

Rights of Blind: Enabling the Disabled

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Received: March 28, 2017; **Published:** May 03, 2017

Abstract

People who are blind or visually impaired can perform almost any job, the possibilities have multiplied manifold for the different jobs that the people who are blind or visually impaired are engaged in today or will be in the future. Vocational rehabilitation is an outcome of the employment process. It may be achieved through open, self or sheltered employment, gainful occupation or income generation. The first step towards the vocational rehabilitation of the visually handicapped begins with awareness of the disabled people regarding their rehabilitation rights and the general population recognizing those rights and feeling responsible towards them. The foremost step is aiding towards education of the visually handicapped. Visually handicapped persons can post-education take up skill development courses in daily living, communication, home-management and travel techniques. Almost all the countries of the world have various laws in place for providing vocational rehabilitation to visually handicapped persons. A positive environment at work, encouraging attitude of employers and proper skills are necessary in order for any person to perform to his/her maximum potential. Visually handicapped persons require special environment that will allow optimal use of their talents and maximization of their work output.

Keywords: *Visually Impaired; Vocational Rehabilitation*

Introduction

Stigma may have detrimental effects on the rights of individuals with disabilities. This study examined the association between stigma and the perception of rights of people with intellectual disabilities and people with physical disabilities. The rights of blind people? It is tempting to reply, no different from those of the sighted. We want a happy childhood; a good education (but should we be set apart or in the mainstream?); a satisfying job; a fulfilling family life; enjoyable leisure and social activities, and the chance to take a full part in public life. We want respect; esteem; affection (if we deserve it); but above all recognition that we are citizens with full civil and human rights. Getting a proper vocation and becoming financially independent are vital to a feeling of achievement and success. Careful consideration and advance planning by the visually disabled are key elements to successful entry in to their field of choice. People who are blind or visually impaired can perform almost any job [1]. The possibilities are tremendous of the different jobs people who are blind or visually impaired are engaged in today or will be in the future. Increasing awareness about the visually handicapped people and the various laws that have come into effect for the protection of their rights. Available assistive technology makes it easier for people who are visually impaired to perform many jobs that they never could have before. Proper training, appropriate tools, the ability to sell oneself, and a willing attitude on the part of employers constitute a winning formula. Programs should aim at decreasing social distance to improve support to exercise rights, especially among people with intellectual disabilities.

Discussion

More negative stereotypes, greater social distance and greater withdrawal behaviors were found toward people with intellectual disabilities as compared to people with physical disabilities. ILO Recommendation reads: "For the purpose of this recommendation the term 'vocational rehabilitation' means that part of the continuous process of rehabilitation involves the provision of those vocational services

e.g. vocational guidance, vocational training and selective placement [2]. There may be difficulties in accessing the institutions which offer vocational training. This helps in two ways, one, we can directly make visually handicapped people aware of their rights and second, human interest stories especially TV interviews can put a human face on disability and dispel myths [3]. It is more difficult to vocationally rehabilitate visually handicapped persons in India because there is higher incidence of visual impairment, near non-existence of social security benefits, higher prevalence of visual impairment in the working age group, limited education and training facilities [4]. Work also because it contributes to self-esteem and self-dignity leading to an abiding joy for life. For persons with disabilities, it would offset to a great extent the negative impact of disdainful attitude of the society [5]. The first step is aiding towards education of the visually handicapped. Every child with disability is entitled to free education in an appropriate environment [6]. In addition, the Government regulates recognition of institutions for persons with disability, especially those with severe disabilities [6]. All these steps of making visually handicapped persons educated, qualified and technically sound for taking up a variety of vocations are essential in order for them to be able to get equipped for pursuing a variety of careers of their own choice. Almost all the countries of the world have various laws in place for providing vocational rehabilitation to visually handicapped persons. A positive environment at work, encouraging attitude of employers and proper skills are necessary in order for any person to perform to his/her maximum potential. Visually handicapped persons require special environment that will allow optimal use of their talents and maximization of their work output. Some realistic and effective changes which can be made to make the work environment more conducive to the working of the visually disabled are [1,7]: 1. Adjustment of lighting by removing or replacing bulbs, repositioning lights and adjusting curtains and drapes. 2. Voice, tape-recorded or e-mail messages to the employees or amongst colleagues, instead of handwritten notes. 3. Desk or laptop computers adapted with screen-reading (synthesized speech), screen magnification, and/or optical character recognition (OCR) software. 4. Scanners, larger-than-average monitors, and/or Braille display devices can be added as peripherals. 5. Large print, tactile, or talking calipers, scales, tape measures, thermometers, blood pressure cuffs, calculators, money identifiers, and cash registers. The various avenues of employment are from the unorganized sector or the organized sector. The former include self-employment, professional employment, home-workers, cooperatives and community based rehabilitation. The latter include open employment, special employment, sheltered workshops, transitory employment workshops and on-the job training centers [3]. But a visually handicapped person may also be self-employed and enter into business as an entrepreneur thereby not only owning his/her own business but also will be able to provide employment to others [4,8].

Conclusion

While disability can be prevented and controlled to some extent it cannot be totally eradicated. Gone are the days therefore when visually handicapped persons were seen as a liability by any nation. Now-a-days, not only are they fast integrating into the educational system but are showing and demanding equal participation in the development of their respective nations by contributing towards the net national income. Planning and implementing a range of services aimed at making them independent in all respects can help restore the rights and dignity of the disabled people. The need of the hour is to make the disabled people aware of their rights and strengthen and enforce this law on the ground which has been set up especially for them to achieve economic independence and self-actualization.

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Volume 6 Issue 4 May 2017

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