that family economy of majority (53.33%) of physically disabled students was affected adversely due to their disability.

**Table-3: Social impact on families of physically disabled students (n=210)**

Nature of problem	YES	
	No.	%
Facing social obstacles	50	23.81
Family environment affected adversely	54	25.71
Family economy affected adversely	112	53.33

(\*multiple response)

#### Discussion:

Maximum 47.62% of physically disabled students belonged to age group 18-20 years followed by 32.38% students in the age group 21-23 years.

Among physically disabled students maximum 95.24% belonged to Hindu religion while minimum 4.76% belonged

to Muslim religion. The same pattern was observed in NFHS-3(2005-2006) (1), where corresponding figures were 82% & 13% respectively.

Among physically disabled students majority belonged to OBC caste followed by General (31.91%), while the same trend was observed in the findings of NFHS-3 (2005-2006). (1)

It was found that the majority of students (51.90%) belonged to social class-V while minimum 1.43% belonged to social class-I.

It was seen that 27.14% of the parents avoids taking their physically disabled children to social gathering, 20.48% parents unduly interfere in the affairs of their physically disabled children while about 14.29% do discriminate among their siblings.

It was also observed that maximum 20.64% physically disabled students were not getting support from parents whereas this percentage was relatively low i.e. 12.86% in case of siblings and friends and lowest (9.05%) in case of community.

It was noted that family economy of majority (53.33%) of physically disabled students was affected adversely due to their disability. This is in conformity with the finding of Singhi P.D. et al (1990) (2) and Mohapatra C.S. et al (2002) (3).

#### **Conclusion:**

Majority of the physically disabled students belonged to age group 18-20 years, Hindu religion, OBC caste and to social class V.

It was seen that maximum 90.95% of the physically disabled students were getting community support, whereas this percentage was 87.14% in case of sibling and friends. It was lowest 79.36% in case of parents. It may be explained by the fact that parents are most directly affected by the disability of their wards.

In the present study, though it was observed that majority of the physically disabled students were getting support from their parents, siblings, friends and community at large but still there is a need to change the attitude of the society towards physically disabled.

The study also revealed that families with disabled students perceived greater financial stress.

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