



Full Length Research Article

**A STUDY OF ADJUSTMENT, LEVEL OF ASPIRATION, SELF-CONCEPT AND ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT OF VISUALLY HANDICAPPED SCHOOL CHILDREN OF ASSAM**

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted on Adjustment, Level of Aspiration, self-concept and Academic Achievement of Visually Handicapped School Children of Assam. The data were collected from a sample of 400 visually handicapped children 200 boys and 200 girls who were studying in the classes VI to X (age 12 to 16 years) in six visually handicapped schools of lower and upper Assam selected by using simple random technique. The descriptive survey method was used for data collection using (i) Adjustment Inventory standardized by A.K.P Sinha and R.P. Singh; (ii) Self-Concept Inventory standardized by Raj Kumar Saraswat; (iii) Level of Educational Aspiration constructed by J.C. Soni and (iv) Academic Achievement from School Record. The study reported that the adjustment of visually handicapped boys and girls was found similar on overall adjustment. It also revealed that there existed no relationship between (a) adjustment and level of educational aspirations; (b) adjustment and self-concept and (c) adjustment and academic achievement of visually handicapped children.

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INTRODUCTION

An individual receives impressions of the world only through the sense organs. Senses are said to be the gateway to knowledge. More impressions reach at the brain through the sense of sight than through all other senses combined. It has been said that eyes are the windows of the soul. Visual difficulties may influence the life of the individual in physical, mental, social, educational and vocational aspects. It has been estimated that more than three-fourth of all learning comes through the use of eyes. Research Studies show that about one child in every five has a correctible vision defect and vision defects left undetected or uncorrected for too long may bring about failure, retardation, or other maladjustment. In ancient time, the visually handicapped children were treated with hostility and were neglected. With the development of democracy and socialism in different countries of the world, education is considered to be the basic right of the child. This realization paved the way for mainstreaming disabled children. However, a discernible change has taken place for attitude of

visually handicapped children after the International year of disabled persons (1981). In India, not more than 5 percent visually handicapped children receive education. A much smaller fraction of our blind adults achieve economic independence. Most of the institutions for visually handicapped are largely urban based. There is urgent need to devote large resources for the development of services to the blinds in the rural areas. There are two types of visually handicapped children, blind and partially sighted. The blind children are those who have no vision or who have only light perception. They use Braille in their educational pursuits. They have visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective glasses. Partially sighted are those visually handicapped who do not use Braille script for their educational purpose. They can read with the help of magnifying glass. Their visual acuity does not exceed 20/70. If the visual field is severely limited, that person may be considered blind even if visual acuity is better than 20/200. According to the 2001 census, there were 219, 06,769 disabled persons in India and 106, 34,881 were visually handicapped children. The 2001 census report of Government of India enumerated 530,300 disabled persons covering a population of 282,056 with blindness in Assam.

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Review of Related Literature

Verma (1968) investigated frustration and mal-adjustment of blind adolescents in special schools and found that the blind adolescents were mal-adjusted and frustrated in comparison with other adolescents. Roy (1969) compared low and high achiever blinds in respect of adjustment. He found that the high achievers were better adjusted in comparison to low achievers. Dhangare (1969) in his study on "The problem of visually Handicapped and their Rehabilitation", found that blind boys develop skills in crafts faster than in liberal education and boys from rural area and low socio economic background pose no problem of adjustment with institutional training. Akhtar (1971) compared the self-concepts of visually handicapped children and non-handicapped. As sample, 20 visually handicapped children of the Netrahin Chhatra Vidyalaya, Bhagalpur. An equal number of non-handicapped children were selected from the schools of Bhagalpur. The two groups were matched with respect of age, sex, and educational level. An inventory developed by Singh (1965) was used to measure self-concept. The findings were (i) The visually handicapped and non-handicapped children were significantly different in their self-concept; (ii) The visually handicapped did not show social conflict when discrepancy between the personal and social forms of adjustment were taken as a whole.

Das (1980) studied some existing problems some of physically handicapped with reference to two important places of Assam, namely Guwahati and Nagaon. In this regard she visited some of the institutions herself and has drawn solutions on the basis of her investigation. She observed that there were less number of institutions for visually handicapped children. She also identified the existing problems like adjustment, proper schooling, educational facilities etc. of visually handicapped students. Darsana (1980) studied the adjustment of IXth class students of Kurukshetra district at various levels of security, insecurity, and academic achievement. Her study revealed that the emotional and social adjustment of high insecure, middle insecure, and low insecure were significantly different. It further found that academic achievement had a significant role to play in emotional and social adjustment. She also found that sex had a significant role to play in emotional and social adjustment. It was also revealed that there existed a significant interaction among sex, security, insecurity and academic achievement.

Battle (1982) undertook a comparative study of the self-esteem of students in regular and special education classes and administered Culture Free Self- Esteem Inventory for children and the Perception of Ability Scale to selected group in regular and special classes. His conclusion was that students in special classes experience greater gains in self-esteem and perception of ability score than those in regular classes. Singh (1982) conducted a study on the personality adjustment of the blind students in three areas like emotional, social and educational. The researcher attempted to examine personality adjustment of the blind and the extent to which they have been able to adjust themselves on emotional, social, and educational levels. The investigator segregated well-adjusted secondary school students from the poorly adjusted students in three areas of adjustment like emotional, social, and educational. The impaired students were found to be poorly adjusted than

the physically normal children. This study also indicated blind children were as good as compared to others with regard to adjustment. Prabha (1983) conducted a research study entitled "Education and Adjustment problems of the physically handicapped and a plan for their Rehabilitation." The finding showed that the blind students were found to be high on emotional, low on social and average on educational adjustment while the deaf were low on social and educational and average on emotional adjustment. Kaur, Singh and Jain (1984) in their study on social adjustment of normal and blind adolescents, showed no significant difference among the sighted and blind adolescents in relation to social adjustment. In another study on conducted by Goel and Sen (1985) on deaf and blind adolescents showed that the deaf had the best work adjustment than the blinds. Sangeeta (1985) studied the self-concept of visually handicapped and sighted pupils. The results have shown that the visually impaired pupils have better self-concept than the sighted pupils. Beside these results showed that visually impaired children were more psychic, more depressed, more sensitive, more aggressive and tender. Still in another study conducted by Sarita, et.al (1987) on the adjustment pattern of visually handicapped and sighted students found visually handicapped students were poorly adjusted in emotional, social and educational adjustment than sighted students. The same condition prevailed as regards their total adjustment.

Banerjee (1988) in an investigation into the problem of adjustment of the blind and visually handicapped students reading in secondary schools of West Bengal found that the groups of visually handicapped adolescents vary with age of onset of the handicap in their adjustment to the interacting environment. Rastogi (1988) conducted a psycho-social study to assess the Residual-vision and visual functions in literate visually handicapped. The tests used in the study were Snellen's Distance Vision Chart, Near Vision Chart, Worth Four Dot Test, Ishihara Colour Vision Test, Bjerrum Tangont Screen for charting visual field, Eysenck's personality Questionnaire, Rotter's Locus of control scale and self-made visual function scale. The results indicated that visual function had significant negative correlation with personality dimensions like psychoticism and neuroticism. Different occupational categories did not differ with regard to scores on visual function, residual vision and visual field. Visual functions were not influenced by colour vision deficiency and binocular single vision status.

Sharma (1990) conducted a study to find out the anxiety level of visually handicapped and normal children. The study was conducted on a sample of 50 visually handicapped and 40 sighted students of class IV to IX standards of Aligarh district. The results revealed that visually handicapped children were significantly more anxious than the sighted children. They were found more anxious for their examination than their seeing counterpart. Haider (1990) investigated the adjustment, social competency, aspiration and academic achievement of visually handicapped children in special schools and in integrated settings. The results showed that visually impaired children from integrated schools were better in all respects. A close relationship was noticed between their several psychological characteristics, such as adjustment, social competency, aspiration and academic performance. Bhuyan (1991) conducted a research on development of education

among the physically handicapped students of Assam since independence. The findings were: (1) Most of the educational institutions for the blind deaf and dumb were managed by voluntary organizations and the funds of the voluntary organizations were not adequate and govt. grants were also not sufficient as a result of which the institutions had been suffering from various problems arising out of the paucity of funds; (2) lack of adequate number of qualified and specially trained teachers; (3) There is dearth of teaching aids and equipment in all the educational institutions of the blind; (4) Poor service conditions of the teachers; (5) no proper hostel facilities and low standard of food in hostels; (6) lack of vocational training in all in educational institutions of the blind; (7) There were no provisions of making proper assessment of visual acuity of the blind students and (8) There were no awareness among the parents regarding the existing educational and vocational facilities for the physically handicapped.

Nisar (1991) conducted a study to find out the psychological problems of congenital and adventitious blind in relation to their academic attainment. The Edward Personality Questionnaire has been used to measure the psychological problems of the blind children studying in Ahmadi Blind School, Aligarh. The main findings of the study were: (1) Congenitally blinds are more extrovert than their counterparts. (2) The congenitally blind children have been found superior in academic performance than the adventitiously blind children (3) Academic achievements of both groups are not affected by psychological problems as well as extroversion. Pradhan (1994) studied "Factor Affecting Academic Achievement of Visually Handicapped Children" and found (1) Study habit affected the academic achievement of visually handicapped children; (2) There was no correlation between sensory knowledge and academic achievement of visually handicapped children; and (3) There was low correlation between age and sensory knowledge of visually handicapped children. Aminabhavi (1996) in his study entitled "A study of adjustmental ability of physically disabled and able students from the colleges of Dharwad and Belgaum," found that physically disabled were mal-adjusted with respect to family, emotion, mode and leadership aspects.

Gogoi (1999) studied on educational problems of blind children as faced by the teachers of blind school. The result showed (1) Poor intelligence, (2) Academic retardation, (3) Slower speech development, (4) Personality disorder, (5) Problem in adjustment, (6) Rural area and illiterate Parents, (7) Poverty, (8) Lack of trained teachers, (9) Poor financial position, (10) Lack of proper hostel and medical facilities (11) Absence of proper extra-curricular activities (12) Defective government policy. Agarwal (2002) conducted a study entitled "A comparative study of academic skills of visually impaired students studying in various educational settings" and reported that visually impaired students going to mainstream schools both in integrated as well as semi-integrated setting were good at problem solving and reasoning skills due to greater exposure to the subjects like Mathematics and science. The investigator concluded that visually impaired children should be admitted to mainstream schools in large numbers. Integrated setting should be promoted and strengthened. Both were equal in their performance. The investigator concluded that uniform education policy and procedures shall hold good for both.

Sharma (2002) conducted a study entitled "A comparative study of self-concept and self-esteem of blind students studying in integrated and special school settings". The result of the study showed that the students (boys and girls together) from integrated school setting did not differ significantly from their counterparts in special school settings on global self-concept ($F = 2.94$). Blind boys and girl student in two setting also did not differ significantly with their counterparts on total self-concept ($F = 1.09$ and 2.00 respectively). On physical, educational, moral and intellectual dimensions of self-concept also no significant differences were found ($F = .27, 1.05, 2.88,$ and $.91$ respectively). However on social, and temperamental dimensions of self-concept the two groups differed significantly ($F = 17.28$ and 9.21 respectively). Soni (2002) conducted a study entitled "A study of influence of parental attitude on the self-concept of visually impaired children". In his research, it was found that the attitudes of society in general and of the parents in particular are neither scientific nor appropriately based on humanistic consideration. Khan (2006) carried out a factorial study "Determinants of Academic Success of Visually Challenged Children of Secondary Schools" in Aligarh town. The major findings were (a) Educational aspiration and academic successes are positively and significantly related with each other among visually challenged children. Therefore, educational aspiration is an important factor of academic success at the secondary stage. (b) Vocational preference also played an important role in academic success in the ease of visually challenged children. (c) Socio-economic status had a significant impact on aspiration.

Lifshitz et al. (2007) conducted a study on Self-concept, Adjustment to blindness and quality of friendship among adolescents with visual impairments. In this study the self-concept and quality of friendship of 40 adolescents with visually impairments (20 public schools and 20 in a residential school) were compared to those of 41 sighted adolescent. The findings indicate a similar self-concept profile for sighted adolescents and adolescents with visual impairments, although the scores of the participants with visual impairments were higher in all domains except their father's concept of them. Mamata (2008) carried out a study on "Educational and vocational aspirations of students with visually impairment in relation to their self-concept and level of intelligence. The major findings were (a) It was found that students with visually impairment do not feel 'Highly Aspired' towards any occupation. (b) Majority of the students with visual impairment were found to have high self-concept.

Neelam (2009) conducted a study on the topic entitled "A study of creative potential of visually impaired students in relation to their self-concept and locus of control." It reported that (1) visually impaired students studying in govt. schools were found more fluent in their vocabulary as compared to those studying in private school. (2) Students with positive self-concept were found to be more fluent as compared to the students with negative self-concept. (3) Visually impaired coming from high socio economic status were found to be more original in their ideas as compared to those belonging to low and middle economic status families. (4) Visually impaired students with high socio-economic status scored better than those with low and middle socio-economic status. (5) Visually impaired students with positive self-concept were found more

creative as compared to those with negative self-concept. The study of Pradhan and Soni (2011) on adjustment and anxiety in visually handicapped male and female adolescents was based on a sample of 400 visually handicapped adolescents, 200 male and 200 female. The tools used for adjustment were adjustment inventory by S.P.Kulshrestha and anxiety scale by D.N Sinha. Findings reported that there is no significant difference in the adjustment of visually handicapped male and female adolescents studying in Bhim Bhoi School for Blind, Bhubaneswar. The study confirmed that there is no significant interaction effect of visually handicapped adolescents and sex on adjustment in Bhim Bhoi School for Blind, Bhubaneswar.

Significance of the Study

The visually handicapped children are a minority in the world. The constitution of India ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals including persons with visually handicapped children. They differ in their characteristics, needs, accomplishments and behaviors from those of the sighted. It has been realized that a majority of persons with visually handicapped can lead a better quality of life if they have equal opportunities and effective access to rehabilitation measures. To bridge the gap between the visually handicapped and sighted children, the researcher feels the rationale of doing research about these children. It has been one of the perennial problems that none has paid serious attention in studying their behavior characteristic. Some researchers proved that social and psychological factors such as self-concept, level of aspiration and adjustment are the determinants of personality development of visually handicapped children. There is a need to do research in the field of visually handicapped to develop their full capacities so as to make them self-dependent. Hence, the researcher feels that it is worthwhile to study adjustment, level of aspiration, self-concept and academic achievement of visually handicapped school children of Assam. Although there is a large number of visually handicapped children in our country, but very little attention has been paid to their well-being either by government or by social and other private agencies. Against the above backdrop, the researcher is motivated to study adjustment pattern, self-concept, level of aspiration and academic achievement of visually handicapped in Assam.

Statement of the Problem

The present study is entitled as

“A Study of Adjustment, Level of Aspiration, Self-concept and Academic Achievement of Visually Handicapped School Children of Assam”.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

1. To study the adjustment pattern of visually handicapped school children.
2. To analyze the level of educational aspirations, self-concept and academic achievement of visually handicapped school children.
3. To find the relationship between (i) adjustment and self-concept; (ii) *adjustment and level of educational*

aspirations; (iii) adjustment and academic achievement; (iv) level of educational aspirations and self-concept and (v) self-concept and academic performance of visually handicapped school children.

4. To find whether significant interaction exists between adjustment and level of educational aspirations of visually handicapped school children with academic achievement as the dependent variable.
5. To find whether significant interaction exists between adjustment and self-concept of visually handicapped school children with academic achievement as dependent variable.
6. To find whether significant interaction exists between adjustment and level of educational aspirations and self-concept of visually handicapped school children with academic achievement as the dependent variable.

Hypotheses of the Study

The study is designed to achieve the following hypotheses:

1. The scores of adjustment, level of educational aspirations, self-concept and academic achievement are normally distributed.
2. There is a no significant difference in adjustment, level of educational aspirations, self-concept and academic achievement of boys and girls visually handicapped children.
3. There is no significant relationship between adjustment and Level of educational aspirations; Self-concept and Academic achievement of visually handicapped.
4. There is no significant interaction between adjustment and level of educational aspirations among visually handicapped school children with self-concept as the dependent variable.
5. There is no significant interaction between adjustment and self-concept among visually handicapped school children with academic achievement as dependent variable.
6. There is no significant interaction between level of educational aspirations and self-concept among visually handicapped school children with academic achievement as dependent variable.
7. There is no significant interaction between self-concept and academic achievement among visually handicapped school children with adjustment as dependent variable.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Method

The descriptive survey method is used in the present study.

Population

The population of the present study comprised of all the students of classes VI to X studying in visually handicapped schools existing in Assam.

Sample

For the present study, the sample is comprised of 400 visually handicapped children 200 boys and 200 girls who are studying in the classes VI to X (age 12 to 16 years) in different visually

handicapped schools of Assam. The sample is selected by simple random technique out of all the six visually handicapped schools of lower and upper Assam.

Tools Used

The following tools are used for the present study:

- (i) Adjustment Inventory standardized by A.K.P Sinha and R.P.Singh
- (ii) Self -Concept Inventory standardized by Raj Kumar Saraswat.
- (iii) Level of Educational Aspiration constructed by J.C.Soni.
- (iv) School Record for Academic Achievement.

Statistical Techniques Used

In the present study the investigator has used median, standard deviation and Spearman correlation, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Q-Q plot, Mann-Whitney U-test, and Multiple Regression. The calculation are done by using SPSS package

Delimitations of the Study

1. The present study is restricted 200 boys and 200 girls visually handicapped children, selected from different visually handicapped schools in Assam, by using random Technique.
2. The present study is confined to the visually handicapped children of grade VI to X standard (age 12-16) of Assam.

Findings and Conclusions

After testing hypotheses and analysis of data, the following conclusions were drawn:

- (1) The adjustment of visually handicapped boys and girls are found similar on overall adjustment.
- (2) The study also reported both visually handicapped boys and girls possess same level of educational aspirations.
- (3) It is found that visually handicapped boys are having better self-concept than their girls counterparts.
- (4) The results of the study further show that visually handicapped boys and girls do not differ significantly in respect of academic achievement.
- (5) The study revealed that there exist no relationship between (a) adjustment and level of educational aspirations. (b) adjustment and self-concept and (c) adjustment and academic achievement of visually handicapped children.
- (6) The interaction between adjustment and level of educational aspirations among visually handicapped school children has no impact on self-concept.
- (7) The interaction between adjustment and self-concept has no impact on academic achievement.
- (8) The results of the study indicate that the interaction effect of level of educational aspirations and self-concept among visually handicapped school children has no impact on academic achievement.
- (9) The interaction effect of self-concept and academic achievement among visually handicapped school children has little or no impact on adjustment.

Educational Recommendations

On the bases of the finding of the present study, the following educational recommendations are proposed by the researchers

so that it may help teachers, policy makers, parents and researchers.

1. Adjustment is the most important factor for visually handicapped children. For developing different dimension of adjustment, various types of co-curricular activities like dancing, singing, dramatic, scouting should be provided in their schools.
2. Teachers should create good environment and provide opportunities for better interaction of visually handicapped children with their sighted peers in order to improve adjustment. They should be made to understand that they are not different from sighted but they are just like or even can be more efficient in some activities than any other normal individual.
3. It has been found that boys visually handicapped show better self-concept than that of their girl counterparts. So, teachers and parent should try to develop positive self-concept among visually handicapped children by proper counselling and guidance, so that girls feel themselves at par with boys.
4. Parents should not have guilt feeling and tension towards visually handicapped. They should consider them as sighted, helping them in their cognitive, affective and psychomotor development. This will help them to understand the handicappedness and accept the children as normal children. National Institute for visually handicapped and other major organizations should be encouraged to convene parent's conference for care of blind children at home.
5. The school campus should be reshaped scientifically for the visually handicapped so that they are not deprive of experiences, activities, social acceptance, and social co-operation.
6. There is no need to open new schools for blind children but integrate them with the sighted schools.
7. Various types of seminar, educational programmes and other academic and vocational activities should be included in the school curriculum for visually impaired children.
8. More auditory and tactile aids adaptations should be made to compensate visual defects.
9. To develop the hidden potentiality of visually handicapped children, Government and non-government organizations should implement integrated educational programmes or other programmes for their improvement.
10. Teachers of the blind school should be trained on how to prepare lesson plan in the broader prospect of teaching plan and related aspects.
11. Adequate arrangement should be made to give vocational training to disabled children for making them economically independent.
12. Special schools with hostels should be provided, as far as possible at district headquarters, for handicapped children. But inclusive approach is better for their adjustment in society.
13. Teachers' training programmes should be reoriented according to the requirement of the visually handicapped children.
14. Early detection, diagnosis and intervention are very essential to identify visually handicapped children.
15. The role of the schools is most significant for helping blind students. This should encourage the blind students

to take part in various activities and should ensure more facilities for them with the help of social welfare ministry.

16. Social welfare department should play active role for implementation of all government schemes of disabled persons to assist them to secure education which would enable them to earn living and to become useful members of the society.
17. Parental counselling and needed professional and other support would reduce the burden on the parents and family. This would develop effective coping, provide needed services for the betterment of the visually impaired children.

Suggestion for Further Research

The study had its limitations and delimitation. It is, therefore, desirable that similar studies can be conducted after overcoming the limitations. However the findings of the present study made the investigators suggest to do further research on the following problems:

1. The present study has been conducted on VI to X class students. Further studies can be conducted on these variables at the other levels of education as well.
2. The present study confirms itself to drawing the sample of the visually handicapped pupils from various residential schools of Assam. A similar study should be conducted by drawing the samples from integrated and inclusive settings of these areas.
3. Similar study may be conducted on students with other disabilities like hearing impaired, learning disabled, locomotors disabled etc.
4. Comparison can be made between visually handicapped students and students suffering from other disabilities i.e. orthopedically handicapped by taking same variables.
5. Parental attitudes and their socio-economic background of the students can also be considered in further studies.
6. A study on inter-institutional differences as affecting the psychological make-up of the visually handicapped children may also be attempted. This may bring out the institutional climate as affecting the total development of these children.
7. Further research may be conducted on visually handicapped by taking into account other variables like intelligence, interest, attention and motivation, attitude of parents and teachers etc.
8. A comparison can also be made between those visually handicapped children who study in special school and those who study in other schools with normal children.

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