

## A Study on the Attitude of Youth towards the elderly

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### Abstract:

The attitude of youth towards the elderly has changed significantly due to diversities and contradictions in the family ties. Inevitable changes in the social life and institutions had taken place as a part of social development and evolution. Even though the constitution and legislative mechanisms put forward some solutions in this regard, this issue remains unresolved. As it is a troublesome issue, the researcher hypothesized as attitude towards elders, which was evolved from the incidents reported in newspapers. Reports on incidents of neglecting and abandoning elders are increasing day by day. For this the researchers selected 100 students in the age group of 18-25 years, studying at Mar Augusthinose College Ramapuram, consisting of both male and female, as the population. Systematic random sampling was used. A standardized tool named Attitude Towards Elderly Scale (ATES-ss) was found suitable for the data collection. Statistical techniques were applied to analyze the data. Qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to analyze the data. In qualitative data analysis, convergent techniques such as in-depth interview were conducted for supporting the quantitative data analysis and conclusion. In quantitative research analysis central tendencies and standard deviations were used. For further analysis, inferential statistics such as T-test and Kruskal-Wallis test were used. This study found that there is a progres-

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sive unfavorable tendency towards the elders. Here it is clear that in this fast moving and technological world, proper care, support, social security and humanitarian consideration should be given to this vulnerable section. The elders can be rehabilitated in a more convenient and supportive atmosphere, such tendencies are emerging. The social worker can work as a catalyst by utilizing the existing facilities for elders with new approaches, such as common rehabilitation centers in each place, where family members are working in different places as breadwinners.

**Key words:** Elderly, Attitude, Youth

### **Introduction**

Diversities and contradictions in the family ties have led to significant changes in the attitude towards the elderly. Attitude is an individual's predisposed state of mind regarding a value and it is precipitated through a responsive expression toward a person, place, thing, or event which in turn influences the individual's thought and action. ("Attitude (psychology)," 2019). The present generation views the elderly as a burden rather than an asset. Some parents do not want to 'burden' their families and knock at the doors of government homes. (Roshni, 2019) It is from the family that an individual learns the basic values of respect towards the elderly. But nowadays the number of nuclear families has increased which has led to fewer opportunities to live with the elder citizens. In this mechanical world the younger generation fails to show enough courtesy towards the elderly. This has become a disturbing social phenomenon. So, it is very important that the younger generation must learn the importance of respecting the elders and find time to spend with them.

### **Review of literature**

According to Ms. Tanya Sharma (April 2016) there are similarities as well as differences in the ways the young and the elderly perceive ageing. The World Health Organization considers an age of 65 and above as old age. Age-

ist attitudes and prejudices about old age are reflected in many ways in our present world scenario. The negative attitudes towards elderly is a result of some myths and stereotypes about old age (“(PDF) Conception of Ageing,” n.d.). Attitude towards the elderly depend largely on the stereotypical views, whether it is positive or negative and the quality of contact with the elders is more important than the contact frequency.(Bousfield& Hutchison, 2010). Youngsters value old people on an average basis. While comparing the attitude towards the elderly in boys and girls, girls have more positive attitude towards old people. Here it is clear that as age increases prejudice increases and appreciation decreases and we can see that gender plays an important role in the attitude scale.(“Attitudes Towards the Elderly Among German Adolescents: Educational Gerontology: Vol 40, No 3,” n.d.).

Researches prove that there is a significant difference between the age and the attitude towards the elderly. Attitude of middle aged persons towards the elderly are less negative than that of the youth. It is also found that women hold a more positive attitude towards older people than men. Those who have an elderly person residing with them hold a more favorable attitude towards the elderly. Weakening of family bonds, migration of young to the cities, flourishing of nuclear family, growing individualism and similar other reasons have become the root causes for the increasing number of problems that affects the elderly of today. Attitude formation is based up on culture, economic status, age, gender, educational qualifications and contacts with old people.

Poverty can be considered as the main cause for the rural middle aged people to show a negative attitude towards old people. These problems even lead the old people into elderly abuse and causes degrading of their self value in the society. People in countries including India have more negative attitude than in countries like United States of America and England. Studies indicates that highly educated people shows a more negative attitude towards old people and consider them as a burden to their life as well as in family. (Visweswara Rao, Prasad, & Avataramu, 2000). The Logical Indian reports cases on a heinous custom called ‘Thalaikoothal’, which is the traditional practice of senicide, observed in some parts of Southern districts of Tamil Nadu

state of India. The main reasons behind this evil practice as understood till date are that nowadays the youth considers elderly as a burden rather than an asset, which is a result of greater employment, modernization and industrialization. ("Thalaikoothal," 2015). Negative attitudes of elders about themselves and the adverse attitudes shown by others towards them can equally affect the well-being of elders. Therefore in order to have a healthy ageing one must develop positive attitude towards the twilight of life. Bless Retirement Living is a new practice in different parts of India especially Bangalore, Delhi, and Ernakulam. Bless retirement living is a space for those aged above 55 where the elderly after their retirement could explore the possibilities of ageing gracefully and with dignity ("Bless Retirement Living," n.d.).

### **Significance of the study**

In this era of increasing number of old age homes, there is a question what leads to this trend. A growing body of research and global data collected and analyzed by Orb Media show a strong connection between how we view old age and how well we age. Individuals with a positive attitude towards old age are likely to live longer and in better health than those with a negative attitude. Older people in countries with low levels of respect for the elderly are at risk for worse mental and physical health and higher levels of poverty compared with others in their country. A shift in attitude, the research shows, could improve a lot. Hence healthy ageing is increasingly important (Terry, 2018).

### **Methodology**

Descriptive Research Design was the perceived method for describing the attitude towards elderly among the youth. The objectives of the study were to study the attitude of youngsters towards elders to study the attitude towards elders among male and female and to study the attitude towards elderly with respect to the class of studying. Hypothesis of the study was made for finding out if there is any difference between the attitude of male and female towards elderly and between the class of studying and attitude towards elderly. The researcher used Attitude Towards Elderly Scale (ATES-ss) developed by Dr. (Mrs.) Sunita Singh. The scoring was done using the manual. In qualitative

data analysis, researcher went through abstracts, journals and newspapers for depicting the background and present status of the research topic. In quantitative data analysis descriptive and inferential statistics were used. In descriptive statistics average and standard deviation were taken. In inferential statistics higher forms of statistical analysis such as T-test, Kruskal-Wallis test were used to find out the mean differences of gender and class. For this process SPSS (version 16) had been used.

### Analysis and interpretation

**Table 1:**

*Attitude Towards Elderly Score of the Students*

Sl. No.	N	Grade	%	Interpretation
1	0	A	0	Extremely favorable
2	13	B	13	Highly favorable
3	15	C	15	Above average
4	42	D	42	Moderately favorable
5	18	E	18	Unfavorable
6	8	F	8	Highly unfavorable
7	4	G	4	Extremely Unfavorable

The above table shows a general picture of attitude towards elders. 42%, majority of the respondents have moderately favorable attitude towards elders. While 15% of respondents showed above average attitude, 13% have highly favorable attitude. Around 30% of respondents have unfavorable attitude towards elders, which means a changing attitude is clear

**Table 2:**

*T- test for Attitude Towards Elders Among Male and Female*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std.deviation	t	df	Significance
Attitude towards elders	Male	50	72.10	8.340	4.088	98	.000
	Female	50	78.56	7.437			

T-test given in table 2 for 50 males and 50 females, the mean values of the obtained data are 72.10 and 78.56 with a standard deviation of 8.340 and 7.437 respectively. Calculated t- value is 4.088 and the corresponding significant value is .000 with 98 degrees of freedom. That means the researcher rejects null hypothesis, as the calculated value is not coming in the normal distribution. So alternate hypothesis is accepted, which means attitude towards elderly significantly deviates.

**Table 3:**

*Kruskal-Wallis test for Class Vs. attitude towards elders*

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Chisquare	df	Significance
Attitude towards Elders	100	75.33	8.506	6.738	3	.081
Class	100	2.40	1.025			

The Kruskal-Wallis test for Class Vs attitude towards elders shows that for 100 students, the mean value of the data obtained is 75.33 and 2.40 with a standard deviation of 8.506 and 1.025 for attitude towards elders and class respectively. The calculated Chi square value is 6.738 and the corresponding significant value is .081 with 3 degrees of freedom. From this it is clear that as age increases there is no corresponding change in the attitude towards elderly, i.e., attitude towards elderly is equally distributed among the population. Thus, we accept the null hypothesis that, there is no significant difference between class and attitude towards elders.

### Result and discussion

There is approximately the same attitude i.e., favorable and unfavorable attitude though, the unfavorable attitude towards the elderly is coming closer to the unfavorable attitude. Even though the respondents who responded unfavorably have an attitude that, they think elderly should be with them, yet

they have an uncertainty about how it should be. In the age of industrialization, they have to go for work. So, by whom the elderly will be taken care of is a significant question. The researcher got the same when conducted an in-depth study among the selected respondents. They said “they must live with their family and must be taken care of by their children. The children instead of taking it as a burden must take it as a responsibility. But I can’t predict the future.”

When we studied the second objective i.e. the attitude towards elderly among male and female, there is a clear picture of a much more favorable attitude towards elderly among female than that found among male. This change in attitude can be the result of many reasons like educational, economic and cultural background.

Again, when the researchers took into consideration the third objective i.e. there is no significant relation between age and attitude towards the elderly and proved the research hypothesis true. The same trend is almost equally distributed in the population.

### **Suggestions**

In future there will be a grey revolution, by about 2050, if the population growth continues. To tackle this issue, the existing facilities should be utilized properly and novel ventures such as ‘Bless’ in New Delhi has to be put forward. More researches for probing multifaceted aspects of this issue has to be undertaken. Geriatric social work should be promoted. More social workers should be trained and encouraged for social entrepreneurship.

### **Conclusion**

To finish off this study, the researchers mainly covered up attitude towards the elderly among youth. For these 100 youngsters were included by probability approach. The information regarding the subject matter was collected through a standardized tool and was analyzed with scientific ways. The study supports the existing trends, growing negative attitude towards elders. Social

work is a profession to make a better and healthy generation. They can do remarkable professional services for this vulnerable section of the society.

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