

# Challenges faced by Visually Impaired Students and Teachers

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Visual impairment is a condition that results from various causes. The causes include injury, congenital condition, brain trauma, eye diseases and other illnesses such as multiple sclerosis and diabetes. An individual is regarded as blind when the corrected vision is not better than 20 out of 200. This means that this person cannot see at 20 feet the things other people see at 200 feet, or they have a side vision that is not more than a diameter of twenty degrees or a radius of 10 degrees. An individual is regarded as having visual impairment when the corrected vision is not recovered to more than 20 out of 70 (Kim et al., 2016).

In 80% to 90% of legally blind individuals, they have a certain light perception or measurable vision. A legally blind student may have retained an amount of vision. Some students who are legally blind have 20 out of 20 vision. Even though these students have a faultless central vision, they have a side vision or narrow field. As a result, they see objects as if they are looking through straws or a tube (Ahmed et al., 2015). This student often uses guide canes or dogs when walking. The student who has the side vision only does not need the guide cane or dog. This is because these students have the ability to see large things, but they cannot read and thread a needle. The word blind refers to people who have lost their sight completely, whereas vision impairment refers to people who have different vision gradation.

In this paper, I will discuss a critical analysis of the challenges that visually impaired students, teachers and the school face, as well as inclusive practices that meet the needs of the visually impaired students.

## Challenges that Visually Impaired Students Face

Students who are partially sighted face the challenge of accessing printed information. These students use readers, taped texts, the line drawing that is raised, and computer terminations that are talking, among other devices, as blind students (Tungaraza, 2018). Also, they use material that has large letters or printed work, the Closed Circuit magnifier with various magnifying equipment and telescopic lenses or computer terminals that have large terminals. This student may as well use paper elements with large patterns typing. Some of them are able to take class notes using pens with felt-tips that print large letters.

The partial students face difficulties that are more than the ones the blind students face. For example, the classmates, as well as other faculty members at times, view this student as faking their eyesight situations. Some members of the faculty may have a problem understanding that these students

need large print resources for their study (Hasper et al., 2015). Most of them see it be unrealistic because they walk and do other things well without using guiding canes or dogs. Depending on their sight condition, some may not have the ability to understand the visual clues of other individuals (Jeter et al., 2015). Therefore, they may seem to have no interest in expression when the opposite may be true. For example, one student said that after carefully observing how the instructor was playing Frisbee, he was not able to see other Frisbees except the red one. As this student explained, it is clear that she had more side vision (Dell et al., 2016). Therefore, using any other colour, she would not be able to play. It is very hard for full-sighted individuals to understand that reading any colour in print is quite different from playing Frisbee (McLinden and McCall, 2016).

Another challenge that visually impaired students face is the psychological responses that the large print evokes in the reader's sight (van der Aa et al., 2015). Such handwritings give a negative attitude to the reader (Kim et al., 2016). For instance, the reader may conclude that the handwriting belongs to children. Thus, this student is more of a child and cannot be bright. These issues arise again in cases where the large letters make the work look too long than expected or a mechanism of defending less work in class (Hasper et al., 2015). Therefore this may affect the student psychologically is not solved.

## Main Challenges that Faced Practitioners, and the Schools

### Lack of Teaching Material

Visually impaired students need special teaching materials. These materials include braille machines, and largely printed textbooks, among other resources that blind people require. In a research conducted in 2017 in the United Kingdom, most of the schools and teachers lacked the trailing materials. 95 per cent of schools said that they lacked materials for teaching this student. 30 percent of schools had the necessary equipment (Wearmouth, 2009). However, this equipment was not enough for teaching other subjects like sciences, math and drawing. Effective learning is essential for every student. However, lack of the necessary teaching material hinders teachers from doing effective work and at times, forces them to implement resources that can aid this student (Khairallah et al., 2015).

### Lack of classrooms and poor environment

Most of the visually impaired schools do not have enough classrooms and have poor learning surroundings or environments. Most visually impaired schools are developing schools. Most of them lack enough classrooms as well as a good environment for effective teaching and learning. For instance, the classrooms lack ceiling boards as well as desks. At the same time, the environment is

not student-friendly (Ahmed et al., 2015). Special education for the blind does not only include general learning from a textbook but also skills such as walking and communicating with other social education skills. The lack of classrooms subjects both the teachers and students to conditions that are hard to learn and teach.

## Lack of visually impaired teachers

The teachers for the visually impaired schools are fewer in both secondary and primary schools. The number of teachers in special education, particularly visually impaired, overall in every country is less. In the United Kingdom, most schools have around three to four teachers. This has forced most schools to employ teachers who are not trained in any special education. At the same time, there are very few colleges that provide special education for teachers. For instance, currently, there are less than one hundred universities that offer high education in the United Kingdom (Florian, 2007).

## Lack of motivation as well as poor salaries

Most teachers are not motivated due to poor salaries. Teachers for visually impaired students teach more than the class work. For instance, as a class one student is admitted to the school, this student needs to learn how to adapt to his situation in social work as well as class work. The workload that this teacher does needs motivation. Lack of salaries results in strikes, and the morale of the teachers is demotivated. Similarly, most schools lack financial funds for development. In a reach that was conducted in 2013, most teachers insisted that the Government needs to act and ensure that all teachers were well paid (Lalvani, (2013).

## Expectations from the Guardians and teachers

Most parents, as well as guardians, have the anxiety to see immediate change as soon as their children start schooling. Most of the parents understand that the teachers will impact the lives of their children immediately. For instance, many teachers complain that the parents start complaining they are not working immediately after their child reports to school. Most teachers are even expected to solve the eye problem that the child is experiencing. Most of the time, teachers have difficulties explaining to parents or guarding that the learning of these children is gradual. This is more evident in primary schools when the children join the school. Therefore, this is a challenge that teachers of the visually impaired face.

## Analysis of Inclusive Practices

## History of Inclusion

In the 1980s and 1990s, the special schools for various needs were developed. They were developed to meet the needs of the students that the mainstream school would not meet. The thing, however, changed with time, and various education champions resolved that the best learning needs are met in the inclusive setting. As a result, mainstream schools developed various strategies to aid in coping with the needs of all students, including the visually impaired students (Frederickson and Cline, 2009).

## Definition of inclusive education

According to the Study Centre, inclusive schools a society; does not reject or exclude, it is barrier-free is accessible to every member in terms of physical and curricular, as well as collaborate with other schools and the individual involved in the welfare of a child (Frederickson and Cline, 2009).

## Inclusive practice discussion in both primary and secondary schools to meet the needs of the visually impaired students

So far this paper has identified the various challenges that visually impaired students, teachers and schools experience. This section will illustrate various ways inclusive practices may be used in an effective way in primary and secondary education using particular recorded case studied as an example.

A conference that involved various stakeholders, including students and parents, resolved that there are around six critical interconnecting themes that are important in the development of many other inclusive practices within district schools. These themes include funding strategies, policy development, partnership, structure and process, external influence, as well as change management. This key holder supported that the policies that are to be used in future for various inclusive practices need to be applicable, having the future into consideration as well as clear in spite of the various arguments of the stakeholders. The government also supported this view (Knowles, 2011).

Funding is an important factor in forming more inclusive practices. Across the various schools, there is a great difference according to the funds that they received. In order to meet all the needs of the visually impaired, the various funding policies need to facilitate policies that ensure inclusive practices and lead to the development of permanent funding strategies in these schools (Nutbrown and Clough, 2006).

In relation to structure and process, it is important to prevent various inclusive practices. An interim arrangement instead should be made to work with the students. Inclusive practices result in

segregation of the school. For instance, various LEAs have come up with various seminars for assistants as well as for teachers (McLinden, 2016).

Reviewing management is important. Various studies revealed that there were regular dilemmas in decision-making among advisers, officers, parents as well as educational psychologists. This is because every side has its own interpretation of inclusive policies (McLinden, 2016).

The evaluation of the significance of partnership revealed that teachers-parents communication is important. For the schools to meet the needs of a visually impaired child, it is important for the parents and teachers to have a partnership (Cameron, (2013). Most schools where teachers and parents communicated showed a 90 percent improvement in the students, unlike where parents were not included.

At the level of the classroom, there are numerous conditions that form an inclusive education foundation for a visually impaired pupil or student. These conditions include a positive attitude, the capability for the student to actively participate in class, the knowledge of the teacher concerning the needs of the student or pupil, the teacher and parent support as well as skilful usage of particular instrumental techniques (Nutbrown, and Clough, 2006).

However, a positive attitude is not enough in its own to attain inclusive education. The teacher requires skills that enable him to provide all the education for a visually impaired student. Implementation of the skills needs to consider the ability of a student, such as the ability to see large objects.

Successive teachers pay attention to some crucial factors of classroom life and national curriculum. The beginning of the lesson is important. The student needs to be included at the start of any lesson. Therefore, pupils or students should be regularly fostered to think aloud with the entire class or as a response to the teacher's question. An example of a successive school is Hill Bank (Nutbrown and Clough, 2006).

## Conclusion

To sum up, a critical inclusive practice discussion for students with visual impairment in mainstream secondary and primary school has revealed various strategies that can be used in classroom teaching exercises as well as policy levels that can result in effective inclusive schooling (Hodkinson, 2012). They include improved management processes as well as a funding mechanism, better partnership and communication between parents and teachers, appropriate skills and positive attitude held by the teacher, full curriculum subject involvement, as well as improved formal and informal assessment. The teachers as well complain about various challenges that affect them, the financing policy can aid in solving it from external funding.

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