

Maria PAPADAKI¹

Heraklion Foundation, Greece

Mira TZVETKOVA-ARSOVA²

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky", Bulgaria

SOCIAL ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS OF SIGHTED PEOPLE TOWARDS BLINDNESS AND BLIND PERSONS

Blindness has been interpreted in different, often controversial ways, since ancient times. It has been stereotyped and labeled by sighted people and has thus affected the acceptance of Visually Impaired persons, the tolerance towards them and their integration into societal life.

The main purpose of this study is to find out the contemporary beliefs and social attitudes of Greek sighted people towards blindness and blind persons. 115 sighted Greek people, most of them from urban and rural areas of Athens and Crete, were asked to fill in a questionnaire consisting of 25 questions.

Our results showed that firstly, visually impaired people are still treated with some prejudice concerning the size of their disability, their education and their integration into society. However, they have ceased to apply antiquated perceptions based on fear or ignorance. Sighted people no longer believe that blind individuals are beggars, evil or blinded because of a punishment. Secondly, sighted people still believe that blind persons possess some extra powers and abilities such as better sense of things, especially of hearing, sixth sense or better judgment abilities. Finally, the common belief about associating blind people with their musical talents and skills is no longer in actual existence.

Key words: *blindness, visually impaired, beliefs, social attitudes, sighted people*

1 marakiglougrou@hotmail.com

2 miratz@fnpp.uni-sofia.bg

INTRODUCTION

Several prevailing cultural values about disability in general and about blindness in particular, are disabling themselves. A person with disability is often presented and conceptualized as a personal tragedy, impaired body or an individual misfortune, especially by policymakers and employers (Donoghue, 2003; Keany & Glueckauf, 1993; Marinelli & Dell Orto, 1999; Stiker, 1999).

Blindness has been interpreted in different ways since ancient times. The degree of the negative impact of blindness varies according to societal norms and attitudes, and environmental access, as well as skills blind individuals have learned through rehabilitation and thus cannot be predicted from visual measurements alone. Rather, the negative impact of blindness would best be viewed in terms of the negative impact of the society on people who happen to be blind. Educational, employment, and economic factors are indicators of societal accessibility.

Disability has been understood with varying misconceptions to date in many societies. Different literature sources provide cross-cultural attitudes toward persons with disabilities (Anagnos, 1882; French, 1932; Enerstvedt, 1996; Гудонис, 1996; Holbrook & Koenig, 2000 etc.). French (1932) indicated that the oldest accounts of eye diseases were found in the country of blind – Egypt, in the Ebers Papyrus (1553-1550 B.C.). In ancient Greece attitudes differed from town to town. It is well known that in ancient Sparta people with disabilities did not survive due to the negative attitude of the whole community. Ancient Spartans used to throw newborn babies with disabilities off cliffs or left them in the wilderness. However, there are researchers who suggest that in ancient Sparta society was not so negative towards people with minor disabilities; hence they chose king Agisilaos the Second who was slightly handicapped.

Meanwhile, in Athens there were different laws. Physically handicapped or unable to work received financial aid from the state, in order to survive. In the plays of the Classical period (500-350 b.c.), Democritus demands treatment for everyone. Plato is also negative towards how state treats people with disabilities, while Aristoteles refers frequently in blind and deaf people and demands a special school for them.

Ancient Greek mythology is also a good source for interpretation of society's attitudes towards blind. The fear of blindness in the myths is the greatest fear for humans apart from fear of death. Ancient people knew that the importance of any disability was the ultimate punishment, for instance Oedipus, or on the other hand the reward as an inner intuition, like Tiresias, the oracle and they use it often as a reference in their plays. More specifically, in the ancient tragedy "Oedipus Tyrannos", Oedipus blinds himself as a punishment and exiles himself when he realizes that he has murdered his own father and has married his own mother, without knowing it. Despite his unawareness, as soon as he realized the truth, blindness seems the fairest punishment that could poise such a criminal behavior. Blindness as a punishment was used in many European countries, mostly for solving political situations – e.g. Bulgarian prince Vladimir was blinded by his own father prince Boris the First (IX century - 907), for his attempts to turn the country back from Christianity to paganism (ЦВЕТКОВА, 1996). On the contrary, Tiresias – as it is said in one of the myths – was blinded by goddess Athena, because he accidentally saw her naked, when she was washing her hair. After his mother's pleading, the goddess – in order to balance the disability – gave him the gift of divination (КУН, 1985).

Therefore, all the references in literature of blindness depict both the negative aspects of this disability and the myths about it. These myths are deducted from the stereotypical representations of blindness. For example, blind or visually impaired people cannot see anything and they live in total darkness, they share special gifts, like better hearing, touch, smell to offset the absence of sight.

In Homer's *Odyssey*, it is stated that the blind poet was often invited in the palace, when the king expected significant guests. The fact that he was blind was not a drawback for his personality and his presence in front of the honored guests; on the contrary it was intended and welcomed. As a result, it seems as if the poets or musicians of this period that were visually impaired were widely admired. On the other hand, begging was confronted with pity. In the same time, one can read in *Iliad* that the disability of crippled Hephaestus was the reason he was sent and kept away from Olympus by his own mother Hera. Furthermore, when drunk Dionysus brought him back to the sacred mountain, he was laughed at

for his strange walk by the rest of the gods. Homer also divides types of disadvantages and suggests music for inner peace and calmness of the sick, not to mention work for the treatment of any psychoses.

In the period prior to the late 1700s, the fate of persons with disabilities was likely to be a cruel one. Northern Salteaux Indians used to shoot persons with disability with arrows and burned their dead bodies since they were considered to be possessed by demon. In Germany, Martin Luther (1483-1546) was the proponent of the idea of killing disabled children considering them to be “manifestation of the devil in a living form”.

Some historical sources indicate the role played by religion in influencing community attitudes and the well being of families with a disability (French, 1932). Many hospices and cloisters were run for the relief of blind people and other persons with disabilities during the 4th century. The provision of support to persons with visual impairment was considered as the special responsibility of the church on the basis of the Christian ideals of charity. They found evidences of cultural attitudes i.e. in Russia, Central Asia, and the Far East countries, where the social positions of persons with disabilities were neither negative nor positive. In some other cultures being disabled was perceived as a liability.

The Christian doctrine introduced the view that disabling disease is neither a disgrace nor a punishment for sin, but instead a means of purification and a way of grace. This ideology shows that suffering perfects the sufferer. The sick has a preferential position, and it is a privilege for the healthy to minister them, while in Britain, the biblical and Christian tradition tends actually to encourage and authorize negative attitudes to disability. According to the Bible, every human being is created in God's will and knowledge regardless of their physical or mental capacities. The love that God has for every being also applies to people with different kind of disabilities. Even though the meanings given for disabilities in the Bible are positive, people interpret them in different ways. The disciples' question to Jesus when they meet the man who was blind from birth was (John 9:2) “who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?” Jesus' answer is clear: “It was not that this man sinned or his parents”. These answers should have prevented any interpretation that the Bible teaches that blindness is a punishment from God for sins.

In 1749. Denis Diderot – a French philosopher, wrote a *Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient* (“Letter on the Blind For the Use of Those Who See”). This is one of first attempts to draw the attention toward blind people not only on a personal, but also on a societal level. In 2001, Hull repeated Diderot’s attempts writing “Open Letter from a Blind Disciple to a Sighted Saviour”.

Farrell (1969) noted three ways in which attitudes toward the visually impaired are observed:

- Non-acceptance, which isolates the visually impaired from social contacts with the sighted community;
- Considering the persons with visual impairment as helpless and incapable of performing the tasks required for day to day living;
- Believing that the sighted must assist the visually impaired poor “without distinguishing those blind persons who may not need their help or those areas in which help is not acceptable”.

Various studies indicate that adverse attitudinal environment makes it difficult for the persons with visual impairment to lead a normal life. This is mainly reflected in the attitude of the community and co-residents for that matter, mainly because of the preconceived negative notions against such people or disability. Persons with visual impairment face very stringent responses that put them apart from the rest of the social environment. In 1948 and 1981 Lowenfeld stated that visual loss can be associated with three major limitations which influence the societal acceptance:

- in the control of the environment and the self in relation to it;
- in the ability to get about;
- in the range and variety of concepts.

Rowland (1985) underlines that blind people are often subjects to stereotyping and “theoretotyping”. According to the author, the theories which best described the societal beliefs toward visually impaired are:

- Blindness under the sexual innuendo;
- Blindness as death and rebirth;
- Blindness as the loss of consciousness;
- Blindness as the reprogramming of the system;
- Blindness as personal characteristic;
- Blindness as learned social role.

One of the most interesting theoretical publications in special literature with regard to the beliefs sighted people have about blindness and blind individuals, belongs to Wagnel-Lampl & Oliver (1994). In Bulgaria their views were presented by Tzvetkova (Цвѣткова, 1997). The authors divided the beliefs of sighted people into three main groups: negative, positive, neutral.

Negative beliefs include:

- Connecting blindness with punishment (the myth of Oedipus).
- Misbelieves about touching blind people (sighted people will become blind if they touch or shake hands with a blind person).
- Thinking of blind as evil people (mostly presented in literature: the blind beggar Pew in the “The treasure island” of Robert Louis Stevenson, the crafty blind man Stagg in Dickens’ novel “Barnaby Rudge” etc.).
- Associating blind with beggars.

Positive beliefs include:

- Beliefs about extra or special powers of blind (blind Greek prophet Tiresias, blind poet Homer).
- Associating the musical talent of some blind people as typical for all (Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles, Andrea Boccelli and many others).
- Belief that blind people can judge well (because of the Greek Goddess Themis).

Neutral beliefs include:

- All visually impaired are only congenitally blind or with acquired blindness
- All visually impaired are only blind
- Visually impaired live in total darkness
- Visually impaired are helpless and fully dependent on others.

There is a number of recent researches on attitudes toward visually impaired among college and university students (Roy & MacKay, 2002; Волкова, 2009; Johnson, 2010; Rowland & Bell, 2012 etc.). Volkova (2009) differentiates few main types of stereotypes of sighted university students for the blind:

- the blind seen as a hero for his/her attempts to achieve as much as possible in life;

- the blind seen in a negative way as unabled and imperfect;
- the blind seen without understanding or with pity.

A recent study of Rowland & Bell (2012) also investigated the attitudes of 497 college students and compared them with those of 67 blind students. The results demonstrated support for the notion that greater exposure to visually impaired yields more positive attitudes and that blind individuals hold more positive attitudes about themselves than do sighted people.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the beliefs and social attitudes of Greek sighted people towards blindness and visually impaired individuals. The objectives of the present study were to:

1. Investigate if the preexisting social attitudes and beliefs are valid in the contemporary time.
2. Explore the current beliefs of sighted people (considering the three main types of attitudes: negative, positive and neutral).
3. Examine whether prejudices towards blindness and visually impaired are still in existence.

METHOD

Participants

The survey involved 115 people, most of them from urban and rural areas of Athens and Crete. An effort was made in order to include men and women of different ages, different social and cultural levels.

Specifically, 115 people were involved, 66 women (57.4%) and 49 men (42.6%) of different ages, from 15 to over 66 years of age: 11 participants (9.6%) belong to the first age group (15-25 years), 76 participants (66,1%) to the age group of 26-35 years, 13 participants (11.3%) to the age group 36-45, 5 participants (4.3%) to the age group 46-55, 5 participants (4.3%) to age group 56-65, and 5 participants (4.3%) are over 66 years old.

Regarding the educational level of the participants: 94 participants have completed higher education: 61 participants (53%) hold a university degree and 33 participants (28.7%) hold a master's degree. Nineteen participants have completed secondary education, out of which 16 (13.9%) have a high school diploma and 3 (2.6%) have a primary school diploma. Two participants (1.7%) did not have any education.

Research Tool

The research was based on a Questionnaire developed by the authors and consisting of 25 questions in total. The questions were based on the three main beliefs – negative, positive, and neutral, defined by Wagnel-Lampl & Oliver (1994). The questions can be divided into a few main groups:

- the first group consisted of three questions aimed to gather data regarding the age, gender and educational background of the respondents;
- the second group consisted of 8 questions that had a negative insight. Four of them were directed towards why people believed in such a statement;
- the third group consisted of 8 questions that had a positive insight. Some of them were again directed towards why people believed in such a statement, while others requested giving examples;
- the fourth group consisted of 6 questions, with three neutral statements and three questions about why people believed in them.

The questions in the Questionnaire were both multiple choice and open-ended.

Procedure

The survey was conducted in 2012. The Questionnaire was administered to 200 people. Specifically, there were 100 questionnaires distributed in paper form and 100 in electronic form. The Questionnaires in paper form were distributed at urban and rural areas of Athens and Crete and in electronic form, by e mails and Facebook. Only 115 of the participants completed the questionnaire and returned it, 67 completed the electronic form and 48 the paper form.

For the needs of confidentiality, the questionnaires were fully anonymous and did not require any personal data, except from the information about age, gender and educational background.

RESULTS

The data analysis was based on the descriptive statistics, using the SPSS 20.0 program. Each question will be discussed separately in order to present a good and clear picture of all results.

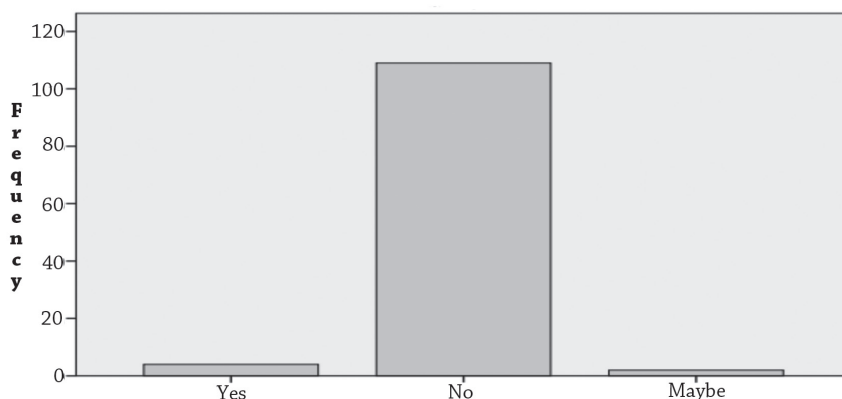
Table 1 shows the results of the question regarding whether the respondents believed that blindness can be connected with punishment. 87.8% (101) of the participants answered negatively and only 10.4% (12) answered positively.

Table 1 – “Do you believe that blindness can be connected with punishment?”

Question 4. Do you believe that blindness can be connected with punishment?		
Answers	Frequency	Percent
YES	12	10.4
NO	101	87.8
MAYBE	1	0.9
I DO NOT KNOW	1	0.9
Total	115	100,0

The 12 respondents who answered positively on the previous question were asked in the next question to reply on what made them believe that. Five participants (4.3%) said that they had read about it and 4 (3.5%) did not know why they believed in this. One participant (0.9%) knew a real example, 1 participant (0.9%) knew many blind persons in this situation and 1 respondent (0.9%) heard from others about such cases. Those who have read about the connection between blindness and punishment mentioned the myth of Oedipus.

Graph 1 shows the results on the question if the respondents believed that they can personally become blind if they touch or shake hands with blind people. 94.8% (109) of the participants answered negatively and only 3.5% (4) gave positive answers. There were also 2 persons (1.7%) who answered “maybe”.



Graph 1 – “Do you believe that you personally can become blind if you touch or shake hands with blind people?”

In the question regarding what made them believe that, 2 persons (1.7%) said that they had read about it and 1 (0.9%) did not know why he/she believed in this. It is remarkable that 1 person (0.9%) indicated he/she knew a real example of an individual becoming blind after touching a blind person.

Table 2 represents the results on the question regarding whether the respondents believed that blind people were usually bad or evil people. 89.6% (103) of the participants answered negatively, 6.1% (7) answered positively. There were also 4 persons (3.5%) who answered “maybe” and just 1 (0.9%) who did not know.

Table 2 – “Do you believe that blind people are usually bad or evil people?”

Question 8. Do you believe that blind people are usually bad or evil people?		
Answers	Frequency	Percent
YES	7	6.1
NO	103	89.6
MAYBE	4	3.5
I DO NOT KNOW	1	0.9
Total	115	100.0

The next question was on what made the 7 participants who answered positively on the previous question believe that blind people were bad or evil. Two participants (1.7%) knew one real example, 2 respondents (1.7%) knew more real examples of such people, 1 participant (0.9%) has read about this and 2 respondents (1.7%) could not indicate why they believed in this.

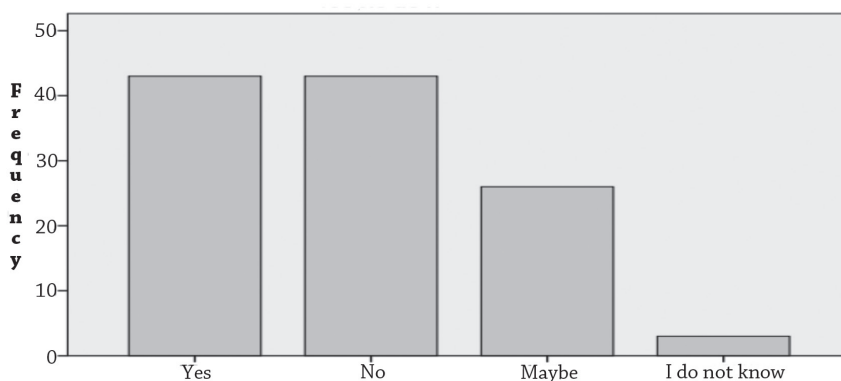
In the question regarding whether the respondents believed that most blind people were beggars, 90.4% (104) answered negatively, 3.5% (4) “maybe”, whereas 4.3% (5) of the participants answered positively. Table 3 shows the frequencies of the answers.

Table 3 – “Do you believe that most blind people are beggars?”

Question 10. Do you believe that most blind people are beggars?		
Answers	Frequency	Percent
YES	5	4.3
NO	104	90.4
MAYBE	4	3.5
I DO NOT KNOW	2	1.7
Total	115	100,0

Those who answered positively (5 in total), were asked to say what made them believe that. One respondent (0.9%) knew one blind beggar, 1 respondent (0.9%) knew many blind beggars, 1 respondent (0.9%) knew about blind beggars from others and 1 respondent (0.9%) did not know why he/she believed in this statement.

In the question regarding whether the participants believed that most blind people possess extra or special powers that sighted people do not have, the answers were equally divided (37.4%) to positive and negative, as can be observed in the graph below. However, there were many 22.6% (26) who answered that it is a possibility and 2.6% (3) did not know.



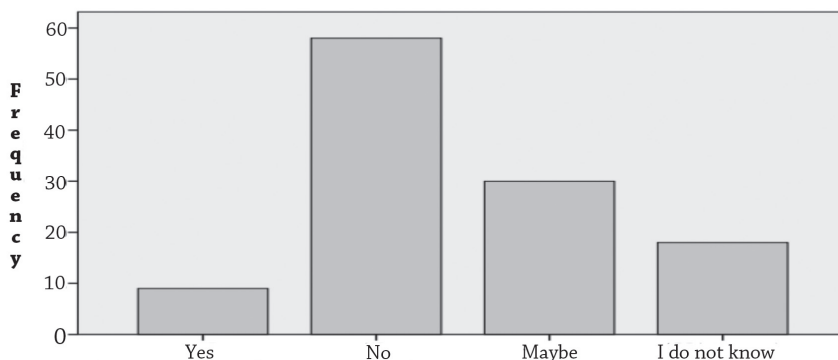
Graph 2 – “Do you believe that blind people possess extra or special powers that sighted people do not have?”

With regard to education, most of the participants who answered positively, hold a university degree. At the same time, the majority of negative answers were given by participants with a master's degree.

Those who answered positively were asked to say what made them believe that. The majority said that they had read about it – 21.7%, 7% heard about it, 4.3% knew examples of such blind individuals and 2.6% knew one real example. 1.7% did not state why they believed that. As we have already mentioned, people often think that blind either had extra powers like Tiresias or are punished for a crime as Oedipus.

The question regarding what special or extra powers blind people can possess, was an open-ended question. 50.4% (58) of the participants gave examples, the majority of which included development of other senses, such as hearing, because of the loss of sight.,. Nine participants wrote about the “sixth sense”.

The next question was whether the respondents believed that all or most blind people have musical talent and musical skills. Only 7.8% of the participants answered positively. As can be observed in Graph 3, 50.4% of the answers were negative, 26.1% were neutral and 15.7% did not know.

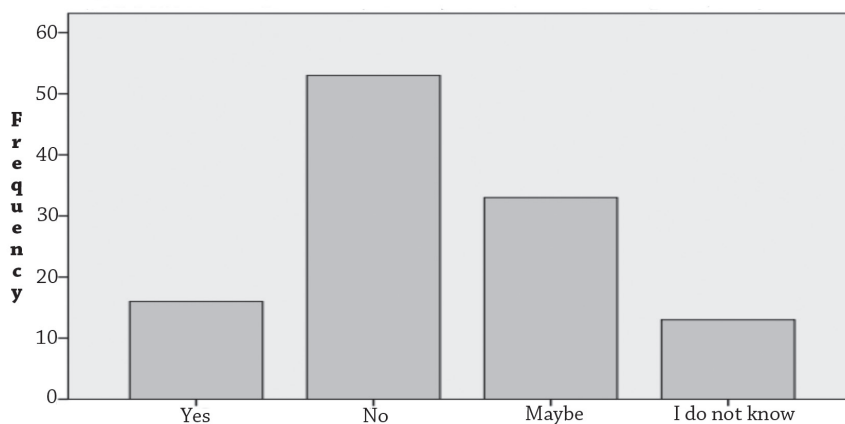


Graph 3 – “Do you believe that all or most blind people have musical talent?”

Those who answered positively were asked to say what made them believe that. 66.7% of the participants knew blind musicians, while others (11.1% for each group) knew one blind musician, have heard or read about it.

In addition, in question 17, the participants were asked to write down names of blind musicians, if they knew any. Various answers were given. The majority listed down Andrea Bocelli, an Italian tenor, and Ray Charles, an American musician. Other names were Jeff Healey, Stevie Wonder, Arizona Dranes and Ronnie Mislap. There were many who gave names of local blind musicians such as Mr. Kostas, blind singer from Heraklion, Mr. Vasilis, blind guitarist from Athens.

In the question regarding whether the participants believed that blind people can judge better than sighted people, 13.9% (16) of the participants answered positively, 46.1% (53) answered negatively, 28.7% (33) were neutral and 11.3% (13) did not know.



Graph 4 – “Do you believe that blind people can judge better than sighted people?”

With regard to gender, equal positive answers were given, whereas males gave more negative answers.

Those who answered positively, were asked to say what made them believe that. 50% of the participants knew one or more examples of blind persons, 18.8% have read about it and 25% did not know why they believed in this.

Table 4 presents the frequency of the answers in the question regarding whether the respondents believed that visually impaired people were only congenitally blind or only with acquired blindness. 94.8% of the participants believed in both opinions, 2.6% thought these people were only with acquired blindness, there was no response about congenital blindness.

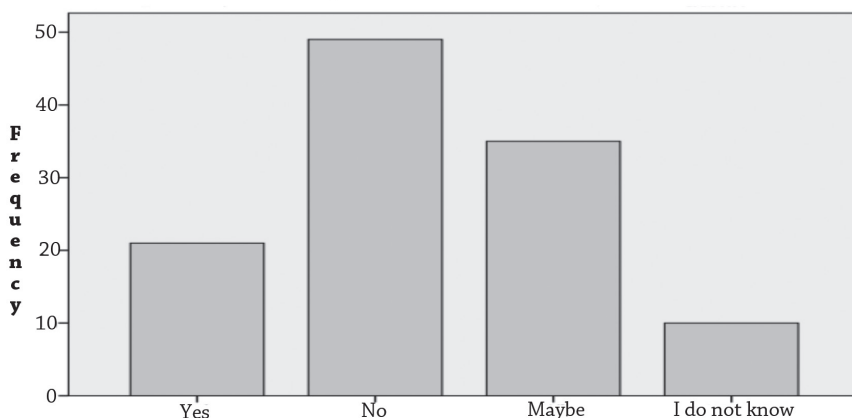
Table 4 – “Do you believe that visually impaired people are only congenitally blind or only with acquired blindness?”

Question 19. Do you believe that visually impaired people are only congenitally blind or only with acquired blindness?		
Answers	Frequency	Percent
They are with acquired blindness	3	2.6
They can be both with congenital and with acquired blindness	109	94.8
I do not know	3	2.6
Total	115	100.0

Participants who believed in both opinions hold a high school diploma, a university degree and a master’s degree.

In the question regarding what made the participants believe that, 6.3% knew one congenitally blind person, 13.4% knew one blind person with acquired blindness, 25.9% have heard from others about it, 38.4% have read about it and 16.1% did not know why they believe in this. The results about knowing one congenitally blind person contradict the previous question where no one stated about the option of the blind being only congenitally blind. However, obviously the respondents (7 in total) who knew congenitally blind people, also knew the adventitiously blind and stated both options.

With regard to the question about the belief that all visually impaired people live in total darkness, 18.3% of the participants answered positively, 42.6% negatively, 30.4% were neutral and 8.7% did not know about this.



Graph 5 – “Do you believe that all visually impaired people live in total darkness?”

Those who answered positively were asked to state what made them believe in this. Some of the participants knew one (9.5%) or more blind persons (9.5%) who live in total darkness, some others have read about this (23.8%) or heard from others (14.3%) and some did not know why they believed it (7.8%). The truth is that many visually impaired people have some residual vision.

In the last question regarding whether the participants believed that all visually impaired people are helpless and fully dependent on others, the majority gave negative answers (62.6%). However, 17.4% (20 people) answered positively, 14.8% (17 people) said “maybe” and 5.2% (6) did not know.

Table 5 – “Do you believe all visually impaired people are helpless and fully dependent on others?”

Question 29. – Do you believe that all visually impaired people are helpless and fully dependent on others?		
Answers	Frequency	Percent
YES	20	17.4
NO	72	62.6
MAYBE	17	14.8
I DO NOT KNOW	6	5.2
Total	115	100.0

Those who answered positively (17.4%), were asked to state why they believed that. 15% of them knew one example, 35% knew more examples of such persons. 15% have read about it, 10% have heard it from others, while 25% did not give any particular reason.

DISCUSSION

Most of our results show that sighted people rely a lot on personal and direct experience about visually impaired. Many of the respondents personally knew blind people in general and blind musicians in particular and were able to state their names. On the other hand, it is worth to mention that small percent of the participants often gave replies connected with “hearing about this form others”, “reading about it” etc. This means that there will always be groups of people relying on second-hand knowledge and experience. They will always believe in wrong statements about the blind and visually impaired and have prejudice about them.

The majority of the sighted respondents did not believe in the four negative statements about the blind. However, for each of the four negative statements, there was a small percentage of people who believed in them.

Our results also showed that the majority of the participants in the study did not believe in three out of four positive statements. Only one of these statements – about visually impaired possessing extra powers, showed equal results. Again, for each of the positive statements there was a small percentage of people who believed in them.

The three neutral statements showed quite controversial results. Although the majority of respondents knew enough about the difference between congenital and acquired blindness and were aware of the fact that visually impaired could belong to both groups, many participants doubted whether or not visually impaired live in total darkness, and quite a big number of the respondents was not sure if visually impaired were helpless and dependent on others. These results show poor knowledge of sighted people about the abilities and skills visually impaired individuals can gain.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was an attempt to gain a picture of the beliefs and social attitudes of the contemporary Greek society with regard to blindness and blind individuals. It also aimed to find out whether or not the beliefs from the past are still evident in sighted people from both urban and rural areas of Greece. The main limitations of the research were connected to the number of the participants – 115 in total, and somehow to the research tool – a questionnaire, consisting of open-ended and multiple-choice questions.

The results of this survey, however, lead us to some basic conclusions:

Firstly, visually impaired people are still treated with some prejudice concerning the size of their disability, their education and their integration into society. However, they have ceased to apply antiquated perceptions based on fear or ignorance. Sighted people no longer believe that blind individuals are beggars, evil or blinded because of a punishment.

Secondly, sighted people still believe that blind persons possess some extra powers and abilities such as a better sense of things, especially hearing, sixth sense or better judgment abilities.

Finally, the common belief about associating blind people with their musical talents and skills is no longer in actual existence.

REFERENCES

1. Anagnos, M. (1882). *Education of the Blind: Historical sketch of its origin, rise and progress*. Boston: Rand, Abery & co. printers to the Commonwealth.
2. Diderot, D. (1749). *Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient*, Londres, Paris.
3. Donoghue, C. (2003). Challenging the Authority of the Medical Definition of Disability: An analysis of the resistance to the social constructionist paradigm, *Disability & Society*, 18(2), 199–208.
4. Enerstvedt, R. T. (1996). *Legacy of the past: Those who are gone but have not left (Some aspects of the history of vblind education, deaf education, and the deaf-blind education with emphasis on the time before 1900)*. Forlaget Nord-Press, Denmark.
5. Farrell, G. (1969). *The story of blindness*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, London.
6. French, R. S. (1932). *From Homer to Helen Keller: A social and educational study of the blind*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.
7. Holbrook, M. C., A. J. Koenig (eds.) (2000). *Foundations of Education: History and Theory of Teaching Children and Youths with Visual Impairments*, vol. 1, Second Edition, New York: American Foundation for the Blind.
8. Hull, J. M. (2001). *Open Letter from a Blind Disciple to a Sighted Saviour: Text and Discussion*, In: Martin O'Kane (ed.) *Borders, Boundaries and the Bible*, (pp. 154-177). Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press.
9. Johnson, P. M. (2010). *Social Accessibility for Students with Visual-Impairments: A Mixed-Methodological Study of Current Students at a Land-Grant and Regionally-Known University in Western Virginia*, Doctoral Dissertation. Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute

- and State. April 2, Blacksburg, Virginia, on-line publication at: http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-04132010-225216/unrestricted/Johnson_PM_D_2010.pdf
10. Keany, K. C., Glueckauf, R. L. (1993). Disability and value change: An overview and reanalysis of acceptance of loss theory. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, Vol 38(3), 199-210.
 11. Lowenfeld, B. (1948). *Effects of blindness on the cognitive functions of children*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.
 12. Lowenfeld, B. (1981). *Berthold Lowenfeld on Blindness and Blind People: Selected Papers*, New York: American Foundation for the Blind.
 13. Marinelli, R. P., Dell Orto, A. E. (eds.). (1999). *The Psychological and Social Impact of Disability*, 4th ed., Springer Publ. co., NY.
 14. Rowland, M. P., Bell, E. C. (2012). *Measuring the attitudes of sighted college students towards blindness*. *The Journal of Blindness Innovation and Research*, 2(2). doi:10.5241/2-24.
 15. Rowland, W. P. (1985). *Being-Blind-In-The-World*. South African National Council for the Blind, Pretoria.
 16. Roy, A. W. N., MacKay G. F. (2002). Self-perception and locus of control in visually impaired college students with different types of vision loss. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, 96(4), 254–266.
 17. Stiker, H. J. (1999). *A History of Disability*. The University of Michigan Press.
 18. Wagnel-Lampl, A., Oliver, G. W. (1994). Folklore of Blindness, *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, 89(3), 267–277.
 19. Волкова, И. П. (2009). Психосоциални фактори адаптације и интеграције у друштво лица са дубоким нарушењима вида, *Човек и Образовање*, № 3(20), 159–164.
 20. Гудонис, В. (1996). Социјалне основе и путеви интеграције лица са нарушеним видом, *Елдија*, Клайпеда.
 21. Кун, Н. А. (1985). Старогрчки легенди и митови, *Наука и изкуство*, Софија.
 22. Цветкова, М. (1996). Слепите у древности и средновековију, *Педагошка*, Софија, No 11, 84–93.
 23. Цветкова, М. (1997). Теорије и схватања за слепотата, *Специјална педагошка*, Софија, No 3, 51–60.

DRUŠTVENI STAVOVI I UVERENJA OSOBA SA NORMALNIM VIDOM PREMA OSOBAMA SA OŠTEĆENJEM VIDA

Maria Papadaki*, Mira Tzvetkova-Arsova**
*Fondacija Heraklion, Grčka**
*Univerzitet „Sveti Kliment Ohridski”, Bugarska***

Sažetak

Cilj ovog istraživanja je da utvrdi savremena uverenja i stavove Grka sa normalnim vidom prema osobama sa oštećenjem vida. Još od davnih vremena slepoća se interpretira na različite, često kontraverzne načine. Ona je takođe stereotipizovana i obeležena od strane onih koji vide, što je uticalo na prihvatanje osoba sa oštećenjem vida, toleranciju prema njima i njihovu integraciju u društvo.

Prvo, prema osobama sa oštećenjem vida se i dalje odnosi sa određenim predrasudama vezanim za stepen njihovog oštećenja, njihovo obrazovanje i integraciju u društvo. Međutim, nestale su zastarele percepcije zasnovane na strahu ili neznanju. Osobe koje vide više ne veruju da su slepe osobe prosjaci, zlikovci ili da je njihovo slepilo nekakva kazna. Drugo, osobe koje vide i dalje veruju da slepi imaju nekakve dodatne moći i sposobnosti, kao na primer izraženija čula, naročito sluh, šesto čulo ili bolju procenu. Konačno, rasprostranjeno verovanje kojim se slepima pripisuju muzički talenti i sposobnosti više ne postoji.

Ključne reči: oštećenje vida, društveni stavovi, osobe koje vide

Primitljeno: 5.8.2013.

Prihvaćeno: 4.10.2013.