

# A Study of the Problems Related to Education of the Physically Disabled Children of Karnataka

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## **Introduction**

In Karnataka there are 18 special institutions rendering educational facilities to the physically disabled children, i.e., the blind, the deaf, the dumb and the orthopedically handicapped children.

This study attempts a survey of the existing educational facilities and to identify the problem areas in the education of the physically handicapped children in the age group 6-18 years.

The sample covers 15 heads of such special institutions, 52 teachers teaching the handicapped children, 470 handicapped childrens, studying in those special institutions, 40 parents of the physically handicapped children, 9 welfare associations and 6 experts, who are working for and interested in the education of the physically handicapped children.

Questionnaires and interview techniques have been used to collect information regarding the existing facilities and about the problems in the education of the physically handicapped children.

The problem areas identified are: (1) Scope for special education, (2) Curriculum and instructional materials, (3) Training of teachers, (4) Administration of special institution, (5) Parental education, (6) Co-ordination among the various departments dealing (7) Participatory activities by the welfare associations, (8) Finance, (9) Research and (10) Facilities for teachers, students and other items.

The nature of the problems concerning these and the main consensus obtained form various respondent groups are highlighted in the main paper.

## **A Brief History:**

The history of education of the disabled such as the blind, deaf and mute, can be traced back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A school for the blind, deaf and the mute was started by a voluntary agency at Mysore during 1901. this institution offered courses which were literary and

vocational. Literary education for the blind included learning of Braille alphabets and numerals. The deaf children were imparted literary education which included lip reading and sense culture to begin with, writing of alphabets and numerals at higher stages. The vocational courses for both the blind and deaf children covered weaving, carpentry, ratton work tailoring, spinning, fret work etc. this institution earned a very wide reputation which attracted disabled children from outside the state namely, the Bombay Presidency, Madras Presidency and from the Nizam's Dominions. In addition to this a normal section was started during 1921-1922 with a view to train men to take up the work of teaching the deaf and the blind. By 1927 the Government took over the responsibility of the management of this institution. Even to this date this school exists at Mysore with 2 separate sections one for the blind and the other for the deaf.

Till 1954-55 no efforts were made by the Government or voluntary organizations to start schools for the disabled children. It was only then that a school for the blind was started at Hubli by a voluntary organisation which was given financial assistance by the government and had 12 students on roll by 1956.

During 1958-59 a Christian Missionary started an institution at Whitefield near Bangalore.

During the years 1962-65 the Government of Mysore started two more institutions at Gulbarga for the deaf and the blind children. In South Canara district during 1968, Institute of Social Services in Mangalore started an institution called 'Roshini Nilaya' wherein the blind children were trained in Braille, handicrafts, music, drama etc. It was non-residential vocation-oriented school having parental involvement in the rehabilitation of their blind children.

During 1970, five more institutions were started to cater to the needs of disabled children, of these two were meant solely for orthopedically handicapped children.

At presents the number of special institutions, then teachers and students from 1956-57 to 1980-81. The table reveals that there has been considerable expansion over a period of 25 years. The total expenditure on the physically handicapped was Rs. 43,234 during 1956-57 which rose to 2,22,234 during 1966-67 and during 1979-80, the budget estimates were 22,95,000 under plan and Rs. 44,15,000 under non-plan scheme. This indicates that there has been greater attention to the welfare of the physically handicapped in Karnataka. Even though there is considerable increase in the number of institutions, teachers and students, the increase is insignificant as the number of disabled children (about 9 lakhs) need to be served in the entire state, with necessary education and vocational training.

The course of study provided in these institutions for the blind are similar to those of the normal (non-handicapped) children but through Bharathi-Braille. The deaf children are provided with general education which includes lip reading, auditory training, speech therapy and subjects as English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Hindi and Kannada.

Craft subject such as Drawing and Painting Paper Work, Handicrafts, Tailoring, Press Work and Assembly Work for Part of the course. Physical Education forms part and parcel of the curriculum for these disabled children. Majority of the schools are residential. Very few institutions entertain day scholars. Many of the institutions run by the government. These institutions are governed by the rules and regulations of the Department of Public Instruction as well as the department of Women's and Children's welfare in Karnataka.

There are nine institutions in Karnataka working for the welfare of the disabled persons. Three of them deaf and three for the orthopedically handicapped persons. Main educational activities provided by these welfare organisation, are running special institutions for the children from pre-primary to the secondary level of education. Some of these associations are affiliated to the state and some are affiliated to the affricated to the state and some are affiliated to the national associations for the respective handicapped categories. These welfare associations provide vocational training to the children as well as adults and often assist in their rehabilitation and job placement. After a brief historical review it becomes imperative to spell out the need to study as well as objectives of the study.

#### **Need for the Study:**

In order to speed up or expand the educational services to the disabled children it is important to probe into the existing facilities and the problems faced in rendering these services to the disabled children. As the roles played by the teachers, parents, disabled children in the education process of the disabled is important, it becomes a felt need to study the problems faced by special institutions, teachers teaching the disabled children, Disabled students in special institutions and their parents. The problems faced by welfare associations which conduct special schools for the disabled children needs to be examined. The study of this kind helps to get insight into the global approach to the problems faced by all those involved with the education of the disabled children. Thereby a scheme for improvement or5 expansion of special education can be drawn. An official committee was constituted in 1973 to study the problems and programmes of the physically handicapped. Studies by the Wright Beatrice (1960) and others have made an attempt to study the problems of handicapped children whether at school, or at home, or in peer group settings. Most of these studies emphasize on parental

education, teacher awareness to the problems of handicapped children and the need for suitable environment at school.

Another set of studies by Gearheart (1967), Beriter (1967), Abel (1958), Cutsforth (1958), Johnes (1953) and Quigley (1965 ) have studied the problems faced by the disabled children in specific areas of studies as well as specific problems of visually handicapped, hard of hearing, deaf and mentally retarded children.

In Indian periodicals we find several articles on disabled children. Sexena, Surendra Saini, Seetharma Krishna Iyer, Jayawardhan, Dr. Vedapraksh Varma, B. Sharma, D.P. Agarwal and others have examined the problems of education of the disabled in a wider perspective and have emphasized the need for integration of the disabled with normal children, need for parental education, a bill of rights for the disabled with normal children, need for parental education, a bill of rights for the disabled, need for early detection and prevention of the handicap and the need for special aids and equipments for teaching the blind, the deaf and dumb. In Karnataka, welfare associations working for the welfare of the blind, deaf and dumb and physically handicapped often publish reports, bulletins and news items which highlight the problems faced by the welfare associations, teachers, students in specific fields. The official committee on the problems of the physically handicapped appointed by the Government of Karnataka examined the existing facilities for the disabled and identified certain areas of problems such as training of teachers, need for integration of the disabled children with normal children, absence of grant in aid code for special institutions, lack of awareness among parents, etc.

### **Plan and Procedure:**

The term physically disabled refers to the blind, the partially sighted, the deaf, the hard of hearing and the orthopedically handicapped i.e. with an impaired leg or arm.

The study covers 6 categories of respondents to secure information regarding the problems faced in the education of the physically disabled children.

1. heads of special institutions are the superintendents of the institutions who look after the entire administration and organisation of the day to day activities of the institutions. Fifteen heads of the institutions were covered in the study.
2. teachers: There are 105 teachers working in special institutions in the entire state, of which 50% i.e, 52 teachers were included in the study. The sample covered male/female teachers as well as the handicapped/non-handicapped teachers.

3. Students: Children above 12 years of age studying in special institutions were included in the sample. Age 12 + was insisted upon for the following reasons.
- i) Children above 12 years can comprehend the questions and able to communicate their ideas properly.
  - ii) Over aged children are available in lower classes too since the age for admission of the physically handicapped children is not strictly adhered to as in the case of normal no-handicapped children. The study covered 470 students (B: 233, D: 255, O: 12) (irrespective of the standard in which they studied) which was about 50% of the total student population attending special institutions.
4. Parents: Parents who were studying in special institutions were included in the sample because most of the schools are residential, parents were scattered in different rural parts of the state and so only 40 parents could be covered in the study.
5. Welfare Associations: Which run special institutions for their category of handicapped children were included in the sample because a few members of these associations help look after the administration and organisation of schools maintained by these associations. Nine represent their respective associations.
6. Experts: Those who are directly or indirectly involved with the education of the physically disabled children were considered in the sample. Six such experts were selected for the sample. Those experts not only act as resource persons for the welfare programmes of the disabled persons but are also specialized in the disabled persons. Some of them are themselves physically handicapped and are rendering education services to the disabled children.

**TABLE-II**

**TABLE PRESENTS THE SAMPLE COVERED IN EACH CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS SELECTED FOR THE STUDY:**

(Sample)

Sample Categories	Number Covered			
	B	D	O	T
Heads of Institutions	9	4	2	15

Teachers	26	22	4	52
Students	233	225	12	470
Parents of students	3	3	3	9
Welfare Associations	2	2	2	6
Experts				

b) Tools of Enquiry: Questionnaires and interview techniques were developed and used to secure the responses of various categories of respondent groups. Wherever it was necessary interviews were taped to secure information regarding the problems faced in the education of the physically disabled children. Questionnaires carried two sections. Section I dealt with general information; section II focused mainly on the problems faced in the education of the disabled children.

c) Results: Results of the survey of the existing educational faculties are presented briefly in the following paragraphs.

Out of the 18 special institutions which rendered educational facilities to the physically handicapped children, only 15 responded to the institutional schedule and provided the necessary information for the study. Table II presents management-wise distribution of special institutions.

**TABLE-II**  
**MANAGEMENT-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF INSTITUTIONS:**

SI.No	Management	Special Institution for			
		B	D	O	Total
1.	Central Government	1	1	0	2
2.	State Government	5	2	1	8

## 3. Voluntary agencies

i) Aided	4	0	0	4
ii) Unaided	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>

Table II reveals that there are more state managed institutions, and these are spread over the districts of Bangalore, Belgaum, Mysore, Gulbarga and Chitradurga, whereas voluntary organizations run special institutions spread over the other districts namely Dharwar, Tumkur, Bangalore and Kolar. Two of the institutions entertain only day scholars whereas all others are residential ones.

These institutions conduct courses from pre-primary to secondary levels. Two institutions run pre-primary classes; 5 institutions run only lower primary classes; 5 institutions run classes from I standard to VII standard; 3 institutions have classes from I to X standards.

There are trained and untrained teachers in these institutions; 50% of them are themselves handicapped teaching respective category of handicapped children. Normally teachers secure a diploma/ certificate from institutions, which are normally located outside the state, training them for the specialization in teaching disabled children.

The subjects taught in these institutions are general subjects meant for the normal non handicapped children. In case of blind children the medium is through Bharathi Braille medium of instruction in 13 institutions in Kannada and only in two it is English. Students take up public examinations at the end of their school education along with the non-handicapped children. Provisions are made for the services of readers and scribes for blind children and orthopedically handicapped children who cannot write. There have been cases of successful completion of the SSLC examinations by the blind and deaf students. Besides general education courses, craft subjects are taught in each institution. Vocational subjects like tailoring, weaving, carpentry, knitting, mat making, press and assembly work are taught in the special institutions.

Two institution which are attached to vocational training centres, have a special programme of vocational training after school hours, wherein children learn lathe work, assembling of machinery parts, printing, binding, carpentry, making of toys and play materials, weaving etc.

Physical education forms part and parcel of the course. In two institutions an integrated system of education is being tried with the combination of able and disabled children; these schools are experimental in nature.

The aided institutions get financial assistance from the respective parent organisation for the purchase of books equipment and special aids for teachers as well as disabled children.

### **Problem Areas in the Education of the Physically Disabled Children:**

The problem areas may be approached in many ways. In this paper no attempt is made to discuss all the myriad of possible problems, but rather focuses attention on a limited number of problems which are somewhat representative of the total range of problems. The problems which are somewhat representative of the total range of problems. The problems are detailed out as follows:

1. **Scope for Special Education:** The scope for special education has been a controversial issue for many years. What categories of disabled children should be covered under special education is still an unanswered question. But consensus has been arrived at by the educationists, planners and social service workers that the special education programme should cover services for the blind, deaf, dumb and orthopedically handicapped and the mentally retarded. In what way special education should be really be special in the real sense of the term remains unnoticed by those involved with education of the physically disabled children who are put along with the normal non-handicapped children in the integrated system of education, what special arrangements, equipments and other facilities are required are not yet specified by anyone dealing with the system. Special institutions which cater to the Educational needs of these children come under two different departments in Karnataka, namely, Department of Public Instructions and department of women and children's welfare. The scope of special education in special institutions is not clear cut. Should the scope for special education limit itself to educational services alone or whether rehabilitation, job placement and vocational training also be included in the programme? So, the present study made an attempt to survey the programmes which come under purview of the special education in special institutions. In majority of the cases special education was referred to as the educational courses in the schools. Only in a few cases heads and experts felt that special education should include vocational and educational training. Almost all the heads of the psychiatrists, occupational and physical therapist were in necessity. Due to lack of financial assistance, these services were not offered in these institutions. Inclusion of Career Master's course is important in the special



education programme to make the children aware of the avenues open to them after the end of the course according to the experts, heads, teachers and parents.

2. **Curriculum and Instructional Materials:** Related problems such as the need for change in curriculum, flexibility in curriculum etc. were predominant among teachers / heads and experts in the field of education for the blind and deaf children. Lack of books in Braille, need for Braille library, need for printing press for Braille materials were the problems expressed by almost all the members of the respondent groups. Lack of special aids, equipments, science and geography models were other problems faced by teacher of special institutions. Teachers teaching the deaf expressed difficulty as they had to learn more than one language as there was no one language that could be adopted as the medium. Many parents, students, experts and welfare association members suggested that a career master's course be introduced in the special institutions. Non-availability of medical services and scribe services were the other problems faced by the students.
3. **Training of Teachers:** A number of problems persist in the general area of teacher training programmes for the teachers in the special institutions. The teacher training programmes for teachers of normal children do not include any specialization paper to cater to the needs of teachers in special schools. Hence one or two institutions have started on the job training programmes to train teachers within the special institutions. Hence one of the problems faced by special institutions is dearth of teacher education programmes in the state. Heads of the institutions and associations have expressed the problem of inadequacy of trained teachers available to teach the blind, deaf and dumb. The other problems faced by teachers are non-availability of refresher courses to make them aware of the new teaching techniques and usage of special aids which are in use in other similar institutions outside the state.
4. **Administration:** Many of the problems faced by heads of the institutions are delay in according sanction and recognition of the school, delay in receiving grants, aids and equipments under the grant-in-aid code which is a severe problem expressed by heads of the institutions and welfare associations conducting special schools with financial assistance from the State Government. In the case of private institutions, the heads of the institutions feel that there is lack of co-operation by the management and inadequate grants to meet the contingency expenses. Majority of the heads of the institutions feel that the inspection of schools should be conducted by Department

of Public Institutions rather than Department of Women and Children's Welfare. One of the blind students. Some of the examination of the blind students. Some of the institutions have stated that they need other non-teaching staff and need for grants to conduct experiments and take up research projects regarding the problems faced by disabled children.

5. **Parental Education:** It is revealed that there is lack of awareness among parents about the educational facilities and schemes of scholarships; education of the parents is a major task in the education of the disabled children. The first task is to provide the parents with the completed, accurate information about the disability of the child and the methods to reduce the handicapping factors of the child like educational and social handicaps at later stages of development. The second emphasis involves developing parents as an efficient teacher at home; Parents should be made aware of means of achieving certain developmental goals and child rearing practices to suit the needs of the handicapped child and thereby to avoid the dangers of overprotection.
6. **C-ordination among various department dealing with the education of the physically disabled:** Majority of the heads of special institution have stated that there is a delay in communication sent by departments at state, district and local level. Also lack of awareness about definite roles played by department of Public Instruction, District Association for the Welfare of the Disabled have resulted in frustrating the Disabled have resulted in frustrating the administrators of special institutions. Some of the heads have opened that the state and the local governments should work out large range of programmes which my hlp in allocating resources of the state as well as local areas which may work advantageously to serve the educational needs of the handicapped children. Besides the other problems faced by the heads of the special institutions are delay in sanctioning and receiving of school building, special equipments and special aids. This delay unnecessarily acts as an obstacle to the ongoing special education programme. Thus for the smooth running of education programme for the handicapped children there is needs decentralization of various funding sources for the teachers have felt the need for inspection by the Department women and children's welfare.
7. **participatory activities by the welfare associations:** the welfare associations meant for various categories of handicap have varied aims and objectives to fulfill. The roles played by these welfare associations in the educational programme for the disabled are not clear cut.welfare associations which run special institutions have varied administrative, academic

and financial problems. Absence of common umbrella for all these welfare associations have led various problems with regard to the conducting of courses for the disabled children and adults. Some associations are affiliated to state associations, some of them are affiliated to national associations, thus creating a gulf between the aims and objectives pertaining to the educational activities to be carried out for the disabled. Lack of co-ordination among the various associations has resulted in offering of very divergent courses at school level.

Since there are varied opinions on the type of education to be imparted to the disabled, need for co-ordination among the various welfare associations catering to the educational needs of the disabled children is urgently called for.

8. Facilities: Need for transport facilities to avail the educational facilities offered at special institutions is a major demand by students, parents and teachers. The orthopedically handicapped children especially need special transport facilities to commute from residence to the institution; since the mobility of blind children is a problem many an institution for the blind have been made residential. In the case of deaf children, mobility is not a problem but they feel they should be given concession to travel by local transport or school transport. Majority children in special institutions which are residential have expressed the need for proper clothing, toilet, food and pocket money to meet the bare necessities in day to day life. The facilities such as lack of Braille text books, slated readers services, scribe services are the problems faced by blind students whereas orthopedically handicapped children have expressed the need for special arrangements at general school as well supply of special aids by the government at lower rates. Parents in rural areas have expressed the view that limited number of special schools in rural areas and lack of high schools for children who complete primary education at local institutions. Lack of higher education programmes, correspondence courses in Braille are the grievances of the blind students, teachers. Many teachers and parents have felt that the age of admission to school for the disabled children should be flexible. They think that late admission to the school may be made a statutory provision. Most of the parents, teachers and members of the welfare association feel that there should be integration of the disabled with the normal children.
9. Research: Research related to educational needs of the disabled children has become a dire necessity in our country. Research pertaining to the efficacy of various teaching methods,

organizing patterns, advantageous age of school entrance, class size, teacher pupil ratio desire greater attention. Research into the problems of language development, speech development and teacher characteristics for varied categories of handdipped children become important. Also the result of the studies conducted in the country as well as elsewhere needs to be communicated to administrators, teachers and parents. Research in to the problems of integration demands attention.

10. Finance: The problem of fiscal support of the State Government for special education has been there for considerable period of time. Absence of special grant-in-aid code has led to the problem of starting of new schools for the disabled children. While primary and secondary education have been made free for normal children, the disabled children have to contribute for their education/towards boarding and lodging facilities and towards transport facilities to reach special institutions. This is because there are few schools run by the government. As the education of the disabled is a costly affair, and special education has been vested mostly with voluntary agencies with financial assistance by the government special education has been accessible to a handful of children in urban and rural areas. Parents have especially expressed the need for financial assistance by the government for the purchase of special aids and also concessional rates for the purchase of special equipment to their children.

#### Conclusion:

The study identified the following areas of problems faced by heads of special institutions, teachers teaching the blind \, deaf and dumb, orthopedically handicapped children, students in special institutions and parents of the students in special institutions also spelt out a few problems regarding the education of the handicapped. The areas identified are: 1. Scope of special education, 2. Curriculum and instructional materials, 3. Training of professional personnel, 4. Parental education, 5. Role and relationship among the various departments dealing with education of the handicapped, 6. Participating activities of the welfare associations, 7 Research and 8. finance.

#### Suggestions for Future Action:

In the light of the above problems identified, following suggestions are made:

- a) There is need for spelling out clearly, the scope of special education so as to avoid controversies and complications. A committee could be appointed to look into this problem and offer specific dimensions to be covered under special education programme.

- b) A special grant in aid code may be prepared to make the special education programme more intensive.
- c) A scheme for a special teacher education programme may be drawn to cater to the training programme of teachers teaching the disabled children as well as to those who are interested in taking up the profession.
- d) Need for parental education is of utmost importance; wide publicity through mass media is needed to make the public utilize the educational facilities offered to the physically disabled children.
- e) The state government can help in the preparation of the text books in Braille to help the blind children. It may also start a press to serve the blind children in the state.
- f) A detailed research programme can be chalked out to go into the depth of the problems faced by all those involved in the educational programme to get real insight into the intensity of the problem in each area.
- g) Government and public participation can be sought for solving the problems regarding transport, reader services, library services, etc.
- h) At least during the year of the disabled an attempt to cover more disabled children should be made; there can be more grants released for voluntary organisations to start and run special institutions. The general consensus of problems faced by heads, teachers, students, parents, experts and welfare associations are as follows:
  1. Need for special education programmes in rural areas.
  2. Need for special grant-in-aid code for schools for physically disabled children.
  3. Need for parental education.
  4. Need for special teacher training programme in the state.
  5. Need for research into the problems of the disabled children.
  6. Need for text books and Braille equipments for blind children.
  7. Need for special equipments in school for deaf children.
  8. Need for expansion of scheme of scholarship.
  9. Need for adequate and suitable transport, medical and hostel facilities.
  10. The responsibility of special education programme for the physically disabled children should be vested with the Department of Public Instruction.

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