

EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED AND MANAGEMENT: A BRIEF DISCUSSION

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INTRODUCTION:

In compared with other disabilities, visual impairment has dramatically varying effects on individual. A few people consider extreme loss of vision is nothing but an incidental inconvenience. In the same time, the others, this impairment has its effects on normal activity, adjustment and education of a visually impaired child. In a democratic country like India, it is the responsibility of the Government and the people to see that the visually impaired individuals are not neglected. They should be helped to attain the greatest possible personal competence in life. Some attempts must be made to minimize their personal, educational and social problems. Visual or vision impairment causes many practical as well as theoretical problems. The psychological aspects of these problems will be treated here under three headings i.e., Cognitive functions, Mobility cum Personality and Social factors. All individuals receive impressions of the world only through the different sense organs. Different impressions reach at the brain through the sense of sight than through all the other senses all total. In this way visual difficulties may influence the life of the individual in the physical, mental, social, educational and vocational aspects. Throughout the ages, blindness has been regarded as one of the severe and traumatic of the physical handicaps. The blind or the physical handicapped have always been the favoured group as compared to those with other types of handicaps. In fact, they were the first group for whom social and educational provisions were made. They have been special rights and privileges and have attracted more public concern than other categories of the handicapped. There are numerous children who have visual disabilities or handicaps of a varied nature. These children need special care and provision for their education, training and rehabilitation. Special personnel instructional material and curricular adaptations are required to help them to achieve as much educational and vocational competency.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following objectives are considered for the present study:

- To elaborate and analyses the concept and some definitions of the Visual impairment.
- To know some identification process of the Visual impaired.
- To know the problems of the Visual impaired.
- To know the causes of the Visual impaired and
- To know the process of Education and Training of the Visual impaired.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

We know there are different types of methodology for any study. Here the historical method of research/study is used. In the present study and the approach is qualitative in nature. The work has been conducted in the following ways:

- Collection of primary and secondary sources
- Detailed of the reliable and valid sources
- Comparison of different sources
- Making generalization from the sources.

SOURCES OF THE DATA:

Here two Types of data were collected. These were:

- I. Primary sources of Data:
- II. Secondary Sources of Data:

DISCUSSION THE OBJECTIVES:

❖ **CONCEPT AND DEFINATION OF VISUAL IMPAIRED:** There are mainly three ways in which pathological conditions in the eye may result in impaired vision. The visual acuity may be reduced, the field of vision may be limited or defective and colour vision may be imperfect.

Visual acuity: It is measured by the use of the snellen chart and expressed in the form of a fraction. A visual acuity of 20/200 means the eye can see at the distance of 20 feet what a normal eye can see at 200

feet, or in other words, an object that a normal eye can see 200 feet away must be brought to within 20 feet in order to be discerned by the eye with a visual acuity of 20/200.

Field of Vision: The field of vision may be affected in two ways: an eye may have central vision with the peripheral field restricted to a certain angle, or the eye may have a scotoma, a spot without vision, which, if in the centre of the field of vision, may cause loss of central vision. Restrictions in the field of vision are mapped out the perimeter, an instrument which indicates the field limitations in the various directions on a chart.

Colour Vision: Colour vision is determined by the discrimination of the three qualities of colour: hue, saturation, and brightness. Most colour blindness is partial, the person having difficulty in distinguishing between certain colours, usually reds and greens. Colour blindness by itself, though a visual impairment, is generally not regarded as coming within the scope of visual handicaps. However, some eye conditions which reduce vision also result either in total or partial colour blindness.

Children with marked visual defects are often classified educationally in two categories:

- i) **The Blind:** Whose vision is so defective that they cannot be educated through visual methods, and hence, have to be educated through channels other than vision. In ordinary language this means total inability to see.
- ii) **Partially Sighted:** Who are able to utilise vision in acquiring educational skills. Partially sighted children are those who have defective vision even after correction. They require adoption of the visual materials and special methods of instructions.

❖ **IDENTIFICATION PROCESS OF VISUAL IMPAIRED:** Identification of children, who are born blind, is not a difficult task. Almost always, the parents identify them within the first year of life. But the children with less visual impairments may not be identified until they attend primary schools, where vision becomes important in the performance of school work. **The National Society of America for the preservation of Blindness, 1965**, has suggested the following indicators of identification of the visually impaired children.

- i) Blinking more than usual crying often, irritability when doing close work;
- ii) Holding books or small objects close to eyes;
- iii) Inability to participate in games requiring distance vision;
- iv) Difficulty in reading or in other work requiring close use of eyes;

- v) Shutting or covering one eye, tilting head or thrusting it forward when looking at near or distant objects;
- vi) Attempting to brush away blurs, rubbing eyes excessively, frowning;
- vii) Stumbling or tripping over small objects;
- viii) Excessive sensitivity to light;
- ix) Complaints of not seeing well, of dizziness, headaches or nausea following close eye work, of blurred or double vision;
- x) Red-rimmed, encrusted or swollen eye lids, recurring sties, inflamed or watery eyes, crossed eyes;

However from the following identification mark one may be levelled as visual impaired.

- ✓ Has squint eyes;
- ✓ Rub eyes frequently;
- ✓ Has eyes constant motion;
- ✓ Displays inattentive during teaching learning hours;
- ✓ Holds books close to eyes;
- ✓ The people of the eyes are of different sizes;
- ✓ Takes false steps while walking;
- ✓ Hesitates to move in bright light;
- ✓ Skips place while reading or writing;
- ✓ Shows sensitiveness to light;
- ✓ Complains of blurred vision at any time;
- ✓ Complains of pain in the eyes;
- ✓ Have limited mobility;
- ✓ Unable to control their own environment
- ✓ Have poor self concept;
- ✓ Have personality problems;
- ✓ Have behavioural problems;
- ✓ Feels body tension when trying to distinguish the distance of objects;
- ✓ Covers one eye and tilts the head forward etc.

❖ **PROBLEMS OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED:**

- i) Poor Intelligence:
- ii) Academic Retardation:
- iii) Problems in School Adjustment:
- iv) Personality Disorder:
- v) Slow Speech Development.

❖ **CAUSES OF THE VISUAL IMPAIRED:** Through understanding of the causes of vision impairment is the first step for providing suitable educational programmes. Partially sight is not only the result of congenital factors; but also it is acquired. Thus the causes may be categorised under three headings:

- i) **Pre-natal causes:** Pre-natal period is the period when the child starts his life, i.e., from the conception to birth. Various researches in medical sciences throw the light that vision impairment is closely associated with the use of strong drugs, maternal mal-nutrition and unhealthy living condition of the pregnant mother. Modern sciences also reveal that brain fever, brain tumour are some of the important causes of visual impairment during the pre-natal period.
- ii) **Perinatal causes:** Some mis-happenings during the time of birth of a child may result vision impairment like:
 - ✓ Instrumental delivery
 - ✓ Use of anaesthetic agents in delivery
 - ✓ Premature delivery etc.
- iii) **Post-natal causes:** Vision impairment at this stage may be due to:
 - ✓ Malformation;
 - ✓ Accidents;
 - ✓ Infectious diseases;
 - ✓ Injuries;
 - ✓ Poisoning;
 - ✓ General diseases;
 - ✓ Tumours;
 - ✓ Cancer etc.

❖ **EDUCATION AND TRAINING AS WELL AS MANAGEMENT FOR THE VISUAL IMPAIRED:**

Educational Provisions: The number of blind schools in India is yet negligible. Visual impairment may be present at birth or may be acquired at any period during a person's life time. The degree of impairment may vary from partially to total blind and the effect of impairment may manifest in varying degree in personal, emotional and social adjustment, in educational achievement and vocational efficiency. If the visual impairment is identified in earlier life the child can be given special medical and educational assistance. The following are some provisions for them those who are partially sighted.

- i) **Medical check-up:** When the teacher discovers such type of children in the classroom he may refer them to primary health centre/hospital for eye check-up. Their parents also need to be informed. Medical care treatment becomes important in such cases.
- ii) **Special class:** The best method of providing educational facilities for the partially seeing is through the establishment of special class. The number of partially-seeing children requiring special educational facilities is not less. The District Education Officer should take the responsibility to decide whether the establishment of special classes for them is necessary or if other provisions must be made. Since one class may serve more school children of the neighbouring schools, the special class should include children of various grades. To facilitate transportation the school may be selected which is centrally located. Those who are living in rural areas, several possibilities may be offered. These possibilities are (a) boarding, (b) providing a special teacher who can give assistance to the teachers in rural areas, (c) special facilities may be provided to the primary school going children, because the sooner the partially-seeing child is given the needed advantage the greater is the hope of success.
- iii) **Introducing co-curricular activities:** The child who is partially sighted may develop a sense of inferiority complex. These children may require the provision of extra-curricular activities which should serve them as sources of satisfaction and arrest their self-demanding feeling.
- iv) **Less Visual Task:** Maximum tasks are recommended to these pupils which never put strain on their vision. Delicate mathematical calculations, laboratory work, minute observation are strictly prohibited for them. In order to reduce reading load on the child with visual problems, such children may be given training in listening with comprehension.
- v) **Sympathetic Attitude:** These children need affectionate and accepting attitude from parents, teachers and friends. Thus the teachers and parents should educate them taking this concept into their mind.

vi) **Classroom Arrangement:** While teaching the teacher can contribute largely to partially sighted if he/she thinks about the following areas:

- The teacher will have to adjust such children in front rows as they can read from the black-board with ease.
- The child may be encouraged to glance out of the window now and then while reading from the black-board.
- The teacher will have to write in bold letters which are legible.
- The teacher may speak what he write on the black-board.
- Books with bold letters should be kept in the library to cater to the needs of these children.
- The District Rehabilitation Centres and Hospitals may provide hand lens, magnifying glasses, etc. for children whose correction is beyond the spec lens.
- Besides the points mentioned above, for children whose eyesight is too weak, books printed in large clear pencils with thick soft leads and unglazed paper should be provided.
- The children may be supplied the time schedule for the radio broadcast and encouraged to listen. Wherever facilities are available, audio-cassettes/memory chips may be used. The State Institute of Education Technology, State Institute of Education, State Councils of Educational Research and Training and Central Institute of Educational Technology, NCERT may provide memory chips in different areas.
- Sufficient light should be provided on their working place.
- Chalk-boards, bulletin-boards, charts, graphs, demonstrations and other allied information are too provided.

TRAINING FOR THE VISUAL IMPAIRED:

a) Train those children on visual discrimination:

- Ask those children to discriminate three dimensional objects;
- Ask them to match the three dimensional objects;
- Ask them to discriminate two dimensional objects;
- Ask them to match the two dimensional objects;
- Ask them to identify from body postures drawing of pictures;
- Ask them to name and describe drawings;

- Ask them to identify the incomplete pictures from a set of complete pictures;
 - Ask them to tell the name of the object when presented in different forms,
- b) Train the far and near vision of visually impaired children:
- Encourage them with remaining sight to see any distant object (For vision).
 - Encourage them to read large print materials and gradually decrease the print size (Near vision).
 - Ask them to readout the facial expression of their peers.
- c) Train the visually impaired children for mobility:
- Ask them to note their observations when they are taken to different important places.
 - Ask them to point out the spatial relations such as left/right, up/down, top/bottom etc.
 - Ask them to locate objects without turning their heads.
- d) Train those children on their field of vision:
- Ask those children to find out the missing element/part of the picture after focusing their eyes on an object (in front of the face).
 - Ask them to locate objects without turning their faces (from the side of the faces).
- e) Train those children for verbal description after observing the pictures of importance.
- f) Train those children as regards to light and dark adaptation:
- Ask them to count the number of lines drawn on the black board before covering and after uncovering their eyes.
 - Ask them to pick out bright shining objects from dark rooms
- g) To train the fixation skill of the visually impaired children:
- Ask them to focus their eyes towards rolling objects.
 - Ask them to fix their eyes on a particular animal of importance.
- h) Train the visually impaired children on tracking:
- Ask them to follow with their eyes the movement of moving objects.

- i) To train the colour vision of the visually impaired children:
 - Ask them to tell the names of the colour of different objects.
- j) Train those children on scanning:
 - Train them to move their figures on the drawn figures.
 - Train them to find out the way from among the puzzle lines to reach at the goal.
- k) Train those children on depth perception through different exercises.
- l) Train those children through different exercises for eye hand and eye foot co-ordination.
- m) Train those children on visual integration by asking them to assemble pieces into whole objects.
- n) Train those children on visual closure:
 - Ask them to find out the missing letters from words.
 - Ask them to complete different incomplete figures.
 - Ask them to decode figures in dots.
- o) Train them on figure ground discrimination:
 - Ask them to pick out a particular part of the given figure which matches with a given figure in a group.
- p) Train them in spatial concepts.
- q) Train those children on visual memory:
 - Ask them to complete the incomplete series.
 - Ask them to relate the parts with the whole.
 - Ask them to match the sample pattern.

THE ROLE OF THE GENERAL CLASS ROOM TEACHER:

For the visually impaired children/students the class room-teacher should adopt the following class room programme.

- i) To keep the doors completely closed or completely open.

- ii) To make such children informed about any rearrangement inside the class room and the school compound.
- iii) To use concrete aids and equipment during teaching.
- iv) To avoid ambiguous words like 'this', 'that' and 'here' during teaching.
- v) To arrange a partner from among the classmates for such children during visit to different places of importance conducted by school.
- vi) To call those children by name inside the class and school campus.
- vii) To tell them about the location of different things inside the school campus.
- viii) To provide sensory experiences to them during teaching learning session.

For the partially sighted children the general class room teacher should adapt the following programmes:

- a) To arrange the seats of such students near the black board.
- b) To use tape recorders if possible
- c) To add verbal expression when using T.V.
- d) To arrange one of the peers to read aloud if necessary.
- e) To allow the students to hold books close to their faces.
- f) To store the special equipments inside the class room for readymade use.
- g) To use projector if situation demands.
- h) To organise programmes which teach daily living skills'
- i) To preserve with him/her the pair of scissors and safety precautions.

THE ROLE OF THE SPECIAL TEACHER:

- i) To provide large print books and talking books to regular teachers.
- ii) To provide detailed information about the sources of supportive services to the general class room teachers.
- iii) To provide mobility training to the visually impaired students.
- iv) To guide them in new surroundings.
- v) To administer academic tests for the children.
- vi) To interpret the medical tests.
- vii) To organise Parents' Counselling Programmes.
- viii) To provide special instruction relating to the use of special aids and equipments and
- ix) To motivate the general teachers to accept the visually impaired children as other non-impaired children.

CONCLUSION:

The teacher should help the visually impaired students to develop concepts meaningful to him/her and in line with his/her own reality. He/she should not impose upon him/her artificial concepts because he/she cannot understand or appreciate it because of his/her visual limitations. It is very easy to exploit the visually impaired children by showing them off to other children, teachers and visitors. Hence the teacher should treat them as he treats the normal children in the regular grade.

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