ABSTRACT

In the present study an attempt has been made to have a realistic understanding of the status of mental health, self-esteem, self-competence and social support experiences in visually handicapped individuals by comparing them with normal sighted individuals on the same variables.

For the purpose of the present study, a total of 110 subjects were included in both the sample groups from the city of Bangalore. The sample in both the groups was matched on the demographic variables. The data were collected using standardized research tools. The tools include the personal data sheet, the personal information schedule for the visually handicapped, the subjective well-being inventory, the self-esteem index and the social support appraisals scale.

The data were analyzed using suitable statistical techniques. The mean, standard deviations and ‘t’ values were computed to assess and evaluate the status of the mental health, self-esteem, self-competence and social support experiences of the visually handicapped individuals in comparison with normal sighted individuals on the same variables. Correlations between subjective well-being, self-esteem and social support were computed to evaluate the intercorrelation and homogeneity among them. To assess the influence of the demographic variables on the dependent variables subjective well-being, self-esteem and social support chi-square tests were calculated. To evaluate the
influence of the two groups of visually handicapped sample – the adventitiously blind sample and congenitally blind sample on the dependent variables chi-square tests were calculated.

An analyses of the result reveal that the demographic variables do not have any influence on the dependent variables in the visually handicapped individuals. Thus, it can be inferred that only the visual handicap has grossly affected their mental health, self-esteem, and their appraisal of social support. Visual handicap has caused enormous disturbances in their experience of subjective well-being as they failed to evaluate themselves positively and they were unable to appraise and perceive adequate support from their family members, friends and significant others.

This study brings to the fore the need for appropriate counselling for the visually handicapped individuals with the help of which they can be made aware of their status of mental health. This knowledge can further help them to enhance and elevate their experience of subjective well-being.