

A study of personality and mental health of visually challenged and normal adolescents

Dr. Savita Gahlawat

Assistant Professor in Education, G. V. M. College of Education for Women, Sonipat, Haryana, India

Abstract

The present study was designed to examine whether there were differences in Personality and mental health of visually challenged adolescents and their normal counterparts. The sample consisted of purposively selected 200 (100 visually challenged and 100 normal adolescents) school going adolescents of grade IX-XII aged 12-17 years. Dimensional personality inventory by Mahesh Bhargava and Mental health battery by Singh and Gupta were administered on each subject. The results of the study indicate, on the whole, that personality and mental health of visually challenged adolescents were significantly lower than their normal counterparts.

Keywords: visually challenged adolescents, personality, mental health

Introduction

Disability is a degree of difficulty, limitation or dependence, ranging from slight to severe. It is a result of the interaction between a person with a health condition and a particular environmental context. Individuals with similar health conditions may not be similarly disabled or share the same perception of their disability, depending on their environmental adaptations. For example, having access to technical aids, services or medication, or physical adaptation to the environment may allow individuals to overcome their disabling conditions. As per Census 2011, in India, out of the 121 Cr population, about 2.68 Cr persons are 'disabled' which is 2.21% of the total population. The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2006) recognizes that Persons with Disabilities are valuable human resource for the country and seeks to create an environment that provides equal opportunities, protection of their rights and full participation in society. Over the last decade, the Central and State governments begun expressing their concern about the welfare of the disabled, the training of the professionals in this field, development of service models and research.

But, the prevailing attitude of our society towards the disabled still needs time to change. In our modern society, they are still believed to be dependent, helpless, defective, deviant immoral and an object of fear and pity to be avoided and rejected. Prevailing attitudes not only determine the social expectations and treatment accorded to a person with a disability in the society, but also his or her self-image and function. It has been felt that the maladjustment of these adolescents is not due to their actual disability but rather due to the hatred, poor social support and attitudes of the non-disabled towards the disabled and due to the emotional stress exerted on them by the family members and society. This negative attitude brings a quite negative effect on the psychological health of the disabled child which affects his/her self-perception and creates a lots of conflicts, anxiety, frustration, emotional, mental and social stress in the mind of the child. Such a situation of ignorance, rejection, denial of the disabled child and his/her handicap by the family members and society cause severe hindrance in the

path of a disabled child, struggling hard to overcome his/her disability and bringing back into the mainstream of social life.

Further, these adolescents have more emotional needs to be accepted as a valuable person, to be appreciated, to get respect, attention, security and acceptance by the society than their normal peers. Failure to achieve a reputed position in school, family and society creates lots of psychological problem. Chaturvedi (2002) [3] studied psychological makeup of visually impaired children and concluded that prolonged deprivation significantly influence the positive self-evaluation, integration of personality and total mental health of visually impaired children. Moreover highly deprived visually impaired children are having poor positive self-evaluation, poor integration of personality and low status of mental health. Cambra and Sillvestre (2003) founded that the special needs students had a positive self-concept although it was significantly lower than that of their counterparts, especially in the social and academic dimensions. Sharma (2005) [13] reported that the family climate and self-esteem of visually disabled children play a very vital role in their academic life. Naseema and Usha (2007) [8] revealed a significant difference between visually impaired and normal pupils in respect to their self concept, school adjustment and achievement in mathematics. Kumar and Singh (2013) [6] concluded that there is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment and sighted students have better intelligent and adjusted than visually impaired students. Pant and Joshi (2016) [10] revealed that children with visual impairment studying in inclusive setup are more emotionally stable than the children with visual impairment studying in special schools.

Several studies have been conducted on different population of special child from different angles to know their needs, adjustment and personality make-up and sense of deprivation. However, the studies on comparing the personality and mental health of visually challenged students with normal ones particularly in Indian context are very few. Therefore, the present study was carried out with an objective to see whether there were differences in Personality and mental health of visually challenged adolescents and their normal counterparts.

Objectives

1. To assess the personality of visually challenged and normal adolescents.
2. To assess the mental health of visually challenged and normal adolescents.
3. To compare the personality and mental health of visually challenged and normal adolescents.

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were framed:

1. There will be a significant difference in personality of visually challenged and normal adolescents.
2. There will be a significant difference in mental health of visually challenged and normal adolescents.

Sample

The present study was confined to Panipat district of Haryana state. The study was comprised a sample of 200 students (100 visually challenged adolescents and 100 normal adolescents). 100 visually challenged adolescents were taken from Govt, institute of blind, Panipat and 100 normal adolescents were taken from different private schools of Panipat city. The age group of 200 purposively selected participants was 12-17 years.

Tools

Dimensional Personality Inventory (DPI) was developed and standardized by *Mahesh Bhargava*. The inventory consists of 60 statements in simple (easy to understand even by low literatures) and available in Hindi as well as English version. It includes the six areas such as activity-passivity, enthusiastic-non-enthusiastic, assertive-submissive, suspicious-trusting, depressive- non-depressive and emotional instability-emotional stability.

Mental health battery standardized and developed by *Singh &*

Gupta was used for the assessment of mental health of hearing challenged students. The scale consists of 130 statements. It includes the six areas such as Emotional stability, over all adjustment, Autonomy, security-insecurity, self-concept and intelligence. The higher the score on the scale better is the degree of the mental health and vice-versa.

Methodology

The present study was conducted on visually challenged and normal adolescents in the age group of 12-17. The investigator herself visited the concerned schools on different dates and time. She met the principals and explained the purpose and the procedure involved in data collection. The investigator obtained written permission duly signed by the concerned authorities. The dates suitable to the school authorities were finalized. The investigator approached the authorities on the dates already decided and was helped to the class rooms. Rapport was established with the students by exchanging introduction and purpose and objectives of study were explained in brief whereas in case of visually challenged adolescents, help of their special educator is sought to convey the purpose and objectives of the study. The students were told that these test and their results had nothing to do with their personal lives and their achievement in the examination. It was made clear to them that the answers and results will be kept confidential and will be used for research purpose only. Before the administration of questionnaires, the instructions given in the tests were explained to the subjects verbally so that the students give correct answers.

Results

The scores of mean, standard deviation and t-value of visually challenged and normal adolescents for personality variable are given in the Table-1.

Table 1: Significance of Difference between Visually Challenged and Normal adolescents For Personality Variable (N-200)

| Sr. No. | Variable | N | Visually challenged Adolescents | | Normal Adolescents | | ‘t’ value |
|---------|-------------|-----|---------------------------------|------|--------------------|------|-----------|
| | | | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | |
| 1. | Personality | 200 | 57.15 | 4.30 | 63.38 | 5.07 | 9.37*/** |

*Significant at 0.01 level /** Significant at 0.05 level

Table-1 reveals that the ‘t’ value 9.37 for the mean scores of personality variable is significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level as calculated value is greater than the table value. Hence, it may be inferred on the basis of result that visually challenged adolescents have low personality makeup as compared with their normal counterparts. Hence, a hypothesis 1 of the study i.e. “There will be a significant difference in personality of visually challenged and normal adolescents” was accepted.

The result of present study is in line with Aleem (2005) [1] who revealed that male students are found to be more emotionally stable than female students. Garaigordobil & Bernarás (2009) [4] concluded that women with visual impairment scored lower in self-esteem and higher in various psychopathological symptoms. He also revealed that low psychoticism, high extraversion, and low hostility were identified as predictors of high self-concept.

Figure 1 depicts the mean scores of personality variable of visually challenged and normal adolescents.

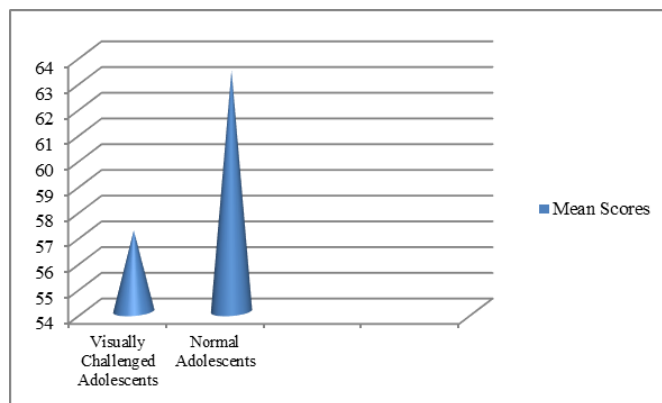


Fig 1: Mean scores of visually challenged adolescents for Personality variable

The scores of mean, standard deviation and t-value of visually challenged and normal adolescents for mental health variable are given in the Table-2.

Table 2: Significance of Difference between Visually Challenged and Normal adolescents For Mental Health Variable (N-200)

| Sr. No. | Variable | N | Visually Challenged Adolescents | | Normal Adolescents | | 't' value |
|---------|---------------|-----|---------------------------------|------|--------------------|------|-----------|
| | | | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | |
| 1. | Mental Health | 200 | 84.55 | 4.15 | 98.65 | 4.06 | 24.28*/** |

*Significant at 0.01 level /** Significant at 0.05 level

Table-2 reveals that the 't' value 24.28 for the mean scores of mental health variable is significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level as calculated value is greater than the table value. Hence, it may be inferred on the basis of result that visually challenged adolescents have poor mental health as compared with their normal counterparts. Hence, a hypothesis 2 of the study i.e. "There will be a significant difference in mental health of visually challenged and normal adolescents" was accepted. The results are in agreement with Kumthekar (2004) [10] who found significant difference in mental health of physical challenged and normal college students. Normal college going students have a more positive self-concept and mental health as compared to physically challenged college going students. Pandith (2011) [8] found significant difference in self-concept, level of aspiration, mental health and academic achievement of handicapped teenagers and normal teenagers. Figure 2 depicts the mean scores of mental health variable of visually challenged and normal adolescents.

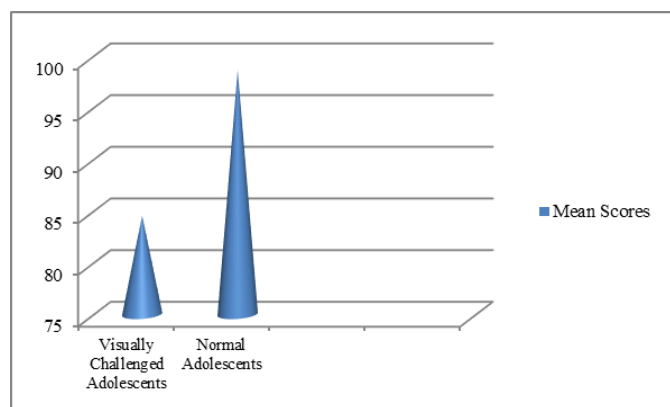


Fig 2: Mean scores of visually challenged adolescents for mental health variable

Conclusion

The present study gives evidence that normal adolescents have better personality and positive mental health as compared to visually challenged adolescents. Hence, it may be inferred on the basis of results that there is a dire need to organize counseling workshops and seminars to boost the personality and mental health of visually challenged adolescents as they are also one of the valuable human resources of our country. The results strengthen the case of special educators who advocate the inclusion of special children in regular school. One of the most important objectives of school education i.e. all round development of personality of students can be realized by exposing students to their normal counterparts. It also helps in advising parents for encouraging their wards to participate regularly in school activities for shaping their personality.

The present results also give insight to authorities working in the field of education to organize workshops, seminars, lectures and conferences on special education. Such efforts will be helpful in creating awareness among teachers, students,

administrator, members of the school management committee, parents, special educators, social workers, media personnel's working in the field of special and inclusive education.

References

1. Aleem, S. Emotional Stability among College Youth. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*. 2005; 31:100-102.
2. Cambra C, Silvestre N. Students with special educational needs in the inclusive classroom: social integration and self-concept, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*. 2003; 18:197-208.
3. Chaturvedi S. Psychological Makeup of Visually Impaired Children. Rajat Publications, New Delhi. 2002, 27-47.
4. Garaigordobil M, Bernarás E. Self-concept, Self-esteem, Personality Traits and Psychopathological Symptoms in adolescents with and without visual impairment. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*. 2009; 12(1):149-160.
5. Kumar S. Singh J. Emotional intelligence and adjustment among Visually Impaired and sighted school students. *Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research*. 2013; 2(8):1-8.
6. Bhargava M. Manual for Dimensional Personality Inventory (DPI). Agra; National Psychology Corporation, 4/230, Kacheri Ghat, 1994.
7. Naseema C, Usha V. School adjustment, self-concept and achievement in Mathematics of visually impaired and normal secondary school pupils in the integrated system – A Comparative study. *Disabilities and Impairments*. 2007; 21(1):49-55.
8. Pandith AA. A Study of Self Concept, Level of Aspiration and Academic Achievement of Physically Challenged and Normal Students at Secondary Level in District Baramulla, Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation, University of Kashmir, 2011.
9. Pant P, Joshi PK. A Comparative Study of Emotional Stability of Visually impaired students studying at secondary level in inclusive setup and special schools. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 2016; 7(22):53-58.
10. Kumthekar M. A comparative analysis of physically challenged and normal college going students on self-concept and mental health. *Journal of Health Management*. 2004; 7:42-43.
11. Sharma S. Prognosis of school achievement of visually disabled students. *Disabilities and Impairments*. 2005; 19(2):111-118.
12. Singh AK, Gupta AS. Manual for mental health battery (MHB). Agra; National Psychology Corporation, 4/230, Kacheri Ghat, 1971.