

# **A Comparative Study of the Learning Achievements of the Visually Impaired Children Studying In Special and Inclusive Schools**

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**A Study Conducted**

**by**

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of various formal educational systems in some of the countries of the Asian Blind Union (ABU) region can be traced to more than a hundred years ago. However, despite such a long history of educational services for the visually impaired, two serious gaps remain. On the one hand we find that in many cases the special schools for the blind are not as well developed as institutions for their sighted counterparts. Secondly, the number of blind children who have been able to gain access to any kind of formal educational system is still very small.

In the beginning, formal education of the visually impaired in the countries above referred to was primarily governed and motivated by a charity approach. It was considered satisfactory enough for schools for the blind to teach blind children basic skills with a view to enabling them hope for a little dignified quality of life. Therefore, the emphasis was chiefly on basic language skills, music, basic vocational training such as caning and weaving and traditional arts such as music. Education of the visually impaired, in other words had a functional rather than a developmental focus.

However, for nearly half a century now, this focus from a conservative approach to education has been gradually shifting towards more developmental and inclusive models of education. This shift in the educational priorities relating to the visually impaired has been more pronounced and widespread during last quarter of a century.

One strategy, which is commonly seen to be an effective tool of this development-oriented approach to education, is the integrated or the inclusive education system (the terms integrated and inclusive are often used interchangeably). At this point it must be pointed out that there have virtually never been any special institutions of higher education for the visually impaired. Even before the term inclusive education became current, we find that most blind children wishing to study beyond standard eight had to go to sighted schools and study in the integrated education system. So the real areas of experiment and promotion as far as inclusive education is concerned pertained to including the visually impaired child in a mainstream sighted school at a very early age.

While success in some localized quarters encouraged the inclusive educational experts to push forward this idea at a macro level, others pointed out that while the majority of the schools for the sighted do not have the basic infrastructure and trained teachers even for the sighted students, then how can these institutions be expected to take care of the special needs of the blind children? The debate that has since been triggered off has been rather heated and primarily based on the academic and philosophical concerns of the educational experts themselves, rather than on any hard evidence of the efficacy of any of the two systems. Caught up in this muddle, the governments of the various countries of the Asian Blind Union region were compelled to continue with both the special and the inclusive education system for the visually impaired, and, in this process, appeared to do justice to neither. While economic reasons and the pressure of some international declarations seemed to push the policies of the governments of many countries towards the inclusive education system, the harsh ground realities

often blocked their path. Sadly, in this entire exercise, the voice of the blind children and a realistic assessment of their needs are seldom taken note of.

The present study undertaken by the Committee on the Status of Blind Children, Asian Blind Union is an attempt to give focus, prominence and due attention to this voice of the visually impaired children as far as the selection of an appropriate educational system for them is concerned. In December, 2003, we organized a conference on inclusive education for Middle East countries in Beirut, Lebanon. There, I had an opportunity to interact with the educational professionals concerned with special and inclusive education from 12 Middle East countries. During our discussions, a consensus emerged to conduct a study on the efficacy of the two systems in the context of the Asian countries. Shortly after that, when I attended the Executive meeting of the ICEVI as the representative of the then World Blind Union President, Ms. Kiccki Nordstrom In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, I learnt that the ICEVI was in the process of planning a study in the inclusive primary schools of Uganda. My discussions there with the ICEVI office bearers further strengthened the concept of this Study in the Asian Blind Union. However, as the term of the previous Children's Committee in the Asian Blind Union was to end in October, 2004, much work could not be done on this project.

When this Committee was reconstituted by the office bearers of the Asian Blind Union in 2005, we felt that one of the important advocacy tasks of this Committee in the context of the ABU region countries could be to prepare specific guidelines and standards the presence of which should be the responsibility of every ABU country government to ensure for the education of the visually impaired children. We were of the view that these guidelines and standards should be determined by closely studying the ground realities of both the special as well as the inclusive educational systems. Such an assessment should be made by listening to the actual stakeholders in the education of the visually impaired, namely, the children themselves and the teachers from the two streams. The development of the appropriate research tools for the present as well as for the future studies of a similar nature was considered to be another useful research exercise.

With these ends in view, the Children's Committee of the Asian Blind Union proposed to undertake a study of both the special and the inclusive education systems in some selected countries. The Asian Blind Union has a total of 23 countries as its members. These are spread over South Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia. We were deeply conscious of the fact that the issue of an appropriate educational system for the visually impaired was a relevant as well as urgent issue for most of these countries, and that such a study should carry samples from all the countries. However, logistical, financial issues and time constraints prevented us from undertaking such a comprehensive work. At the same time we were clear that any study may not have much relevance if it is purely localized. As a middle path, we decided to conduct this study initially in four countries: two each from South Asia and the Middle East respectively. It has been our hope that once appropriate and comprehensive tools for such a research are developed during this study and once common indicators and trends are visible to us in these two regions, then such a data base research could be duplicated in other countries. In our view, the present work has been successful in fulfilling both these aims.

The countries selected for this research are India and Nepal from South Asia and Jordan and Lebanon from the Middle East. Nepal was chosen as it has a long history of inclusive education across the country, a history that dates back to 1960s. India is geographically much larger than the other three countries and is supposed to have a well-developed system of special schools as compared to other developing countries. At the same time during last decade or a little more, there has been a sudden shift of the government policies towards inclusive education. Jordan and Lebanon were selected because, we were informed that these two countries not only had well developed models of education for the visually impaired, but also, because the national organizations of the blind in these two countries had active projects and valuable human resource in inclusive education.

The underlying philosophy behind this study was the rights based approach to education for the visually impaired. Such an approach is informed by the fact that a visually challenged child has the right to receive appropriate education in a harmonious and healthy environment similar to the one available to his sighted counterparts. This in effect means that he has the right to demand necessary infrastructure, trained teachers and the love and care of his parents irrespective of the fact whether he is staying in an urban or in a rural location. In order to fulfill this fundamental right of the visually impaired child it is imperative that the education system for the visually impaired should not be dependent on localized NGO projects only, either in special or inclusive systems. Rather, all the conditions required for the education of a visually impaired child should be available in a school, whether special or inclusive by virtue of the implementation of centralized and consistent government policies.

Further, we wanted to explore whether such policies and their implementation really existed at the ground level.

Our parameters of assessment were based on the right of the child to have access to facilities, environment and trained teachers in the same manner in which a sighted child has. Consequently, the questions were designed to examine the following areas:

- School preparedness to accept a visually impaired child
- Availability of textbooks and other equipments
- Accessibility to materials other than textbooks
- Materials such as magazines and general reading materials
- Attention and accommodation in classroom
- Methodology concerning home tasks
- Ways in which examinations are taken
- Choice of reading formats such as Braille or audio etc.
- Availability of special aid to teach subjects such as science,
- Mathematics and geography etc.

As learning in our view is not just academic and content based, we, in addition to examining the academic performance of children also sought to examine their:

- Motivation levels
- Interpersonal relations with peers
- The capacity to interact in the sighted world

- Their emotional and psychological states
- Their social interactive skills
- Sports and extra curriculum participation and
- Family support

Though our aims were lofty, the limitations were many. You will agree that conducting a data base study using the client personal interview approach in different countries at the same time is a difficult task. There are geographical, linguistic and other local factors, which often come in the way of such a research. Also, we needed to ensure mature and professional investigators in every country to conduct personal interviews with children and their teachers. We were of the clear view that this task could only be performed by those who in addition to having other skills are well versed in disability issues. Such competent persons are often not able to spare much time for short term assignments such as ours.

As we worked to ensure the near perfect logistics for our research, we realized that given our financial and other constraints we could not have a very large sample. To offset this disadvantage we decided to be comprehensive in our research and examine various issues from a multiple prospective. It was decided to interview a total of 160 persons in four countries over a period of three months in the following manner:

In consultation with the organization of the blind in each of the selected countries skilled investigators were appointed. Details about the qualifications of the investigators can be found in the first chapter of this study. Each of the investigators was asked to interview a total of forty persons in his/her country:

15 students studying in the special schools for the blind, 15 visually impaired children studying in the inclusive mainstream schools, five teachers, either blind or sighted, but teaching in the special schools for the blind and five teachers, either blind or sighted, but teaching in the inclusive mainstream schools. Detailed guidelines were provided to these investigators regarding the selection of these students and teachers as well as regarding the interview procedures. These guidelines as well as the kind of questionnaires the investigators were provided as research tools are discussed in the first Chapter of this study.

The data collection took longer than expected due to various reasons including the fact that while the questionnaires were in English, these needed to be translated into the respective country languages for the purposes of conducting interviews. The responses again needed to be translated into English because interviews in most cases were conducted in the local languages. While required data from three countries was received, with respect to Lebanon, we were informed by the President of the national organization, called Youth Association of the Blind (who is also the current President of the Asian Blind Union), that the investigator there faced tough opposition from the special schools for the blind In Lebanon which were not allowing any data collection from the special schools. As the present work is a comparative study between the two systems, only data from the inclusive schools of Lebanon would have been inadequate for our purposes.

Thus our findings and conclusions in this study are based on the data collected from the special as well as from the inclusive schools in three countries, namely, India, Nepal and Jordan. Based on this data, this study is divided in 6 chapters. Chapter One talks about the methodology of research and the processes through which the completion of this work has passed, Chapters 2-4 talk about our findings about various aspects of special and inclusive schools, aspects which have been outlined above. Chapter 5 points out some limitations of this research and our conclusions are presented in Chapter 6.

The 6 annexures to this study provide information, which can be very useful in further research. The data collection and most of the data analysis for this work was done in 2005 and the actual writing of this study was completed in the first half of 2006.

As we grappled with various key issues relating to the special and the inclusive education of the visually impaired children over a period of fifteen months, we sadly realized that much still needs to be done with respect to both the special and inclusive systems in most developing countries. Education, the fundamental human right, is still very far from becoming a reality for most blind children.

**Dr. Anil Aneja**  
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**Co-ordinator and Chief Investigator**

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# CHAPTER 1

## METHODOLOGY

The completion of this work has undergone several stages in a structured and planned manner.

### 1.1. Concept Formulation:

A wide range of consultations was held with leaders in the blindness field as well as with special and inclusive educational experts of the selected countries before the questionnaires for the data collection were prepared. The consultations held in Beirut in December 2003 and the discussions with the ICEVI office bearers and executive members have already been referred to in the Introduction. In addition to these, Ms. Kicki Nordstrom, then President, World Blind Union took an active interest in the concept of this study and helped clarify various issues. The members of the World Blind Union Children's Committee, in particular Ms. June Waugh and Ms. Ana Palas provided useful in-puts whenever these were sought for. Mr. A.K. Mittal, Regional Director, National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, India has been a constant companion of ours during this study and has given time and attention whenever asked for.

The office bearers of the Asian Blind Union, in particular, Mr. Amer Makarem, President, Mr. J.L. Kaul, Secretary General have helped throughout with their experience, expertise and in various other ways. In our view, this work has gained significantly with the active involvement of so many renowned personalities from the blindness field from across the globe. We consciously continued review and monitoring of this project through varied consultations at all stages of this work.

### 1.2. Preparation of Questionnaires:

Based on our discussions, four sets of questionnaires were prepared for collecting data from students and teachers. One each of these questionnaires was designed for:

- a) Students studying in the special schools
- b) Visually impaired students studying in the inclusive schools
- c) Teachers teaching in the special schools
- d) Teachers involved with teaching visually impaired students in the inclusive schools.

While many of the questions were common to both the special school and the inclusive school questionnaires, some variations were there depending on our parameters for assessing a particular stream. The questions were left open ended so that students could respond freely without any preconceived choices being given to them. Each of the students and teachers selected as our sample for this Study was personally interviewed by a well-qualified investigator in complete privacy. This was ensured so that students and teachers could freely express themselves without the fear or worry of school management.

As our investigators resided in three countries it was not feasible to conduct personal training for them. However, we overcame this difficulty in two ways:

1) By involving the national blindness organizations which were also the members of the Asian Blind Union. In this way we ensured that an apt person suited for our purposes was appointed as Investigator in each of the countries and also that the investigators were in regular touch with the blindness organizations and worked under their guidance.

2) We formulated a detailed set of guidelines, which were sent to all the investigators in writing. Copies of these guidelines were also sent to the blindness organizations with which the investigators were associated. These written guidelines endeavoured to address every concerned issue, whether minor or major relating to the interpretation and handling of various sets of questionnaires, conduct of interviews and data entry. In addition, the coordinator of this Study was in regular touch with the investigators through telephone and emails. Thus, the continual monitoring of the data collection was ensured.

### **1.3. Details of Investigators:**

Being keenly aware of the fact that the success of this Study chiefly rests on accurate data collection we ensured that our investigators had sound knowledge of issues involved in this research. The three investigators appointed were Ms. Neera Adhikari, for Nepal, Ms. Shaden Elewat for Jordan and Ms. Mukta Aneja for India.

1 Ms Neera Adhikar is herself a visually impaired person, has completed her Masters in English literature and has mostly studied in the inclusive schools, has excellent command on English, Nepali and on computer usage, is the Head of the Women's Committee in National Association of the Blind (central) in Nepal, and represents NAB Nepal in the Asian Blind Union.

2 Ms. Shaden Elewat is a low vision person and holds a Ph.D. in special education of the visually impaired. She is presently teaching as a lecturer in the Education Department of a University in Jordan. She has full command on English, Arabic and computer application, has worked with several projects relating to the special as well as inclusive education of the visually impaired in the Middle East, has also been a CBM trainer in the Middle East, is involved with various activities of Friendship Association of the Blind, Jordan and also represents FAB in the Asian Blind Union.

3 Ms. Mukta Aneja holds a Masters in English, has worked as a lecturer in English in Delhi University, has excellent command over English and three Indian languages, currently runs a translation and editing service bureau, is a writer and has taken part in several disability related activities in both India and abroad. She has contributed 24 out of 40 real stories in the book titled **Abilities Redefined: Forty Live Stories of Courage and Conviction**, which was published by All India Confederation of the Blind on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee in 2005

#### **1.4. Beta Testing:**

Before being given to the Investigators along with the guidelines, the four sets of questionnaires were beta tested in two schools of India. Necessary modifications were thereafter made keeping in view the feed back. The questionnaires and the guidelines for Investigators are appended to this work as **Annexures 1-5**.

#### **1.5. Mid Project Consultations:**

Our understanding of various issues involved in special and inclusive education was enriched by my discussions with Mr. Larry Campbell, International Director, Overbrook School for the Blind, and President, ICEVI, during the three days the co-ordinator of this Study spent with him at the Overbrook School for the Blind, USA in 2005. Mr. Campbell has throughout shown a keen interest in this work and was instrumental in introducing the co-ordinator of this Study to the practices being followed in special and inclusive schools by arranging personal visits to these institutions. That experience sharply highlighted what was lacking in the developing countries with respect to both the systems.

#### **1.6. The Data Analysis:**

The data analysis of this project involved the task of analyzing and classifying a total of 12690 responses before the writing of this Study could take place. As the questionnaires were deliberately kept open ended, the data analysis had to be done manually which was an extremely time consuming process.

#### **1.7. Findings and Post Research presentations:**

After the data analysis was completed, the preliminary findings of this Study were presented by the co-ordinator at the meeting of the Children's Committee, World Blind Union, on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2006. Apart from the members, a number of other experts of the education of the visually impaired also attended this presentation. It was a happy coincidence that the findings of the ICEVI's Uganda study were also presented by the President, ICEVI during the same meeting. It may be pointed out here that both the Uganda and the present study were conducted approximately during the same period. However, the present study of the Asian Blind Union Children's Committee, goes beyond the factors influencing inclusive education at the primary level. Our sample consists of students studying at both the primary and the secondary levels. Secondly, our study covers three countries and is an attempt to present a comparative picture of education as it is being practiced in special and inclusive schools of these countries. We must mention however that the Uganda study has helped us clarify our own confusions at many points.

Useful in-puts received during our presentation at the World Blind Union Children's Committee meeting have helped in finalizing the draft of this Study.

A full Paper detailing salient findings of this study was presented during the 12<sup>th</sup> World Conference of the ICEVI after the draft of this study was ready.

Our findings were confirmed by the educational professionals and NGO representatives from India, Nepal and Jordan. The suggestions received during this presentation and through emails afterwards have been, where applicable incorporated while editing the draft of this work.

### **1.8. Conclusions:**

Thus, it can be seen that we have followed a structured plan while working on this research project and, within our limits, have endeavoured to adopt a varied and comprehensive approach.

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## CHAPTER 2

### PROFILE OF STUDENTS

Our sample in respect of the profile of students reveals some interesting similarities and variations among the three countries where this study was undertaken.

#### 2.1. The guidelines:

The Guidelines provided to the investigators in respect of selection of students were specific in two respects:

- a) They were asked to ensure a gender balance by selecting a near equal number of boys and girls.
- b) They were asked to interview students from different age groups.

We requested them to include a near equal sample from the primary, the middle and the secondary level classes. The investigators were to make a random selection in all other respects. Therefore, the similarities within the profile of the students point to some definite trends.

#### 2.2. Age:

18% of the children were within the age group 4-10 in the inclusive schools whereas in respect of special schools this number stood at 13%. Children between the ages 11-16 form 60% of our sample from the inclusive stream whereas from the special schools within the same age group this percentage stands at 47%. 22% of the inclusive school students we interviewed were of the age above 16 years while with respect to special schools, this number stands at a significant 40%. The country-wise percentages for each of the streams are shown in **table** below.

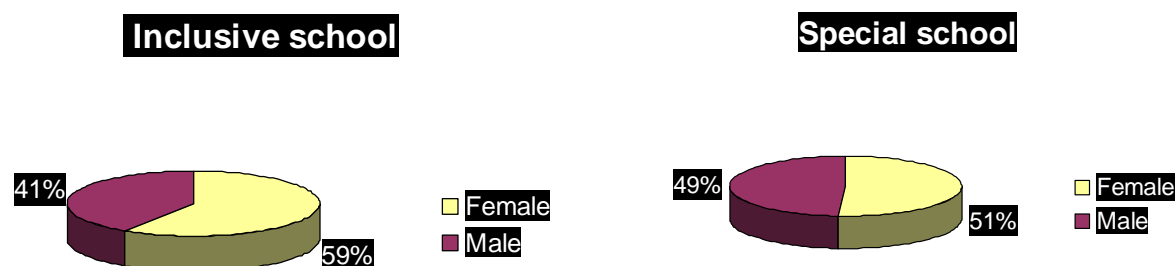
**Table 1: Age profile of our sample**

	0 to 10 years		11 to 16 years		16 and above	
	Inclusive School %	Special School %	Inclusive School %	Special School %	Inclusive School %	Special School %
India	13	20	81	40	6	40
Nepal	7	6	53	47	40	47
Jordan	33	13	47	54	20	33
Total %	18	13	60	47	22	40

#### 2.3. Gender:

51% of the special school students were female and 49% male. In the inclusive school stream samples, this ratio stood at 59%female and 41% male as illustrated in the **figure** below. There were very little country variations within these figures.

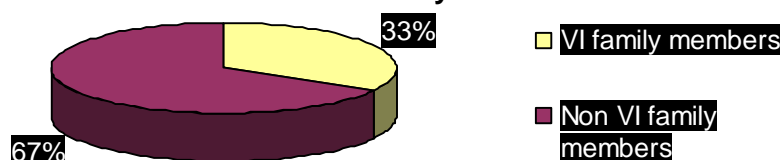
**Figure 1: Gender profile of inclusive and special school sample**



## 2.4 Blindness within the family:

Interestingly, 33% of the total students we interviewed had other family members, mostly one or more of the siblings as also visually impaired as shown in **figure**. The country variations ranged from 27-35%.

**Figure 2: Blindness within the family**



## 2.5. Economic Status of the family:

We found that in the special schools 54% of the children came from low income and mostly rural background families, 37% from middle income and only 9% from the higher income group families. In contrast, in the inclusive schools this ratio stood at 29% from the lower income group, 49% from the middle income and 22% from the higher income group. The country-wise percentage of each of the two streams is shown in **table** below.

**Table 2: Economic status of the family**

	Inclusive School %			Special School %		
	Lower Class %	Middle Class %	Upper Class %	Lower Class %	Middle Class %	Upper Class %
India	47	53	0	54	33	13
Nepal	20	47	33	54	33	13
Jordan	20	47	33	54	46	0
Total %	29	49	22	54	37	9

It is worth examining whether there is any connection between economic status of the family and the choice of an educational system. Perhaps parents living in the urban areas are more aware of the current practices, and therefore, they prefer to send their visually impaired child to the inclusive school more naturally than a parent living in the rural area and not so aware. The parents of two inclusive students whom we interviewed said that they were sending their visually impaired daughters to the inclusive school just to pass time. As soon as they are 13 years old, the parents would get them married. While such an attitude towards the girl-child is not uncommon even in the case of sighted girls living in the rural areas of India,

the incident just referred to does point to a lack of awareness on the part of the parents as far as educational possibilities of the visually impaired children are concerned.

## 2.6. Family Size:

We found that a significant percentage of students that is more than 60% came from large families in all the three countries put together.

## 2.7. Entry in school:

We found that most of the blind children both in the special and inclusive schools gained late entry in schools which in turn affects their personality and interpersonal skills, especially if they are admitted in lower classes at a late age in the inclusive schools. A total of 73% of the children interviewed for this Study from the inclusive schools had congenital vision loss and only 27% lost their sight later. In the case of special schools this ratio stood at 53% congenital vision loss and 47% losing their eyesight later. In the backdrop of this information if we examine the age of entry into school country-wise, some interesting facts and trends emerge. The entry age country and stream-wise is shown in **table** below.

**Table 3: The age at the time of joining school**

	Inclusive School %				Special School %			
	0 to 5 years %	6 to 10 years %	11 to 15 years %	16 & above%	0 to 5 years %	6 to 10 years %	11 to 15 years %	16 & above%
<b>India</b>	0	60	13	27	6	27	60	7
<b>Nepal</b>	20	53	20	7	26	67	0	7
<b>Jordan</b>	0	80	20	0	0	94	6	0
<b>Total %</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4</b>

It is note worthy that a sighted child would normally gain entry in school in the three countries under discussion at the age of 4 or 5. However, we found that only 7% of the visually impaired inclusive students and 11% of the special school students belonged to this age group. The maximum number of blind children enter either special or inclusive school between the ages 6-10. In our sample the percentage in this age group was 64% in the inclusive schools and 63% in the special schools. The Indian sample shown in table above demonstrates that most special school students gain entry around the age of 11.

Naturally, if the blind child gains late entry in the inclusive school as compared to his sighted peers, he will have a sense of inferiority as his classmates would be younger than him. Similarly, late entry age implies late passing out age as well, and that would effect the blind child's further integration both educationally and socially.

While, late vision loss could be one cause of late entry, in many cases the lack of adequate information regarding the educational facilities relating to the blind children is responsible for this late entry.

2.8. Parents from middle and higher income families tend to send their children to the inclusive schools while mostly families living in the rural

areas send their children to the special schools. It must be added however, that most urban families also do not make much distinction between the two streams and the choice of a stream is often a matter of chance. In Nepal and Jordan, there is a conscious attempt on the part of the families to include their children in mainstream inclusive schools. Nepal has a long history of inclusive education and there, even children living in the rural areas are mostly sent to inclusive schools. In India, we found that there are much fewer facilities of special schools for visually impaired girls as compared to boys. Most of the special schools for girls are not well maintained. Perhaps that is why more visually impaired girls seem to prefer inclusive system in urban areas.

As **Table 3** above demonstrates the entry age of blind children is higher in special schools, we found that whereas a child of 16 was at an average in class 9 or 10 in the inclusive school, in the special school his / her class was 7 or 8 at the age of 16. Late passing out from schools does create practical and psychological difficulties in integration at the level of the higher education.

A noticeable fact in the profile of these students was that most of them came from large families. 33% of the children had other family members as visually impaired. The similarity of this trend in all the three countries highlights the urgency of medical and genetic counseling, as well as medical intervention during pregnancy and early childhood.

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## CHAPTER 3

### SPECIAL AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS: A COMPARATIVE VIEW

While making the selection of an appropriate school for a visually impaired child, it is important to determine as to which kind of school offers him/her academic as well as non-academic facilities and infrastructure most conducive to his/her educational requirements and overall growth. To assess this in the context of both special and inclusive school systems, a number of specific questions were included in our questionnaires. Some of the comparative findings are detailed below:

#### 3.1. Educational policies concerning the visually impaired:

There exist specific legal and legislative provisions relating to the education of the visually impaired in all the three countries under discussion. In India, the Persons with Disabilities, (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act of 1995 contains a full chapter on education of the visually impaired. This chapter makes it obligatory for the government to promote both special and inclusive education and offer the visually impaired student the right to choose between the two systems. Providing of textbooks and equipments becomes the state responsibility under this Act.

In Nepal, there has been an education policy in force since 1960s, which promotes inclusive education. Therefore, acceptability of a blind child in a mainstream school has not been an issue there for some time. Many of the mainstream schools have special hostels only for visually impaired students so that they do not have to travel from home. Our survey suggests that nearly half the number of visually impaired students going to school stay in these hostels of the mainstream schools.

In Jordan, the education of the visually impaired children is governed by Law 42, which is also designed to promote inclusive education. However, despite these legal provisions in the three countries under survey, there has not been any focused movement on the part of any of the country governments to promote the education of the visually impaired children. Nor, as our findings indicate, has there been the required special drive on the part of the country governments to equip the special as well as the inclusive schools with necessary materials and infrastructure to promote the education of the blind children. Experiments and attempts towards promoting inclusive education, especially in India and Nepal have been primarily undertaken by some NGOs, which have been instrumental in providing necessary textbooks and equipments to the inclusive schools in certain geographical regions. Therefore, while there have been some sporadic successes in some areas due to the initiatives undertaken by some NGOs, the concept of inclusive education has not been able to gather the desired momentum across the board.

The special schools on the other hand are being largely run on conventional patterns without much initiative for adaptation or up gradation. Both the resources and the will appeared to be lacking in this respect.

### 3.2. Admission to School:

Due to the legislative provisions those blind children who are able to find their way to the schools, either special or inclusive do not find much difficulty in getting admission. In the case of inclusive education however, most of the admissions are arranged by some NGO working in that particular geographical area to which the child belongs, or where that NGO is implementing the inclusive education programme. When parents approach the mainstream schools directly, there are often difficulties in admission and acceptance. A large number of students in India and Nepal go to the mainstream schools from hostels, which are located far away from their homes. Thus, like the student of a special school the child, in a majority of cases in India and Nepal, has to leave his/her home, and stay in a hostel. In India, the number of such students going to inclusive schools from hostels was a significant 85% and in Nepal it was nearly 50%. Jordan presented a very different picture where we found that a large number of special school students also travel from home to school every day.

### 3.3. Acceptance of a visually impaired child in Inclusive school:

The available data suggests that the acceptance level of visually impaired children in inclusive schools is not very satisfactory. In the three countries under discussion the acceptance percentage by principals is only 52% and by the sighted peers 69%. The attitude of more than 20% teachers of the inclusive schools is quite hostile towards the visually impaired children. Some students even reported that the teacher told them to go to special schools. The specific country details are shown in **table** below.

**Table 4: Acceptance of the blind child in inclusive schools by principal, sighted peers and change in attitude of the teachers**

	<i>Inclusive School %</i>		
	<i>Accepted by principals %</i>	<i>Sighted friends co operation %</i>	<i>Change of positive attitude of teachers to negative later %</i>
<b>India</b>	43	60	47
<b>Nepal</b>	53	87	0
<b>Jordan</b>	60	60	14
<b>Total %</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>20</b>

### 3.4. Availability of textbooks and related infrastructure

One of the fundamental prerequisites for the success of any educational system is the availability of textbooks and related infrastructure. In respect of availability of textbooks and equipments, special schools appear to offer an advantage over inclusive schools in all the three countries under survey. Whereas textbooks in Braille and other alternative formats are available to 33% children in inclusive schools in India and Nepal, their availability in special schools stands at 83% and 93% respectively. The Jordan data indicated that 40% inclusive school students and 66% special school students had access to textbooks in desired formats. As for the equipments, the Indian data indicated that none of the inclusive schools had provided any equipments to the blind children. These were obtained by them through various NGOs supporting the education of the visually impaired. In the case of special schools, nearly 90% students had obtained the equipments

through their school. In Nepal the figures stood at 53% for inclusive schools and 80% for special schools. In Jordan, we noticed that more than 40% students in inclusive schools had got their equipments chiefly through the help of special schools and an NGO. In respect of special schools this figure stood at 66%.

### 3.5. Accessibility to general reading materials:

The scenario was even more disappointing in respect of accessibility to General reading materials, materials such as magazines, general reading books etc. The country-wise status in this respect is shown in the **table** below.

**Table 5: Accessibility to general reading materials**

	<i>Inclusive School %</i>		<i>,Special School %</i>	
	<i>Access to non text book reading materials %</i>		<i>Access to non text book reading materials %</i>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	13	87	67	33
India	0	100	0	100
Nepal	13	87	13	87
Jordan	9	91	27	73
<b>Total %</b>				

It is evident from the above data that whereas the special school students in all the three countries have a limited access to magazines and fiction etc. the inclusive schools have not taken due measures in this regard. Even when such materials are available to visually impaired students these are not often what sighted students read.

### 3.6. Carrying books and equipment to class:

It was also noticed that visually impaired children studying in inclusive schools often have more difficulty carrying books and equipments to class as compared to students of special schools. A significant number of inclusive school visually impaired students do not even carry books and equipments to class. The country and stream specific data is shown in the **table** below.

**Table 6: Carrying books and equipments to class**

	<i>Students Carry Braille Books to School</i>					
	<i>Inclusive School %</i>			<i>Special School %</i>		
	<b>With Difficulty %</b>	<b>Without Difficulty %</b>	<b>Don't Carry %</b>	<b>With Difficulty %</b>	<b>Without Difficulty %</b>	<b>Don't Carry %</b>
India	27	20	53	47	40	13
Nepal	47	26	27	27	13	60
Jordan	0	20	80	60	40	0
<b>Total %</b>	25	22	53	45	31	24

As the above data suggests that a large number of inclusive school students are unable to carry textbooks and writing equipments to class, their incapacity to refer to the textbooks as the teacher is teaching and to take notes has the danger of putting them at a disadvantage as compared to their sighted peers.

### 3.7. Studying science, geography and mathematics

One of the common difficulties faced by both special as well as inclusive school students in the three countries under discussion is studying of science, geometry and geography. The findings in the three countries were broadly uniform in this respect. 90% students from the inclusive stream in India reported that no special attempt was made to teach them these subjects by their teacher and no special resource rooms to teach these subjects were available. In the special schools, nearly 80% students reported that they had some aids to help them learn these subjects better. In the case of Nepal, the figures stood at 70% (inclusive school students) reporting negative and 80% special school students reporting positive. Jordan presented a more optimistic picture with nearly 50% students from the inclusive stream and equal number from the special stream reporting that they had reasonable help from their teachers in understanding these subjects. It must be mentioned here that a number of the children interviewed by our investigator in Jordan were low vision children, and with some residual vision at their disposal, it was easier for them to study subjects such as maths, science and geography in an inclusive setting.

### 3.8. Preferred formats for reading:

One common factor viewed in students of both the streams in all the three countries was that most children appeared to prefer Braille to any other formats. So, the assumption that inclusive education is undermining the importance of Braille is proved wrong by this study. The following **table** demonstrates the choice of various formats by students, stream and country-wise.

**Table 7: Choice of reading formats**

	<i>Choice of reading formats</i>					
	<i>Inclusive School %</i>			<i>Special School %</i>		
	Braille %	Audio / Large Print %	Computers %	Braille %	Audio %	Computers %
India	67	27	6	87	13	0
Nepal	87	13	0	87	13	0
Jordan	40	27	33	87	13	0
Total %	65	22	13	87	13	0

As the preferred format for both inclusive and special school students is Braille, there is need to enhance the production of Braille textbooks in the countries under discussion. However, not enough special efforts appear to have been made by the respective country governments towards this end.

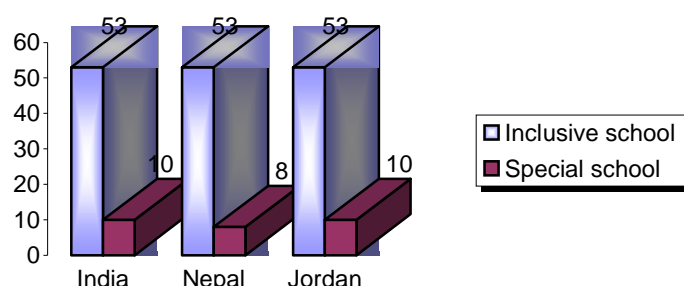
### 3.9. Classroom Accommodation:

Our data suggests that comfort levels of the visually impaired students are much better taken care of in special schools than in inclusive schools in all the three countries. The class size, the quality of teachers and the presence of peers who are blind are major contributory factors in the better accommodation of the blind child in a special school classroom.

### 3.10 Classroom size and ratio:

The average size of a special school class was found to be 10 students in our survey whereas the average size of an inclusive class was 53 in all the three countries surveyed. All the teachers interviewed from the inclusive school stream were unaware of the ideal class size prescribed for classes having visually impaired students. 40% special school teachers were also unaware of the prescribed ideal class size for their school, but said that the students were comfortable in interacting with the teachers. A total of 47% inclusive school students said that they were comfortable interacting with the teachers in the class. The number of special school students indicating comfort levels with the teachers stood at 82%. The country specific details are shown in the **figure** below.

**Figure 3: Classroom size and ratio**



### 3.11 Sensitive to the special needs of the blind students:

More than 30% students at an average, and in India as many as 55% Inclusive school students complained that their teachers were not sensitive to their special needs as visually impaired students. More than 50% teachers in all the three countries stated that given the large class size it was not possible for them to pay special attention to the visually impaired students even when they wanted to do so. 100% teachers from the inclusive stream of all the three countries said that they had difficulty, teaching subjects such as science, maths and geography. In the case of the special schools, 90% teachers said that they were able to convey visual concepts through verbal means, but more than 70% teachers indicated difficulty in teaching subjects such as maths, science and geography. The special schools however had special aids and equipments to teach these subjects.

### 3.12 Home tasks

One of the significant areas which presented a contrast between the Inclusive and special school students was the extent and manner of doing home tasks. 78% students of the inclusive stream reported doing their home task with the help of a special educator whereas as many as 87% students of the special stream schools said that they did their home tasks themselves. In the inclusive schools students this figure stood at 13%. The country specific and stream specific details relating to home tasks are shown in the **two tables** below.

**Table 8: Home tasks related issues in Inclusive school**

	<i>Inclusive School %</i>				
	Able to do by self %	Do with special educators / family members help %	Not able to do %	No home work is given %	Home tasks given but not checked
India	20	66	7	7	47
Nepal	0	87	13	0	20
Jordan	20	80	0	0	27
Total %	13	78	7	2	31

**Table 9: Home tasks related issues in special school**

	<i>Special School %</i>				
	Able to do by self %	Do with special educators / family members help %	Not able to do %	No home work is given %	Home tasks given but not checked
India	93	7	0	0	0
Nepal	87	7	13	0	7
Jordan	80	13	7	0	0
Total %	87	12	7	0	2

In the inclusive schools even when the students do their home tasks, as the above table indicates in 31% cases teachers do not check it. As those students of the inclusive stream who do their home tasks in Braille or in large print are often asked to read out the assignments to the teachers, their writing and linguistic errors may often go unnoticed. This is not the case with special schools as the home task is done by an overwhelming number of students in Braille and is checked by the teachers in script form.

### 3.13 Examination practices:

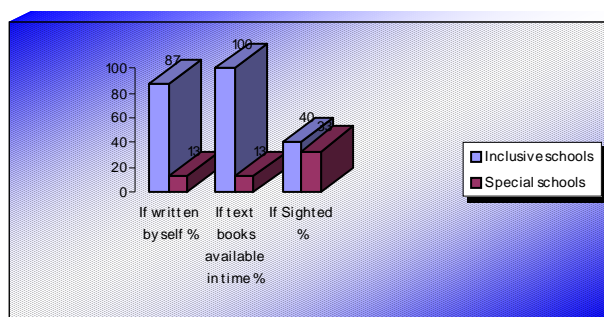
In respect of examination practices for the visually impaired students within the two streams some interesting facts and significant country variations came to light during this study. In India for instance, we discovered that 60% blind children in the inclusive schools were exempt from weekly and monthly tests whereas in the special schools this number stood at 0%. Such an exemption was not that common in Nepal and Jordan. Significantly, in the inclusive schools, only 9% students wrote their exams themselves whereas in the special schools this figure stood at 66%. As many as 43% students from the inclusive stream used teachers as writers which made sighted children sometimes complain of unfair exam pattern. In the special schools this figure stood at 17%. The **two tables** and the **figure** below demonstrate country specific and stream specific data on various aspects of examination practices in the three countries.

**Table 10: Exempt from exams**

		Exempt from exams %	Exams taken with help of writers %	Teachers as writers %	Exam written by self %
India	Inclusive schools	60	20	14	6

	Special school,,,,,,,,,	0	10	10	80
Nepal	Inclusive schools	0	40	47	13
	Special schools	0	20	20	60
Jordan	Inclusive schools	0	26	67	7
	Special schools	0	20	20	60
Total	Inclusive schools	20	28	43	9
	Special schools	0	17	17	66

**Figure 4: Possibility of better performance in exams by the blind student**



**Table 11: Problems with writers and gaps in exam practices**

		Exam written but not checked %	Problem with finding Writers %	Problem with quality of writers %	Sighted peers complain of teachers helping the VI child in exams %
India	Inclusive schools	53	93	53	93
	Special schools	0	47	20	0
Nepal	Inclusive schools	0	13	40	7
	Special schools	0	93	13	0
Jordan	Inclusive schools	0	100	13	60
	Special schools	0	93	20	0
Total	Inclusive schools	18	69	35	53
	Special schools	0	78	18	0

The above data highlights some of the important gaps and drawbacks, which exist in both the inclusive and special systems with regard to examination



practices. As many as 87% inclusive school students said that their performance would have been better if they wrote their exams themselves. The fact that a large number of inclusive school students are compelled to use teachers as writers due to lack of availability of suitable writers lends their performance to question by their sighted peers. Such a complaint was pointed out by 53% inclusive students, with India and Jordan recording a higher number of 93% and 60% respectively. These are also the countries where we see more difficulty in finding suitable writers for inclusive school students. If the inclusive school system is to succeed ways will have to be found whereby the visually impaired students are able to take their exams themselves. In India a peculiar trend was reported by both students and teachers who confirmed that even when students take their exams through any methods, the answer sheets are not checked by inclusive school teachers. The fact that this information came from as many as 53% students and teachers causes serious concern. However, it must be pointed out that this problem was not visible in Nepal and Jordan.

As many as 40% students from the inclusive stream said that their performance would have been better if they were studying in special schools and 33% of the special school students felt that they would have academically performed better if they were studying in an inclusive school.

When asked whether the visually impaired students in both streams were satisfied with their academic performance when compared with their sighted counterparts, 66% inclusive students and 69% special school students responded in the positive. The country-wise responses are shown in the following **table**:

**Table 12: Satisfaction in performance compared to the sighted peers**

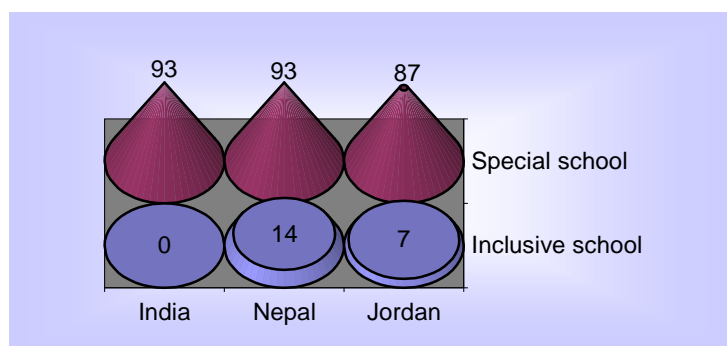
	<b>Satisfaction in performance compared to the sighted peers</b>	
	<b>Inclusive school</b>	<b>Special school</b>
<b>India</b>	33	47
<b>Nepal</b>	73	100
<b>Jordan</b>	93	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>69</b>

### **3.14 Availability of trained teachers and teaching methodology issues:**

Availability of sensitive and trained teachers is a basic precondition for the efficacy of any education system. In the case of students with special needs the training and sensitivity of the teachers becomes all the more essential. Our findings in this respect confirm that the special schools have a definite advantage as far as trained and sensitized teachers are concerned. The number of teachers trained in the education of the visually impaired in special school stood at 91% whereas in the inclusive schools it was a mere 7%. In fact, teachers of the visually impaired students in the inclusive stream were rather unhappy about the fact that they were not provided with due exposure and training in the education of the visually impaired students and wanted this training to be imparted to them. The status of trained teachers country and stream-wise is shown in **figure** below.



**Figure 5: Status of trained teachers**



One significant drawback visible in the inclusive schools of India and Jordan was that there were no full time resource teachers in any of the inclusive schools of these countries from where we collected our data. So these schools had to rely on help from iterant teacher sent by NGOs once or twice a month and that too, not regularly. So neither the visually impaired students of the inclusive schools nor their teachers had someone to turn to when they needed help. The need for such a resource teacher was emphasized by both students and teachers of the inclusive schools. Such a resource teacher is essential not only for the academic purposes, but also to counsel students and teachers on interpersonal relations and to look into class-room accommodation problems. Such a full time resource teacher was available in Nepal in 30% of the schools. In the case of special schools, only 16% of the special schools were found to be without a special or a resource teacher.

Through a series of questions to both students and teachers we sought to determine the availability of teaching competency in the following areas in both inclusive and special schools

- Adequate attention to the visually impaired student
- Adaptation in teaching to explain visual materials
- Special attempt to make the VI child understand abstract concepts
- Class-room accommodation for the visually impaired child
- Gap in the materials for the sighted and the blind

The country and stream specific data is shown in **table** below.

**Table 13 Teaching competencies of teachers handling blind students**

		Adequate attention to students %	Teaching Visual references %	Explain abstract concepts %	Gap in teaching materials for the sighted & VI %	Classroom accommodatio n to VI students %
India	Inclusive school	40	67	47	67	33
	Special school	67	100	80	33	60
Nepal	Inclusive school	80	67	60	33	67

	Special school	93	100	80	47	93
	Inclusive school	67	40	60	33	40
Jordan	Special school	93	47	60	47	93
	Inclusive school	62	58	56	44	47
Total	Special school	84	82	73	42	82

The above table clearly demonstrates the sharp gaps that exist between the competencies of teachers of the special and inclusive schools when it comes to teaching a visually impaired child. Though 62% teachers try to give adequate attention to the blind students in the inclusive schools, only 47% try to ensure class-room accommodations towards this end. In the special schools this figure stands at 82%. Also, 44% inclusive school teachers and 42% special school teachers feel that there is gap between the teaching materials available for the sighted and the blind students. This clearly demonstrates that the visually impaired students are not getting the same quality of education as the sighted both in the special and in the inclusive schools.

3.15. Though our conclusions are detailed in Chapter 6 of this Study, for the present purposes suffice it to state that though not the sole, academics form an important component when we speak of the education of a visually impaired child. Viewed in this light, the available data suggests that special schools in all the three countries surveyed offer a definite advantage to the visually impaired children as far as availability of books, equipments, general infrastructure and trained teachers is concerned. The visually impaired children studying in the inclusive schools of these countries appear to be at a disadvantage in terms of class-room accommodation, materials and equipments and trained teachers. Home tasks and examination related methodologies of the inclusive schools with regard to the visually impaired students are in need of severe revision and correction.

It must be said however, that there is much that needs to be upgraded and brought in line with the current educational practices of the visually impaired even in the special schools. There is a need to strengthen availability of general reading materials, update equipments and upgrade the teaching of subjects such as science, maths and geography in both special and inclusive schools.

## CHAPTER 4

### FACTORS INFLUENCING OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF A VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILD

While academic facilities, appropriate infrastructure and trained teachers influence one's education to a substantial extent, a child, in order to develop as a complete being needs much more than mere conducive academic environment. It is the variety of skills and not knowledge alone that shapes an individual's overall personality. In the case of a visually impaired child the development of soft skills and all round excellence becomes all the more important to offset the disadvantages of his/her disability. Therefore, this study, in addition to examining the academic aspects of special and inclusive schools, also focused on comparing the respective advantages and disadvantages of both the streams as far as the visually impaired child's co-curricular activities, social adjustments and interpersonal relationships are concerned. Our findings in some salient areas are detailed below:

#### 4.1. Physical activities:

One of the commonest activities that take place in school is the Physical Training class or (P.T.) as it is called. Also, for most children sports form an important part of their interest and daily routine.

In respect of the visually impaired students however, our findings were somewhat different. As many as 96% students from the inclusive schools and 76% students from the special stream understood the importance of physical activities, sports etc and 84% and 76% students respectively demonstrated motivation to take part in these activities. However, in reality only 27% students from the inclusive stream and 33% from the special schools actually took part in physical activities. The country and stream specific figures are shown in the **table** below.

**Table 14: Physical activities related issues**

	Motivation for physical activities %		Take part in physical activities %		Realize importance of physical activities %		Special facility for sports in school %	
	Inclusive school	Special school	Inclusive school	Special school	Inclusive school	Special school	Inclusive school	Special school
<b>India</b>	86	93	20	33	93	67	7	67
<b>Nepal</b>	73	60	27	26	100	73	67	47
<b>Jordan</b>	93	73	33	40	93	87	33	53
<b>Total</b>	84	76	27	33	96	76	37	56

The time spent on physical activities and sports by students ranged from one hour a day to three hours a week. As the above table demonstrates that lack of appropriate facilities for physical activities and sports for blind children in both special and inclusive schools is the primary reason for their non-participation in these activities.

## 4.2. Isolation in physical activities and training:

It was surprising to note that in the inclusive schools more than 80% students are not even included in the P.T. class which requires no special accommodation for a visually impaired child. When the sighted children have their sports period or, are engaged in games of their own, more than 80% visually impaired children just sit around or read some Braille book. This has a tremendous isolation effect on their psyche. More than 85% students from the inclusive stream expressed their unhappiness about such a scenario.

## 4.3. Emphasis and facilities for physical activities:

Though more than half the special schools (56%) had facilities for physical activities and sports, the students reported that the emphasis was primarily on academic performance. Due encouragement was not provided to students to take part in sports etc. 86% of the special schools had a period for P.T. though. Also, special outdoor games for the blind, such as cricket were available to students in 75% of the special schools.

## 4.4 Extra curricular activities:

Our data suggests that inclusive schools offer definite advantages to the visually impaired students in promoting their interests and talent through extra curricular activities. As per our sample, 75% special school students do not give sufficient attention to extra curricular activities and spend less than 3 hours a week on these interests. In the inclusive schools this figure stands at 51%. In Jordan though, both the inclusive and special schools do not appear to be giving enough attention to extra curricular activities. The number of students not paying attention to these activities in both the streams in Jordan stands at 73%. Whereas a total of 40% inclusive students have represented their school in some event or the other, this percentage in the case of special schools stands at 15% only. The country and stream specific variations are shown in the **table** below.

**Table 15: Extra curricular activities**

	Time spent for extra curricular activities i.e. < 3 hours a week %		Represented school in extra curricular activities %		Motivation to participate in extra curricular activities %	
	Inclusive schools	Special schools	Inclusive schools	Special schools	Inclusive schools	Special schools
India	40	73	60	20	80	40
Nepal	40	80	40	13	73	53
Jordan	73	73	20	13	87	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>47</b>

The above table also demonstrates that students from the two streams under discussion are interested in very different kinds of activities when compared with one another. As many as 58% students from the special schools prefer music whereas this number in the case of inclusive students stands at 25%. Similarly, debate is preferred to other activities by 29% students from the inclusive stream, but in the case of special stream students this number

stands only at 9%. The variations in the choice of activities are so pronounced among the students of the two streams that the influence of the kind of school a child is studying in cannot be denied in his/her choice of activity and is illustrated from the **table** below.

**Table 16: Choice of extra curricular activities**

	Inclusive schools			Special schools		
	Debate	Music	Quiz	Debate	Music	Quiz
India	40	20	40	13	80	7
Nepal	47	27	26	13	80	7
Jordan	0	27	0	0	13	0
Total	29	25	22	9	58	5

#### 4.5. Interaction with peers and the world outside of school:

Friends constitute an important part of any child's school life. Our examination of the kind of friends visually impaired children like to have in both the streams under discussion highlighted some interesting facts. Whereas 73% visually impaired students from the inclusive schools were comfortable having interaction with their peers inside the classroom, this figure stood at 75% in the case of special schools. However, when it came to knowledge and interaction with the world outside the school, the special school students were found to be severely lacking with only 20% of them having any direct interaction with the world outside their school. The country-wise and stream specific data is shown in **table** below.

**Table 17: Interaction with their peers and the world outside of school**

	Interaction in classroom with peers %		Interaction with the world outside of school %	
	Inclusive schools	Special schools	Inclusive schools	Special schools
India	73	87	53	20
Nepal	66	66	80	13
Jordan	80	73	86	27
	73	75	73	20

Most of the special school students lived a life of isolation and had no occasion to go outside apart from occasional shopping. The younger children were not allowed to go out of the hostels in most cases. Even when they went out, it was for specific purpose and with a school staff.

While safety and security were good reasons to restrict the movement of the special school children, it surely deprived them of a very important experience of their life. More than 70% students were not even aware as to what is around their school building. On the other hand, a better exposure to the outside world reflected itself in the general conduct of the inclusive school students.

#### 4.6. Friendships:

When we come to friendships, both inclusive and special school children appeared to prefer blind friends rather than sighted. Despite studying in the sighted schools, as many as 80% children demonstrated inadequate trust in

sighted peers. In the special schools, when a similar question was put to students, the inadequate trust in sighted children percentage was 75%. Despite studying in inclusive schools only 35% visually impaired children had sighted friends outside the classroom, but as many as 60% inclusive school students had blind children as friends. The **table** depicts country and stream specific data on various aspects of this issue.

**Table 18: Friendship with sighted Children**

	Have sighted peers as friends %		Prefer VI peers as friends %		Easy to make friendship with VI peers %		No trust in sighted friends %	
	Inclusive school	Special school	Inclusive school	Special school	Inclusive school	Special school	Inclusive school	Special school
<b>India</b>	33	10	73	67	73	<b>73</b>	73	<b>73</b>
<b>Nepal</b>	33	33	53	73	83	<b>73</b>	83	<b>73</b>
<b>Jordan</b>	40	33	53	60	83	<b>80</b>	83	<b>80</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>75</b>

As is clear from the above table that a preference for blind children as friends and a lack of adequate trust on sighted peers was a uniform trend in all the three countries under discussion. Two inferences may be drawn from this data:

- a) Though the geographical inclusion with sighted peers in the class is substantial (73%), the real inclusion in inclusive schools has not yet occurred outside the class bounds.
- b) Blind children, even when they are studying in sighted schools prefer to move among the blind rather than the sighted.

More than 60% of the inclusive school students reported that their sighted peers did not mix with them outside the class-room and did not include them in their plans for outings, picnics etc. The number of visually impaired children invited by their sighted peers for parties, birthdays etc. from the inclusive schools stood at an average of 33% whereas in the case of special schools, it was only 14%.

4.6.1. It could not be determined whether this sharp difference in the interaction between the blind and the sighted within and outside the classroom was due to lack of sensitization on the part of the sighted, or due to lack of adequate communication skills on the part of the blind. Nearly 80% of the inclusive school teachers to whom questions regarding this issue were put said that the school was not doing anything to promote the friendship between the blind and the sighted and that it was left to the natural interaction among the students.

4.6.2. Perhaps the sense of isolation generated in the visually impaired students due to lack of interest in them by their sighted peers was responsible for their preferring blind friends rather than the sighted. It has been observed in some developed countries that such a feeling of isolation in the blind children due to lack of interest in them by their sighted peers can have a negative effect on their overall performance.

#### 4.7. Personal grooming

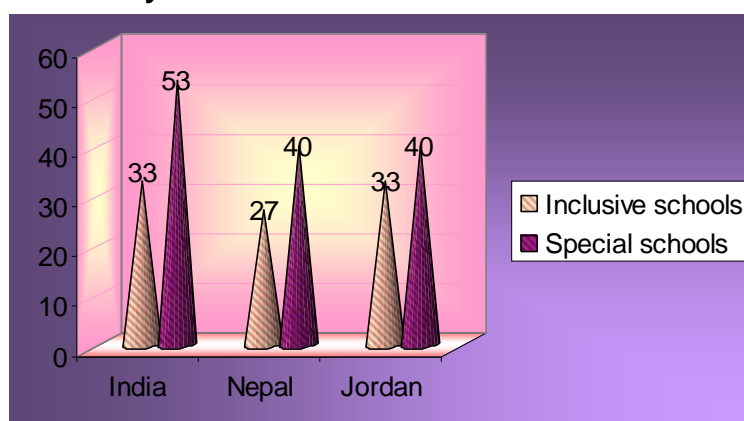
The data from the three countries uniformly suggests that neither the special schools nor the inclusive schools are doing enough towards the personal grooming of the visually impaired students. A majority of the special school teachers reported that nearly 80% blind students in their schools develop some kind of mannerisms which are hard to get rid of! Mannerisms such as putting the fingers in the eyes, not sitting properly in the class, not facing the person while talking, consider poking eyes, not maintaining the correct posture in the class, drumming of desk, swaying the body from side to side while standing and head while sitting..... In the inclusive schools the figures in this respect, at an average stood at 50%. Our investigators from all the three countries reported that though the interviews were conducted during school hours, even then some of the students from the special schools were not properly and/or cleanly dressed. Such reports however, were not there in the case of inclusive school students.

In the case of girl students, nearly 60% special school girls appeared to be suppressed and shy, whereas more than 90% of the inclusive school girl students appeared to be forthcoming and communicative.

#### 4.8. Instilling a sense of motivation:

As far as instilling a sense of motivation (so important to the growth of a visually impaired child) is concerned, the data uniformly suggests that the special schools are making a better attempt towards this end. A total of 31% students from the inclusive schools felt that the schools were doing enough to instill motivation in them, whereas the number of such reports from special schools students stood at 44%. The country and stream specific data is shown in the **figure** below.

**Figure 6: Motivation by school to the VI student**



Developing a sense of motivation is essential to offset the disability of the visually impaired child. The responsibility of undertaking this task rests both with the family and the school. Therefore, to see that in a country like Nepal, where inclusive education is being practiced for more than 40 years now, only 27% inclusive schools are working towards this end causes concern. At the same time, the above data clearly suggests that special schools in all the three countries, despite their long history have not paid adequate attention to the co-curricular aspects of a child's development.



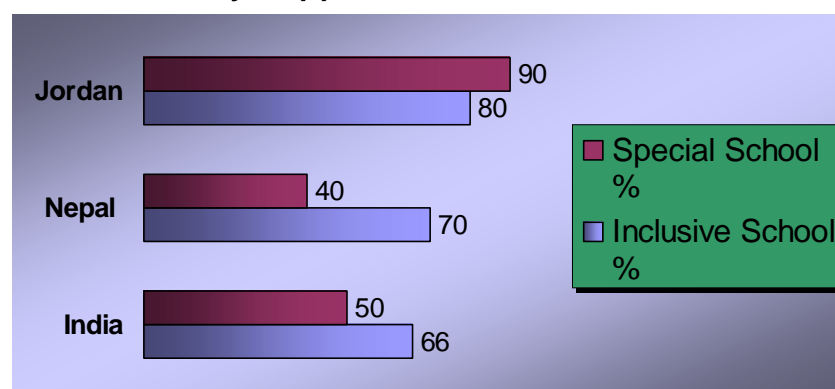
#### 4.9. Family support:

The success of any educational system substantially depends on the extent to which a child receives support from the family and community. Such a support becomes all the more crucial in the case of a visually impaired child. Our findings in this respect had considerable country variations. In Jordan, as an overwhelming majority of students both in the inclusive and the special streams go from home to schools, nearly 90% families of the inclusive school students and 80% families of the special school students were supportive in their studies. Members of a large number of families even helped their visually impaired child in his/her daily home task.

In Nepal, the family support was 70% in the case of inclusive school students and 40% in the case of special school students.

In India, as nearly 85% inclusive school students also stayed in hostels, the family contact in the case of both inclusive and special school students was in the nature of letters and phone calls. Whereas nearly 50% families showed active interest in their visually impaired child in the case of special school children, this figure in the case of inclusive school students stood at 66%. The figure below illustrates these country and stream variations.

**Figure 7: Extent of family support**



Inclusive system is surely advantageous in promoting family involvement and support if the visually impaired child goes to school from home every day. Even if the child stays in the Hostel, the fact that he/she is studying in a mainstream school makes the parents/guardians feel a sense of involvement in the child's progress. The parents of special school children feel more distant from the school and from their child's progress. Only 30% of the special schools had parent-teacher forums which were not functioning well as most parents/guardians visited their child rarely during the term and came to take him/her home only during the vacations. 20% special school children from India and Nepal reported that their parents did not even come to take them home during the vacations.

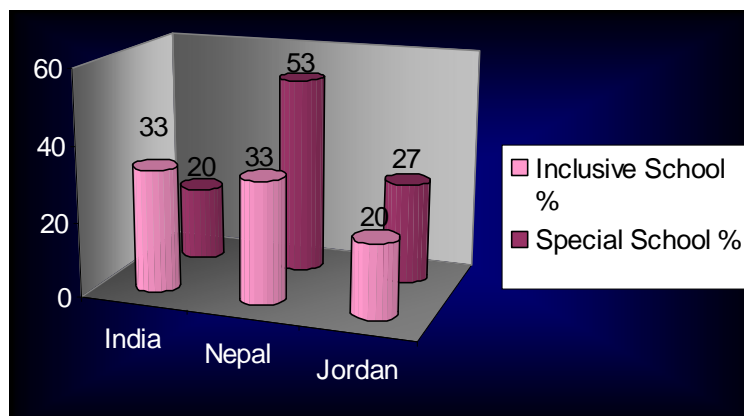
#### 4.10. Community discrimination:

When we examined the attitude of neighbours, we discovered that discrimination by neighbours towards the visually impaired child is in near equal measure irrespective of the fact whether the child is studying in an inclusive or a special school. Such discrimination was reported by a total of



29% children from the inclusive school and 33% children from the special stream. As the **figure** below demonstrates in Jordan this discrimination is lowest perhaps because more children travel from home to school on a regular basis.

**Figure 8: Discrimination by neighbours and non inclusion in play**



#### 4.11. Student's choice of stream of education:

When asked whether they would prefer to study in an inclusive or a special school, the students responded in an interesting manner. 42% of the inclusive school students preferred to study in a special school, and 33% special school students felt that inclusive school would have been better for them. The country and stream specific preferences are shown in the **table** below.

**Table 19: Choice of stream of education**

	Prefer Special school for better performance %	Prefer inclusive school for better performance %
	Inclusive schools students	Special school students
India	40	40
Nepal	53	33
Jordan	33	27
Total	42	33

The above data confirms that the dissatisfaction level with their respective systems is more in the inclusive school students. However, the gap between the inclusive and the special school students, in this respect, is not very wide. The fact that in Nepal, the preference of as many as 53% inclusive school students is for special schools needs to be taken due note of considering the fact that Nepal has a long history of Inclusive education dating back to 1960s. It may be mentioned here that even in USA which has highly developed systems both for inclusive and special school students, there is often a movement of students from the inclusive to the special schools and vice-a-versa. Many inclusive school students there prefer to spend some time in special schools before “graduating” or taking the final school examinations.

#### 4.12. Teachers' choice of stream of education for the VI children:

The dissatisfaction level among teachers with the respective educational systems in which they function appears to be higher. A total of 66% inclusive school teachers were of the view that special schools would be better for a visually impaired child. 60% special schoolteachers felt that visually impaired children should study in inclusive schools. There were no significant country variations in this respect.

4.13. Though our conclusions are detailed in Chapter 6 of this Study, suffice it to say that the dissatisfaction of both the visually impaired students as well as their teachers with their respective educational streams is sufficient proof of the fact that serious gaps remain in both inclusive and special education systems, which need to be remedied. Though having a better academic infrastructure and facilities than the inclusive schools, the special schools have not been able to come out of their conservative modes of teaching in order to promote the overall growth of a visually impaired child. The inclusive schools on the other hand have largely helped in only a geographical inclusion and limited interaction between the blind and the sighted children. Specific strategies aimed towards total inclusion have not yet become a part of the overall design of the inclusive schools. Despite this fact, certain distinct advantages of the inclusive schools contributory towards the overall growth of a visually impaired child cannot be overlooked.

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## CHAPTER 5

### LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

One good thing applicable to any research study is that it is never perfect, never the final document. So there is always scope for further work, for improvement and modifications in the work previously completed.

While we are of the view that given the magnitude of our task we have been able to achieve our ends to quite an extent, yet we are not blind to some of the limitations which we were faced with and which we could not fully overcome.

#### **6.1. The sample size:**

Given the significance of a research such as this, we would have liked to cover a much larger sample for our data collection and in at least two more countries in each of the two regions in which this study was undertaken, namely, in South Asia and the Middle East. However, as has been stated in the introduction that due to financial and time constraints this could not be done. We do hope that the research tools and questionnaires developed during the course of this research will be used in future to conduct more such researches in other countries. We offset this disadvantage in the present research study by trying to cover as many aspects of the issues involved as possible.

#### **6.2. Long questioners:**

As we attempted to cover multiple aspects some of the questionnaires became a bit longer than these ought to have been. One of the investigators was of the view that the questionnaire relating to inclusive school students could have been shorter. Even after the data collection was over and once we received this feed back from our investigator, we tried to rework on this questionnaire and discovered that given the nature of our research approach, not much could be removed from the questionnaire. However, we do feel that there may be a need to look at the length of this particular questionnaire relating to the inclusive students. In our view, the length of the other three sets of questionnaires is just fine.

#### **6.3. Focus on Inclusive education practiced in rural areas:**

After the data analysis was complete we felt that our investigators ought to have focused more on the inclusive education being practiced in rural areas, because that is where some of the problem areas are likely to be more pronounced. But we must add here that even this research Study has taken into account a reasonable number of samples from the semi-urban and rural areas.

#### **6.4. Very large regions of the country to be covered:**

We faced a real problem in determining areas of data collection as far as India was concerned. India being a large country has many regions and the practices in inclusive education differ significantly from region to region. To

pick up a few samples from each of the regions would not have been representative enough and would have presented a rather scattered and confused picture as far as inclusive education in this country is concerned. Therefore, for practical purposes we decided to select our samples from the Northern part of India, particularly from the Capital, New Delhi and areas around it. Such a choice was made because it is believed that there is a considerable awareness regarding inclusive education in this area and the system has been working for nearly 20 years now. However, as the preceding chapters have demonstrated that despite these factors we found serious weaknesses in the inclusive education system in this geographical area. We also have information that inclusive education in most parts of India suffers from similar weaknesses.

#### **6.5. Resistance of special schools for girls:**

There was also some resistance on the part of the special schools for visually impaired girls in India during data collection. One prominent school for blind girls in the capital city of India even denied entry to our investigator despite our repeated request to allow interviews with students.

#### **6.6. Non availability of data from Lebanon:**

Lastly, but quite significantly, the non-availability of data from Lebanon on account of opposition to this research study by the special schools there has limited our conclusions regarding the Middle East. The balance of comparison was disturbed as there was only one representative country from the Middle East while there were two from South Asia.

Despite the above limitations we are confident that the educational experts, the educational policy planners, organizations of the blind, the special and the inclusive schools and other stakeholders will find much in this work which is fresh, thought provoking and valuable.

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## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the purposes of this study was to establish the present status of both the special and inclusive school systems by eliciting direct information from the real stakeholders in the education of the visually impaired, namely, the children and their teachers. Based on the present scenario, it was our intention to put forward some urgent and practical recommendations designed to ensure a better quality, infrastructure and environment for the education of the visually impaired children irrespective of the fact whether they are studying in special or inclusive school systems.

6.1. Our findings as detailed in the foregoing chapters clearly demonstrate and establish that, in the context of the South Asian and Middle East countries, neither the special school system nor the inclusive education is at present fully geared to do justice to the educational needs and aspirations of the visually impaired children. The following conclusions and recommendations are presented with a view to remedy this situation in the ABU region countries.

6.2. There appears to be a direct link between disability and the economic condition of the family. A significant number of visually impaired children belong to large and not so economically well off families. Therefore, there is an urgent need of early intervention through various schemes and programmes of primary health, poverty alleviation and community development particularly in the rural areas. It is important that families having a child with visual impairment are specifically mentioned and targeted in the planning and implementation of these programmes.

6.3. As many visually impaired children gain late entry to schools, which in turn has an impact on their academic and career prospects, it is imperative that both the government and the NGOs draw up and execute specific programmes to sensitize the community about the importance and opportunities of education for a visually impaired child both in urban and rural areas.

6.4. As services for the visually impaired girls are much fewer than for boys, special efforts must be made to promote their education through both special and inclusive education systems.

6.5. Only geographical inclusion of a visually impaired child is detrimental to his/her educational aspirations. Therefore, if needs be, the pace of inclusive education may be so regulated as to ensure the introduction of this system only when the concerned school/schools are duly equipped with necessary infrastructure, attitudes and trained human resource. If children are made to stay in hostels far away from their homes and go to a sighted school only for the purposes of study, then we are not really serving the cause of inclusive education but rather the opposite of it, because, such a child neither belongs to the special stream nor the inclusive stream. Therefore, proper emphasis on quality rather than on quantity must be provided in the inclusive education programmes. Introduction in a phased manner state-wise, region-

wise or even city-wise could be a good way to ensure the long-term benefits and efficacy of the inclusive educational programmes.

6.6. It is important that education of the visually impaired, whether special or inclusive should be covered and taken care of by a single ministry. However, given the fact that the education of any disabled child is much more cost-intensive than that of a child without disability, due financial provisions must be made available by the country governments. As education is the fundamental right of a visually impaired child and his prime key to empowerment there should be no dearth of resources for this sector.

6.7. In today's age of new economy corporates and NGOs must be encouraged to support the education of the visually impaired both special and inclusive, and due support and incentives towards this end must be provided by governments.

6.8. It is imperative that NGOs, in addition to promoting the education of the visually impaired children through their own services must lobby with the government to put in place and to implement legislative and other provisions relating to the education of the visually impaired. It must be recognized that the reach of an NGO may be limited, but if it lobbies and persuades the government to carry forward a programme of education it will impact the whole region or even the entire country. Therefore, the organizations of and for the visually impaired should undertake more advocacy initiatives relating to the education of the visually impaired children.

6.9. The special schools, instead of being run in a conventional mode, as segregated geographical schools, should respond to new situations and developments. Therefore, these schools must consciously work towards introducing new innovations, advance infrastructure and equipment and effective strategies designed towards not just the academic, but the overall development of a visually impaired child.

6.10. There should be enhanced emphasis on production and availability of general reading materials in addition to textbooks for visually impaired children.

6.11. The inclusive schools must provide similar care and services to visually impaired children as these provide to their sighted students. Therefore, these schools must reduce their dependency on NGOs to support the visually impaired children, instead general care, providing of textbooks and equipments etc. should be mainstreamed and inbuilt in the policies and budgetary provisions of the inclusive schools.

6.12. There should be monitoring bodies having government and NGO representation both at the national as well as at the state/province level which should have full accountability and responsibility of providing textbooks and equipments to visually impaired children studying both in special and inclusive schools. These monitoring channels must also ensure that no special school or inclusive school runs an educational programme for the visually impaired children without ensuring availability of textbooks, equipments and trained teachers.

6.13. It must be mandatory for state educational boards and national education policy planning institutions as well as for all government-publishing agencies to make a textbook available in Braille for the visually impaired children at the same time and in the same manner as it is made available for the sighted children. No book should be introduced in syllabus unless its availability for visually impaired children in Braille is ensured.

6.14. In order to make inclusive education effective, teachers trained in issues concerning visual impairment are essential and not presently available. There should be a full paper covering Braille and education of the visually impaired children mandatory for all Teachers' Training programmes being run by universities and/or by other recognized institutions. Such papers must also be introduced as optional subjects at the B.A. level.

6.15. Special teaching and research programmes must be promoted to make the teaching of maths, science and geography more effective for teachers of the visually impaired both in the special and inclusive schools.

6.16. The NGOs must work with the inclusive schools and Departments of education to design practical strategies by which the visually impaired students can become independent in doing their home task and write exam answer sheets themselves.

6.17. Every inclusive school where visually impaired children are studying must be linked to a resource special school or with an NGO working in that area only for the purposes of guidance and information as and when required. Dedicated and interactive websites must be developed containing relevant information about the educational aspects of visually impaired children which a school whether special or inclusive may require for practical management of the visually impaired children.

6.18. Special incentives must be given by schools to the visually impaired children to promote their participation in sports and extra curricular activities.

6.19. Both the special and the inclusive schools must work towards developing soft skills in the visually impaired children as well as their interpersonal relationships with the sighted children.

6.20. Agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO must closely work with national and international organizations of and for the blind in every country to ensure quality education for the visually impaired.

6.21. As family is the starting point of the education of a visually impaired child, the media and other channels must be fully exploited by organizations of and for the blind as well as by the schools and education departments to sensitize the parents and society at large regarding the possibilities inherent in the education of the visually impaired children. Such initiatives should be undertaken with a view to ensuring that parents realize that quality education is the right of their visually impaired child and start demanding it from society and government.



## **Annexure 1**

### **A Comparative Study of the Learning Achievements of the Visually Impaired Children Studying in Special and Inclusive Schools**

#### **Questionnaire cum interview guide 1**

**To be responded to by fifteen children studying in special schools in  
each of the countries being surveyed**

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Nationality:
5. Father's name & occupation:
6. Mother's name & occupation:
7. Mention the number of brothers / sisters and the class in which they study?
8. Which of the following does your family own:  
☐ Telephone      ☐ Own House      ☐ Car  
☐ Scooter      ☐ AC
9. What is the approximate monthly income of your family?
10. What is the year and cause of blindness?
11. Any treatment undertaken to prevent and / or cure the blindness?
12. Does any other member of the family suffer from any kind of visual and / or physical impairment? If yes then of what kind?
13. How did you spend your time at home before joining the school?
14. Did your brothers / sisters include you in their play activities etc? If yes, How? If no, why not?
15. Did your neighbors and their children treat you in the same manner in which they treated other children? If yes, How? If no, how and in what respects did you perceive this difference?
16. Did you observe any difference in the attitude of your parents and of your other relatives towards you due to your impairment? If yes, of what kind?
17. Were you consulted at any stage before the selection of a suitable school for you was made?
18. Did you express any desire to go to school in your area in the same way in which the sighted children of the locality were studying in schools? If yes, what was the response of your parents? If not, why not?
19. Whose decision was it to send you to a special school? How did you feel when this decision was communicated to you?
20. Did you attend any other school or had any exposure to any kind of Braille teaching or any other kind of special or general education system before joining this school? If yes, then for how long?
21. Were you happy when you were told that you would have to stay away from home for your studies?
22. Before getting admitted to the school, were you given any kind of background knowledge / information regarding the school you were being sent to?
23. At what age did you join the school?
24. In which class was you admitted?
25. In which class are you studying now?

26. Who came to drop you to the school?
27. What was the reaction of your family when you were leaving for the school, were they:  
☐ Casual ☐ Happy ☐ Sad ☐ Encouraging ☐ Worried  
☐ Any other
28. How did you react when your parent/guardian was leaving you in the school for the first time?
29. Now that you are in school what do you miss most about your home?
30. What was your state of mind when you were coming to school for the first time: ☐ Nervous ☐ Anxious ☐ Happy ☐ Sad ☐ Excited ☐ Very Happy
31. How was your first experience in the class?
32. You must have gone home and returned to school many times? Each time when someone comes to leave you to the school, do you still feel the same as you felt when you were left for the first time?
33. Did you have any idea of the kind of school you are going to before coming here? If yes, how did you get this idea? Through someone, or through your own imagination?
34. Now that you are in school, to what extent do you think your conception of this school was correct? Does it match with what you thought of it or what you were told?
35. Describe your daily routine from morning to night in the school?
36. Do you think that the school is doing enough to teach you daily living skills, such as bathing, dressing, etc?
37. Apart from regular school hours how many hours do you spend in studying in the hostel?
38. Do you often study by yourself or do you like to study with your friend/friends in a group? Which of the two is better and why?
39. Do you get all your textbooks in Braille as personal copies or do you have to share these textbooks with your friends?
40. What is the ratio of curricula materials that you receive in Braille and in audio or in any other alternative format?
41. If you were to choose between Braille and recorded formats which of the two would you prefer and why?
42. What in your view is your major drawback as compared to sighted children as far as accessibility to materials is concerned? How do you think that gap can be filled?
43. Does your teacher always have a copy of the textbook with him / her while teaching, or is it that sometimes you are taught orally without the teacher having a copy with him/her?
44. Which of the following moulds of teaching does your teacher resort to:  
☐ Active interaction ☐ Passive teaching ☐ Both ☐ Any other
45. Do you ask queries / raise questions in the classroom if you have any doubts? If yes, then are your queries responded to?
46. Do you think you are given due attention in the classroom?
47. How would you rate your interaction with teacher in the classroom:
48. ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent ☐ Any other
49. If answer of above question is in poor or average – give reasons and how you think it can be improved?
50. Does your school have a library? If yes, how often do you borrow books from this library, books that are not prescribed for your course?
51. If your school does not have a library, have you ever requested your Principal to establish a library? If yes, what has been the response?

52. Do you think that the textbooks and general reading materials available to you are enough or do you feel that something more is required? If yes, of what kind?
53. Do you have volunteer readers reading books to you? If yes, how often and of what kind?
54. How often do you read newspaper or magazines and books, which are not in Braille and in audio format?
55. How do you take your examinations? Through Braille or through writer or any other medium?
56. How have you been performing in your examinations so far?
57. Are you satisfied with your performance, or do you feel that your performance would have been better if you were a sighted student? If yes, why?
58. Which subjects do you enjoy most in your course and why?
59. Which subject do you like the least and why?
60. Have you experienced any difficulty in learning subjects such as Mathematics, science and geography? If yes, of what kind? Please explain in detail.
61. Has your teacher been often able to solve your difficulties relating to these subjects? Or are there times when your difficulties remain unresolved? If yes, what do you think is the reason for this inadequacy?
62. Do you think that your teachers are competent to answer your queries, or do you think that sometimes they lack adequate preparation?
63. How much time do you devote to extra curricular activities? What kind of extra curricular activities interest you and why?
64. Are these interests in extra curricular activities cultivated by your teacher, or do you feel the need to pursue these from within?
65. Do you play any sport? If yes, how much time do you devote to it?
66. What in your view is the importance of physical activity in ones life? Do you think you are giving enough time to it?
67. Does your school have a gymnasium or equipments for exercises?
68. Do you like to take part in other extra curricular activity such as: debates, music etc? If yes, how much time do you devote to it? If not, why not?
69. What do you like to do in your leisure time? If you were given one hour in which you could do whatever you liked without any restrictions, what would you do and why?
70. How often do you go out of the school and hostel premises and for what purposes? Do you shop for your own needs such as personal needs, edibles, biscuits, chocolates etc. or do you ask someone to bring these for you?
71. Are you familiar through your personal experience with the surroundings of your school and what is nearby? Or have these been told to you by someone?
72. How often do you mix with the sighted children studying in schools nearby and on what kind of occasions?
73. Have you made any sighted friends of your own age studying in this area? If yes, how did this friendship come about? If not why?
74. When you are with your sighted friend/friends do you have any feeling of being with boys / girls who are different from you in some way? If yes, what kind of feeling is that? If no, then are you able to play with your sighted friend and share everything in the same way in which you play and share with your blind friends? Please explain in detail.

75. If given a choice would you like to be more often in the company of your sighted friends or with your blind friends? Give reasons.
76. Is it easier to make friends with blind children or with sighted children? Why?
77. Have you ever gone for occasions such as birthdays, or other social events to the house of your sighted friends? If yes, how often? And was the experience pleasant? Or did you feel left out and discriminated in the hustle of activities?
78. When you go home in vacations do you play with your brothers and/or sisters as well as with their sighted friends in a natural way, or do you experience some distance between you and them?
79. What kind of interaction do you have with them, whether it is through a game, through seeing a movie or listening to a radio programme or through any other means?
80. Can you pinpoint some factors, which bring you and your brothers/sisters and their friends close to you?
81. Are there any factors which in your view create a distance between you and the sighted children at home?
82. Do you have any sighted friends of your own at home apart from your brothers / and sisters and their friends? If yes, do they eagerly await for you to come home? Or do they keep in touch with you through letters and/or telephone when you are in school?
83. Where do you feel happier: being in the school or being at home? If you were asked to choose one out of these two what would you choose and why?
84. How much pocket money do you get from home and how do you spend it?
85. How often does your family keep in touch with you: through letters, through phone, through relatives and friends living in the area and through personal visits.
86. Do you feel that being in a school for the blind would put you at a disadvantage when you leave this school and move in an open society? If yes, then what are the reasons for such a feeling?
87. Have your friends who were earlier in this school and are now studying with sighted children faced any difficulty because of the fact that they were in a special school? If yes, of what kind?
88. What is your ambition in life? How do you propose to achieve it?
89. What do real sceneries or other pictorial description mean to you?
90. How do you respond to the descriptions of garden, flowers, natural surroundings, colours beauty of a woman etc?
91. Do you feel that you are able to have a full grasp of these concepts through verbal and tactile methods?
92. Do you think that your knowledge is somewhat incomplete as far as these concepts are concerned, or do you feel that you have a near complete idea through alternate methods? If yes, how?
93. Who chooses your clothes for daily wear? If you do it yourself, what do you keep in mind while choosing your clothes? If it is someone else, then do you tell him/her as to what kind of clothes you want to wear?
94. Do you know what is the colour of clothe that you are wearing today? If yes, did you decide this combination yourself? If not, don't you ever feel the desire to find out what you are wearing?
95. Which has been the happiest moment of your life so far?
96. What has been your deepest regret so far?

97. If given a choice would you like to continue studying in this school, or would you like to study in a sighted school? Why?
98. (For girl children only): Do you feel being a girl you face some extra difficulties in adjusting in school? If yes, of what kind?

Investigator's remarks:

Signatures of the Investigator:

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## **Annexure 2**

### **A Comparative Study of the Learning Achievements of the Visually Impaired Children Studying In Special and Inclusive Schools**

#### **Questionnaire cum interview guide 2**

**To be responded to by fifteen children studying in inclusive education system in each of the countries being surveyed**

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Nationality:
5. Father's name & occupation:
6. Mother's name & occupation:
7. Mention the number of brothers / sisters & in which class are studying in?
8. Which of the following are owned by your family?  
☐ Telephone      ☐ Own House      ☐ Car      ☐ Scooter  
☐ AC
9. What is the approximate monthly income of your family?
10. At what age did you lose your eyesight and how?
11. Any Treatment undertaken to prevent and / or cure the blindness?
11. Does any other member of the family suffer from any kind of visual and / or physical impairment? If yes then of what kind?
12. What are your earliest memories of the attitude of your family members towards you after they discovered your blindness?
13. How did you spend your time at home before joining the school?
14. Did your brothers / sisters include you in their play activities etc? If yes, How? If no, why not?
15. Did your neighbors and their children treat you in the same manner in which they treated other children? If yes, How? If no, how and in what respects did you perceive this difference?
16. Did you observe any difference in the attitude of your parents and of your other relatives towards you due to your impairment? If yes, of what kind?
17. Were you consulted at any stage before the selection of a suitable school for you was made?
18. Whose decision was it to send you to an inclusive school? How did you feel when this decision was communicated to you?
19. Did you go to any special and/or preparatory school before joining this school? If yes, then for how many years? If not, then did you have any Braille teacher at home before joining this school?
20. How far is your home from the school?
21. How do you travel from home to school every day? (If in some cases the child is staying in a hostel and goes to an inclusive school from the Hostel, that fact should be indicated here. In such a case, some other questions may be modified according to this circumstance).
22. If you travel with your sighted class-mates, then are they helpful to you while getting in and off the transport?

23. What difficulties do you face in commuting from home to school and back home?
24. Do you carry your Braille textbooks and writing equipments etc. with you? If yes, then do you face any problems in carrying such heavy materials with you every day? If not, then how do you manage in school without the Braille books and writing equipments?
25. Before getting admitted to the school, were you given any kind of background knowledge/information regarding the school you were being sent to?
26. At what age did you join the school?
27. How did the principal of the school and other teachers react to you when you went for admission? Is there any difference in their attitude towards you now? If yes, how?
28. In which class were you admitted?
29. In which class are you studying now?
30. Who accompanied you when you came to the school on the first day?
31. How did your family react when you went to the school first day:  
☐ Casual    ☐ Happy    ☐ Sad    ☐ Encouraging    ☐ Worried  
☐ Any other
32. How did you react when your parent/guardian was leaving you in the school for the first time?
33. What was your state of mind when you were coming to school for the first time: ☐ Nervous    ☐ Anxious    ☐ Happy    ☐ Sad    ☐ Excited    ☐ Very Happy
34. How was your first experience in the class?  
(a) Who came to drop you to the class?  
(b) How did the sighted students of the class react to you? Were they curious about you, indifferent to you, helpful to you or any other? Describe their reaction and their initial interaction with you in detail.  
(c) Is there any difference in their attitude towards you now? If yes, of what kind and how? Describe in detail.
36. How did the teachers initially respond to you? Were they understanding about your additional needs due to your visual impairment? Were they helpful to you? If yes, describe some of the ways in which they extended this help? If not, did they just ignore you?
37. Is there any difference in the attitude of your teachers now? If yes, then in what way and how?
38. Did you have any idea of the kind of school you are going to before coming here? If yes, how did you get this idea?
39. Now that you are in school, to what extent do you think your conception of this school was correct? Does it match with what you thought of it or what you were told?
40. Describe your daily routine in the school?
41. How do you manage your mobility in the school after you are dropped from home?
42. How often do you need to take the help of your sighted classmates to move around in the school, to go from one class to another, to go to the play-ground and to the wash room etc?



43. Do your classmates and other sighted friends in the school help you on their own in a natural way, or do you have to ask for their help every time you require it?
44. If you need to ask for the help of sighted students of the school, do they help you?  
☐ Willingly ☐ Happily ☐ grudgingly
45. Has it ever happened that your sighted friends and / or classmates have refused your request for help, or knowing that you need help for something have deliberately stayed away from you so that they do not need to help you? If yes, then how often does it happen?
46. In general, how positive and willing are your sighted friends to help you in a natural way without making you feel that they are doing a kind of favour to you?
47. Who dresses you up and packs your tiffin in the morning?
48. Does someone else decide your clothes for you or do you choose them yourself for everyday wearing?
49. Is there any sighted classmate of yours who accompanies you from home to school regularly or often?
50. How did you learn Braille and mathematical frame?
51. What kind of Braille writing mathematical and other equipments do you have to help you in your studies?
52. From where did you get these equipments?
53. Do you have a resource teacher in school? Or is there any special teacher who regularly visits you to take care of your special needs?
54. If you have a resource teacher, then in what way does he/she help you with your studies? Is the resource teacher also sometimes present in the class-room when the regular teacher is teaching you? If yes, how often?
55. If there is a special teacher who sometimes visits you to take care of your needs then how often does this special teacher come and from where?
56. What is the specific role of this special teacher and how often and in what manner does he/she help you with your studies?
57. Is this special teacher also present in the class sometimes, when the regular teacher is teaching you?
58. Have your sighted peers shown any surprise or curiosity when you use Braille and equipments for writing or doing mathematics sums? Have any of them asked you about Braille and how it is used?
59. Have any of your class-mates or any other sighted students in the school expressed a desire to learn Braille? If yes, how many of them have actually learnt it?
60. How good are you in using Braille? And how often do you use it?
61. If asked to choose between Braille, audio and computers, which format will be preferable to you for studies and why?
62. Apart from regular school hours how many hours do you spend in studying \_\_\_\_\_ at home?
63. Do you often study by yourself or do you like to study with your friends in a group? Which of the two is better and why?
64. Do you get all your textbooks in Braille as personal copies? If yes, who provides these books to you? If not how do you manage without Braille textbooks?

65. What kind of difficulties do you face in carrying heavy Braille books from home?
66. What is the ratio of curricula materials that you receive in Braille and in audio or in any other alternative format?
67. How do you do your home tasks given by various teachers? Is there someone to help you with these tasks? If yes, who? If not, then how do you manage?
68. How is your home task checked and marked by the teacher?
69. Do your sighted classmates help you with your home tasks sometimes? If yes, how often?
70. How do you take your monthly tests and other examinations? How do the teachers check these?
71. Do you think that your performance is in any way affected either positively or in a negative way as compared to sighted students of your intelligence level due to the fact that you take the examination in a different format?
72. If you use a writer to take your tests and examinations, then does it sometimes happen that the writer wants to help you when you don't know the answer? What do you do in such situations?
73. If you use a writer, then who is the writer? And how is he/she arranged? Have you ever had any difficulty finding a writer?
74. Do you read books and magazines etc? Other than your prescribed textbooks? If yes of what kind and in what format?
75. Do you read the same kind of general books and magazines as your classmates? For instance do you read Harry Potter? If yes, how do you have access to these materials? If not, then does it not come in the way of your communication with your sighted friends, because you would be blank when they talk about these books?
76. Do you see television and cartoon films? If yes, are you able to get a full essence of these through audio? If not, then when your sighted friends talk about something you have not watched on screen, does it not put you at a disadvantage?
77. How often do your sighted classmates include you in their conversation and/or other activities?
78. When you are among your sighted friends what do you normally talk about?
79. During their conversation your sighted friends may be referring to a number of visual things, things you have not directly seen, for instance, the beautiful flowers in the garden, colours, rainbow, natural sceneries, the beauty of stars and of the moon and the beauty and dress of a girl or a woman. You may be coming across such references during your studies. Do you think you are able to have a reasonable and clear grasp of these abstract concepts through verbal knowledge, or do you think your understanding and consequently your communication somewhat suffers due to the visual nature of these concepts?
80. Has any special attempt been made by your teachers to make you understand these abstract concepts? If not, then how would you like these and other such concepts to be explained to you?
81. Do you think that your sighted friends are sometimes conscious of the fact that you are visually impaired and therefore, they avoid talking

- about certain things, which they would talk about naturally if you were not present? If yes, then how often does it happen?
82. Do you remain with your sighted class-mates in your free time in school and go with them to canteen etc. Or do you spend that time usually alone?
  83. How much pocket money do you get? Is it the same as your other brothers and sisters get?
  84. Is your pocket money nearly the same as that of your sighted classmates? If yes, do you sometimes spend a part of it on your friends and do they do the same in return? If there is a sharp difference in the amount of pocket money, which you receive, and which they receive, then does it sometimes effect your interaction, for instance when you are planning an outing with them?
  85. How often do your sighted friends include you when they plan their activities like outings, movies, picnics etc?
  86. What in your view is your major drawback as compared to sighted children as far as accessibility to materials is concerned? How do you think that gap can be filled?
  87. What do you think are your major drawbacks when you interact with your sighted friends/class-mates?
  88. Which of the following modes of teaching does your teacher resort to:  
☐ Active interaction      ☐ Passive teaching      ☐ Both      ☐ Any other
  89. Do you ask queries / raise questions in the classroom if you have any doubts? If yes, then are your queries responded to?
  90. Do you think you are given due attention in the classroom?
  91. Do your teachers make any special efforts to make you comfortable and accommodated in the classroom? If yes in what way? If not then is it a good thing or not?
  92. Do your sighted class-mates sometimes feel jealous towards you due to some skills and talent which you may have and they don't, or due to the fact that a particular teacher may be paying more attention towards you? If yes then how do you tackle such situations?
  93. How would you rate your interaction with the teachers in the classroom:  
☐ Poor      ☐ Average      ☐ Good      ☐ Excellent      ☐ Any other
  94. If answer of above question is in poor or average, then please give reasons and how you think it can be improved?
  95. Does your library have materials and books accessible to you for instance in Braille or in audio format? If yes then how often do you borrow, if not then how do you access these books, which are available to other sighted students and not to you?
  96. If your school library does not have books and material in Braille or in audio formats? Have you ever requested your principle to procure this for you? If yes, what has been the response?
  97. Have you ever requested your school to procure any special equipment for your studies or any special aids and appliances? If yes, then was your request accepted? If not, then why not?
  98. Do you think that the textbooks and general reading materials available to you are enough or do you feel that something more is required? If yes, of what kind?

99. Do you have volunteers readers, class mates, seniors, parents reading books to you? If yes, how often and of what kind?
100. How often do your classmates help you with reading and with your studies?
101. Do you feel a bit left out when the teacher writes something on the board and you don't know what it is? Do any of your classmates help you spontaneously in such situations?
102. How are you performing in your class as compared to your sighted friends? Are you satisfied with your performance?
103. Do you face any difficulties in learning subjects such as mathematics, science and geography? If yes what are these difficulties?
104. Has your school procured special tactile and/or speaking aids to teach you subjects such as Science and Geography? If yes, then do these aids help you understand these subjects better? If not then how do you manage in Science and Geography class?
105. How do you take the practical examinations in Science?
106. Are you satisfied with your academic performance? Do you think that that your performance would have been better if you were studying in a special school for the blind? If yes, why? If not, then why not?
107. How often do you take part in sports and extra curricular activities?
108. What kind of extra curricular activities interest you and why?
109. Do you think that you get an equal opportunity to participate in these activities as compared to your sighted classmates?
110. Have you ever represented your school in any inter-school events? If yes, when and in what event?
111. Do you think that your performance is better than sighted students in these extra curricular activities, same as other students or worse than sighted students?
112. If you have performed well in your studies, then have your sighted peers been supportive, encouraging, happy or jealous? Why? Give an example if you can.
113. Do your teachers make any special efforts to include you in the extra curricular activities?
114. Are you able to participate in the P.T. and physical activity classes in the same way in, which the sighted students do? If yes, then are there any special provisions made for you to be able to participate in these classes? If no, then what do you do when these physical activity classes take place?
115. Do you play any sport? If yes, then has your school made any special provisions for you take part in that particular sport? Do your sighted classmates join you in your games?
116. Do you play any sports along with sighted children? If yes, which one? Are the sighted children spontaneous with you when you take part in sports with them if at all you do?
117. Are you classrooms, playgrounds and other school facilities accessible to you? Or do you face any difficulties getting to these places?
118. At home, do you have the same games, toys etc? Which your sighted friends have with them? /How often do they share their games and toys with you?
119. Do your sighted classmates ever fight with one another? Do they also sometimes fight with you? If yes, on what issues? If not, then why is it that they fight among themselves, but do not fight with you?

120. Do you celebrate your birthday? Do your sighted classmates join you in this celebration?
121. How often do you go for parties, birthdays etc? Do you go to the homes of your sighted mates? Do you feel included in their functions? Or do you feel isolated and keep sitting alone even when they invite you?
122. How often do you go to the functions of your relatives? How included do you feel there?
123. How much interest does your parents and other relatives take in your day-to-day studies and other activities?
124. Who does your shopping? Do you accompany your parents and/or other relatives for shopping things for yourself, or are these brought for you without your having any say in it?
125. Do you have any other blind or disabled children in your school or in your neighbourhood? If yes, how often do you mix with them?
126. If given a choice do you feel easier in the company of your blind friends or with your sighted mates? Why?
127. Have you ever visited any blind school? If yes, how do you compare it with your own school? Same as your school, better or worse? Why?
128. What is your ambition in life? Why do you have this particular ambition?
129. How do you propose to achieve it?
130. If you are given one hour in which you are allowed to do just what you like, then what would you like to do in that one hour?
131. How do you generally spend your leisure time?
132. What has been the happiest moment of your life so far? And why?
133. Which has been the saddest moment of your life so far? Why?
134. If given a choice would you prefer to study in an inclusive school of the kind you are now studying in, or would you like to study with other blind children of your age in a special school for the blind? Why?
135. (For girl children only) What extra difficulties do you face in this school being both a visually impaired and a girl? Describe your experience in detail.

Investigator's remarks if any:

Signature of the Investigator:

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### **Annexure 3**

#### **A Comparative Study of the Learning Achievements of the Visually Impaired Children Studying In Special and Inclusive Schools**

##### **Questionnaire-cum-Interview guide 3**

**To be completed by 5 teachers from each country teaching in the special school system**

1. Name:
2. Gender:
3. Age:
4. Nationality:
5. Are you suffering from visual impairment or any other kind of disability? If yes, of what kind and since when?
6. What are your educational qualifications? Have you received any training in teaching the children with visual impairment? If yes, of what kind, when and where?
7. Whether you have had any personal and/or professional exposure with any person / persons with disability in general and with persons with visual impairment in particular before joining the special school for children with visual impairment? If yes, of what kind?
8. Since when have you been teaching? Did you teach in any other institution before joining this school? If yes, was that an institution for persons with special needs?
9. The name and location of the school where you are presently teaching? For how long have you been teaching here?
10. Information about the kind of School: whether it is a primary school, middle level school and/or a secondary school?
11. Whether the school is located in an urban, semi-urban or in a rural setting?
12. How many children are studying in the school?
13. Is it a coeducational school? If yes, what is the gender ratio?
14. Is it a fully residential school? If not how many children stay in the hostel and how many come from their homes every day?
15. What is the students' teacher ratio in the school? Do you think this ratio is an ideal one? If yes how? If not, what in your view should be the student teacher ratio in a school such as yours?
16. Is there a government policy in place relating to the education of children with visual disability? If yes, what is that policy? And is your school following the norms of that policy? If not, has there been any demand for such a policy? If yes, what has been the response to such a demand?
17. Is there any student, teacher ratio prescribed by any government department / government agency for a special school such as yours? If yes what is that ratio?
18. What is the average number of student in a class? Is the number an ideal one? If yes, why? If no why not?
19. As compared to a sighted school, what extra and / or special facilities, provisions and equipments does your school have to meet the additional educational needs of visually impaired children?



20. Are these special aids and equipments provided by the government or do you have to arrange these from other sources? If it is the latter, then what are these sources?
21. Apart from these special aids, does your school have all the facilities, which are available sighted children in the regular schools? Or, are there any facilities, which the sighted child has, access to in his/her school, but a blind child does not?
22. Which subjects do you teach in the school?
23. What difficulties have you faced in teaching these subjects to visually impaired students?
24. What difficulties are normally faced by a teacher in teaching subjects such as mathematics and science and geography to blind students?
25. Do all your students have textbooks in Braille and/or in any other format?
26. Which is the most popular format among your students, are format in which they can like to read textbooks? And other reading materials: is it Braille, audiocassettes, computers, live reading on any other? The reasons for its popularity?
27. Do your students actively participate in the classroom? What are they passive recipients of knowledge?
28. Do you have any difficulties in interacting with the students on account of their visual impairment? If yes, of what kind?
29. Do your students have textbooks with them when you are teaching them? Or do they have to share the textbooks with their peers?
30. If they have the textbooks do they read along with you in the class? Or are these used only for reading after the school hours?
31. What percentage of your students actively take part in the class discussions and group work etc?
32. What is the average percentage of attendance in the class? What excuses do the students make when they are absent from class? Are these excuses generally correct or fabricated?
33. Do you keep a record of students' attendance? If yes, is this record used to take any punitive action in case a student absent himself/herself from the class more than permitted? If not, why not?
34. How do you rate the interpersonal interaction between students? Do you observe any unusual characteristics in this interaction?
35. Do you think that many blinds children because they are mostly interaction with blind persons acquire some mannerisms with one normally does not find in sighted children?
36. When students come to the class, to take any measure to check their dress, personal hygiene manners and postures etc? If yes, how and how often? If not then who is deputed to ensure all these in the school?
37. How often do you find students sitting in the wrong posture or facing a side other than the teacher? What measures have you taken to correct this tendency if discovered?
38. What methods do you use and how much success to involve students who are not very active and communicative? What is generally the ratio of such students?
39. How often you found students disobeying and/or misbehaving in the class? What action have you taken in such situation?
40. Have you ever resorted to physical punishment in case of indiscipline and/or non-compliance on the part of a student? If not, what other measures have you used to deal with such acts?



41. Are the measures so used by you typical of your teaching strategy or are these commonly used by other teachers or your school? If not, what are the commonly used measures in such situations by teachers in your school?
42. Do you subscribe to the view that some students may suffer from some psychological and/or personality problems by virtue of their studying in special schools? If yes, then what measures may be taken to deal with this problem?
43. Does your school have a counselor or a psychologist? If yes, what is his / her role? If not, who takes care of the need of such a person in the school?
44. Do you think that the equipments and other materials provided to children in your school are sufficient to meet their needs? If not what more is required in this respect?
45. How often do your students complete their homework? How do you deal with defaulters?
46. How much time do students or we spend in physical activity and sports?
47. What is the level of interaction of your students with the sighted children from other schools? Does such an interaction take place only on formal occasions? Or do you plan any special events to facilitate this interaction? If yes, what kind of events? If not, then do you use any strategy to ensure that your students have an adequate level of interaction with the sighted world?
48. How often do this staff and/or the administration of the school interact with the parents' and / guardians of the students?
49. Is there any mechanism in place to ensure such regular interaction? If yes, of what kind and how effective? If not then what other measures are taken to keep in touch with the parents and how effective are these measures?
50. How often in general do the parents and / or guardians of the students take an active interest in the progress of their child/ward?
51. When the children go home, do they in general face any adjustment problems because they have remained in a segregated setting?
52. How you made any attempt to ascertain whether the behaviour of the siblings and the neighborhood is healthy or positive towards these children? If yes, how?
53. Do think that boarding and lodging facilities provided in this school are adequate and the physical, emotional and psychological needs of the students?
54. Do you think the children in your school would have been better looked after if they had stayed with their own families? Give reasons?
55. Which in your view is an appropriate setting for your students: the special schools or the inclusive system? Please give detailed reasons for your view?

Investigator's comments:

Signature of the investigator:

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## **Annexure 4**

### **A Comparative Study of the Learning Achievements of the Visually Impaired Children Studying In Special and Inclusive Schools**

#### **Questionnaire-cum-Interview guide 4**

**To be completed by 5 teachers from each country teaching in the inclusive school system**

1. Name:
2. Gender:
3. Age:
4. Nationality:
5. Are you suffering from visual impairment or any other kind of disability? If yes, of what kind and since when?
6. What are your educational qualifications? Whether you have received any training in teaching the children with visual impairment? If yes, of what kind, when and where?
7. Do you have any personal and / or professional exposure with any person / persons with disability in general and with persons with visual impairment in particular before you had your first visually impaired student in the class? If yes, of what kind?
8. Since when have you been teaching? Did you teach in any other institution before joining this school? If yes, were there any provisions in that institution for students with special needs?
9. The name and location of the school where you are presently teaching? For how long have you been teaching here?
10. Give some Information about the kind of school. Is it a primary school, middle level school and/or a secondary school?
11. Whether the school is located in an urban, semi-urban or in a rural setting?
12. How many children are studying in the school?
13. Is it a co-educational school? If yes, what is the gender ratio?
14. Does the school have any residential facilities for any category of students? If not, what is the preferred mode of travel by students for commuting from home to School?
15. Do the visually impaired students also use the same mode of transportation as sighted children? Or are there any special/different arrangements for them?
16. Are these arrangements of transportation made by the school or travel to and from school is their own responsibility? If it is the latter, then who looks after the transport requirements and safety of the visually impaired students?
17. Has there ever been any accident, either minor or major, involving any visually impaired child while traveling from home to school or vice-a-versa?
18. What is the student teacher ratio in the school? Do you think this ratio is and ideal one? If yes, how? If not, what in your view should be the student teacher ratio in a school such as yours?
19. Is there a government policy in place relating to the education of children with visual disability? If yes, what is that policy? And is your school following the norms of that policy? If not, has there been any demand for such a policy? If yes, what has been the response to such a demand?

20. Is there any student teacher ratio prescribed by any government department/government agency for a school providing inclusive education to visually impaired students? If yes, what is that ratio?
21. Are there any mandatory or desired requirements relating to the availability of a resource room, equipments, Braille books and other kinds of materials for visually impaired students studying in a inclusive school such as yours? If yes, who has laid down these requirements? And does your school strictly adhere these to? If not, then has your school made any arrangements for a resource room, resource teacher, Braille textbooks and materials in other formats for your visually impaired students? If yes, then please specify these arrangements in detail. If not, then why not? And how is this gap filled up?
22. What is the source of funding for such special resource rooms and special aids and equipments? Is it the government or any other source? Please specify the support provided by government agencies in providing Braille textbooks and developing resource room etc.
23. What is the average number of students in a class? Is this number an ideal one given the fact that there may be a student with special or additional needs in the class who may require special attention and time on the part of the teacher? If yes, why? If no, why not?
24. What special equipments and other facilities does your school have to meet the requirements of the special students? Who had advised you to procure these equipments and introduce special facilities for visually impaired students? How often are these equipments and facilities upgraded?
25. When did the school admit its first visually impaired students? Was this done in pursuance of a government policy, to fulfill a departmental direction? Or was the child admitted on the initiative of the school administration with a view to make education accessible to all? Please describe the reasons for taking a visually impaired student and the experience in detail.
26. Was there any resistance from any quarter, namely, administration, teachers, children or their parents when the first visually impaired child was admitted? If yes, from what quarter and what were the reasons for such an opposition? How was such an opposition countered?
27. Is there a difference in the level of acceptability of visually impaired students between when they were first admitted and the present? If yes, of what kind and how is this change brought about? If not, then why not?
28. Were any refresher course, bridge course and/or any other kind of preparatory training or sensitizing training provided to the teachers, the staff, to the students or to the parents before admitting a visually impaired child? If yes, of what kind, of what duration and by whom? If not then was a need for such a training felt?
29. In your view is such a training necessary for a proper accommodation and acceptability of a visually impaired child in a regular school?
30. If yes, then has any attempt been made to provide such a training and/or short-term courses at a latter stage? If not, then do you think the teachers have been capable to handle the needs of a visually impaired child without such training?
31. What was the first reaction of the students when they found a visually impaired child in their class? Is there a difference in their reaction now? If yes, of what kind? If not why not?

32. What general difficulties did the teachers face while teaching a visually impaired child with sighted children? Are these difficulties of the kind, which can be easily overcome? Or these come in the way of the academic performance and psychological rehabilitation of the visually impaired child?
33. Do the academic concentration and the psychological adjustment of a sighted child suffer negatively due to the presence of a visually impaired child in the class?
34. To what extent is there a harmony and integration between the visually impaired child and the sighted children? Give some examples. If you think such a harmony which is there among the sighted children does not exist between the blind and the sighted children interaction, then give reasons?
35. Have often do you have to make adjustments in your teaching methodology to accommodate the needs of a visually impaired student?
36. Are you always conscious of the fact that there is a blind student in the class or is it that sometimes you forget this fact and make blunders in the process? For instance, you may ask a blind child to read what is written on the board without realizing that he/she cannot do so. If such incidents have occurred, then please do give some examples and how you have coped with such situations?
37. Do you use any special techniques or strategies to ensure that a visually impaired student does not lose out on visual information such as information written on the Black board or information given in the textbooks through graphics or if and when you use any visual presentations?
38. Do you sometimes have to adapt the curriculum to accommodate the problems of a visually impaired child? If yes, how often? Give examples.
39. Do you through some gestures etc. Try to make the blind child comfortable in the class, or do you treat him/her like any other child? For instance, do you sometimes or may be always make the blind child sit in the front row, or very close to you, or try to highlight his/her intelligence? If yes, what is the impact of such gestures on the sighted children? Is it positive or negative, or both? How?
40. Is there a significant difference in the economic levels of the sighted and the blind students? If yes, then to what extent does it influence the interpersonal relationships of the sighted and the blind children?
41. Do you take any steps to promote friendships or any kind of interaction between the blind and the sighted children? If yes, how? If not, then how do these friendships come about and to what extent?
42. Does the visually impaired student in your class always have his / her textbooks in Braille or in any other alternative format? Or does he / she dependent mainly on listening to what you teach?
43. Does the blind student in your class carry any writing or mathematical equipments? If yes, then how often does he / she use them in the course of your teaching to take notes etc? Does the use of such equipments hamper in any way the normal classroom teaching or disturb or distract the sighted students in any way? If yes, how?
44. How are the mobility requirements of the blind child taken care of in your class? For instance, if he / she wants to use the washroom or if the children need to change class room or go to play grounds or during recess etc?

45. Has there been any objection on the part of the sighted student or any parent towards the presence of a blind student in the class? If yes, how has the school dealt with such a situation? If no, then have you in some cases noticed an extra positive attitude by the sighted children towards the blind students?
46. Do you think that in an inclusive setting a visually impaired child tends to get isolated and feel lonely?
47. What measures does the teacher take in the class-room to ensure that the blind student is not left behind in studies? Do such measures come naturally to the teacher and are a part of their instructional strategy? Or do the teachers have to make any extra effort to think of these ways?
48. Which subjects do you teach in the School?
49. What difficulties have you faced in teaching these subjects to visually impaired students?
50. What difficulties are normally faced by a teacher in teaching subjects such as mathematics, science and geography to blind students?
51. Which is the most popular format among your students, format in which they like to read textbooks and other reading materials: is it Braille, audiocassettes, computers, live reading or any other? Give reasons for its popularity.
52. Do your students actively participate in the classroom? Or are they passive recipients of knowledge?
53. Do you have any difficulty in interacting with the students on account of their visual impairment? If yes, of what kind?
54. What steps has your school taken to make available textbooks and other reading materials to your blind students? How far has the school been successful in these endeavors?
55. If the blind students have the textbooks do they read along with you in the class? Or are these used only for reading after school hours?
56. How do the blind students in your school do their home tasks? How do the teachers check these in the class?
57. How often do these students absent themselves from the class? What excuses do they give when they are absent? Are these excuses generally valid?
58. Do you keep a record of students' attendance? If yes, is this record used to take any punitive action in case a student absents himself/herself from the class more than permitted? If not, why not?
59. How do you rate the interpersonal interaction between the blind and the sighted students? Do you observe any unusual characteristics in this interaction?
60. Do you think that many blind children have some unusual mannerisms, which one normally does not find in sighted children?
61. What methods do you use to involve a blind student when you find that he/she is not very communicative?
62. How often do students normally disobey you and what action do you take in such situations? Now, as far as the blind students are concerned, do they disobey you more or lesser than sighted students? Is there any difference in the kind of action taken against them in similar situations?
63. Are the measures so used by you typical of your teaching strategy or are these commonly used by other teachers of your school? If not, what are the commonly used measures in such situations by teachers in your school?

64. Does your school have a special resource teacher, or a counselors or a psychologist? If yes, what is his / her role? If not, who takes care of the role of such a person in the studies of a blind student?
65. Do you think that the equipments and other materials provided to blind children in your school are sufficient to meet their needs? If not what more is required in this respect?
66. How much time do the sighted students in your school spend in physical activity and sports?
67. What do the blind students do when the sighted students are engaged in such activities? Do they join them in these physical activities? Or do they just sit apart? If it is the latter, then does it in any way make them feel isolated?
68. What measures have you taken to make sports and other extra curricular activities including physical activities accessible to blind children?
69. How do you occupy these students when they are unable to join their sighted colleagues in any activity? Who looks after them in such situations?
70. What steps have you taken to make your library and other facilities accessible to blind students?
71. What kind of special equipments and books do your blind students personally possess and can take home?
72. What kind of equipments is available to them only to be used in the school?
73. Does your school have computers? If yes, then do you have special software designed for the blind to use computers?
74. Are you in touch with any NGO, which is working for the blind in your area or district or state? If yes, how often are you in touch with this NGO and through what methods? Namely, whether through personal exchange visits, through phone, through letters or any other means?
75. If you are in touch with such an NGO then is this NGO a national organization in character, or is it working only at the state or the local level?
76. How often are you in touch with the parents of the blind students? Do their parents regularly attend the parent teacher meetings?
77. Is there any special effort made by your school to organize special counseling sessions for the parents of the blind children?
78. Do you organize any special events to promote friendships among the blind and the sighted students or between their parents?
79. Do you sometimes enable the blind students to meet other blind children so that they can learn from mutual experiences how to tackle their special difficulties?
80. Do you sometimes take blind students and / or their parents for visit to the blind schools or to other inclusive schools where blind children are studying? If yes, how often and with what results?
81. How have been the blind students of your school been generally performing in their studies: same as sighted students, generally better than sighted students, not as good as sighted students?
82. How do blind students generally fair in extra curricular activities such as debates, music etc?
83. Do you think that the facilities provided in your school are adequate to meet the academic, emotional and psychological needs of the blind students? If not what more needs to be done in this direction?



84. Which in your view is an appropriate setting for your students: the special schools or the inclusive system? Please give detailed reasons for your view?

Investigator's comments:

Signature of the Investigator:

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## Annexure 5

### Guidelines for Investigators

Dear Investigator,

You have with you four sets of questionnaires, and through these you are requested to perform a sensitive and vital task: that of collecting the data from a cross section of persons as well as beneficiaries involved in the education of the visually impaired persons in your country.

This work is being done as a part of a project undertaken by the Committee on the Status of blind children, in the Asian Blind Union. The purpose of the project is to measure the learning achievements of the visually impaired students studying both in the special as well as in the inclusive schools in terms of their academic performance, availability of materials and infrastructure, social integration, psychological adjustments and interpersonal skills. The target of the project is to ascertain on the basis of reliable hard evidence as to which of the two educational systems is better suited for the visually impaired students. Another aim of the project is to define minimum guidelines in terms of care, infrastructure and equipments etc. both for the special school system and the inclusive schools.

In order to collect the required data you are required to interview a total of about forty-fifty persons from various schools of your country. Of these fifteen students should be from the special school system, (for whom questionnaire-cum-interview guide Number 1 is to be used), another fifteen from the inclusive schools, (for whom questionnaire number 2 is to be used), five teachers from the special schools (for whom questionnaire number 3 is designed), and another five from the inclusive schools, (for whom questionnaire number 4 is meant). In choosing persons for the interviews please bear in mind the following:

1. Try as far as possible a gender balance in your selection. For instance out of the fifteen students chosen from each of the two streams mentioned above, nearly half should be boys and another half girls. The same with teachers.
2. Also try to ensure that the students are not chosen from only one school, but in so far as possible at least from two or three schools. The same with teachers.
3. As far as possible choose the students in near equal numbers from the primary, middle and secondary sections.
4. The same would apply to the choice of teachers.
5. Please bear in mind that the students may not be able to understand the technical and sometimes intricate language of the questionnaire. The various sets of questionnaires-cum-interview guides are more for your use. You could rephrase and adapt the questions and their phraseology as per the circumstances and the level of the students. While adapting or rephrasing it is important to ensure however that the content information desired in that particular question is obtained.
6. Each student should be interviewed separately or maximum of two students together at a given time. To ensure objective information, please make sure that the teachers and / any other person from the administration is not present during these interviews.

7. Please make hard copies of these questionnaires. For each student and or teacher a separate hard copy should be used. Please give your remarks at the end of each interview and sign the hard copy.
8. Please ensure that each student as well as each teacher is verbally interviewed by you. We do not expect you to distribute the questionnaires or dictate these to a whole group so that the students can complete the questionnaire themselves. . IT IS IMPORTANT TO EMPHASISE THAT EACH STUDETN AND TEACHER HAS TO BE INTERVIEWED SEPARATELY IN PERSON BY YOU AND NOT BY ANY DEPUTED PERSON BY YOU BECAUSE THAT DEPUTED PERSON MAY NOT HAVE A CORRECT IDEA OF THE PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEWS.
9. After the interviews are completed you are required to enter each hard copy data in a separate file in the electronic format. If you can use a computer while conducting the interview, then you could do the electronic entries directly without using hard copies.
10. Please note that the completed questionnaires should be returned in English language only even if you are conducting the interviews in translation, as may be the case in many instances.
11. Before you start the interview, each student should be clearly told in a simple language the nature and purpose of the interview and the study so that he/she does not feel under any kind of pressure. If at any stage, the student does not understand the question, please rephrase in a simple language. If any student and/or teacher does not want to answer a particular question, please do not compel him/her, but record the response "unwilling to answer" as an answer to that question.
12. Sometimes, there are repetitions in the questions. These are deliberate. So if a question is repeated, please ask that question once again. There is a certain purpose in this methodology.
13. If a student and or a teacher wishes to take a short break during the interview, please do allow that break. Please be sensitive and not business-like while conducting the interviews. Make the children feel at ease and try to be a good listener.
14. After the interviews are completed you will require to divide the responses in a particular format which will be sent to you once we know that you are near completing the interviews.
15. If you face any difficulties or have any questions, please get in touch with the organization which has deputed you or write to me on the following email: [anilaneja@vsnl.net](mailto:anilaneja@vsnl.net)

Wish you best of luck with the assignment. I am sure you will do a good job of it.

**Dr. Anil Aneja**  
**Chairperson, Committee on the status of Blind Children**  
**Asian Blind Union**

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