



# SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AS PERCEIVED HANDICAPPED ADOLESCENTS

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## ABSTRACT

India is the largest democracy and most populous country in the world, has as per the official estimates, 55 million disabled people of different age groups, unofficial estimates but the figure at 100 million, In other words, 10% of the Indian people are disabled. They face many psychosocial disadvantages because of their physical inadequacy. Such as feeling of inferiority, fear of social ridicule, lack of self confidence and limited social participation.

The main objective of this investigation is to assess and compare school environment as perceived by handicapped and non - handicapped adolescents. The sample consisted of 80 adolescents (20 orthopedically handicapped males, 20 orthopedically handicapped females and 40 non - handicapped) from different school located in Rewa city.

The non handicapped adolescents were drawn from the same institutions same classes and the same section from where physically handicapped adolescents were taken. For the purpose of data collection personal data sheet and school environment inventory (constructed by Mishra; 1984) was used. Data were analyzed with the help of suitable statistics: Mean, SD, t-ratio etc. The results indicated that various dimensions of school environment are found to be significantly different for both the group.

**Key words:** Adolescents, Handicapped, Psychological, School

## Introduction -

India, the largest democracy and second most populous country in the world has as per the official estimates, 55 million disabled people of different age groups unofficial estimates but the figure at 100 million. In other words 10% of the Indian people are disabled. The disabled in Indian context usually constitute these four categories: (i) Visually Handicapped (ii) Hearing Impaired or Deaf and Dumb (iii) Mentally Retarded and (iv) Orthopaedically Handicapped. The disabled face many psychosocial disadvantages because of their physical inadequacy, such as a feeling of inferiority, fear of social ridicule, inability to compete with the normal people, lack of self confidence and limited social participation. They bear double burden of social handicap in addition to actual physical loss. Community considers them as useless members of society, and treats them as either an object of pity or ridicule. Orthopedically handicapped are those whose physical capacity is impaired by the loss, deformity or paralysis of one or more limbs. They are the victims of diseases or injuries which cured leave behind a certain diseases or injuries which is permanent and lifelong.

The physically handicapped face problems as they attempt to adjust the demands of living in social environment, They face physically, educational, vocational. Psychological and social problems. Among these the most difficult is the adjustment to the hostile social forces. Society has always treated them as strange species altogether. The physically handicapped are, therefore, most difficult to resettle, victims of disease. Deformity or accident, they have been further victimized by the peculiar and irrational prejudice that society has always displayed towards its physically inferior. The physically handicapped individual suffers from self - devaluation because he is unable to satisfy many of the emotional needs. An able - bodied adult enjoys independence and security as well as a good social life. He has adequate outlet for aggression and physical tensions. In a normal personality, there is a balance between security and independence. A normal person has not to think or worry about his movements or plans. He knows that the world is made for him. For the handicapped individual, however the same situation creates threats and anxiety, He has to make sure whether he can climb up the steps or whether the house to which he is invited has a lift or whether he can make use of bus, train or any other ordinary mode of transport to find his destination. If he cannot get up or go down, he cannot get out of his dwelling, he can not attend to his job if he has one. He at once feels that he has been cut off from the rest of the world.

Turner and Mclean (1989) reported that disabled subjects were substantially elevated risk for anxiety depressive disorders. Ojha (2000) found significant difference between orthopaedically handicapped female and normal control on social avoidance distress and fear of negative evaluation of evaluative social anxiety scale. Hasnain and Joshi (1984) compare the lame boys with normal ones on same psychological factors. It was highlighted that the handicapped and normal's had no difference on anxiety scores. The study also discloses interesting facts as the normal's were found to be more submissive, self disclose whereas the flames were found more ascending. Storey and Kuntson (1989) reported that disabled subjects interacted more with coworkers and customs, while disabled subjects interacted more with their schools or agency supervisor. Disabled subjects received more instructions than non - disabled subjects and non - disabled. Ojha (2006) indicated that handicapped and non handicapped students differ significantly with regard to sense of deprivation and self concept

Several studies have been conducted on disabled persons from different angles to know their needs problems and personality make up but the study on school environment as perceive by physically handicapped and non - handicapped students were found to be relatively nil. So the present study was design to ascertain and compare perceived school environment among physically handicapped and non handicapped adolescents.

The following null hypotheses have been formulated in the light of the above problems and objectives, which are envisaged to be tested in the present study.

1. There would be no significant difference between physically handicapped and control groups on various dimensions of school environment.
2. There would be no significant difference between physically handicapped female and non handicapped female on various dimensions of school environment.
3. There would be no significant difference between physically handicapped male and non handicapped male on various dimensions of school environment.

4. There would be no significant difference between physically handicapped male and physically handicapped female on various dimensions of school environment.

**METHODOLOGY -**

Sample: The sample constitutes of 80 physically handicapped adolescents (20, Orthopaedically handicapped males, 20 Orthopaedically handicapped females and 40 non handicapped) from different school located in Rewa district. The non handicapped adolescents were drawn from the same institutions. Same classes and the same section from where physically handicapped adolescents were taken. The socio economic background of physically handicapped adolescents in the two groups were almost same.

Measures: The following measures were used for the purpose of data collection.

1. Personal Data Schedule - Personal Data sheet was used to obtain general information regarding the subject's age, Gender, education and duration of being physically handicapped.
2. School Environment Inventory- School Environment Inventory is developed by Mishra. It contains 70 items related to the six dimensions of school environment. The six dimensions are -

- (A) Creative Stimulation (CRS - 20 Items)
- (B) Cognitive Encouragement (COE - 10 Items)
- (C) Acceptance (ACC - 10 Items)
- (D) Permissiveness (PRE - 10 Items)
- (E) Rejection (REJ - 10 Items)
- (F) Control (CON - 10 Items)

Against each item of the inventory five alternatives are given in forms of cells indicating the intensity of the responses. against 4 marks to 'Always'. 3 marks to 'often', 2 marks to 'sometimes'. 1 marks to 'rarely' and zero to responses. the inventory is reliable and valid.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION -**

The data obtain from the study were analyzed to find out the mean and standard deviation (SD) for various dimension of school environment. To find out the significance of differences between the mean or two groups 't' ratio was computed.

**Table No.1 : Mean score and 't' value on perceived school environment of handicapped male and non-handicapped male**

S. No.	School Environment	Handicapped Male (N= 20)	Non - Handicapped Male (N= 20)			
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1.	Creative Stimulation	50.50	2.72	50.65	2.80	0.17
2.	Cognitive Encouragement	36.65	6.08	38.85	3.95	1.36
3.	Acceptance	28.85	6.20	31.94	1.67	2.15*
4.	Permissiveness	20.00	4.41	20.80	2.14	0.73
5.	Rejection	9.23	3.04	10.50	4.53	1.04
6.	Control	22.00	9.72	19.75	3.78	0.97

\*\* .01 Level of confidence \* .05 Level of confidence.

Note: - Creative Stimulation (CRS) Cognitive Encouragement (COE) Acceptance (ACC). Permissiveness (PRE). Rejection (REJ). Control (CON)

Table 1 indicates the mean and t scores for two groups of handicapped male and non handicapped male students with regard to perceived school environment. The result clearly revealed that handicapped male and non - handicapped male students did not differ significantly from each other with regard to five dimensions of perceived school environment viz; CRS, COE, PRE, REJ and CON. But both group differ significantly on only (M = 28.85 ; M 31.94; t = 2.15 p> .05) dimension acceptance of perceived school environment.

It can be inferred that non - handicapped perceived unconditional love, right to express feelings, to uniqueness and to be autonomous individuals. Teachers also accept the feelings of students in a non - threatening manner as compared to handicapped students.

**Table No.2 : Mean score and 't' value on school environment of handicapped female and non handicapped female**

S. No.	School Environment	Handicapped Male (N= 20)	Non - Handicapped Male (N= 20)			
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1.	Creative Stimulation	35.95	6.65	54.05	7.57	0.80
2.	Cognitive Encouragement	30.85	4.95	31.35	2.24	0.41
3.	Acceptance	25.25	7.07	28.80	5.12	1.82
4.	Permissiveness	17.0	3.74	21.75	3.17	3.96**
5.	Rejection	9.90	3.22	16.30	4.85	4.92**
6.	Control	15.85	3.74	27.65	5.19	0.25

It could be seen from table 2 permissiveness (t = 3.96 p <.01) and rejection dimension of perceived school environment are more significantly effective in handicapped group (female) as compared to non- handicapped (female). It could be inferred that handicapped group perceive opportunities to express their views freely and act according to their desires with no interruption from teachers. On REJ (t=4.92 P < .01) dimension of perceived school environment. handicapped group perceive school climate in which teachers do not accord recognition to students rights to deviate, act freely and be autonomous persons in comparison to non - handicapped group. Other dimensions of perceived school environment such as CRS, COE, ACC and CON were not found to be significant at any level of confidence.

**Table No.3 Mean score and 't' value on perceived school environment of handicapped male and handicapped female**

S. No.	School Environment	Handicapped Male (N= 20)	Non - Handicapped Male (N= 20)			
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1.	Creative Stimulation	50.50	2.72	35.95	6.65	9.09**
2.	Cognitive Encouragement	36.65	6.08	30.85	4.95	3.31**
3.	Acceptance	28.85	6.20	25.25	7.07	1.71
4.	Permissiveness	20.00	4.41	17.00	3.74	2.33*
5.	Rejection	9.23	3.04	9.90	3.22	0.71
6.	Control	22.00	9.72	15.85	3.74	2.64**

From table 3 the mean difference between handicapped (male) and handicapped (female) students on cognitive encouragement (t = 3.31; p < .01), permissiveness (t = 2.33 P < .05) and control (t = 2.64; P < .01) dimensions of perceived school environment found to be statistically significant. From table 3 it is clear that handicapped ( male) and female perceived teachers behaviours more stimulating and encouraging towards then actions or behaviours. It can be inferred from the result that they also perceived school climate more favourable where they were provided opportunities to express their views freely with several restrictions to discipline them as compared to handicapped female group.

The mean and standard deviation (SD) and t value for various dimension of perceived school environment are shown in table 4.

**Table No.4 Mean score and 't' value on school environment of handicapped group and non handicapped group**

S. No.	School Environment	Handicapped Male (N= 20)	Non - Handicapped Male (N= 20)			't' Value
			Mean	SD	Mean	
1.	Creative Stimulation	11.70	8.92	51.00	5.93	23.25**
2.	Cognitive Encouragement	33.75	6.74	35.10	4.98	0.95
3.	Acceptance	27.05	5.47	28.60	3.94	1.44
4.	Permissiveness	18.52	4.36	21.82	2.65	0.41
5.	Rejection	9.32	3.09	13.32	5.47	0.40
6.	Control	18.40	4.99	70.60	5.93	4.48**

It is clear from above table that only two dimension of perceived school environment viz. creative stimulation ( $t=23.25$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and control ( $t = 4.48$ ;  $P < .01$ ) were found to be significant in handicapped group and non handicapped group. It can be inferred that non handicapped group perceive more opportunities to stimulate, creative thinking and they also perceive automatic atmosphere of the school in which several restrictions are imposed on them to discipline them as compared to non -handicapped group. Other dimensions of perceived school environment viz. COE, ACC, PRE and REJ were not found to be significant in any group at any level of confidence.

#### Conclusions -

1. The various dimensions of school environment are found to be significantly different for both of the groups (physically handicapped group and non handicapped group).
2. Physically handicapped boys perceived more creative stimulation, cognitive encouragement, acceptance, permissiveness, rejection and control school environment than physically handicapped girls.
3. Next to the family, the school environment plays the most important role in the process of the child development. The major problems of handicapped children such as education and school environment, in spite of effort made by government remain as major challenge. So in school, much needs to be done to create necessary environment for educating the handicapped children.

Much needs to be done to create necessary environment conducive for psychological development of physically handicapped children. So that physically handicapped children can be brought into mainstream of the society.

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