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A Study on Partially Visually Impaired

Prof. Ruma Agwekar

B.Sc, ADMS, MBA (Fin.), Dip. EXIM

E-mail: rumaagwe@gmail.com

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Abstract:

The advancement of medicine has still not been able to control the data of special needs. The category of special needs includes handicaps of various types. The ten most common are multiple disabilities, deaf-blindness, language disorder, developmental delay, Autistic spectrum disorders, behavioural disorders, Dyslexia, Cerebral palsy, Dyscalculia . The disability of visual impairment has been rapidly on the rise, which is either congenital or related to high sugar levels. The categories of visual impairment consist of totally blind, partially blind or also deaf blind.

The category of partial visual impairment - the members of this community show an inclination towards education and employability.

A sample of fourteen members was observed during their session on 'Spoken English'. The conclusions have been derived on the basis of their participation, enthusiasm and determination to do something different. The statistics obtained and conclusions derived are specific to the group and they cannot be generalised for the whole group or society of partially or totally visually impaired.

Keywords: *Visual impairment, Partial, Visual aids, Learning tools*

(A) Introduction:

The inability to see is called blindness. Blindness may result from damage to the eyeball, especially to the retina, damage to the optic nerve that connects each eye to the brain, and/or from stroke (infarcts in the brain). Temporary or permanent blindness can be caused by poisons or medications. People who are blind from degradation or damage to the visual cortex, but still have functional eyes, are actually capable of some level of vision and reaction to visual stimuli but not a conscious perception; this is known as blindsight. People with blindsight are usually not aware that they are reacting to visual sources, and instead just unconsciously adapt their behaviour to the stimulus.

Visual perception in Psychology:

According to Gestalt Psychology, people perceive the whole of something even if it is not there. The Gestalt's Law of organisation states that people have seven factors that help to group what is seen into patterns or groups: Common fate, Similarity, Proximity, Closure, Symmetry, Continuity and past experience.

Visual impairment:

Loss of central vision. The loss of central vision creates a blur or blindspot, but side (peripheral) vision remains intact

Loss of central vision creates a blur or blindspot, but side (peripheral) vision remains intact. This makes it difficult to read, recognize faces and distinguish most details in the distance. Mobility, however, is usually unaffected because side vision remains intact.

Loss of peripheral (side) Vision

Loss of peripheral vision is typified by an inability to distinguish anything to one side or both sides or anything directly above and/or below eye level. Central vision remains, however, making it possible to see directly ahead. Typically, loss of peripheral vision may affect mobility and if severe, can slow reading speed as a result of seeing only a few words at a time. This is sometimes referred to as "tunnel vision".

Blurred vision:

Causes both near and far to appear to be out of focus, even with the best conventional spectacle correction possible.

Generalised haze:

Generalised haze causes the sensation of a film or glare that may extend over the entire viewing field.

Extreme light sensitivity:

Extreme light sensitivity exists when standard levels of illumination overwhelm the visual system, producing a washed out image and/or glare disability. People with extreme light sensitivity may actually suffer pain or discomfort from relatively normal levels of illumination.

Night blindness:

Results in inability to see outside at night under starlight or moonlight or in dimly lighted interior areas such as movie theatres or restaurants.

Back to Low vision:

The most common causes of visual impairment or vision loss, is a decreased ability to see to a degree that causes problems not fixable by usual means such as glasses. Some also include those who have a decreased ability to see because they do not have access to glasses or contact lenses. Visual impairment is often defined as a best corrected visual acuity of worse than either 20/40 or

20/60. The term blindness is used for complete or nearly complete vision loss. Visual impairment may cause difficulties with normal daily activities such as reading and walking without adaptive training and equipment.

The WHO estimates that 80% of visual impairment is either preventable or curable with treatment. This includes cataracts, infections, river blindness and trachoma. Glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, uncorrected refractive errors, and some cases of childhood blindness. Many people with significant visual impairment benefit from vision rehabilitation, changes in their environment, and assistive devices.

What is 40mg disability?

Persons with low vision in the better eye and economic blindness in the worse eye are awarded 40% disability in the current classification; some visual combinations are missing.

What is PWD vision?

“In order to be qualified for a PWD (person with disability) ID card and its benefits, individuals with VISUAL DISABILITY must have 20/70 best-corrected visual acuity on the better eye to be labeled LOW VISION, and 20/200 visual acuity on the better eye to be labeled LEGALLY BLIND,”

Cataract is the leading cause of blindness in India while refraction error and glaucoma are the second and third leading causes of blindness respectively in India.

(B) OBJECTIVES

- a. To maximise on mobile learning through a session on “Spoken English” during the pandemic.
- b. To maximise on the participative aspect of the visually and partially visually impaired.
- c. To develop learning tools/aids for increased participation of the visually and partially visually impaired.

(C) RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

(a) Secondary Database:

The original goal of the National programme for control of blindness was to reduce the prevalence to 0.3% by 2000. If there is no change in the current trend of blindness, the number of blind persons in India would increase to 24.1 million (95% CI :19.7-28.4) in 2010, and to 31.6 million (95% CI: 26.4-36.9) in 2020.

India statistics for visually impaired-nearly 40 million people in India, including 1.6 million children, are blind or visually impaired due to uncorrected refractive error. India is home to 20% of the world's visually impaired.12 million blind people,... India is home to around 12 million blind people, which accounts for one-third of the world's total blind population.

Maharashtra statistics for visually impaired:

This means that currently, 1 in 80 Indians are blind. This is a statistic that simply cannot be ignored. That puts the number of blind in Maharashtra at just over 900,000!

(b) Primary Database:

(i) Project 1

Spoken English programme (2 months)

The handshake with the owner of the group happened in the year 2020, during the covid times. The simpleton arrived with a simple request of COVID assistance. The COVID lockdown got him thinking for a respite to the 300 odd members to the group. (The group consists of members who are partially visually impaired, completely visually impaired. Who suffer from autism, cerebral palsy, and different handicaps)

A post was prepared by the member who is himself partially visually blind. Around 70 odd partially visually blind joined in from all over India. The specific states were Maharashtra, Madhyapradesh, Uttarpradesh and Punjab.

A plan for a 2 months Spoken English programme was decided for the respective members. The programme consisted of understanding grammar and reading comprehension passages. The time decided was 3 hrs in a week, Monday, Thursday and Saturdays, 1 hr, 3-4 p.m. The members with their abilities took time to join in. They joined at 3.15 p.m. every class. The first class as the introduction day we had 45 members clicking on the google meet. The chaos was an event by itself. The actual class got settled with 14 members. Out of which every hour 8-9 were usual participants. The members to the course showed following abilities - Mobile Savvy, Positive approach, optimism, Grit and determination, Enthusiasm, Excitement, Indulgence, leadership, Liking towards learning, active participation, promptness, grit and determination, confidence, group dynamism, and a very sharp inclination towards negotiation and employability.

The author who was their teacher made her best efforts and accomplished the task by 60%. Looking at the enthusiasm the members went ahead with a 2 weeks 'Communication Programme'. Also the members prepared a gathering to mark the end of the Spoken English programme as "We shall overcome". The programme was a thunderous success with the participants singing the song "We shall overcome". The members were gifted with a house plant "Parnika", a small leaf, on the day, for doing well. The members finished another project with planting the house plant.

Table a

Project - I - Spoken English program

	(I)			(II)			(III)		
Score/ Attributes	Optimism	Confidence	Negotiation	Education	Employability	Mobile Savvy	Participation	Attendance	Group dynamics
Variance	1.44	1.44	1.44	0	11.945	8.09	7.37	5.9	3.13
Standard Deviation	1.2	1.2	1.2	0	3.45	2.84	2.71	2.42	1.76

Conclusion (Project I):

1. The students (members) registered to the group were 70.
2. The students who responded to the google meet were 45 (66%).
3. The students registered to the 2 months spoken English programme were 14(31%).
4. All the students who responded were partially visually blind.
5. The response was lower than what was expected. The reasons were attributed to the following:
 - a. Many were first time registrations. The response can be improved by consistent contact or connect activity.
 - b. Lower mobile adherence.
 - c. Lesser mobile availability (connectivity, media inavailability)
 - d. Inconvenient course time specifications.
 - e. Ability inconvenience.
 - f. Language problem, vernacular or local language.
6. The statistics were obtained to identify their personal traits and leadership style.
 - a. Optimism, confidence, negotiation.
 - b. Education, employability and Mobile Savviness
 - c. Participation, attendance, Group dynamics
7. The sample data of 14 students show marginal deviation.
8. The students show a highly educated structure. The employability is defined and restricted in their frames as, teachers, entrepreneurs, musicians, art work etc.
9. Highly responsive and cohesive.
10. Very communicative and well connected through Mobile connectivity.

(b) Project II

The PARNIKA - A small leaf

The members were very excited about the parcel from the very beginning. They reached their doors by Indian Post. The Indian Post service is on dot and is popular in the faroff city areas and rural areas.

Each member enthusiastically got going with opening the parcel, reading the product knowhow, and the procedure to plant the seeds . The product knows how which is partially read by them selves was clarified by the teacher or the house member. Some part of the know how was given by the product dealer in the google meet.

Each member very appropriately got back on sowing the seeds and the growth of the plant. They were all distributed by the “Tulasi “plant which brings optimism and auspiciousness to the house and its surroundings.

The members displayed the following abilities in the period of growing the plant: Positive approach, Product Knowhow, Proactiveness, Negotiation, and Ability.

Out of the 8 plants distributed three did not flourish well. The other five flourished well. The owner of the plant posted a photo and also showed the full grown plant in the video.

Table b

Score/ Attributes	Positive Attitude	Product know how	Proact ive	Negoti ation	Abilit y
Variance	56.25	56.25	56.25	56.25	56.25
Standard Deviation	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5

Conclusion (Project II)

1. The project obtained 100 % response. The gift was offered to 9 of the members of the group.
2. Five students gave a positive outcome.
3. Three of the students did not give a positive outcome.
4. The students were judged on the following positive attributes: Positive attitude, Product Know how, Proactive, Negotiation, Ability.
5. The students were high on all the attributes. The performance was higher than expected.

(C) Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that institutions and government agencies should increase aid to the partially visually impaired community.
2. A central hub for facilitating mobile learning should be set up for the visually impaired community.

3. Wider prospects for education to the partially visually impaired should be set up.
4. The ability to learn is very high. The grit “Yes I can “needs to be developed.
5. A frame of employability can be developing a scientific and entrepreneurial mindset, doing something for their own community.

(D) Acknowledgements:

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