

# A STUDY ON PEER GROUP RELATIONSHIP TOWARDS VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION

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**ABSTRACT:** A study on peer group relationship towards visually impaired students at higher education was carried out with 16 samples. The samples were selected by using purposive sampling method from Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women – Coimbatore. Survey method was followed for the conduct of the study. The main independent variables are the age, class, and locality. The dependent variable includes in the study is to assess the peer group relationship towards visually impaired students especially in higher education. Checklist developed by the investigator in three aspects namely personal, social and academic relationship. The checklist is also prepared in Braille method for better understanding for visually impaired students. At the end of the study the visually impaired students are ask to express their experience. The main aim is to assess the peer groups on personal, social and academic relationship towards visually impaired students in higher education.

**INDEX TERMS:** Peer group, relationship, visually impaired, higher education, inclusion

## INTRODUCTION

A peer group is both a social group and a primary group of people. Peer group may be defined as a group of people, who through homophile, share similarities such as age, background and social status. The members of this group are likely to influence the person's beliefs and behavior. Peer group contain hierarchies and distinct pattern of behavior. During adolescence, peer group tend to face dramatic changes. Adolescents tend to spend more time with their peers and have less adult supervision. There are two types of peer group are seen. They are cliques are small groups typically defined by common interests, or by friendship. This group has 2 to 12 members and tends to be formed by age, gender, race and social class. They serve as an agent of socialization and social control. And the crowds are larger group but they do not have friendship. These crowds serve as peer group and they increase in importance in the adolescence. The attributes of peer group are serving as source of implication, teaches gender roles, serve as a practicing venue to adulthood, teaches unity and collective behavior, identity formation in disabled students at higher education. The study of peer effects in education has come to occupy a prominent place in the ongoing effort to understand the determinants of educational outcomes.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were to assess the personal, social and academic relationship of peers towards visually impaired students especially in higher education.

1. Identify the visually impaired students in higher education of the age between 17 to 27.
2. To develop a checklist for assess the relationship of peers towards visually impaired students.
3. To find out the relationship of peers towards visually impaired students.
4. To motivate the peers to maintain a positive relationship towards visually impaired students.

## HYPOTHESIS

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the personal, social and academic relationship of peers towards visually impaired students in higher education with respect to Age.
2. There is no significant difference in the personal, social and academic relationship of peers towards visually impaired students in higher education with respect to Class.
3. There is no significant difference in the personal, social and academic relationship of peers towards visually impaired students in higher education with respect to Locality.

## NEED FOR THE STUDY

Nowadays are not uncommon for adolescents with visual impairments to have little or no contact with other age mates who have visual impairments or to meet adults with visual impairments. A symbol of independence indicates that the young person with visually impaired can reaches adulthood quickly by their peers. Through peer group relationship the visually impaired students learns to co-operate lead and follow think for a common cause and adjust in the challenging social situations. They inculcate the sense of loyalty, sympathetic attitude and the willingness to obey social rules and regulations in them. Disabled students accepted by their peer group. They should get proper environment and opportunities to mix with their peers. Perception of the impact of visual impairment on the lives of adolescents found that each adolescent had a unique perspective on the impact of visual impairment on family. School and peer relationships but that all valued their friendship. The desire of

personal identity to accept by peers and to maintain a sense of individuality is a dilemma for majority of the adolescents. Research should investigate the usefulness of self-evaluation procedures for generalization programming of peers' social interaction.

### SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the present study is as follows:

1. The tool used and its adaptations can be helpful to use the same on a wider scale among visually impaired students in higher education.
2. The study can be replicated for other disabled students in higher education.
3. It is beneficial to assessing the peer group relationship towards visually impaired students in higher education.
4. The study is also helpful for the professional to understand the relationship of peer towards visually impaired students in higher education.
5. The study can be compared with the peer group relationship towards other types of disabilities in higher education.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Angharad.E.B (2013) studied that urging schools and educationalists to do more to encourage non- disabled children to think differently and positively about disabled people and peers. Anke de boer et.al (2012) points out that the attitudes of peers related to the social participation of students with disabilities promote positive attitudes in his study on "students' attitudes towards peers with disabilities. Narges Adibsereski et.al (2012) identified that the gender play a significant role in the degree to which his/her peers accept a student with disability. Sip Jan Piji et.al (2010) carried out a work on "students with special needs and the composition of their peer group" it says that the rearrangement of the composition of peer group by combining a minority of students with disabilities with a majority of students without disabilities. Katrina Mavrou (2010) finds that the verbal and non verbal interaction of peers towards disabled peers in on-and off task events results in socio-emotional situations.

### METHODOLOGY

Survey method is followed for the conduct of the study, samples were chosen by purposive sampling method from the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women – Coimbatore. A total sample of 16 students of higher education with visual impairment with a distribution of 12 between the age 17-21, 2 of them are between the age 22-24 and the remaining 2 are between the age 22-27 participated in the study. Further the samples are distributed according to their class as following 11 students of higher education with visual impairment are from I year, 3 of them are from II year and the enduring 2 are from III year. And the same sample consists of 8 from Rural and 8 from urban are of locality. The main independent variables are the age, class, and locality. The dependent variable includes in the study is to assess the peer group relationship towards visually impaired students especially in higher education. The checklist is used to assess the personal, social and academic relationship of peers towards visually impaired students in higher education. Data collected was analyzed by using percentage analysis. Individual percentages are also obtained.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Hypothesis testing

##### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the personal, social and academic relationship of peers towards visually impaired students in higher education with respect to Age.

Type of relationship	Age group	17 to 21		22 to 24		25 to 27	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Personal relationship	Often	91	75	19	95	15	75
	Sometimes	25	21.7	1	5	5	25
	Rare	4	3.3	-	-	-	-
Social relationship	Often	106	75.7	18	90	14	70
	Sometimes	21	15	2	10	6	30
	Rare	13	9.3	-	-	-	-
Academic relationship	Often	80	67.5	18	90	12	90
	Sometimes	33	28.3	2	10	6	30
	Rare	5	4.15	-	-	-	-

From the table it has been observed that students between the age group of 22 to 24 are reported that 90% of them were able to establish social and academic relationship. While reported that they are getting 95% of the personal relationship with their peers. This may be due to the increased awareness on the performance and the ability of visually impaired among their peers.

##### Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the personal, social and academic relationship of peers towards visually impaired students in higher education with respect to class.

Type of relationship	Class	I Year		II Year		III Year	
		Number	percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Personal Relationship	Often	87	79.2	24	80	10	50
	Sometimes	19	17.2	6	20	9	50
	Rare	4	3.6	-	-	-	-
Social relationship	Often	85	77.3	16	80	24	80
	Sometimes	22	20	4	20	5	16.7
	Rare	3	2.7	-	-	1	3.3
Academic relationship	Often	77	70	20	66.7	16	80
	Sometimes	22	20	7	23.3	4	20
	Rare	10	10	3	10	-	-

From the table it has been observed higher the age group better the relationship. It reflects that the students belonging to the third year established better in terms of social and academic relationship. When comparing to the first and second years.

### Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the personal, social and academic relationship of peers towards visually impaired students in higher education with respect to Locality.

Type of relationship	Locality	Rural		Urban	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Personal Relationship	Often	60	75	55	68.8
	Sometimes	18	22.5	23	12.5
	Rare	2	2.5	2	2.5
Social relationship	Often	67	75	66	82.5
	Sometimes	20	25	10	12.5
	Rare	-	-	4	5.2
Academic Relationship	Often	62	75.5	54	67.5
	Sometimes	12	15	18	22.5
	Rare	5	7.5	8	10

From the table it has been observed that the peer group relationship of visually impaired students with respect to locality it was found out that 82.5% of the visually impaired students reported that they are supported voluntarily by their peers who in turn increase their social relationship which is gained in the inclusive education.

### CONCLUSION

This study mainly aims Peer group relationship is very essential for the Visually Impaired students in personal, social and also academic activities. Because the Visually Impaired students getting peers supports in education as well as personal in large extent. The result reveals that the overall relationship of the peer group towards visually impaired students is positive because of the awareness programme conducted by government and non-government organizations.

### LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The limitation of the study was following as:

1. The study has been administered only to the Higher Education students.
2. The study comprised of small group of sample.
3. The study carried out for only personal, social and academic relationship of peers towards visually impaired students in higher education.
4. Limited research studies in India for this area.

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**WEB RESOURCE**

<http://www.wiley.org>

<http://www.springer.org>

<http://www.taylorandfrancis.org>

