

## A Study of the Problems of Students with Visual Impairment in Social Adjustment

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study is conducted to highlight the problems of students with visual impairment in social adjustment. It was a descriptive type of research conducted with survey method. The population of the study comprised of all students with visual impairment who are studying in graduation and post-graduation level. A sample of 100 students with visual impairment (Male=71, Female=29) studying in one college and three Universities of Lahore city have selected using random sampling technique. The age of the sample ranged from 18 to 30 years. Among 100 students 49 students were studying in post-graduation whereas 51 students were studying in graduation classes. A standardized scale was used for the collection of data. The scale was developed to illicit the responses of students with visual impairment on problems in social adjustment. The scale consisted of two parts; the first part consisted of demographic information whereas the second part consisted of 5 sub components (29 items) related to the problems in social adjustment. The respondents were provided five options to respond. The reliability of the scale was .870 estimated with the help of cronbach alpha. Frequency of the responses along with percentages and mean of responses has collected and tabulated. The independent sample t-test was used to compare the difference in social adjustment problems on the basis of gender and educational qualification. The results have shown a significant difference in the social adjustment problems of students with visual impairment on the basis of educational qualification and gender. A training program to improve the interpersonal relationship of students with visual impairment is recommended by the research*

**Keywords:** Students with visual impairment, social adjustment, problems

### INTRODUCTION

Visual impairment is referred to as limitation in vision. It is a result of disease, trauma, or congenital or degenerative conditions that cannot be corrected by conventional means, such as refractive correction or medication. This functional loss of vision is typically defined to manifest with best corrected visual acuity of less than 20/60 (Arditi & Rosenthal, 1995).

Visual impairment imposes restriction on the ability to move about and control over self and the environment in relation to it. Thus the inability in going out alone makes a visually impaired person feel lonely and isolated. As a result, psychologically he develops a feeling of great fear while going out alone. Persons with visual impairment may suffer from resentment or a feeling of bitterness about having become a victim of the disease, feeling of inferiority in comparison to sighted people or feeling of low self-esteem anxiety and depression (Bhagotra, Sharma & Raina, 2008).

Many studies have stressed the close relationships among personal network characteristics and the mental and physical health of adults. The size and composition of the network, closeness to other people, satisfaction, but also conflicts within networks are all important. Social support to children and adolescents protects them from the negative effects on their mental health when they are exposed to stress, and support improves well-being, self-esteem and self-assurance. Family support is very important, but so is the support of friends and other adults (Kef, Hox & Habekothe 2007). It is admitted that a person although feels comfort in the company of his or her family yet he needs friends and his or her own social circle. A social circle satisfies the self-esteem of a person that is why a social circle is important for a person (Haskett and Willoughby 2006).

Each and every situation of life demands that the person concerned should be able to effectively perform in accordance with some guiding principles and should be able to strike a balance among various forces. Adjustment is defined as a process wherein one builds variations in the behavior to achieve harmony with oneself, others or the environment with an aim to maintain the state of equilibrium between the individual and the environment (Tauheed, 2012).

Social adjustment is the achievement of balance in social relationship. This relationship involves the individuals adjusting to their surroundings based on their own motives. This helps to satisfy their needs. Social adjustment is similar to physiological adjustments. People strive to be comfortable in their surroundings and to have their psychological needs (such as love or affirmation) met through the social networks they inhabit. When needs arise, especially in new or changed surroundings, they impel interpersonal activity meant to satisfy those needs. In this way, people increase their familiarity and comfort with their environments, and they come to expect that their needs will be met in the future through their social networks. Ongoing difficulties in social and cultural adjustment may be accompanied by anxiety or depression (Sharma, 2011).

Visual impairment is a devastating physical condition with deep emotional and economic implications. The consequences affect not only the individual but also the family and the community. Sighted people are often embarrassed when they first meet a visually impaired person because they are confronted with the question of whether or not to shake hands with a visually impaired person as he is unable to see his extended hand.

Students with visual impairment are thus, aware of the embarrassment and clumsiness which their presence inspires in sighted people. Deliberate attempts by sighted people to delete all references to vision from their conversation and show over sympathetic attitude towards visually impaired students may further deteriorate the situation which might lead to visually impaired students avoiding much social contact and result in a feeling of isolation from society. Facial expressions and body attitudes often give important clues to sighted indicating sarcasm, worry, humor and other emotions.

The visually impaired students lose the perception of these subtleties and fail to develop the ability to use them in their speech. As a result of this certain blandness in speech develops. They also fail to sense the visual cues which tell whose turn is it to speak. Because of this the conversation may be marked with unintentional interruptions or embarrassingly long pauses (Bhagotra, Sharma & Raina, 2008).

Previous studies revealed that most of the blind people were reasonably adjusted in key areas of social interaction, marriage, and family. Majority were considered to be poorly adjusted in the areas of education, vocational training, employment, and mobility.(Bhagotra, 2008, Usha

2011). The present study was conducted to see the problems in social adjustment of students with visual impairment in home and school.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To highlight the problems of students with visual impairment in social adjustment.
2. To compare the problems of students with visual impairment in social adjustment on the basis of their gender.
3. To investigate the difference in social adjustment problems of students with visual impairment with reference to their academic status.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study was conducted to find out the answers of following questions:

1. What type of problems students with visual impairment face in social adjustment?
2. Is there any difference in social adjustment problems of male and female students with visual impairment?
3. What is the difference in social adjustment problems of visually impaired students with reference to their academic status?

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The type of the research was descriptive conducted through survey with the help of a questionnaire. The population of study was all students with visual impairment studying in different universities and colleges of Lahore. The sample of the study consisted of 100 students with visual impairment selected purposively from different universities and colleges of Lahore. The educational level of the students ranged from graduation to Masters (B.A. =51, M.A. =49). Among sample 29 respondents were female and 71 were male. The age range of the students was from 19 to 30 years.

The sample was selected from seven Departments of the Universities and colleges including Psychology, Education, Special education, Urdu, Punjabi, Islamiyat, English and Sociology. Among the sample 44 students with visual impairment belongs to the University of the Punjab, Lahore, 34 belongs to Government College University, Lahore, 15 belongs to Allama Iqbal Open University, Lahore and 7 students with visual impairment belongs to Government Degree College for Special Education, Lahore.

To achieve the objectives of study, researcher used a standardized scale for assessment of problems in social adjustment of students with visual impairment. The scale consisted of two parts. The first part of scale consisted of demographic information of students (name, age, gender, grade, and institute) and the second part consisted of 5 components consisted of the items related to the problems in social adjustment of students with visual impairment. Researcher used close ended questions with 5 options (not at all, occasionally, about half the time, most of the time and all the time). The reliability of the scale was .870 estimated with the help of cronbach alpha. The non-parametric analyses were performed on the data. Frequency of the responses along with percentages, Mean and Mann-Whitney test for independent sample was performed to analyze the data.

**Table 1. Frequency of the respondents along with their percentages on respondents views about problems in social adjustment**

S/ N	Statements	Not At All		About Half the Time		Occasionally		Most of the Time		All the Time	
		Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre.	%	Fre	%	Fre.	%
<i>Outside The Home/at institutes: Have you:</i>											
1	Been missed from institution	3	3.0	3	3.0	36	36.0	40	40.0	3	3.0
2	Been doing your study well?	3	3.0	3	3.0	7	7.0	54	54.0	33	33.0
3	Felt ashamed of how you have been doing your work?	21	21.0	33	33.0	26	26.0	12	12.0	8	8.0
4	Got angry with or argued with people at your institute?	4	4.0	15	15.0	48	48.0	18	18.3	15	15.0
5	Felt upset, worried or uncomfortable at your institute?	7	7.0	19	19.0	30	30.0	32	32.0	12	12.0
<i>House work: Have you:</i>											
6	Done the necessary housework each day?	2	2.0	6	6.0	5	5.0	72	72.0	15	15.0
7	Been doing the housework each day?	6	6.0	13	13.0	12	12.0	46	46.0	23	23.0
8	Felt ashamed of how you have been doing the housework?	11	11.0	50	50.0	23	23.0	8	8.0	7	7.0
9	Got angry with or argued with servants and /or neighbors?	4	4.0	31	31.0	33	33.0	24	24.0	8	8.0
10	Felt upset, worried or uncomfortable while doing the housework?	1	1.0	11	11.0	28	28.0	35	35.0	25	25.0
11	Found the housework boring, unpleasant or a drudge?	9	9.0	27	27.0	12	12.0	39	39.0	13	13.0
<i>Social and leisure activities:</i>											
Have you:											
12	Been in touch with any of your friends?	4	4.0	2	2.0	68	68.0	26	26.0	0	0
13	Been able to talk about your feelings openly with your friends?	16	16.0	29	29.0	33	33.0	22	22.0	0	0
14	Done things socially with your friends?	13	13.0	17	17.0	47	47.0	23	23.0	0	0

15	Spent your available time on hobbies or spare time interests?	3	3.0	8	8.0	63	63.0	26	26.0	0	0
16	Got angry with or argued with your friends?	1	1.0	9	9.0	46	46.0	31	31.0	13	13.0
17	Had your feelings hurt by your friends?	2	2.0	26	26.0	33	33.0	31	31.0	8	8.0
18	Felt ill, tense or shy when with people?	6	6.0	26	26.0	33	33.0	27	27.0	8	8.0
19	Felt lonely and wished for companionship?	2	2.0	12	12.0	18	18.0	40	40.0	28	28.0
20	Felt bored in your free time?	3	3.0	15	15.0	16	16.0	54	54.0	12	12.0
	<i>Extended family:</i>										
	Have you:										
21	Got angry with or argued with any of your relatives?	3	3.0	23	23.0	17	17.0	50	50.0	7	7.0
22	Made an effort to keep in touch with your relatives?	3	3.0	5	5.0	19	19.0	48	48.0	25	25.0
23	Been able to talk about your feelings openly with you relatives?	1	1.0	10	10.0	8	8.0	58	58.0	23	23.0
24	Been feeling that your relatives have let you down at any time?	21	21.0	29	29.0	27	27.0	11	11.0	12	12.0
25	Been feeling that you have let your relatives down at any time?	26	26.0	31	31.0	18	18.0	18	18.0	7	7.0
	<i>Family unit:</i> Have you:										
26	Been worrying more than necessary about things happening to your family?	2	2.0	21	21.0	26	26.0	39	39.0	12	12.0
27	Been feeling that your immediate family has let you down at all?	37	37.0	21	21.0	24	24.0	11	11.0	7	7.0
28	Have you ever felt that your family members have let you ill-informed about all happenings?	14	14.0	32	32.0	21	21.0	23	23.0	10	10.0
29	Tried to listen and understand the family matters?	1	1.0	2	2.0	6	6.0	68	68.0	23	23.0

### **Findings Related to Social Adjustment outside the Home**

According to (40%) of the respondents most of the time they remained absent from their educational institutions, almost half of the respondents (54%) reported that they have been doing their educational work well. A less number of the respondents (33%) reported that about half the time they felt ashamed of how they were doing their work. Approximately half of the respondents, (48%) reported that they got angry with or argued with people at educational institutions. Some of the respondents (32%) reported that most of the time, they felt upset, worried or uncomfortable at their institutions.

### **Findings Related to Social Adjustment at House work**

A vast number of the respondents (72%) reported that most of the time they have done their necessary homework each day. Less than half of the respondents, (46%) reported that most of the time, they have been doing their homework each day. Half of the respondents (50%) reported that about half the time, they felt ashamed of how they have been doing their homework. A lesser number of the respondent, (33%) reported that occasionally they got angry on neighbors or with other people. Some of the respondent, (35%) reported that most of the time, they felt upset, worried or uncomfortable while doing the housework. 39% of the respondents reported that most of the time, they have found housework boring, unpleasant and drudge.

### **Findings Related to Social Adjustment during Social and Leisure Activities**

Majority of the respondents, (68%) reported that most of the time, they were in touch with their friends. Majority of the respondents, (33%) reported that most of the time, they were able to talk about their feelings openly with their friends. About half of the respondents, (47%) reported that they have done things socially with their friends most of the time. More than half number of the respondents, (63%) reported that for most of the time, they spent their available time on hobbies and spare time interests. About half of the respondents, (46%) occasionally, they got angry or argued with their friends. Few of the respondents, (33%) reported that occasionally, they got hurt by their friends and they felt ill at ease, tension and shy when they were with people. However (40%) of the respondents reported that most of the time, they felt lonely and wished for companionship. Majority of the respondents, (54%) reported that for most of the time, they have felt bored in their free time.

### **Findings Related to Social Adjustment in Extended Family**

Half of the respondents, (50%) reported that for most of the time, they had got angry and argued with their relatives. About half of the respondents, (48%) reported that for most of the time, they have made efforts to remain in touch with their relatives. More than half of the respondents, (58%) reported that for most of the time, they were able to talk about their feelings openly with their relatives. A few number of the respondents (28%) reported that about half the time, they felt that their relatives had let them down.

### **Findings Related to Adjustment in Family Unit**

Few of the respondents, (29%) reported that about half the time, they felt that their relatives were ignoring them. According to (31%) of the respondents, most of the time they felt that they were worried about happenings in the family more than necessary. (39%) reported that they not at all felt that their immediate family members had let them down. (37%) reported that about half the time, they felt that their family members ill-informed them about all happenings. According to (32%) of the respondents most of the time, they tried to listen and understand the family matters.



**Results on Problems Difference in the Social Adjustment Problems of Students on the Basis of their Educational Level**

A significant difference have found in the social adjustment problems of students with different academic qualification (Mean students of M.A. =55.46, Mean students of B.A.=44.86,sig =.05) .

**Results Related to Difference in the Social Adjustment Problems of Students on the Basis of their Gender.**

There was no significant difference in the male and female students with visual impairment in the nature of social adjustment problems (Mann-Whitney U= 793, Z=-1.553,sig=.118).

**Table 2. Mean of students’ scores on five sub-scales of the instrument**

<i>Problems in Social Adjustment</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Social leisure	100	23.00	45.00	34.4900	4.77683
Outside the home	100	7.00	25.00	17.1300	3.72178
In the homes	100	10.00	29.00	21.3300	3.91334
In the family	100	9.00	25.00	16.0808	4.18373
Extended family	100	12.00	25.00	18.7700	3.23446

**CONCLUSION**

Socialization is a process of mutual communication between individual and society. The family and school have a significant role in developing social skills. On the basis of findings of the study, it can be concluded that the students with visual impairment face problems in social adjustment both in the family and in the academic institutions. It is may be due to their limitations in vision and limited interpersonal relationships. The female g students with visual impairment face more problems in social adjustment as compared to male students with visual impairment.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the light of results, following recommendations have been made.

1. The academic institutions shall provide guidance and counseling services to the students with visual impairment.
2. The institutions may try to build a friendly relationship between sighted and students with visual impairment to improve the socialization skills of students with visual impairment.
3. There is a need to strengthen the family bonding of students with visual impairment to minimize the problems in social adjustment.
4. Further study must be conducted with the larger sample.

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