
Unit 4 □ Educational Implications of visual impairment

Structure

4.1 : Effects of Blindness-Primary and Secondary

4.1.1 Unit Structure

4.1.2. Objectives

4.1.3. Introduction

4.1.4. Primary Effects

A. Cognitive :

(a) Berthold Lowenfeld's Interpretation

(b) Role of Sences

(c) Jean Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development

(d) Some Factors Responsible for Cognitive Development

B. Attitudes affecting Blindness :

(a) Community attitude

(b) Parental Reaction

(c) Psycho-social Effects

4.1.5. Secondary Effects

4.1.6. Summary

4.1: Effects of Blindness-Primary and Secondary

4.1.2. Objectives :

After studying this sub-unit you will be able to

- (i) Understand and interpret effects of Blindness/visual impairment on the child.
- (ii) Discuss the implications of child's blindness for the parents and the family.

(iii) Describe the prevailing attitudes of the community towards blindness and blind persons.

(iv) Analyse the effects of family and community attitudes on the blind child.

(v) Realise his/her own role as a teacher in relation to the blind child, parents and the community.

4.1.3 Introduction :

'Blindness' has varied interpretations. It relates to impaired sense of vision. It means that the person suffers from the loss in the sense of seeing, the organ responsible for vision is defective.

Blindness in all countries and through ages has come to develop as a connotative term. It evokes different emotional reactions in different persons. The societies across the globe have developed their own images of blind persons, of their capabilities and of their limitations. Even beyond that, they have developed their own ways of coping with the capabilities and/or limitations of The Blind.

Parents are the part of the community and they share social ways and attitudes. But when a blind child is born to them, they find their personal ways to cope with.

As the attitudes and reactions of the community in general, and parents in particular, impinge upon the child, blindness does not remain a simple sensory loss to him; it is confounded with psychological overtones resulting in changes in self concept of the child.

The present sub-unit outlines below the above mentioned points and a note upon the role of the teacher face to face the blind child, his parents and his community.

4.1.4 Primary/Basis Effects of Blindness : A. Cognitive

The effects of blindness are basically cognitive. Since blindness relates to the sensory deficit of vision and because senses are the gateways to knowledge. Vision is the most actively used sense by human being and hence knowledge grows chiefly of visual experience.

(a) Berthold Lowenfeld's Interpretation :

The resulting effects of blindness have been discussed widely, but the most

accepted interpretation has come from Berthold Lowenfeld (1975). In his own words, "Blindness imposes three basic limitations :

1. In the range and variety of experience.
2. In the ability to get about.
3. In the control of the environment and the self in relation to it."

All these interpretations may have great effects on cognitive development. They have sociological, psychological and educational implications on blindness. According to him, the visually disabled individual gets a reduced experience and therefore, 'loss of sight' cannot be interpreted as the 'loss of experience'. The sociological implication is that visually disabled persons do have experiences but those are limited in comparison with sighted persons. The psychological implication is that blindness does not mean 'loss of life' since blind persons are more like than unlike sighted persons in terms of basic needs. The educational implication is that the reduction of experience imposed by blindness can be overcome by appropriate training to the affected individual.

(b) Role of Senses :

These three obstacles to independence and self-fulfilment are the special education provisions demand for the blind child. A brief note at the three limitations may be helpful in understanding the depth of losses.

It has been estimated that 90-95% of all knowledge and experience comes through the eyes. Vision is the major mode of acquiring information about people, places and processes. Therefore the blind child by definition is experientially deprived.

Vision provides much more continuous information than sound. Although touch may be equally continuous, its range is extremely limited. This deficiency may affect development of object permanence and conservation capability.

The capacity to organise a wide range of experiences through vision is much greater than through touch and sound. Further vision gives much more detailed information than any other sense modality.

Another educationally significant difference in sight and touch is that sight is a holistic sense. It provides information at one glance. Whereas touch is an analytical sense. You all know the story of gaining knowledge of an elephant by four blind persons. Information gathering range of touch is limited. Therefore, if you want a

visually impaired child to build an accurate image of any object in his mind, you should show it to him bit by bit till he has synthesized the image in his mind for unifying experience.

A totally blind child, in particular, depends to a very large extent on verbally mediated information. The mediation of words may leave gaps in experience and the filling of these gaps may require a very special effort on the part of the teacher.

Firstly, the blind child learns in pieces. He learns in a fragmentary way. He has to get time to put these bits and pieces together to form a concept which is not exactly like ours but which is enough like ours so that we can communicate. This is the restriction in the 'range and variety of experiences.'

The child with severe visual impairment may be deprived of such experiences as the ordinary child has without effort. For example a young seeing child may look at an orange, jump to pick it up, feel it, smell it and eat it. At one go, the child has visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory and olfactory experience. But a severely visually impaired child may have great difficulty in locating an orange. The child will be able to locate it if it is within the range of his grasp, or within the reach of his arm. In this way the ordinary child easily gets a total experience, whereas a visually impaired child has a limited experience. His experience range can be enhanced only by supplementary tactile or auditory inputs given by a teacher or parents.

Secondly, blindness tends to create a very sedentary kind of existence. A blind person will just sit unless he is pulled out, motivated to get out and move out independently : He sits because of fear. He sits because of lack of skill in using information available in his environment and lack of skill in moving about within it. Certainly the ability to get about is restricted.

A severely visually impaired child has difficulty in moving about independently in unfamiliar environment. Because sight does not give the child the total framework of the space in which he has to move. Therefore, determining the direction of movement poses special problems. This is particularly difficult in large open spaces. Again detection of obstacles in the way may pose serious troubles. The child may run the risk of injury.

Thirdly, a blind person talks loudly in a room that is too small for a loud voice or he talks "to a corner" or an empty chair rather than to another person. The common reaction is what a silly man. But it is not silly. It simply shows how a blind person is very much at a disadvantage. Not knowing where one is, being unable to control one's environment and oneself in relation to it is a significant deficit.

It is not easy for a severely visually impaired child to read facial expression. Reinforcement of positive behaviour may be denied to him if he cannot read the face of his mother to whether she is happy. Parental approval in strong positive reinforces, The child's eye contact with his mother in also not possible.

Now it is clear that vision is the dominant sense giving us information about the environment. No interaction with the environment is possible without gathering, storing, retrieving and organizing information. The loss of vision tends to restrict this process. Now we are to consider to what extent loss of vision hinders cognitive development and to what extent this deficiency is made up as the child grows in age and experience.

(c) Jean Piaget's (1896-1980) Theory of Intellectual Development will help us to know all in this respect.

Piaget says that Intellectual development takes place through the process of assimilation and accommodation.

What is Assimilation ?

Assimilation occurs when an already learnt stimulus evokes a response. For example, if a child sees a mango and recognizes it properly, this is an example of Assimilation.

What is Accommodation ?

Accommodation takes place when a child adds a new activity to his repertoire. After recognising a mango if a child begins to eat that, this is an example of Accommodation.

These two processes involve acquiring information, storing it, organizing it, retrieving it in response to an appropriate stimulus and developing behavioural responses appropriate to the task in hand. In the light of the limitations entire activity of information processing is influenced by visual disability.

Piaget divided Intellectual Development into several stages. Most important stages are :

1. SENSORY MOTOR STAGE (0 TO 2 YEARS)
2. PRECONCEPTUAL STAGE (2-4 YEARS)
3. INTUITIVE STAGE (4-7 YEARS)
4. STAGE OF CONCRETE OPERATIONS (7-11 YEARS)

5. STAGE OF LOGICAL OPERATIONS (11 YEAR OR ABOVE)

1. **Sensory Motor development** : According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development. The first two years constitute the sensory motor period during which infants' behaviour progresses from being characterised by simple reflexes to showing an internalised and representational form of problem solving. This period is broken down into six stages.

(i) **Reflexes (birth to one month)** : The infant's behaviour is characterised primarily by reflexive responses to his own body and to some aspects of the external world. The infant discovers some objects are suckible and some are not.

(ii) **Primary Circular Reactions (One to four months)** : The infant begins to repeat selectively those actions that produce effects that are interesting and satisfying to him. These actions are primarily directed to his own body rather than external objects.

(iii) **Secondary Circular Reaction (four to eight months)** : The infant reproduces behaviour that produces effects in the external world that are satisfying or interesting to him. This stage marks the beginning of the infant's effective orientation to the external world.

(iv) **Co-ordination of the Secondary Circular Reaction (eight to twelve months)** : The beginnings of intentionality are seen in this 4th stage. Infant begins to co-ordinate his behaviour with respect to the external world in more complex ways. The use of his specific means to obtain specific ends shows his increasing organization of the world.

(v) **Tertiary Circular Reactions (twelve to eighteen months)** : In this stage the infant's behaviour clearly involves active trial and error experimentation on the world.

(vi) **Internalization of thought (eighteen to twenty four months)** : This stage marks the beginning of internalized thought.

In this sensorimotor stage intelligence is demonstrated through motor activity without use of symbols. Knowledge of the world is limited (but developing) because it is based on physical interactions/experiences. Children acquire object permanence at about 7 months of age (memory). Physical development (mobility) allows the child to begin developing new intellectual activities. Some symbolic (language) abilities are developed at the end of this stage.

A visually handicapped child may reach a particular stage late but cannot skip it. This also confirms the view that even if there is some delay in developments, the

quality of mental ability remains uninfluenced by visual disability. There has been very little direct effects of blindness on the infant's progress through the stages of the sensory motor period. Stephens (1972) discussed some implications of visual impairment. She noted Piaget's stress on the importance of the infant's interaction with his environment as well as the fact that in the normal infant a large measure of that interaction depends on vision.

2. Preconceptual Stage : During this stage children gradually construct more complex mental images. But these images obviously depend on the sensory data available to the child. Unless specific efforts are made by parents, teachers and neighbours, the sensory data made available to the child is deficient. Therefore, the visually handicapped child crosses this stage later than the sighted child.

3. Intuitive Stage : At this stage a child is dominated by what is known as 'here and now' i.e. the child's thinking is dominated by immediate perceptions. The sighted child reads print and may look at a number of two dimensional objects. But the blind child lives in a three dimensional world. Even the reading of Braille is a three dimensional operation. Again a great deal of experience coming to the blind child is verbally mediated.

4. Stage of Concrete Operation : At this stage child is expected to make use of reason and logic relating objects to concrete objects. The limitations pointed out by Lowenfeld are applicable to blind children at this stage as well. If the range and variety of their experience is limited, their logic and reasoning cannot but be affected. Actually this is the result of limited experience and not of blindness.

5. Stage of Logical Operation : At this stage children are able to reason without the presence of concrete objects. In this stage of formal operations children can present problems mentally and operate on them. The blind children can make mental representation as effective and at about the same age as sighted children even if the precise nature of their mental representation is somewhat different.

(d) Some Factors Responsible for Cognitive Development :

□ **Concept Formation :** Concepts have been styled as building blocks of thought. They are therefore, basic to cognitive development. A fundamental ability required for concept formation is classification. It involves noting similarities and disregarding insignificant differences. The use of long or meaningless words not based on actual experience often described in the literature as verbalism. It is the use of words without knowing the precise meaning.

□ **Conservation** : The conservation of a property refers in general to the ability to retain correct judgement of the property even in the face of perceptual transformation. The general finding is that blind children show a lag in the development of conservation of volume, weight and substance. But these are temporary lag and as a blind child grows in experience he is most often able to make up his deficiency in day to day functioning.

□ **Imagery** : Imagery plays an important role in the child's cognitive growth and later in practically every aspect of his life.

What do we precisely mean by Imagery ?

Most of our actions are based on the thinking process. An image comes to our mind before we eat, talk, jump, run or perform a more complex task.

What are these images ?

They are the residue of stored experience. Indeed they are learned responses. But these learned responses may be visual, auditory, tactile, or kinesthetic or combination of visio-motor, audio-motor or verbal-motor. In fact no physical activity will be possible without such imagery.

□ **Creativity** : Creativity often depends on unique and efficient combination of images. It is often asked whether blind and sighted children differ in divergent thinking. There is no fundamental difference between blind and sighted children on divergent thinking except that blind children exhibit much greater verbal fluency whereas sighted children use much greater visual imagery.

B. Attitudes Affecting Blindness :

(a) **Community Attitudes and Reactions** : The deficits caused by blindness are not taken as objectively by the community as occur to the individual. The reaction varies from community to community depending on its traditions, culture and belief. Killing of disabled persons existed. As the society progressed towards being a welfare state from a warfare state, so did the changes occur in the total outlook. The blind persons became members of the society who needed to be looked after but not at the equal level with others. They were to live in a charity. It has also an undertone of religious beliefs. To-day the scenario is changing. The community is based on the principles of equality and fraternity. The motto is equal opportunities for all including handicapped people.

Though psychologists and educationists do talk about individual differences, yet we as human beings try to generalise things. Charity its general tendency is to

perceive a blind person as one who can make a livelihood only through begging, hence blindness implies a low level of living. Another misconception refers to the special talents of blind people like musical talents, fantastic memories. As normal human beings they depend on senses of hearing and touch as the sight is denied.

The stereotypes go beyond the beliefs and saying of it. It is reflected in the distortion in interaction with blind people. In daily life situations they are denied the opportunities, expectations are restricted and thus we 'socialise' the impairment into disability which is further extended to become a handicapped.

The community at large affects the blind child not only because of its general attitude but also through the ways that are reflected in the attitudes and behaviour of the immediate human contacts of the child, the neighbours, the parents and the peers.

(b) Parental Reaction to Blindness : When a child is born blind, the parents feel at a loss for so many social, personal and psychological reasons. The reactions occur on a continuum from neglect to over-protection. Due to the inability of most parents to understand the implications of an impairment, the impairment is perceived as a handicap, on one extreme is the response of neglect. Because it is felt that a blind person is devoid of all normal human functions of being an active member of the society. Not only this even parents at times feel the birth of a blind child to be the result of some sin. Hence in their own frustration, the child, is ignored and naturally the 'expectancy prophecy' comes to be true, the child develops into a person who cannot contribute socially or economically to the society.

Neglect causes certain personality problems but the child has to learn certain basic living skills. Over protection is more dangerous. It denies the child all of the natural demands or expectations of society. In between these two ends of the continuum of neglect and over protection, are the discrepant behaviours of parents which add to the problems of the blind child.

The discrepant behaviour is the gap between what a person says and what a person does/feels—The social structure is such that we try to say or act what is socially acceptable. Real feelings are rarely expressed especially when they are contrary to the socially desirable ones. The parents of a blind child, at times, pose the full acceptance of the blind child as an over behaviour, because today society expects parents to stand by their children. But covertly, it is difficult to accept a child who becomes a liability, a reason for social talk and criticism. Overt rejection is manageable but covert rejection does not only deceive a child, it hurts him

psychologically. It affects not only his growth and social relationships but also his own self-concept, the very basic of a person's development.

(c) Psycho-social Effects on the Child : Psycho-social development of a blind child is not affected, so much by blindness, perse, as it is disrupted by the emotional over-tones of blindness, for the parents another community. It is now a well-known fact from reaserch that children tend to achieve as much, and only as much as their parents aspire them to achieve or the significant persons in their environment expect them to achieve. But once the community deos not treat them as individuals, they are lost into a crowd, the crowd of blind persons—beggars, musicians or do whatever they like, once, the parents stop treating the child as a developing individual, once they refuse to accept his capabilities and limitations, both in a realistic manner, his self concept is bound to be severely affected. Overprotection takes away his independence, neglect turns him to exhibit undesirable behaviour—Either way, it is the suffering child whose miserices multiply.

4.1.5. Effect of Blindness—Secondary :

After going through the effect of Blindness—primary the students have clearly understand that there are some effects of the visual Impairment which are due to impairment, disability and for the deficient vision. These conditions are not final. Some can be minimised with the learning of some teachiques. For example a visually impaired person is handicapped in a new place and with the new things. If he/she is oriented properly with exploration and narration barring verbalism he/she will be able to do for himself/herself. Then he/she will no more be handicapped.

The on-set of blindness makes the effects whether it will be primary or secondary. Formation of concetp differes in respect of born blind (congenitally) and later age blind (adventitiously) or acquired blindness. In case of later age blind the effects become secondary.

We should keep in mind the issue of residual vision. Visual disability is considered from 40%. The visual disability ranging from 40% to 90% relates secondary effect. 90% to light perceptioon will be considered severe visual disability and they have only functional vision. Hence the percentage of visual disability refers whether the effects will be primary or secondary.

Training and practice of some teachiques like orientation & mobility, concept formation either by TLM or getting in touch of rewal objects as far as possible, activities of daily living skills, have management, personal management, arranging

of reading materials, assistive devices will minimise the handicapping condition.

Apart these the attitudes of parents, family, peers, community need to be changed through awareness making them recipient of the ability of the visually impaired, trying for their real acceptance. People in the media need to be educated to write about blindness accurately and carefully. The public need information not only on the realities of blindness but also on the techniques which make both the blind and the sighted persons comfortable. Fortunately at the Govt. level some services are also extended for making the visually impaired at par with the sighted people. Hence the primary effects gradually become secondary with the progress of science, Information & Technology.

4.1.6. Summary :

The ordinary child easily gets a total experience whereas a visually impaired child has a limited experience. The child's experience range can be enhanced, compensated to a great extent only by supplementary tactile or auditory inputs given by teachers or parents. In view of the above stated implications that a teacher is supposed to play his/her role face-to-face with the blind child, his parents, and his community. The specific understanding and skills required of the teacher of blind children are given below with suggested activities for their development.

1. The teacher should know the social climate from which the child comes.

Activity :

- (i) Prepare a case study of the observations/perceptions of the blind child of his social acceptance.
- (ii) Make interview of the parents, neighbours, peers and fellow teachers about their reactions to the blind child.

2. The teacher should have experience, knowledge of and faith in the capabilities of blind child.

Activity :

- (i) Make observations from the Daily Lives of some blind persons employed in significant jobs.
3. Reduce discrepant behaviour.

Activity :

- (i) Introspect your own attitude towards blindness.
 - (ii) Analyse the attitude of the parents.
4. Avoid negative or inappropriate semantics.

Activity :

- (i) Analyse the tasks that are given to sighted & blind children.
- (ii) Analyse the expression of speech used for interacting with blind and sighted children.

WORKSHEET :

1. List how the blindness affects objectively.

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2. Define stereotype behaviour.

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3. To-day, the scenario is changing—Explain.

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4. Senses are the gate-way to knowledge—Describe.

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5. Overprotection snatches away indendence—Clarify.

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6. Distinguish between over behaviour and covert behaviour.

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Check Yourself :

Some questions are here for self-check. Tick the most appropriate answer for each.

1. Three Major/basic limitations imposed by severe visual impairment was put for word by—
 - (a) Jean Piaget
 - (b) Berthold Lowenfeld
 - (c) Valintin Hany
 - (d) Samual Gridley Howe.
2. The number of the most important stages of intellectual development as stated by Piaget is—
 - (a) 8
 - (b) 6
 - (c) 3
 - (d) 5
3. Sighted persons feel pity for visually impaired because—
 - (a) Visually impaired cannot live properly in the world of sighted
 - (b) Sighted people fail to understand strength of visually impaired
 - (c) By the society it is taught to the sighted
 - (d) Kindness is a human value.
4. A visually imparied person can learn effectively if—
 - (a) he is given variety of experience
 - (b) he is taught only through auditory mode

- (c) he is given a chance to learn
 - (d) he is left to learn by himself
5. Parents of visually impaired children tend to overprotect because—
- (a) they love thier children
 - (b) they despise their children
 - (c) they are afraid for thier safely
 - (d) they try to hide their guilty feeling.
6. **Tick the most appropriate response.**
- (a) Senses are the geteways to knowledge [True/False]
 - (b) The community affects a blind child by not only its general attitude but also the attitude and behaviour of he neighbours, parents and peers. [True/False]
 - (c) Teachers can generalise about blindness on the basis of their limited experience. [True/False]
 - (d) All blind persons have special talents like musical talent and fantastic memory. [True/False]
 - (e) Blind persons are like any other normal human beings. [True/False]

Answer Key :

1. (b), 2. (d), 3. (b). 4, (a), 5. (c). 6. (a) False, (b) True, (c) False, (d) False, (e) True.

Unit : 4.2. □ Selective Educational Placement

Structure

4.2.1. Introduction

4.2.2. Objectives

4.2.3. Types of Educational Institutions

A. Special Schools

B. General Schools

C. Open Schools

D. Non-Formal Schools

4.2.4. Models of Educational programmes for children with disabilities.

A. Resource Model

B. Itinerant Teacher Model

C. Dual Teaching Model

D. Distance Learning Model

E. Alternative School Model

F. Home Based Education Model.

4.2.5. The Need of Inclusive Education for the Disabled in India.

4.2.6. Sub-unit Summary

4.2.7. Check your progress.

4.2.1 Introduction :

Mainstreaming of the disabled children is more than a half century old attempt in India. To-day equal opportunities to all disabled persons have become a mandate for all welfare states. In the preamble to our Indian Constitution, it has been emphatically declared that the people of India are resolved to provide equality of status and opportunity for everyone of its citizens including the disabled persons of the country.

"Education For All" (EFA) has been The Thrust of our Government and our people for many years. But due to several reasons including inadequacy of financial and personnel resources, this dream has not been completely materialised so far. An alarming percentage of our school-going-age population or still illiterate and ignorant remaining out-side the educational prograppmes.

4.2.2. Objectives :

(i) The students will have a clear idea of educational programmes and placement of disabled children particularly the Visually Impaired.

(ii) They would be more encouraged for the education of the visually impaired children and the target EFA will be achieved.

(iii) Being aware of the educational programmes for the Visually Impaired children they could counsel V. I. Children for their education and get inspiration for conducting some Research Study.

4.2.3. Types of Educational Institutions

A : Special School

Special school concept for the disabled is the earliest one implemented in India. The attitude changes to the services for the disabled persons in India Parallely as those existed internationally. As a matter of fact, the eudcational community did not realise that disabled children could be educated. But the inception of special schools for different disabilities proved them to be wrong.

What is a special school ?

A Special school is a place of education for the disabled children.

What is a Residential School ?

Residential School is an institution where all students reside and learn.

Are all Special Schools Resedential ?

No. Some are completely residential where all enrolled students reside in the hostels arranged by he school. Some are partly residential and partly day-scholar i.e. Some students reside in the hostles and some students come to school from outside. Again some special schools have hostles, all students are day-scholars.

Do all special schools follow a special curriculum widely suited to a disabled child ?

No. Some categories of disability have some special curriculum widely suited to a disabled child. But in case visual Impairment and Hearing Impairment, the existing curriculum for the normal education is followed. For other categories of disability only the mild and moderate groups can study under normal curriculum.

What are plus curricular activities for the Visually Impaired Students ?

In order to perform well in curricular aspects, Visually disabled children should learn skills which are peculiar to blindness. These skills are called 'Plus curricular activities'. The correlation between general and plus curricular activities is positive and high. We will read more about this in the curriculum sub-unit.

In most cases the special schools provide 24 hours custodial care to the children with disabilities in a protective environment.

The growth of special services for disabled children in India has followed the global trends of care and help. It suggests the availability of some form of educational and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. In pre-independent India, foreign missionaries introduced services for the disabled in the country. Besides direct service to these persons, the missionaries also assisted the Indian counterparts in attaining skills by undergoing technical courses abroad. The 1st school for the deaf in Mumbai and the first school for the Blind in Amritsar were started by The Missionaries in 1883 and 1887 respectively.

At the time of independence in India, there was no formal legislation to ensure compulsory education for the disabled. Though the articles 45 of the constitution of India is assuring better services to persons with disabilities in India, it was not enforced through legislation until recently. As on today more than 3000 special schools for the disabled are functioning in India of which approximately 900 are institutions for the hearing impaired, 400 for the children with visual impairment, 1000 for mentally retarded and the remaining 700 for children with other physical disabilities.

A 'blind school' as it is commonly called is a special school, because it caters to the needs of a special kind of students—the visually handicapped. Visual impairment creates special problems and difficulties in the psychomotor, cognitive and affective areas, and in interpersonal relations of the individual—which require special kind of approach and solution. A blind school is supposed to do all these. It is different from a general school in the sense that it imparts not only, 'academic'

education but also aims at the development of compensatory skills i.e. rehabilitation among its students.

The speciality of a blind school lies in the fact that almost always it is a residential school, though an insignificant number may attend it as day scholars here and there. This characteristic depends on both historical and demographic necessities. Historically, the modern blind schools have evolved from the pre-1784 asylums before the establishment of valentine Hany's school in Pasis. From that time till the present day, no other way of schooling seems feasible than separating blind children from the seeing in special residential schools. Special features of these schools can be noticed in the words of Lowenfeld, "In Germany, for instance, blind children entered the residential school and upon graduation were transferred from one building to another where handicrafts kept them productively occupied until they became too old to work and were moved to still another building, on the same ground, for the aged blind—a kind of 'cradle to grave security'.....In many parts of the world, it has not yet moved for beyond this stage.

Demographically, the geo-scatter of the blind population makes it imperative that they should be collected in one place so that they can be given education and training properly. The institutionalization of visually handicapped children in residential special schools illustrates in concrete terms the quality of attitudes to handicapped—the desire to create some positive means of assistance and the willingness to separate and confine.

In these schools, the manners of instruction is also different—either there are special teaching methods, or the teacher-pupil ratio is very low, the close connections between the medical and para-medical staff is also a distinctive feature of special school.

Special schools have several aims for their pupils which are quite different from the regular schools. These schools include making the visually handicapped child as normal in behaviour as possible. This means, imparting training in for example, orientation and mobility, training, sensory training, use of residual vision, daily living skills development etc. The aim is to enable the child to blend into his/her social context as far as possible. A general aim is the vital notion of independence—the maximum economic, social and personal self-sufficiency for the child. The school also tries to help the child to live with his/her disability in a way which minimizes its handicapping effects. These are some of the aims which distinguish a special school from a normal regular school.

To enable the special school to achieve these goals all the component factors

which constitute a school must be brought together and made to work like a, well-oiled machine. This is called "School Organisation" Combining both—human and non-human elements, we get four major factors essential for good organisation and these are (i) Management, (ii) Teaching Personnel, (iii) Curriculum & (iv) Pupils.

Apart from the above-mentioned factors, there is another equally important element in the organisation of a special school which is 'community' including the parents. This fact is generally not taken into account as it remains beyond the boundaries of the school premises, but nonetheless, its importance cannot be minimised because it is the community which is the means and the ends, of the education and training of the handicapped child.

Just to bring all the elements together is not organisation, a force is required to make all these factors work in unison. This force in the school organisation is the Headmaster or in some cases The Principal, or in other words the Head of the Institution is the Pivot round which the whole organisation revolves.

□ Special School as Innovator :

'To innovate' means "to introduce something new or novel in the existing system." The necessity of ushering in the new becomes imperative when the old and traditional system fails to deliver the expected result in the changing situations. In the New Education Policy (NEP) a basic change in the outlook and approach was proposed. By providing effective lobby for legislation, sensitizing the decision makers in the Government, helping the regular schools in the proper management of Integrated system, diversifying their own activities, initiating research and experiment in the field, the special school can play the role of responsible guide and innovator.

□ Special School—its relevance

Setting up a special school with all the necessary resources like infrastructure, equipments and manpower warrants a huge capital. In a developing country like India which can't afford to huge investments on alternative system became imperative so as to bring all the disabled children under the umbrella of education. Inclusive education is one of the viable approaches to make the dream come true. Inclusive education is not a threat to integrated education concept or the special school programmes rather an important component for education of the disabled. The special schools can concentrate more on difficult groups such as severe and profound group of children and children with additional disabilities. It is noted that the introduction of one system had never suppressed the old system but has widened the scope and action of such system. Therefore, special schools can change their role

in the following ways for expanding inclusion.

1. Serving as resource centres for a cluster of general educational schools which are involved in inclusive education.
2. Organising inservice courses to the teachers of general schools in methods of handling children with disabilities.
3. Sharing special equipment with general schools for enriching learning experiences of children with disabilities.
4. Organising summer camps for non-disabled children to create awareness in them about disability related issues.
5. Providing residential school facilities to children with severe and profound disabilities.
6. Undertaking action research studies on disability related issues and disseminate the information to general schools.
7. Initiate community based rehabilitation services to provide alternative education and rehabilitation to persons with disabilities in their own localities.

Therefore, special schools can play a vital role for the betterment of inclusive education in India. The inclusive education and special school concepts are not competitive to each other. In fact they are complimentary to each other. This spirit would go a long way in establishing a base for the harmonious growth of services for persons with disabilities in India.

□ Integration and Inclusion—how do they differ ?

In India the two systems—integrated education and inclusive education have a major difference. In integrated education, specialist teachers provide most of the essential as well as support services, whereas general classroom teachers provide additional assistance to blind children in the classroom.

In inclusive settings, the education of disabled children is treated as an integral part of general education. Therefore, essential services are provided by general classroom teachers and only support services are provided by specialist teachers.

Provision for education of children with disabilities is usually made in special schools. But these special schools are completely inadequate to cater to the need

of the vast population of children with disabilities. So the steps have been taken to make provision of education of these children in general, open and non-formal schools.

B. General Schools :

More than 5,00,000 schools are there in India to look after the educational needs of the children in the country. These schools are meant for the normal children. But the constitutional provision to make education compulsory and free for children including disabled ones up-to the age of 14 years has compelled the policy makers and administration to make available the facilities of these schools for the education of the disabled children. In this context, these general schools may be grouped into Four Categories :

- Schools with normal children only.
- Schools where disabled children are enrolled but without any special facility of trained teachers or special teaching aids.
- Schools where disabled children read along with normal children but trained teachers are there to understand their special needs and try to satisfy these needs to some extent.
- Schools where there are special sections for disabled children.

C : Open School :

All disabled children cannot be benefited from formal learning system. There are many over-aged children and dropouts who may like to continue education through distance mode. The clients in vocational and rehabilitation centers who want to continue higher education many pursue the same through distance learning system. The Indira Gandhi National Open University, The Netaji Subhas Open University, some universities in every states of India, some foreign universities, Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya etc have also started special study centres to assist persons with disabilities to continue school education and higher education. Such distance education opportunities must be used to the maximum possible extent to make more disabled persons educated.

Open learning system is considered as the panacea of the general educational system. When developed nations as well as developing nations are acknowledging the need of open learning as a viable alternative to make any country literate, the special education system, being a part of general education system, needs to

examine the feasibility of open learning to make more disabled persons literate. The National Open School has developed instructional material for adaptation of curriculum in the case of disabled children. It has also started providing accreditation to selected institutes in the country to offer all levels of academic and vocational courses for the benefit of disabled children. The strengths of the National Open School curriculum are its wider range of options for course selection and facility to learn at the pace of the learner. These two aspects suit the requirement of children with disabilities. The children, according to their abilities, may select either academic or vocational courses.

D : Non-Formal Schools :

While open learning system may be encouraged for school-going and academically capable children, many adult disabled persons may not be benefited from this approach. There is a need to promote non-formal education programmes in the existing community based rehabilitation programmes to provide educational services to their clients. These clients may not opt for higher education, but they may become lifesafe for better living. Adult disabled persons are the potential seekers of non-formal education.

4.2.4 Models of Educational Programmes For Children with Disabilities

A. Resource Model :

This is an educational plan in which a child with any type of disability specifically visually impaired is enrolled in a regular class. Within the school building a special teacher called resource teacher is available to the child along with his regular teacher. The regular teacher assumes major responsibility for the children with all disability in general programme. The resource teacher is responsible for instruction in special techniques or skills required for children of all types of disabilities. One full time resource teacher can manage 8–10 children of different types of disability in the resource programme. As far as possible, the children should be distributed in different classes/sections, preferably not more than 2 in one class/section.

In developing countries, at least seven models of Resource System are in practice. These are the following—

- (a) Resource model where visually impaired children study in general schools and stay in hostels for non-disabled children.
- (b) Resource model where visually impaired children study in general schools and

stay in hostels of the near by special schools.

(c) Resource model where visually impaired children study in general schools and stay in hostels exclusively arranged for them.

(d) Resource model where visually impaired children study in general schools and stay with parents at home.

(e) Semi-resource model or co-operative model where visually impaired children are taught only by the resource teacher in a separate class in a general school.

(f) Multi-category resource model where disabled children of different types are educated in a general school by the regular teachers and a specialist teacher.

(g) Multi-category itinerant model where one special teacher attends to the need of visually impaired children of different categories in a particular locality.

B. Itinerant Teacher Model :

This is an educational plan in which the children with all disabilities are enrolled in a regular class in his/her home school where his needs are met through the combined efforts of the regular teachers and visiting itinerant teacher qualified to offer special service. The salient features of the Itinerant model.

- The children in this programme are distributed in different schools.
- The Itinerant teacher has to travel everyday to reach the children.
- Each child will be visited by the teacher twice or thrice a week. However children with all disability of primary classes should be given frequent visits. In this case, limited number of children with all disability should be enrolled at the primary level especially in the beginning stages of the Itinerant programme.
- Each school will not be having a resource room. So for the itinerant teacher, a resource kit is must.
- The schools selected for the programme can be within a radius of 8 kms. However, this distance depends upon the topography of the locality.
- Depending upon the topography, the itinerant teacher should be provided with transportation arrangements—a bicycle or a motor cycle can be given.

C. Dual Teaching Model :

This is the model which can make the universalisation principle, a reality. Even though resource and itinerant programme can reach a huge number of children with

all types of disability, there are numerous places where educational services for this population are not existing. For example, an isolated village which has one or two children with multi-category disability can very well go for the dual teaching plan. This plan is successful only when the number of disabled children is very limited, not more than two for ideal programme. The regular teachers with the support instructional material and limited competency oriented training can look after children with multi-category disability in addition to their regular classroom responsibilities. A token incentive may be provided for their additional work with disabled children. A large number of teachers, at least one teacher per school have to be trained through crash programmes of two to three months duration to serve in the dual teaching plan. When such arrangements are made, any visually impaired child also can avail the educational facility in the local school itself.

D. Distance Learning Model :

The present day scenario is changed. The out-reach programme services of education is at every doorstep now. Expensive college and university centralised higher education is brought very close to our home through the study centres. Institutions like Indira Gandhi National Open University, Netaji Subhas Open University, all other universities of our own state and other states even the foreign universities facilitate high education available in the home locality. Apart these today Information & Technology has brought the world and all resources of education to our room-corner. Like general students all category of disabled students including Visually Impaired can avail themselves of the opportunities of higher education seating at home keeping personal business and engagement undisturbed and intact.

E. Alternative school model :

The possibility of alternative schooling such as night schools, evening schools, package programme etc. may also be explored and take into account for providing are needed to improve the skills of the disabled individual to become economically as well as educationally rehabilitated. India has great potential for the growth of alternative education models to promote maximum services to all disabled persons.

F. Home based education model :

"This programme is meant for children who are physically handicapped also to the extent that they cannot attend a school, or who live where a school suitable for them is not available." The purpose of this school is that the physical inequity

should not and need not create a "mental vegetable". If the children are unable to attend the school education can be brought to them.

In this approach specialised teachers are nominated routinely to minimise interruptions in a student's education caused by short and long time confinement at home. The special teachers in this system are assigned with a caseload and visit the student in the home on a regular basis. The major responsibility of these teachers is to assist the child's regular classroom teacher in preparing instructional plans and guidelines which can be pursued with the homebound student on one-to-one tutorial basis. It is desirable that the learning environment should be made more compatible to the child's basic physical and emotional needs in this system. The homebound programmes are rarely practised in Indian conditions.

4.2.5. The need of Inclusive Education for the Disabled in India

In India special school services are more than a century old. At present, approximately 30,000 blind children are served in nearly 400 special schools for the blind. The present scenario is that :

(i) A disabled child has to travel to far off places, whereas a non-disabled sibling from the same family can attend the local school. This accessibility of local school is not made available to children with visual impairment.

(ii) In most villages of the country, children with disabilities of different conditions are present. As far as the standard models are concerned, one specialist teacher serves 8–10 disabled children of the same category. But the scattered villages in the country do not have an adequate number of the same category to justify the appointment of a full-time resource teacher. Therefore, the need of multicategory personnel becomes inevitable.

(iii) The extent of disability in each category ranges from mild cases to severe and profound cases. The mild and moderate cases are more in number than the severe and profound cases. Due to a lack of sensitivity of general education to the needs of children with visual impairment, even the mild and moderate cases are not attending schools. This invites the involvement of general education so that children who are currently left out can be served.

(iv) Last but not the least, the enrolment in the integrated education as per the sixth all India Survey on Education (1998) is 8633. The total coverage in both special schools and integrated settings constitutes less than 5% of the population of blind

children. Therefore, special schools and integrated education models are not able to provide access to all. The Education for All (EFA) campaign should not become 'education for all minus blind children'. If EFA in the case of blind children is to become a reality, inclusive education needs to be nurtured and implemented. In addition to the accessibility factor, the nature of distribution of visually impaired children too demands inclusive education. At present the SarvaShiksha Abhiyan/Mission is the active force for full implementation of Inclusive programme.

4.2.6. Unit Summary :

□ Education of disabled children in India is served by mainly four types of schools—special, general, open and non-formal.

□ There are various models of Education available for disabled children such as—Resource Room Model, Itinerant Teacher model, Distance Learning Model, Alternative School Model, Home Based Education Model.

4.2.7. Check Your Progress :

1. (i) The teacher should know the educational placement of disabled children.

Activity :

Enquire disabled children's learning in your locality

- (ii) Type of study materials of a visually impaired child.

Activity :

Locate a visually impaired child. List his/her study materials and techniques of learning.

2. Point for discussion.

After going through the sub-unit you may like further discussion on some points and classification on other

Note down those points.

3. (i) Inclusive and Integrated setting of education is not a Threat to Special Residential System—Justify.
(ii) Inclusive and integrated educational setting for the disabled children—Differentiate.

4. Assignments :

Prepare a Report regarding the types of schools and models of education available in Your Block. Collecting data from various sources and give your suggestions and recommendations for promotion of education of the children with disability.

5. Self-Check :

Tick the most appropriate answer :

- (i) The first school for the visually impaired in India was established in— (a) 1784, (b) 1883, (c) 1987, (d) 1887.
- (ii) Constitution of India assures better services to persons with disabilities under article No.— (a) 54, (b) 45, (c) 24, (d) 44.
- (iii) Expanded core curricular items for the visually unpaired are followed more in— (a) General Schools, (b) Open Schools, (c) Special Residential Schools, (d) Non-Formal Schools.
- (iv) This model of Education for the disabled can make the universalisation principle, a reality.— (a) Dual Teaching Model, (b) Itinerant Teacher Model, (c) Resource Room Model, (d) Home Based Education Model.
- (v) Instructional material for adaptation of curriculum for disabled children has been developed by— (a) The National Open School, (b) General School, (c) Special Residential School, (d) Non-Formal School.
- (vi) Inclusive education is essential in India for— (a) Larger coverage of disabled children population, (b) Huge cost for running special school will not be needed, (c) Implementation of EFA will be possible normally, (d) All of the above.
- (vii) The categories as per percentage of disability is— (a) 4, (b) 5, (c) 6, (d) 3.

Answer Key :

- (i) d, (ii) b, (iii) c, (iv) a, (v) a, (vi) d, (vii) a.