

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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The publication of this book has been instrumental in helping us to review the field of education of the blind and the different programmes literally all over the world. Mr. Stein is an avid traveller and he has traversed the globe innumerable times. He has met and befriended social workers, educators, rehabilitation workers and blind students in his globe trotting. All these people whose names cannot be mentioned due to paucity of space deserve special thanks as they have helped to contribute to our learning.

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received prompt responses and feedback inspite of their pressing committments.

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Last but not the least, we are grateful to all the blind children, the teachers and parents whose pictures and case studies have been used in this publication.

Ahmedabad  
30 January, 1995

**Bhushan Punani**  
**Nandini Rawal**

## **PREFACE**

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I consider it a great privilege and honour to write the Preface to this book - W. Stein and Integrated Education. I admire and respect my dear friend Wolf Stein and I feel that the great work he has done so diligently and selflessly needs to be recorded, so that posterity and history recognize his valuable contribution to the field of education of the visually impaired.

Mr. Stein is, I feel, a citizen of the world - he transcends borders of nations, castes, creeds and finds himself very much at home in the sophisticated scenario of the west as also a small mud hut in a remote tribal village in India. He can communicate meaningfully with the most humble villager, without knowing his native language. This is because he speaks the language of humanity and love - which is universally understood.

He has travelled extensively in India and tried to preach the gospel of integrated education by demonstration and his uncanny method of communication. He has enriched agencies and professionals in the field of welfare of the visually impaired by his experience and expertise. He is an emotional speaker and reaches straight out to the hearts of his listeners. His love for children and their well-being is evident in every word he speaks.

He has motivated my young colleagues - Bhushan Punani and Nandini Rawal - to such an extent that they are firm followers of the faith of integrated education and admirers of the 'father' as they fondly call him. I am proud of their efforts in the compilation of this booklet and I firmly espouse their views.

I sincerely hope that this small tribute to a great teacher is useful to practitioners and teachers in the field of education of the visually impaired. I wish that Mr. Stein is blessed with many many healthy and happy years to enable to further enrich the field with his wisdom.

Ahmedabad  
16 November, 1994

**Jagdish K. Patel**  
General Secretary  
Blind Men's Association

## **THE MAN AND HIS VISION**

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Mr. Wolfgang Arthur Stein usually begins any talk on integrated education with the words "*Take a blind child by the hand and lead him..... into life*". Simple words, but rich with meaning, very ably putting the quintessence of rehabilitation, education, planning, philosophy and co-existence in its true perspective.

An Educator: Mr. Stein is an "*Educator*" who's heart, head and being centre around the welfare of his pupils. Years of working with children have made him a master whose every nerve is sensitized to improving the quality of education. He is a born educator whose concern is evident in his humanity, his love for children and visually impaired children in particular, whose dictum is not to preach but practice, who can walk with kings and crowds alike and whose devotion and utter dedication to his field are hallmarks of his greatness.

A Pedagogue: Mr. Stein prefers to be referred to as an "*Educator*". The term "*teacher*" in the hearts and minds of many people is always associated with classroom activity i.e. reading, writing and arithmetic (of which he taught very little). In fact, looking at the work he has been doing in the past 20-30 years, his role could be more appropriately described as that of a "*Pedagogue*". He prefers to talk about "*pedagogy*" rather than "*education*" as this term embraces more comprehensively the manifold duties and responsibilities of someone responsible for the upbringing of children. Also, the person who advocates, lectures on teaching methods, principles and philosophy of teaching fits better the synonym "*pedagogue*".

Initiator of Integrated Education: During the early seventies Mr. Stein shared his views on integrated education with Mr.



#### **Charisma & Charm**

*W. Stein addresses the Quinquennial ICEVI Conference in Germany in 1987.*

P. G. Michael, Regional Representative, South Asia Region, Christoffel Blindenmission: the first Indian with whom he talked about integration. Mr. Michael, Mr. Stein feels, knew very little about it, but he quickly understood the new dimension and its implications for India and soon he became a devoted follower and vociferous advocate of the new concept. Together with Mr. Michael, Mr. Stein made the first real break-through with integrated education in Tamil Nadu in South India.



#### **Brothers in Faith**

*Evaluating a child's performance with close friend Mr. P.G. Michael*

In a dinner meeting with the Minister of Education of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Stein had an opportunity to convince the former about integration and he gave them permission to embark on a pilot project at Coimbatore. This is how it all started in South India. Needless to add that Mr. Stein had also to convince the Board of the Christoffel Blindenmission for it.

Promoter of Integrated Education: Mr. Stein conducted several workshops over a period of two years for refreshing

skills of the itinerant teachers working in the various integrated education projects all over India. These workshops were sponsored by Sight Savers (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind) and coordinated by National Association for the Blind, India to examine the scope and standards of integrated education programmes, to expose the teachers to innovative teaching methods and discuss the problems faced by them in their day-to-day work.

Mr. Stein emphasized the vital role of teachers in working with a blind child, fashioning him with care and concern and enabling him to walk with his head held high in the mainstream of life, as an indivisible part of the pulsating group around. An itinerant teacher is thus not an ordinary teacher bound by the limitations of time and curriculum, he is in Mr. Stein's words, "*A philosopher and a horse-tamer*" - A teacher who has the quest of knowledge, love for humanity, innovativeness and the skills for taming his ward i.e. shaping his personality and over-all development.

According to Mr. Stein, a teacher's education is never complete, the teacher begins to die the day he stops learning. Learning is thus not a static, once-in-a-life time exercise, it is a continuous yearning for knowledge.

**Experienced Educator:** Mr. Stein has worked in both forms of education - special and integrated and has an in-depth knowledge of the inherent strengths and weaknesses of each. He believes that the '*itinerant teacher*' is the "new teacher" who has a multidimensional personality - that of a counsellor, consultant, investigator and artisan to name a few qualities. He strongly feels that a child has to be thoroughly prepared before he is admitted to a school, he cannot just be admitted before he is mentally and physically equipped with the skills necessary for school.

Starting by teaching the child to learn to read and write braille in the early days could have a detrimental effect on the child. He would be learning an alien script without becoming acquainted with familiar things. Mr. Stein cautions against this hasty plunge into braille and stresses the importance of sensory training by activating the senses to compensate for loss of sight. A child has to be taught tactual discrimination and concept of dots through tactile material before being taught braille.

**Three Axioms of Education:** Mr. Stein feels that a child should be fully confident in his movement before he goes to school and hence the importance of orientation and mobility cannot be stressed enough. Mr. Stein swears by three axioms for the success of integrated education:

1. Education is education for life
2. Life is different in different parts of the world, education must thus be environment-oriented.
3. The best education is that which enables the child to compete, survive and live.

The days with Mr. Stein could be reckoned to days spent in the company of a sage enlightened yet humble, whose love of learning is his mission. As Socrates says "*Life should be inspired by love, sweetened by poetry and guided by knowledge*" Who better personifies this statement than Mr. Stein?

**A Tribute:** This publication is a humble attempt to put together the thoughts of Mr. Stein and enable workers in the field of welfare of the visually impaired to learn from these thoughts and translate these experiences to suit their own special needs.

This publication is based on the thoughts reflected by Mr. Stein in numerous seminars, reports, letters and personal conversation. It is, however, not easy to put his thoughts in the same emotional vein that is his forte, nor is it as easy to be as picturesquely eloquent as he is.

This publication of his thoughts is our personal tribute to a great "*pedagogue*" who initiated us in the field of integrated education of the visually impaired.

Ahmedabad  
16 November, 1994

**Bhushan Punani**  
**Nandini Rawal**

## **A DISTINGUISHED CAREER**

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Mr. Wolfgang Arthur Stein is known the world over as the Overseas Director of the Christoffel Blindenmission with which he was associated from 1970 to 1984, playing a vital role in directing the efforts of CBM in combating blindness, helping the handicapped and highlighting the education of visually impaired children. He is, however, more loved as a humanitarian, pursuing the cause of visually impaired children unflinchingly and relentlessly.

Born on 28 August, 1930 at Witten in a mining district of Germany, he had experienced poverty and hunger as most of his fellowmen did at that time. It was his determination that saw him through his primary and secondary education. He was able to complete his education and studies in social work in post-War Germany, working part time in steel mills and coal mines to finance his studies.

After obtaining a degree in Social Work, Mr. Stein served briefly in an institution for maladjusted boys in Switzerland and thereafter as Education Officer in Brunswick, Germany, from 1951 to 1958. In this assignment his focus of attention was the juvenile delinquents. After three years of service as Counsellor for Refugee Students in Brunswick and Hanover Universities, he expanded his professional scope by undergoing training in education of the blind at Liverpool and Sheffield, U. K.

At Tapton Mount School in Sheffield, Mr. Stein warmly recalls, he was fortunate to meet the headmaster, Mr. Freddie Tooze, one of the pioneers of integrated education in England. Their encounter led to a long friendship; years later their paths crossed again when they helped develop some of the first integrated education programmes in Africa. Following the U. K. training, Mr. Stein came to serve

the Orient as the Superintendent of the "Ebenezer School for the Blind, Hong Kong" from 1964 to 1970. It was from here that he was invited to join the Christoffel Blindenmission, Germany.



#### **The Cartographer**

*Mr. Stein with his self-made map of the Kowloon Peninsula*

Mr. Stein's rich experience and knowledge has helped CBM in emerging as a pioneering agency in the world today assisting over 300 organizations in their fight against blindness and endeavours to rehabilitate the handicapped. He has ably guided institutions working in partnership with CBM in planning and launching meaningful and realistic programmes.

In August, 1977 at the VI Quinquennial Conference of the International Council of the Educators of the Visually Handicapped (ICEVH) held in Paris, Mr. Stein was unanimously elected as its President for the ensuing quinquennium. Under his enlightened leadership, the ICEVH, which is the forum of the educators of the visually impaired, reached new heights in planning programmes for educating and rehabilitating millions of blind all over the world.

The VIII Quinquennial Conference of ICEVH, with over 500 participants from 90 countries, held at Wurzburg, Germany, in 1987, was a superbly executed and managed one under the personal supervision of Mr. Stein. It was as if he was hosting the Conference at his own home - so warm and personalized was his hospitality.

He joined Sight Savers (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind) as International Rehabilitation and Education Consultant during 1984. During his tenure he conducted a number of workshops for itinerant and resource teachers in India as he felt that only with intensive training could these teachers provide the specialized services that a small blind child needs. He brought a new awakening regarding pre-braille activities, making of educational aids using locally available materials and the constant need to keep learning new things to enable education to become a dynamic process in the true sense of the word. He played a pivotal role in promoting the itinerant model of integrated education



#### **Great Role of Music**

*Children of Blind School in Hong Kong*

His work is not confined to any one country or continent. He has initiated integrated education in quite a few Caribbean countries, in Africa, in Asia, more recently in Canton\China, in Bulgaria and in Romania.

A widely travelled man, visiting almost all the countries covered by the Christoffel Blindenmission and the Sight Savers (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind), at least once a year, Mr. Stein is a silent dynamo, full of love and compassion for the suffering humanity. He is a powerful speaker, admired for his depth of thoughts, frank opinions, practical ideas and most of all his sensitivity and warmth. Mr. Stein is a respected participant in major world forums in the fight against blindness and activities for the welfare of the handicapped.

He celebrated his 60th Birthday on 28 August, 1990. A large number of fellow workers and admirers from all over the world had the privilege of enjoying a grand evening with the "*Father of Integrated Education*" as he is rightly called.

His advancing years do not seem to show on him at all - he is in fact more enthused and creative than ever.

## **EARLY INTERVENTION AND THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED CHILD**

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(Based on a Keynote Address Presented by Mr. Stein at the International Symposium on "Visually Handicapped Infants and Young Children: Birth to Seven" at Tel Aviv, Israel, 1981)

### **1. The Opulent Occident:**

Allow me to begin my observations with a little digression before I turn to the actual theme of this conference. I consider this digression necessary however, because it will make many connections clear and place our specific problems in a larger perspective and in a wider dimension.

We live in great times. Such momentous and revolutionary changes in human life as have characterized the past 30-50 years have never before been experienced in any previous era of humanity. Man has, to speak in biblical terms, subdued the earth, in the truest sense of the word. It almost seems as if there were no more secrets, and the word "impossible" will soon disappear from our vocabulary. Scientists, technologists, and doctors have opened doors which for our ancestors were either taboo or regarded as firmly closed. In half a century we have split the first atom, mastered the air, and now we are preparing to totally conquer space.

That which seemed infinitely far away to our fathers has already been brought within an attainable distance, and since the first landing on the moon, a development has begun the outcome of which we cannot even guess. The visions of one Jules Verne already seem as fairy tales to us nowadays; we find it much easier to agree with Jung, who



has said "The future has already begun!" In a simpler way, but still expressing a distinct feeling of elation, a member of a new caste in our society, the "Jet-Set", said recently; "Last night I dined in London, I had breakfast in Bombay, lunch in Singapore, and my next dinner will be served to me in Tokyo. It's great to live in times like these and great to be able to say: "We were there at the time!"

Indeed, we were, we are here at this time! and we are not only eye witnesses and participants of these wonders of technology, we also see ourselves as victims, stripped of our own last secrets. Medicine, psychology, and psychiatry go beyond those limits which for centuries were regarded as inviolable taboos. Since the first heart transplant was successfully performed less than 20 years ago, it seems that the transplant of other human organs is not a matter of time. The conquering of the last deadly diseases, for example cancer, also belong to this development.

On the horizon is genetic manipulation which may one day bestow us with a conveyer-belt production of brains modelled after Einstein. Our times, our great times! Should we not join in a chorus with the jubilant cry of that jet-setter: "We are here to experience it!" Like gods we have liberated ourselves, elevated ourselves - flown up to the stars. Truly, we are the crown of creation!

## **2. The Dismal Disparity:**

Unfortunately this hymn of praise is not a world-wide chorus! The dissonance arises from the fact that only a small proportion of the human population of our planet has a share of which we are so proud of and that these acquisitions have by-passed more than two thirds of all human beings. Even more: there are signs and proof that

in the last decades of our rapid development, our growing wealth and our improved standard of living, many of these countries which were already poor have become still poorer. So poor, that 70-80 per cent of their people lead an existence unworthy of human beings, below the minimum necessary for survival, the so-called "Poverty Line". For example, in India this means a yearly income of less than 50 US \$.

In order to demonstrate the large extent to which our world is split into "Different Worlds", I will compare the following figures: the Gross National Product in India amounts to US\$ 150, in the U.S.A. it comes to \$ 5,590, in Bangladesh it is \$ 90, compared to \$4,480 in Sweden. Poverty has many faces, and its criteria are varied. Someone has claimed that a person in Europe may be classed as poor if he has no car, in Asia he is poor if he has no bicycle, and in Africa if he cannot afford a pair of shoes. My definition is simpler: for me all those who cannot eat their fill at least once a day are poor!

It is of these poor people I am thinking, especially of the many millions of hungry children. I have met them in the slums of large cities in Asia and Latin America, in the refugee areas of East Africa, and in the arid regions of the Sahel in West Africa. They are not yet "handicapped" in the sense of our theme, but there can be no doubt that it is precisely these children who, because of inhuman living conditions, form the large reservoir of those whom we call "children at risk". Just how much they are at risk is shown by a publication of the World Health Organization, according to which in South-East Asia alone 100,000 to 150,000 children go blind yearly from xerophthalmia.

This statement leads me right into our theme: here it is not a question of old people who lose their sight late in their

lives - here we are talking about small children and infants who lose faculty of sight at a time when their lives have not yet really begun. At the same time we should remember that these visually impaired children represent only one of the diverse groups of handicapped persons: together with the deaf, mentally and physically handicapped they form approximately 15 per cent of the child population in developing countries.

The World Health Organization has said that the two main causes of these handicaps are malnutrition of mothers and children, lack of vitamins, and to top it all a host of infectious diseases. If the goods of this world were more equally distributed, a little more insight were shown on the part of those in positions of responsibility, and there was more solidarity of effort, 80 per cent of these handicaps could probably be prevented. Can we still talk about our "great times" in the face of this? How great - or how small - do we suddenly become faced with such knowledge? A well-known industrialist once said: "Nothing imposes more responsibility than wealth". Have we, the rich and privileged of this world, assumed such responsibility ourselves?

### **3. Persons In Need:**

Even if we are not prepared to share the problems of our fellow human beings in an underprivileged part of the world, one would at least assume that we have solved our own. Let us, therefore, examine our great, affluent and flourishing society somewhat closer. Have the fantastic achievements of technology, science and industry also contributed to raise our human life together, our attitudes toward our neighbours, to a better, higher level? Do all members of our society participate in this progress, do they all really enjoy and benefit from this zenith of human existence? Have we in fact already asked ourselves why we need a

"Year of the Child" or a "Year of the Handicapped"? Could it be possible that such proclamations are issued to force us to think of those whom we so often banish from our consciousness?

Let me speak clearly: our rich, prosperous society assumes more and more often an attitude of rejection or at least of ignorance to wards all those who form a disturbing element in our prosperous paradise.

They neither fit into our image of perfection, nor can they have a place in our competitive system: the ill, the weak, the handicapped, the old, the dying.

In this context it is interesting to follow advertisements on the radio or television, for by now we are aware of the power of such advertisements in forming our opinions. In them a society is suggested to us, or at least an ideal picture of this society, which consists of happy, healthy, vital, active and wealthy people whose average age is perhaps 25. The pharmaceutical industry probably represents the only exception, as its advertisements extol the virtues of medicines and miracle cures which promise eternal youth, vitality and health for those among us who are no longer young.

Let us be honest with ourselves: we would like to push them out of our sight, all those who disturb our image of a perfect human society! For that reason they must be forced into isolation from us- the aged and feeble into old people's homes and infirmaries, the dying into sterile hospital rooms, the blind, deaf and physically handicapped into special schools, the mentally retarded into institutions and asylums. We tell ourselves, "That is the State's business and responsibility. The State must take care of them". We forget that we are the State. If the State fails, then we fail too.

We must develop a new conception of our human community so that there is room not only for those who contribute to its knowledge, progress and wealth, but also warmth and affection for those who are weaker and have less to give. We must all have a sense of responsibility for one another. These basic demands on social conscience cannot be laid down by law. All of us as fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters of the human family must make individual contributions to this development.

Despite the bleak picture I have just presented, there is much existing upon which we can build. There are examples in the world which can encourage and stimulate us, which can show us how to strive for that better human community where each individual can have the right to full membership and participation.

#### **4. The Visually Handicapped Child: Early Intervention And Parental Involvement:**

Now we must consider a task which has been given to this conference: to look at the needs of young visually handicapped children. We who are here, you and I, want to give blind and low visioned children a better start in life and in the society in which they will live. We understand how important it is to begin this process early, as early as possible. We know that during the first years of a normal child's life everything can still be won or lost. This is even more strongly true of the early years of a handicapped child's life. Too long we have held on tightly to the concept that what we call "education" begins at ages 5, 6 or 7. We have been thinking primarily of educating a child to become an "academic being" rather than a "social being".

Today we know that learning, and education begin at birth, and that parents represent the key figures in the learning

process of a small child. Let us not therefore take our own roles too seriously, because by the time children come under our care and responsibility, a decisive part of their development as human beings has already been concluded. We must arrive at a new recognition and evaluation of the important role parents play. Whenever a child comes under our protection, his parents must remain our most important partners.

But parents often feel helpless and unprepared, which is understandable. We train people to be teachers, psychologists, and therapists at our universities. Where do we train people to function as parents? There are no schools teaching parenting. It is, therefore, not the least surprising that parents often find themselves unable to cope with their children's problems, especially if the children are handicapped. An experienced educator says on this subject:

"Many handicapped children are not aware of their problems during the first few years of their lives. It is their parents who suffer most. They are ignorant of the full import of their child's condition, and may be harbouring many misconceptions. Most parents are terribly shocked. Some refuse to accept the diagnosis of the doctor. Blaming themselves or others for their child's condition, some reject the handicapped child totally. A large percentage mix guilt with pity and overprotect the child. Full acceptance is not an easy matter for any parent."

Nearly all parents need help at some time during the early years of the lives of their handicapped children, and most of them are glad to accept assistance. It is not so vital that we as counsellors and teachers be concerned with using the most scientific methods and techniques when handling the children, but rather that we make every effort to use the

best possible ways of helping the parents. Such help may be given in a different form in a developing country from what is offered in a prosperous society. In all cases, the most important thing is the activation of the family's latent strength for sharing and helping one another so that all members may live in harmony and joy with the handicapped child.

### **5. Deinstitutionalization:**

On no account should our only answer be the institutionalization of such children. I am aware that in certain cases where especially severe handicaps are involved, a short or long-term stay in a special institution cannot be avoided. In spite of this, I declare myself to be a strong opponent of special institutions where they only serve as alternatives or as excuses for the failure of both family and society. This is equally true for handicapped children at pre-school or school age.

For a long time now we have known about the so-called "hospitalism syndrome", that is, the deficiencies children living in institutions show in almost all areas of their personal development. Nevertheless, the tendency still exists to isolate handicapped children in institutions. I would like to quote from Professor Hellbrügge, a teaching paediatrician, who has created in my country a model integrated programme for handicapped and non-handicapped children, "Only if we promote the social development of a child, no matter in what way he is handicapped, at the earliest possible stage, and give him the opportunity at pre-school and school age to know the world of non-handicapped people... Only if we give the non-handicapped child an opportunity early in his life to know and accept the handicapped child in the context of his social development will we be able to really solve the problem of handicapped

persons in our society."

### **6. Social Integration:**

Such integration is possible in our prosperous societies and in developing countries - indeed, in the latter it is not only possible but imperative. How else could the great mass of handicapped children in Third World countries ever have a chance of education? In India, to mention only one example, there are over 130 residential schools for the blind, yet we know that these schools can offer service to only one child out of thirty in that country. If only for financial reasons, we must ask how many special schools must still be built to guarantee all visually impaired children the right to education.

But I am not so concerned with the financial side of the problem. My main concern, our main concern, must be to help build a social structure in which handicapped and non-handicapped persons can live together. Prosperity and health must not be allowed to obscure the fact that God has created this world for all of us, a world in which every individual must have his place.

One of our philosophers said that handicapped people need society, but society needs its handicapped members also. Any society's ethical, moral and spiritual value can be measured according to whether it not only tolerates its handicapped members, but fully accepts them.

If our riches should one day all be taken away from us, the sense of community, of solidarity, the feeling of responsibility for our neighbour would survive and become a guideline and compass for future generations.

Thus the duty of all educators is not merely to fulfill professional obligations, but to challenge themselves, and others, to build a new and better society. Over and beyond all professional deliberations let us respond to, and accept, this challenge.

## **THE NEW TEACHER**

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### **1. Integrated Education - The New Challenge**

Integrated education has been initiated and has grown steadily in the developing world. Mr. Stein believes that working in integrated education in Asia and Africa is not just another teaching job based within the sheltered precincts of a classroom. It is a challenging responsibility, embracing the care and welfare of scores of visually impaired children in a wide area. It can be one of the roughest and toughest educational assignments that can be found anywhere in the world. Its possibilities are immense, its horizons wide, yet, because of the very areas in which it has to operate, the dividing line between success and failure is sometimes very thin.

Integrated education depends for its vitality, indeed its existence, on the "know how", competence and tenacity of the men and women who pioneer this work in the field. They are the people who have to demonstrate convincingly to governments, missions, voluntary agencies and, most important of all, the families who have visually impaired children, that these children are trainable - that this training can be imparted effectively in ordinary schools and that, from the point of view of the class teacher, it can be done without upsetting the normal balance of work in the school.

#### **1.1 Qualities of a Leader:**

What are the qualities that a successful leader in integrated education must possess? One of the most important is certainly a firm belief in the value of the work that one is doing and the ability to see a project through to a satisfactory conclusion. Another is the vision to see this form of

education in its true setting - not merely as another way of passing on knowledge, but as an instrument which can, under the right leadership, become a massive force in breaking down the barriers of apathy and ignorance which surround the lives of so many blind children.

A true appreciation of the social potentialities of integrated education is an essential element in the thinking of all teachers interested in this work. At present, integrated education is working in the humblest of communities: in small villages and towns, permeating into family life with its message of hope and tolerance for handicapped children. Integrated education needs not only good teachers, but teachers with tact, personality and the ability to mix with all kinds of people, who are able to present the case for integrated education in an attractive, logical and persuasive manner.

It will be the integrated education officer in a given area who will set the whole tone of a system - a system that, if it is happily run will show a good team spirit amongst its staff, be respected by teachers and parents in the ordinary schools, and above all bring to each and every blind child a warm, friendly approach on which confidence is easily built. In the haste to build up an impressive scheme, it is easy to forget that each child must be treated as an individual. The "one to one" relationship of a specialist teacher to a visually impaired child is essential, particularly in the formative months of a system and should be nurtured in a natural, easy way.

## 2. What is Education

Education for Life: Mr. Stein says, it is difficult to define education exactly or limit it to one meaning. The right word for education is Pedagogy which could be translated to

convey its real meaning as 'lead a child' - for education of a visually impaired child it could be translated as "Take a blind child by the hand and lead him into life". Mr. Stein emphasizes that a teacher must love his visually impaired ward selflessly and unflinchingly. Only then will he feel one with the child and would be able to prepare him for life. The greatest challenge for the teacher is to teach the child skills for his normalization, for his ultimate integration into society and into life. He emphasizes that education is not just formal learning, it is education for life.

Mother - the First Teacher: Education does not begin at school but right after birth, the mother being the first "teacher" of the child. She will retain that role until her child enters adulthood, guiding, directing, and leading him. Above all, her physical closeness, warmth, care and love surround the child, providing him with the most essential elements of education. She is the first one to "take the child by the hand" during those 6 years in the life of any child. It is in this period that the foundations of the child's personality are laid, for his social, emotional, spiritual development. And it is a period of intensive learning, informal though, but nevertheless of immense value.

During this period, the child may enter Kindergarten - the first "transition" in his young life. Especially for children without siblings, this is another enriching experience. He becomes a member of a group in which the process of socialization and integration in society is beginning to take shape. Unknowingly, the child learns how to function in and respond to life in a small community and to find his own place in it.

Transition from Home to School: Entering the school - the second transition - is the next decisive stage in the educational process. School is not the beginning of education; it

is the continuation of a process that began right after birth. At school it only takes a more formal shape. And a new key-figure enters the child's life: the Teacher! His role is described in more detail later in this publication, but it is important to note that he does not replace the mother. The teacher must recognize her as a partner in a joint effort to prepare the child for life and to be fully integrated in society. Thus this transition should be a smooth and natural process. For the child, it is also the beginning of a fascinating journey. From now on, the teacher will take his hand and lead him into a new world, the world of search and discovery, of knowledge and experience.

### **3. History of Education of the Visually Impaired**

#### **3.1 First School For The Visually Impaired:**

Mr. Stein traces the origin of the first school for the visually impaired to a letter by Dr. Diderot during 1748 which was published in a French newspaper in Paris. Interestingly enough, it was a letter meant for educators but was written not by an educator, but by a physician. The letter bears the title, "A letter about the blind for the use of those who can see". and in this letter, for the first time, somebody reveals something about the real personality of the human being behind blind eyes.

In this letter which is totally unknown among the educators for the visually impaired in many parts of the world, Diderot reveals that what a wonderful friend he had discovered in his blind neighbour, a man who, to his utter surprise, wrote poetry, appreciated music, even played some instruments, who had many manual skills - a man who was longing for friendship, a man who wanted to be wanted, and who was indeed wanted by others. This was a very different kind of person than one that we sometimes in our distorted minds

form about the poor blind man - the blind beggar, the blind musician or the blind child that is worthless.

This letter highlighted the potentials of the blind as witnessed by Dr. Diderot and made society look afresh at this neglected segment of society.

It was during 1784, that Mr. Valentine Huay established the first school for the blind in the world in Paris. Louis Braille, a student of this school invented the embossed six dot system of reading and writing, now popularly known as the Braille System. In India, the first school for the blind was started at Amritsar during 1887 by Ms. Annie Sharp, a Christian missionary.

#### **3.2 Beginning of Special Education in India:**

Miss Annie Sharp - the initiator of education for the blind in India. It was a woman; not a man, not provided with "colonial" or other governmental powers, just a lady with a vision, a determination. She was willing to make certain sacrifices to leave her family, her friends, her home country. She had set her mind at a goal: To teach, train blind children in a far-away country, in India. What made her do that? We don't really know. For Christians there is an easy explanation: God charged her, directed, guided her.

Yet, she must have had inspirations of a very human nature; the understanding and knowledge of human needs, the notion of desires and despairs of those on the dark side of the road, the conviction that life gives us the rare chance to make it meaningful if we live it not only for ourselves, but for others. She must have sensed that there is a reward for every sacrifice, a reward not in cash or kind, but the satisfaction of an enriched, enhanced, fulfilled life.

Miss Annie Sharp, incidentally, did not just "work for the blind": She lived with the blind people in her care, she shared her life with them. Her seemingly unimportant venture didn't cause headlines, public attention. That should not surprise us: Most humanitarian acts were done in quiet, solitude, seclusion. In the same quiet manner, a young missionary lady from Germany, Louise Cooper, left for China in order to work with a small community of blind people near Canton-just two years after Miss Sharp's Indian adventure began; in less than ten years a young pastor by the name of Ernst Christoffel would follow them to establish the first homes and schools for the blind in the Middle East, Turkey and Iran. None of them ever received public recognition during their life-times.

### 3.3 Advantages Of Special Schools:

This system of special education, that is, educating visually impaired children in schools specially created for them, became very popular and for some time remained the only medium of education of the blind. At that time there was absolutely no inkling of any other possible system of education. The special schools had distinct advantages which enabled their proliferation and acceptance as a mode of education.

While conducting a seminar for the itinerant teachers at Ahmedabad, Mr. Stein pointed out a variety advantages of special schools including availability of specialized trained teachers, access to wide range of special equipment, and well organized and clean environment. As the size of each class is small, each child gets individualized attention and the special teachers devote adequate time for each child.

These schools lay adequate emphasis on plus curriculum i.e. braille, activities of daily living and orientation and

mobility. These schools have developed adequate facilities for development of other skills i.e. music, chair caning, weaving etc. He considers these schools ideal for the poor children as boarding and lodging is generally free. Similarly, these schools emerge as a shelter for the abandoned blind children.

### 3.4 Limitations of Special Schools:

Mr. Stein considers that it is fair to say that the residential system reaches out to only about 3 to 5 per cent of visually handicapped children of India. That, as a matter of fact, is a similar picture in almost all developing countries. Or, it has been the same picture until very recently, let us say, until 10 to 15 years ago when in many of these countries what we are still planning has become a reality - integrated education.

So, it is for reason of numbers that we should promote and embark, set our sails on the ship called "integrated education". But we have also heard that there are other reasons. How does one find a blind school! Somebody once said: 'Just find the building with the highest walls around it'. That is the blind school. Mr. Stein has seen blind schools all over the world and they virtually all look the same. He has yet to find a blind school without that high wall around it.

For over 200 years, in spite of all the good and all wonderful things that have been achieved by blind schools, in all these 200 years they have also added to that phenomenon that we call the blind group set apart. That is in fact one of the biggest problems of blindness - not belonging to the community. If we are ready not only in our minds but also in our hearts to receive our blind brothers and sisters in our communities, we have to prepare them and that preparation begins very early in life. It begins even before they enter



school. Unfortunately in most cases we only reach them when they are above school-age.

Mr. Stein has been reading lots of material of the forefathers of education of the blind and then very often he has come across the phrases, "We must lead them out of their darkness." That might be true and that might be a good approach. But no where ever we read the phrase, "We must lead them into our societies."

### **3.5 Beginning Of Integrated Education:**

Inspite of the various advantages of special education, it was realized that the visually impaired children were isolated from their families and society. Infact it was this single principle that made professionals and parents to pause and appraise afresh the relevance and merits of this system.

**3.5.1 Scotland Project:** The origin of integrated education can be traced back through the years. More than a hundred and thirty years ago, the first organized system of integrated education was introduced in Scotland and was replicated for a short period in other parts of the United Kingdom. It was a venture well in advance of the social and educational thinking of the age and aimed, according to one record "at preserving the home life of visually impaired children and overcoming the economic problems of the times". After a promising start the project failed "through lack of interest on the part of the teaching profession and public".

**3.5.2 Initiation in America:** Little was heard of the co-education of visually impaired and seeing children, though further half-hearted attempts were made in England between 1860-70. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Dr. R.B. Irwin made in the United States the first successful attempt

at the integration of visually impaired and sighted children in the schools of Cleveland, Ohio. His work obtained little publicity but he persevered with it over the years. The scheme was taken up seriously in the 1930s in Maryland and later in Kentucky. It was after the Second World War that "integration" or "integrated education" gripped public imagination and came into its own. Today, over half the blind children in the United States are educated in regular schools.

### **3.6 Impetus To Integrated Education:**

It is interesting to note that integrated education received its main impetus not so much through the initiative of teachers and social workers (though there were exceptions), as much as the response to the request of parents, many of them who objected to sending their children long distances to special schools. This, coupled with the fact that it was much cheaper to educate a visually impaired child in an ordinary school, probably contributed to the popularity of the scheme with the public. At the same time many professional workers realized that for a great number of blind children, the regular school was probably, from the wider educational aspect, the best environment.

### **3.7 Who Initiated Integrated Education:**

According to Mr. Stein three groups of individuals played an important role in initiating integrated education:

**3.7.1 Visually Impaired Persons Themselves:** Many visually impaired persons themselves were not satisfied with the system of special education, they wanted to stay with their families and study in regular schools along with other sighted children. They took the initiative in encouraging integrated education.

(This is true in India as well. Most of leaders of integrated education like Jagdish Patel, Lal Advani, Rajendra T. Vyas, Ramnik Halari, Rehmat Fazalbhoy, Bhaskar Mehta, K. A. Thaker, Narendra Kumar, Harshad Jani, Anil Patel, T. Ashir Nallathambi, M. K. Choudhary, C. D. Tamboli, Anuradha Mohit are themselves blind persons)

**3.7.2 Progressive Teachers Of The Visually Impaired:** They discovered that the special education was not the right answer to the education and complete development of the blind. They felt that the visually impaired persons were missing a lot in life by being isolated from the mainstream. Hence they thought of initiating integrated education.

**3.7.3 Parents Of the Visually Impaired Children:** Parents did not wish to send their blind child away from home to a special school far away. They felt that the child would be much better off if he stayed in the family and in a familiar environment. They also realized that their blind child could be educated along with the sighted children with some additional efforts and they encouraged integrated education.

Mr. Stein emphasizes that one must never underestimate the importance of involvement of visually impaired persons and their parents in the planning and implementation of programmes of education. In fact programmes planned with the active cooperation of parents are immensely successful as goals set are more realistic and practical.

#### **4. Advantages of Integrated Education:**

Mr. Stein feels that special schools and integrated education are not mutually exclusive, they are not substitutes for each other, they are in fact complementary to one another and each one helps to supplement the other. Special

schools will always exist for visually impaired children with an additional handicap; or for children who come from broken families; or who are destitute. Integrated education is, however, the only option for reaching out to the thousands of blind children in remote rural areas in developing countries. Mr. Stein points out the following advantages of integrated education:

#### **4.1 Social Integration**

What has integrated education to offer visually impaired children in Asia and Africa? It offers congenial company instead of physical isolation; the uplift and prestige of belonging to a group busily engaged in enriching their minds instead of endless mental stagnation; the knowledge that one is "wanted" and is part and parcel of a progressive and lively young community instead of being thought of as an oddity that for most purposes is inert or even "dead". These are but a few of the joys that properly organized integrated education can bring into the life of a visually impaired child.

The social benefits in case of integrated education are immeasurable - it swiftly removes stigma, prejudice or indifferent attitudes of the sighted towards the visually impaired.

#### **4.2 Mutual Sharing:**

Socially and administratively the system has equally important advantages. It has, for example, been shown conclusively in Africa that integrated education is a two-way process: it not only trains the blind child but, because it works in the midst of communities, it educates the local population in more understanding attitudes towards the handicapped. Many people who have seen these

schemes at work feel that on these grounds alone the integrated education schemes should be developed.

#### **4.3 Wide Coverage:**

Integrated education is the last weapon to reach out to the vast number of visually impaired children - the bleak statistics indicate that there might be as many as half a million of them in India.

Administratively, it provides a logical and practical means of dealing with large numbers of visually impaired children at a realistic cost. Integrated education, then, is the latest weapon in attempting to assist the estimated 6,70,000 blind children in the world and the 20,000 children in commonwealth countries who lose their sight every year and who will never be served by special schools. The few residential schools can hardly touch the fringe of the problem. Academic achievements in case of integrated education may not be as high as in case of special schools, but for most of these children in India - and in most developing countries for that matter - it is a question of some education or none.

Mr. Stein stresses that the ultimate goal of integrated education must be to reach out to the young blind children, the earlier, the better.

#### **4.4 Low Cost:**

Integrated education can offer them a chance in life. At the same time it educates the community, and it operates at a fraction (about one-third) of the normal cost of educating a visually impaired child in an institution as admitting such a child in a regular school does not require any additional initial investment in land, building, fixtures or infrastructure.

The existing infrastructure in the regular school is made available to such a child. The major cost incurred in special schools is that on boarding and lodging of the inmates, this is taken care of by the family of the visually impaired child in case of integrated education.

#### **4.5 Equality of Opportunity:**

Sometimes one hears the question, "Why educate the visually impaired when we have insufficient facilities for our sighted children?" Whilst one can fully appreciate the problems developing countries face, two factors are often forgotten. Firstly, because of the very nature of their handicap, visually impaired children are more in need of help than most others. Secondly, as the general pattern of primary, technical and higher education moves rapidly forward, it is short-sighted and unrealistic, both economically and socially, to exclude the handicapped.

#### **4.6 Proliferation Principle:**

At the very least, pilot schemes for integrated education can be started in most territories - schemes which can be expanded and improved as the economic progress of the country gains momentum. The system of integrated education is very simple and can be easily replicated in the developing world.

#### **4.7 The Warning Bell:**

In the next ten to twenty years, integrated education will in many areas revolutionize the pattern of education for visually impaired children. But let there be no mistake: integrated education is not an infallible formula which claims to solve all immediate problems of education of the visually im-

paired. Sound organization, close supervision, good public relations and a large measure of common sense are prerequisites for an integrated education scheme. It has limitations, yet it can, in a selected area and with keen, capable staff, bring new hope to scores of blind children in a remarkably short space of time.

Mr. Stein also cautions that integrated education projects must not become "reception centres" for all school leavers from residential schools irrespective of their ability to pursue an academic career.

## 5. Models of Integrated Education:

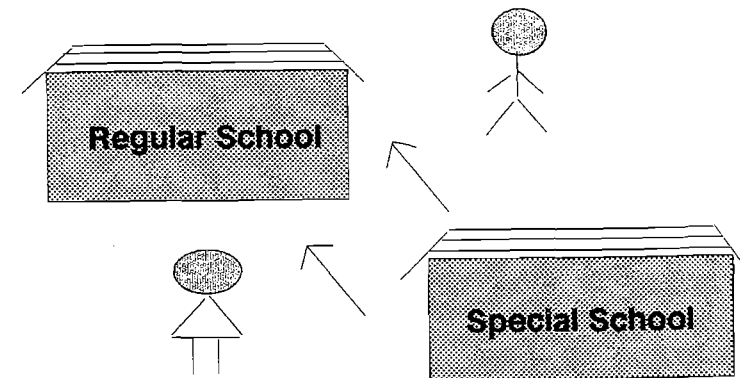
### 5.1 Explanation of Different Models:

Three main models of integrated education depending upon socio-economic conditions, geo-political environment, general education system are prevalent in developing countries. In some areas, a combination of different models has been introduced. Factors which influence their selection are the local incidence of blindness, geographical scatter (whether an area is rural or urban), the availability of teacher training facilities and local attitudes to blindness.

Each system has one common element: the inclusion of small groups of specialist teachers. A specialist teacher is a teacher who has volunteered to undergo a special course of training in the education of visually impaired children. He may eventually be responsible for 8-10 blind children, depending on the system he is working in. The specialist is the unifying force, tactfully drawing together the interests of a visually impaired child, the class teacher and the school as a whole. Each of the systems has as its aim: the integration of a visually impaired child with the mainstream form of education.

### Model I: Co-operative System:

A group of visually impaired children selected from amongst the other visually impaired students attending a residential school attend specific lessons at a local regular school. The residential school serves as a "Resource Centre" in terms of provision of braille material, tactual aids, plus curriculum and both schools maintain a close co-operation.



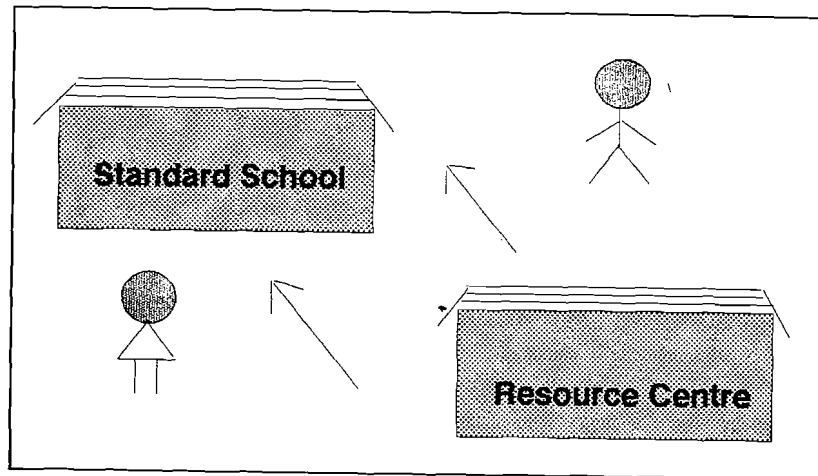
Mr. Stein is, however, not in favour of this model. He feels that it is not integration in the true sense of the word. As students return to special school after attending some lectures at regular school and they tend to isolate themselves, this model does not result into meaningful integration. Visually impaired students have a limited involvement with sighted students and the process of information sharing and understanding between the two groups is very limited.

Mr. Stein, however, opted for the "Cooperative System" as a meaningful proposition for Canton in China during 1991. This decision was guided by the fact that the know-how and competence of the Canton teaching staff did not warrant

embarking upon itinerant programme for the time being. The concerned teachers have had only very basic and rudimentary exposure to this kind of work. Mr. Stein looks at the co-operative system as a fore-runner for an itinerant programme to be started when more teachers have been adequately prepared.

### Model II: Special Unit System:

A group of blind children, 15 or maximum 20, is accommodated in a "Resource Centre" which is attached to a standard school. After intensive preparation the blind children attend lessons with the sighted children; at the resource centre they find all necessary special equipment and braille materials. Two or three specially trained teachers help them with their problems and teach them special skills such as braille, mobility, etc.



It is of course to be seen if resource teachers can "give the best to the child". Often it has been stressed that the teacher/student ratio in the itinerant programmes should be 1:5 or at the maximum 1:7. Even if we consider the more favourable working conditions of the resource teacher in

Tamil Nadu, his case-load should not exceed 10 clients.

In India, this model is also termed as Resource Centre model of integrated education. Most of the integrated education programmes in Tamil Nadu have adopted this model. Most of the city based integrated education programmes generally follow this model.

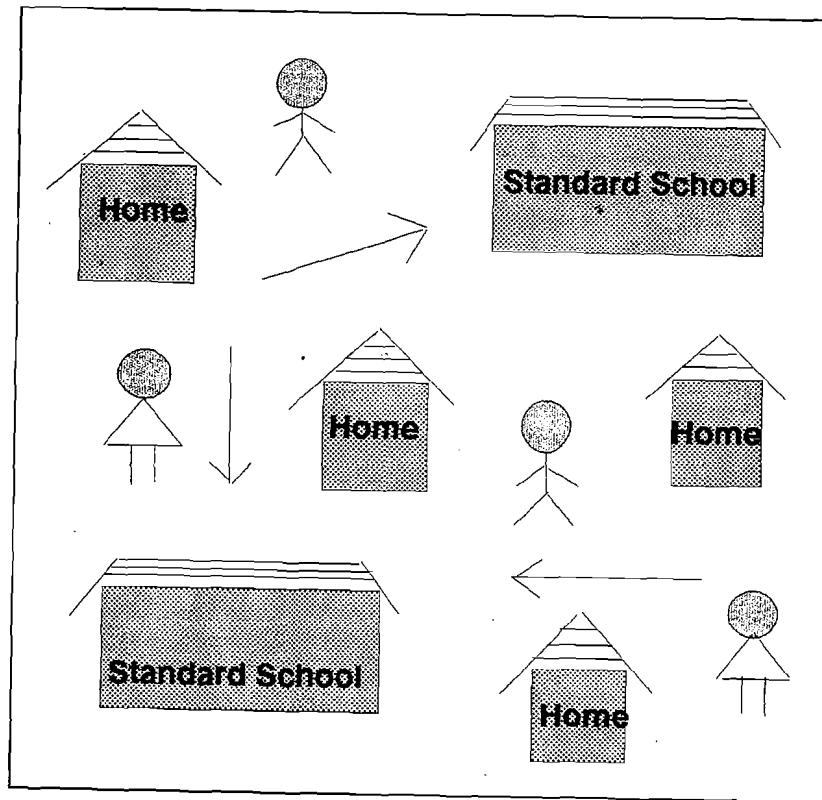
With this model, integrated education was introduced in Africa after a batch of specialist teachers had been trained at Montfort College, Malawi. Even today, the special unit system is practiced in Malawi, Tanzania and in some West African countries.

### Model III: Itinerant Teaching System

In this system, a visually impaired child lives at home with his family in his own community and attends the nearest regular school and studies with the sighted children. A specially trained "itinerant teacher" assists 5 to 7 of these children in the areas where they need help and individual tuition. This teacher goes from one village to another and imparts the specialized services to visually impaired children in their own homes.

He also maintains a close contact with the class-room teacher and the children's parents. In one of the schools, preferably in a central location, he is provided with a "Resource Room". Here all special equipment and braille material is kept and individual teaching is given to the children.

This is the most ideal model for the integrated education of visually impaired children. However, its success depends on the appointment of a competent itinerant teacher and the provision of a resource room.



### 5.2 A Comparative Study:

The Christoffel Blindenmission has spearheaded Special Unit System of integrated education in Tamil Nadu. Today over 2000 visually impaired children are integrated in nearly 110 schools. Resource Centre plan is adopted and almost all children live in integrated hostels. Thus, it is mostly a residential programme. Most of the teachers are qualified having a post graduate degree in special education from Vidyalyaya Home Science University.

Whereas Sight Savers (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind) has promoted the itinerant model of integrated

education mostly in the Northern, Western and Eastern states of India. The Ministry of Human Resource Development has also supported this model of integrated education.

Mr. Stein paid field visits to both these programmes, conducted seminars of the special teachers and discussed the salient features of these systems with the organizers. Based on his detailed analysis of functioning of these systems of education, he submitted a Report on a Survey Mission on Integrated Education Programmes. The task had been defined by the Christoffel Blindenmission Regional Office as a "critical evaluation of the syllabus for the resource teacher training and CBM-supported integrated education programmes for the visually impaired children".

In view of his overall involvement in integrated education programmes in India, the assignment offered additional opportunities to Mr. Stein, for example to compare the resource centre model, its service delivery strategy, monitoring and supervision practice, standards of performance with projects under itinerant system of integrated education, but also to examine the pros and cons of a hostel-based integrated education programme and its financial implications.

The following observations regarding salient features as well as merits and limitations of different systems of education are based on this survey mission report.

#### 5.2.1 Limitations of Special Unit System:

**5.2.1.1 Lack of Total Integration:** While the Tamil Nadu Resource Centre Model seems appropriate for this part of India, there is still an essential element of "total integration"

missing - the active participation of parents. The resource teachers admitted that they rarely have contact with their students' homes or their parents and the child-parent relationship is limited to vacations.

Mr. Stein, however, prefers that the child, especially the young child, grows up in his natural environment and as a close family member. For this reason alone he is more in favour of the itinerant model as practiced in Northern and Western India and supported by Sight Savers (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

*5.2.1.2 Tendency to Transform into Special Schools:* According to Mr. Stein, generally these resource centres do not remain limited to 20 or so blind children, the demand for their services increases and they tend to become special schools. The objective of integration is defeated in the long run as the group of blind children keeps growing and they tend to cluster around in their own little isolated groups.

Moreover, the advantage of low initial investment, cost effectiveness, active community involvement and complete integration which are the principal objectives of integrated education are not fulfilled in this model. For countries with resource constraint and large number of visually impaired children, this model is not practicable. It is advisable only in areas where there are very few schools and majority of the sighted children study in boarding schools as a regular feature.

*5.2.1.3 Comparatively Expensive:* Because of the much higher salaries of graduate teachers, cost of hostel accommodation and other expenses the special unit system programme is almost as expensive as education in special

schools. Therefore, this model cannot possibly be replicated in other much poorer states of India and other developing countries.

### *5.2.2 Outstanding Feature of Special Unit System:*

*5.2.2.1 In Consonance with Prevailing System of Boarding Schools:* In Tamil Nadu - quite different from states in Northern India - many schools, particularly at secondary level, provide hostel accommodation for many of their students. The CBM regional office has taken advantage of this system by integrating visually handicapped children into these boarding schools.

*5.2.2.2 More Intensive Coverage:* As compared to his itinerant colleague in Northern India, the resource teacher in Tamil Nadu has an easier job. He finds most of his clients in one place which eliminates the problem of transportation. As communication with the regular teaching and hostel staff is easy, the resource teacher can draw up a minute timetable which corresponds with the educational and social needs of each individual child. Statistics of two resource teachers with 5-6 years of experience show that during an 8 hours working day, 6 hours are devoted to educational support and 2 hours are spent on sensory training, teaching of social skills and orientation & mobility at the primary level.

During school hours, the resource teacher is available to visually impaired students almost all the time. Whenever a problem arises, help is nearby. In the resource room a child finds lot of special material and equipment; readers and transcribers supplement the special teacher's efforts. Many of the teachers stay on after school hours to assist with student's home work, they teach daily living skills, mobility and orientation.

**5.2.2.3 Congenial Company:** In case of resource centre model, lack of home contacts is to some extent compensated by the congenial company which visually impaired children enjoy in the school's hostel. Here they always find playmates, someone to chat with, a helping hand, when necessary. In such company, there is lot of "incidental learning", stimulation in many extra curricular activities, exposure to healthy competition, and also subtle correction of bad habits and behaviour.

**5.2.2.5 Complete Integration:** Mr. Stein was able to watch visually impaired children at the hostel in different situations - their presence was almost unnoticeable as they behaved and performed like the rest of the children. Never did Mr. Stein see them as an isolated group, they were mingled with sighted children all the time. Every now and then he observed sighted children giving them a helping hand - during meals, in a post education lesson, but they do not seem to overprotect them.

Likewise, heads of schools and regular teachers made favourable comments on the integration of visually impaired children. One headmistress remarked, "We are learning a lot from visually impaired children. Their determination and drive has a distinctly positive and stimulating influence on the rest of the school population.

**5.2.2.6 Outstanding Academic Performance:** Academic achievements of visually impaired children are above average. Classroom teachers report that they come well-prepared for their lessons - the result of intensive work of specialist teachers and their cooperation with classroom teachers. "Drop-outs" among blind children are very rare.

**5.2.2.7 Requisite Qualification of Teachers:** The resource teachers trained under resource centre model meet the

government's requirements under the Central Scheme of Integrated Education of Disabled Children in terms of one year recognized and specialized teachers training. Whereas the itinerant teachers trained for the itinerant model of integrated education, at present, do not meet this requirement. Most of them have had 6 weeks to 6 months of special training only.

**5.2.2.8 Public Acceptance:** From all these comments it can be concluded that integrated education is no longer regarded as a "pilot project" but that it has been firmly established in these districts of Tamilnadu. It is now fully recognized by the education authorities, the public at large, the teaching staff in regular schools, and what is perhaps even more important, in the hearts and minds of thousands of school children who have happily accepted their handicapped peers.

### **5.3 Integration More Important than the System:**

While thus hostel based resources centre model may not be replicable elsewhere, its principles can serve as an example and stimulus to other states in South India and elsewhere. Whether they choose to adopt the itinerant, the cooperative or the special unit system is irrelevant- as long as a progressive education policy allows visually impaired children to grow up and to learn in the midst of all children.

Taking all these positive facts into account, also considering the special educational setting in Tamil Nadu, Mr. Stein is inclined to agree that the resource centre programme as it is practiced in Tamil Nadu comes fairly close to the desired goal of "open education".



## 6. Importance of Resource Room:

The resource room serves as support base for visually impaired children. It can be built, furnished, or equipped in many different ways. In developing countries, economy is often the determining factor. Mr. Stein has seen resource rooms in verandahs, in the corner of a teacher's common room, even in a headmaster's office.

It is quite natural that visually impaired children frequently visit the resource room in order to seek help from the specialist teacher. Very young children, before being fully assimilated into the regular school classes, will have to spend many hours there, mainly for the purpose of learning braille.

Under the Central Scheme of Integrated Education of Disabled Children initiated and supported by Central Ministry of Human Resource Development, provision has been made for providing financial assistance for establishing resource rooms at the central location under the itinerant model of integrated education. These resource rooms have already been established in central places in the various project areas. Such resource rooms are instrumental in strengthening reading and writing of braille, understanding of course curriculum through embossed and relief maps etc. These rooms also provide an opportunity for the blind students from scattered villages to come together under one roof and also enable the project holders and the itinerant teachers to undertake comparison between different students for the purpose of improvement.

Thus such a resource room is emerging to be an integral part of itinerant model of integrated education and it serves different purposes viz. for storing special equipment such as brailers, tactile maps, mobility aids; for transcribing

ink-print material into braille; for carrying out different activities in respect of plus curriculum; for producing special material to facilitate the learning of the blind children; for providing individual coaching and sensory training in a group; for conducting meeting of the parents of the blind students; also as a demonstration to the general public.

Mr. Stein puts a word of caution that resource rooms should not become a permanent "refuge" for blind children. Many a times, resource rooms are often over crowded with children who linger, chat and play - thus disturbing those who are working. This should not be permitted.

## 7. Importance of 'Plus Curriculum'

Research has revealed that 90 per cent of information is gained from the environment only through observation. Moreover, most of this information is gained through sight in the first six years of life. One can easily imagine how much information the visually impaired child is deprived of due to loss of sight. It is however possible to develop other senses to compensate for this loss.

It is necessary that teachers must ensure that the visually impaired child, irrespective of whether he is in a regular school or a special school, must be taught skills to compensate for loss of sight. 'Plus Curriculum' are the additional skills that a child needs for coping with blindness. Plus Curriculum skills include sensory training in respect of hearing, touch, smell, taste, and use of residual vision; training in orientation and mobility, activities of daily living, and braille reading and writing including use of abacus, handwriting; use of recorded books; and typing etc.

Mr. Stein stresses that before a child is taught braille, it is essential that he develops good tactual ability, discrimina-

tion, dexterity. Adequate time should be spent to see the child is able to cope with the ability to read braille. Mr. Stein suggests that J. Kirk Horton's book on 'Education of Visually Impaired Pupils In Ordinary Schools', published by UNESCO, could be used as a guide.

It is usually seen that the biggest problem is that implementing agencies identify blind children very late, that is after they are past their school age. By that time a number of decisive years have already passed: They have "missed the boat", and the only solution then is to organize a home teaching programme for them with the focus on providing practical skills.

### **8. Early Intervention:**

It is a common knowledge that most visually impaired children come too late to our attention. Usually they are admitted at the age of 7,8,9, perhaps even later. Many of them are still not ready for school, mainly the result of parental ignorance and negligence. It is in these precious pre-school years when such a child needs lot of help which many parents can not give. They need professional guidance of how to cope with their child's special needs. Our specialist teachers are the only people qualified to render such guidance. Therefore, organizers of integrated education should include early intervention services in the programmes.

### **9. Teacher Preparation:**

Two prominent educators of the visually handicapped, Dr. Stanley Bourgeault and Dr. Jeanne Kenmore, have been instrumental in developing the training courses for teachers of the visually impaired at Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya Coimbatore and Holy Cross College, Tiruchirapalli respec-

tively in India. Their professional background, coupled with many years of overseas experience had made them firm believers in "open education" and this conviction matched the Christoffel Blindenmission Regional Office's determination to promote integrated education in Tamilnadu. Consequently, the syllabus for both teacher training centres was designed to prepare these teachers for precisely the education setting they are going to meet in their teaching roles; resource room - based integrated education programme.

For many years it has been recognized that these teachers need to acquire skills and competence over and above those required in regular classroom teaching. On the whole, the Vidyalaya and Tiruchirapalli programmes provide for the training in this broad spectrum of skills - quite a formidable task to be accomplished in a 12-month period! In order to make this more transparent for the reader not directly involved in matters of special education - for example administrators, organizers and promoters - Mr. Stein has listed below the range of skills to be acquired by the resource teacher during this training programme (Ref.: Susan Spungin - "The Teacher")

- a. Knowledge of communication skills and utilization of devices
- b. Understanding the educational implications of eye conditions
- c. Skills in curriculum development and adaptation.
- d. Skill in public education.
- e. Skill in guidance and counselling.
- f. Knowledge of how to utilize local, state and national resources.
- g. Ability to do teacher consultation.
- h. Skill in orientation and mobility
- i. Understanding of the sociological and psychological

- cal needs of children.
- j. Skill in record keeping
- k. Knowledge and procurement of educational equipment.
- l. Knowledge of child growth and development.
- m. Background in general education.
- n. Ability to develop and provide supplemental devices, e.g. readers, tutors. class activities etc.
- o. Skill in classroom observation.

The heads of the two training programmes, Dr. M.N. Mani in Ramkrishna Mission Vidyalaya and Prof. Prabhakar in Tiruchirapalli, both very competent and diligent educational leaders, are fully aware that this immense range of skills not only needs to be conveyed to the teacher student during a relatively short span of time, but also must be "digested", absorbed and understood in depth by each and every one of them. In other words, regardless of the volume and richness of the curriculum, it all depends on how much of it becomes the full "possession" of the teacher and how he can translate it into action in his daily work with visually impaired children.

## 10. The New Teacher:

### 10.1 Definition Of A Teacher:

Mr. Stein advocates the definition of a teacher as given by Socrates, "A Teacher should be a Philosopher and a Homotamer." A teacher must be a scholar, a thinker, must keep on refreshing himself with newer skills. A teacher must not live in an Ivory tower, he must be practical and realistically skillful in moulding his students and convincing the community. Mr. Stein stresses that education is a continuous and dynamic process, the moment a teacher stops learning, he begins to die.

A resource/itinerant teacher has to perform a variety of functions in addition to the functions performed by the class teacher, he has to work as a friend, philosopher and guide to the children, parents and the class teacher. Mr. Stein very rightly defines such a teacher as a "New Teacher", who is a person with versatility and a multi-faceted personality. He is a person who does not work in a class-room or according to a prescribed time-plan. He has to cater to different students from different classes in different villages and has to travel from one place to another, unlike the regular teacher.

### 10.2 Role Of A Teacher:

Mr. Stein says that the New Teacher is expected to perform the following roles over and above his teaching assignment:

**10.2.1 Promoter of the Concept:** The new teacher is expected to promote the idea of integrated education and complete integration of blind children. He identifies visually impaired children and arranges their school admission. He also acts as an agent of change for transforming societal attitudes by highlighting the potentials of the visually impaired.

**10.2.2 Counsellor:** He acts as counsellor and provides counselling to the parents and the community. He also acts as a teacher consultant to the class teacher and peer group. He also provides counselling to the individual on continuing basis. He provides career counselling to the students completing the school education.

**10.2.3 Trainer:** He provides training in orientation & mobility, activities of daily living and braille to each and every child. He should give greater attention to correction

of poor posture, mannerisms, observed in certain children in order to achieve a swift social development of the child. Many children because of their background and home environment have a great difficulty in social communication skills. The tendency of addressing children with visual impairments as "blind" rather than their names should be discouraged. All children have names and should be called by them and it is the responsibility of the teacher in seeing that this is adhered to. He is also expected to give guidance to visually impaired children in various local trades and crafts.

### 10.3 Case Study:

The young task force of specialist teachers in India impressed Mr. Stein in many ways, in particular with their enthusiasm, diligence and commitment. Their firm belief in the value of the work they are doing and the vision to see this form of open education breaking down the barriers of ignorance and prejudice which surrounded the lives of so many blind children is contagious.

For this cause they are willing to make sacrifices: Often they arrive one or two hours before school starts, almost regularly they stay on after school hours - to transcribe Braille materials to teach special skills for which they find no time during the day. One lady teacher even lives with her visually impaired children at the hostel.

The teachers also impressed Mr. Stein with special skills such as braille writing. Hardly ever has he met braillists as fast as the teachers in India. Likewise, most of them handle the Abacus very well. They spend many hours on making tactile materials including good maps, diagrams and modes. Obviously this is the result of systematic training of the teachers.

The resource/ itinerant teachers maintain and foster good relationship with their counterparts, the class teacher and



**Lending Expertise**  
*Consultation with Itinerant Teacher*

the heads of regular schools. Frequent contacts and dialogue with them has built a partnership of mutual trust and understanding - all for the benefit of visually impaired children.

Noticeable, almost exceptional is the loving, and caring attitude towards their children. This builds another sound foundation for the success of the programme. It is also proof of the fact that these teachers have been carefully chosen.

## 11. Blind Children and the Community

### 11.1 Importance of the Home And Family

The basic needs of the visually impaired have been, and still are in many parts of Africa and Asia, directed solely towards the struggle for survival. They have been depend-

ent on others for food, clothing and shelter. Their welfare has often been solely in the hands of a few relations and friends or perhaps entirely dependent on the charitable actions of the local community.

The influence of environment in the early years often remains with a person throughout life. It is therefore important that the formative years of a blind child's life should be spent in a congenial atmosphere, where there is understanding and tolerance, so that self-confidence and initiative are given a chance to thrive.

The modern concept of training the visually impaired postulates that with proper training and the advantages of a helpful home-life, the visually impaired can attain a state of reasonable social and economic independence. These two factors go hand in hand and consequently it is very desirable that teachers of the visually impaired should be thoroughly familiar with the background and home life of pupils under their care. The work of the primary school can be effective only with the concerted and coordinated cooperation of parents and the community.

### 11.2 Beyond The Confines Of The Class-room:

A visually impaired child needs reasonable security and the knowledge that he is "wanted" in his home and village. He needs encouragement, the company of other children and to share in their life and pastimes. He needs as well the firm, but kindly guiding influence of sensible parents, relations and friends who are aware of what can be achieved with a good environment and proper training. He should be encouraged to share in the daily duties and chores of village life, such as collecting firewood, carrying water, helping with the animals and taking part in local crafts and skills. There are still far too many visually impaired children who

are not allowed or encouraged to participate in home or village life. They can be found sitting day after day in their homes dependent entirely on others, until they are old enough to be taken out to beg. There is an urgent need to change this fate of blind children, to give them a right to choose their direction and future.

The education of visually impaired children especially is a wide and comprehensive process, not limited to the confines of the four walls of a classroom, but intimately related to life. The influence of a good home, a friendly, cooperative community and a good school life are all essential factors in bringing the blind to independent social and economic ways of life.

## 12. Selection of Children

Mr. Stein is of the opinion that the itinerant teacher should cover at the most 7 visually impaired children at any point of time. (The Central Scheme of Integrated Education of the Disabled Children of the Government of India, recommends teacher-student ratio of 1:8)

In some itinerant programmes, it is noted that the teacher-student ratio may at times be as high as 1:12. In such cases where it is essential to maintain such a ratio due to financial constraints and other such reasons, Mr. Stein suggests the following procedure:

1. Visit all the blind children to be covered (12 in the present case).
2. Administer a pre-planned questionnaire for evaluating the child in mental as well as social aspects.

3. Select the 3 best children on the basis of following criteria:
  - a. Level of orientation & mobility
  - b. Language development in respect of speaking as well as understanding ability: For establishing this, ask simple questions:
    - i names of family members
    - ii name of the village
    - iii routine activities
    - iv name of items of daily use, etc.
  - c. Ability of the child to identify the world around
  - d. Level of sensory development, etc.
4. Arrange for the admission of these selected best 3 children and start pre-braille activities.
5. Take the next 3 blind students and initiate the above process when these 3 first ones are reasonably well settled.
6. While the children in the first and second groups are being covered, the itinerant teacher should pay regular visits to other children at home to teach them initial skills.
7. The children who are well settled in the regular school should be used as demonstration to others.

During the first year, major emphasis should be socialization of the blind children. The academic development should not be the only target.

### 13. Stages for Preparing a Child for School:

After, the 3 best children have been identified, the following steps should be followed before the child is admitted into the regular school as enumerated earlier.

### 13.1 Sensory Training:

The first step should be i.e. activating the remaining senses of hearing, touch, taste and smell etc. As far as possible simple techniques and locally available material should be used for this purpose.

### 13.2 Pre-Braille Training:

The next stage is imparting pre-braille training. Mr. Stein emphasizes that teaching of alphabets straight away must be avoided. Some teachers approach this subject by teaching braille writing first. According to Mr. Stein this is utterly wrong. Braille reading competence must be achieved before braille writing is taught. More attention should be given to pre-braille activities. Various Montessori aids should be introduced at this stage.

The teacher should recognize the importance of preparing a child for learning braille. To expedite understanding of braille, he should prepare stimulating braille material such as flash cards, work sheets, bingo cards, and other tactually stimulating material.

### 13.3 Teaching of Braille:

The pre-braille training should culminate into teaching of braille. Mr. Stein advocates a scientific approach to teaching of braille which is:

- a. reading of braille should be the first step
- b. beginning should be made with the recognition of dots
- c. writing of braille should be the last stage.

He suggests administering of the work sheets as suggested by Kirk Horton in his UNESCO publication on Education of the Visually Impaired. There should be proper emphasis on pre-braille activities. Writing of braille in the beginning should be avoided.

### 13.4 Reading Readiness Test

As part of the sensory training, the teacher should prepare the visually impaired child for braille reading. For this the itinerant teacher should administer the Reading Readiness Test. This test can be developed, using card-board, scissor, glue and paper. Three shapes viz. round, triangle and square should be cut into larger and smaller sizes. The shapes should be pasted on paper in the following sequence:

- a. Large size circle
- b. Large size square
- c. Large size Triangle
- d. One large and one small circle
- e. One large and one small square
- f. One Large and one small triangle

Increase one small circle, squares and triangles each in the subsequent work sheets till their number reaches six. The last three work sheets should have six small circles, squares and triangles each.

In the beginning, it is advisable to use flash cards. These that the sighted children could also participate.

Once the child is able to identify these work sheets clearly and discriminate between the different shapes and sizes, he is ready for learning braille reading and subsequently writing.



#### Teacher-Evaluator

*Checking braille reading skills*

### 13.5. Method of Reading Braille:

Mr. Stein feels that it is very important that the visually impaired child learns to read braille in the right manner. He advises that both index fingers should be used for reading braille. The right index finger "reads" while the left index finger follows to re-confirm and to locate the next line. "Butterflying" type of reading should be avoided.

### 13.6 Braille Writing:

Mr. Stein advocates that teaching of braille should be initiated only after the child has acquired reasonably good skills in reading of braille. Mr. Stein advocates use of A4 Handwriting Braille Frame for writing of braille. The special facility of this frame - one can write inter-point braille on it. Wherever this special facility is unknown - a tremendous

amount of costly braille paper is wasted. The A-5 pocket frame also has the inter-point braille facility.

Proper use of inter-point braille frame should be given greater attention during teacher training. Usage of old american frame which constitutes a wooden board and sliding 2-line metal guide, popularly known as Braille Slate, should be discouraged.

#### 14. Introduction to School

It is very important that the following procedure for admitting a child to school is followed in the right order:

1. Orientation about the class room and the school: The itinerant teacher should take the blind child to the school one day in advance and orient him about the class room, toilet, staff room, prayer hall, place for drinking water and other facilities at the school.
2. The itinerant teacher should approach the Principal and explain the whole approach to integrated education. Otherwise the Principal may have doubts about the success of the programme.
3. The itinerant teacher should contact the class teacher and take him into confidence. He should explain to him the programme and his role in the programme. The class teacher in turn may introduce the visually impaired child to other students in the class. The itinerant teacher should give his address to the class teacher to enable contact when necessary.
4. The itinerant teacher must realize that he is not a substitute to the class teacher nor is he superior to the latter. The class teacher is the person who is respon-

sible for the performance and the development of visually impaired child alongwith the rest of his sighted students. The itinerant teacher, however, should always be available whenever a problem arises and the class teacher seeks his advice.

In the introductory period of a blind child in the regular school, it is the itinerant teacher's duty to assist the class teacher in the understanding of the needs of the blind child. He should also familiarize the regular teacher with the abilities as well as limitations of the child. He should be acquainted with the various equipments and aids that a blind child would be using in the class room.

5. The itinerant teacher should advise the class teacher about the seating position of visually impaired child. If possible, the child should sit in the front row. The tendency of making blind children sit with their backs to the wall facing the class should be discouraged. The blind children must be seated as far as possible alongwith the rest of the class. As in many Indian schools the children sit on the floor, the visually impaired child should be provided a small writing table for writing and reading braille, she would be in a better position to manage a bulky braille book and also write with the help of the table.

Recommended size of the writing table is:

Length of the Top : 18" (45.4 Cms)  
 Breadth of the Top: 12" (25.4 Cms)  
 Height in the Front: 12" (25.4 Cms)  
 Height in the Rear : 14" (35.3 Cms)

The size may be varied according to regional conditions



and needs of the child.

Material of the Writing Table: Structure of iron bars of 1 centimeter thickness with sumica or formica of 12 millimeter thick



ness on the top. Arc welding may be used for the metal structure. The top should be fixed using screws.

The itinerant teacher should also explain to the class teacher the special equipment which blind child uses. He should also explain the contents of the Braille Kit and the use thereof.

6. The itinerant teacher should encourage pairing of a visually impaired child with a sighted child who should help the former while going to toilet etc.

7. The itinerant teacher should maintain a daily diary showing details of the teaching activities with child on that particular day. He should also write quarterly progress reports to be included in each child's individual file.
8. The itinerant teacher should meet the child's family regularly, counsel them, inform them of the child's progress and involve them in the rehabilitation planning.

The frequency of visits to the blind child by the teacher will depend upon the needs of the child and his learning ability. Visits may be reduced or increased depending on this.

Visiting Routine of the Teacher: There are no blue-prints regarding the frequency of visits to the child by the itinerant teacher. Newly admitted children may need as many as four to five visits per week, once well settled down at school - a weekly visit or once a fortnight - might be sufficient.

Once-a-week visit pattern at the school of the child for the purpose of teaching braille is not advisable as the child misses a lot of time and work in his class. Teaching of braille should be preferably done at the home of the child. Whenever visiting a child at school, the itinerant teacher should meet the Headmaster first, and sign in the log book which keeps a record of the teacher's arrival and departure.

Mr. Stein feels, however, that there cannot be a blanket or umbrella approach towards the educational needs of a blind child. Each child is different, is an individual in its own right, has its own likes, dislikes, levels of learning, different ethnic and family backgrounds, thus each child needs an individualized training programme - tailor-made to suit its specific requirements. A good teacher is one who feels for and with the child and who is a part and parcel of the child's life. Such a teacher would be able to very ably deliver the

goods, that is "Taking a blind child by the hand and leading him..... into life."

**15. Case Analysis:**

A thorough case analysis and proper recording is the foundation on which we build the teaching and training programme for each individual child.

**15.1 Importance of Record Keeping:**

Mr. Stein feels that record keeping is not an administrative procedure! A thorough case analysis is the platform on which the teaching/training programme of the individual child is built!

**15.1.1 Information About the Child:** The case analysis tells us who our child is. It gives us useful information about the child's background, his environment. It gives us useful information on his eye condition, previous schooling. It is an assessment of the total personality of the child. It tells us what he can and what he can't do, what his gifts and talents, but also what his deficiencies are.

Once the child has been admitted to our programme, we want to keep track of his development and progress, not only academically but in every aspect of his young life. All this needs to be recorded so that gradually a comprehensive picture of the child's personality emerges.

Mr. Stein cautions that the evaluation and record keeping must not become a meaningless routine for the teacher. It provides the teacher with information from which he can make decisions with regard to the individual educational programme. The purpose of evaluation and record keeping is not to prove but to improve.

Record keeping must be tidy, concise, precise, regular. Up-dating at frequent intervals gives a better, more comprehensive picture of the child. All recording should be compiled in an individual file. Date of entry should not be forgotten! Narration of special events, incidents of minor and major importance in the child's life will enhance our recordings.

The pre-planned check-list of skills is a very useful tool, a guide in all investigations. When compiling this list, colleagues who are not involved in the education and training of the child may also be consulted for their own additions to this list.

**15.1.2 Dialogue with Parents:** The recorded data on the child also helps us in the dialogue with parents. Let us not forget that they are important partners in our educational efforts. Therefore, home visits and results of discussion with parents should also be recorded.

**15.2 Basic Information:**

Mr. Stein suggests that the following information should be compiled for every blind child:

1. Name Age  
 Village District  
 School Date of Admission  
 Name of Regular Teacher
2. Sight Defect  
 Degree of Sight  
 Age at Onset of Blindness  
 Other Disabilities (if any)

3. Local Authority
  - Name of Father
  - Occupation
  - Child's Position in Family
  - Notes on Environment and Home Conditions

4. Interview
  - (a) Mobility
  - (b) Spatial Relationships
  - (c) Mannerisms
  - (d) Manual Dexterity
  - (e) Co-ordination (Tactile and Sensory)

*b. Basic Information*

1. Physical Description of Child
  - degree of vision, if any, and use of it. posture and movements (head, limbs, trunk, etc.) mannerisms
2. Gross Motor Skills and Development
  - standing, walking, running, climbing stairs, jumping climbing (use of particular equipment)
3. Dexterity
  - reaching, grasping
  - eating -- interest, use of utensils, glass
  - use of manipulative toys, small objects
  - co-ordination
4. Resting
  - posture
  - ability to relax
  - need for help (physical contact, music, toys, etc.)
5. Dressing
  - self-help
  - acceptance of (or demand for) adult help

6. Toileting
  - following routine
  - expressing need
  - self-help
7. Language and Communication
  - sounds, words, phrases, sentences
  - gestures
  - response to language -- comprehension
  - expression of fears and other emotions
8. Play
  - interest in toys - specify
  - ability to maintain interest
  - response to other children
  - curiosity -- use of senses in exploring material, smelling, touching, tasting
9. Relating to Adults
  - differentiating between adults
  - recognition of particular adults
  - need for physical contact
  - need for verbal contact
  - outgoing or accepting
10. Teacher's Comments
  - Any special observations, problems or recommendations

**Note:** The important message for rehabilitation planners and workers is that they should not lose sight of the fact that they are working with children who have a special need as they are blind. Workers should be first and foremost good human beings who should love and genuinely care for the children who are dependent on them. Rehabilitation theories or formal educational plans will fail if the workers lack warmth and concern.

## REHABILITATION - THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE

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*"Mr. Stein has the great capacity to win over audiences and convert people by his powerful oratory and his ability to reach out and touch people's hearts through his speeches. Every one of his orations has an everlasting message and impact. It is imperative that his gospel is preserved and conveyed to workers in the field. His address at Haifa, Israel, and his various reports have been synthesized to bring about an article that is rich with meaning and we feel must be shared with our fellow- men in rehabilitation. The article is interspersed with Mr. Stein's original language and commentary and substantiating text on our part."*

*- Authors.*

(Based on Keynote Address presented by Mr. Wolfgang Arthur Stein at the inauguration of the International Vocational Training Course at the Haifa University in Israel during October, 1984 and a variety of Reports and his visits )

### **1. Attitude of Society:**

The biggest obstacle in our work for the disabled is not the disabled person himself. What we mainly fight against in the developing countries is the attitude of the society. Prejudice and ignorance are the biggest hurdles one has to encounter. There is nothing easier than teaching orientation and mobility to a blind person of average intelligence, but convincing the general public that the blind can safely cross the road is far more difficult.

## 2. Parental Umbrella of Care and Protection:

Mr. Stein during his visit to Belize in Central America met Teresita, a young blind woman of 22. Teresita has completed her education many months ago; now she sits at home, undecided about her future, socially isolated, chaperoned by her parents. Like a clucking hen, the mother watches over Teresita, determined to keep her at home. Teresita has a very good academic record, she is quite an intelligent woman, but under the parental umbrella of care and protection she remains indifferent.

Similarly, a visit to Arcelli establishes over protection of parents. Arcelli is 5 years old, but she is far, far behind - mentally, socially, indeed, in every respect. She is immobile, does not communicate and she has severe mannerisms. Arcelli is totally protected by parents, by her mother in particular, who treats her like a baby. To what extent must her mental retardation be ascribed to the ignorant parental treatment - is not known. Only a well planned, consequent and regular stimulation programme away from her parents' influence would tell.

During his visit to Belize in Central America, Mr. Stein observed a case of innovation in rehabilitation. Mr. Stein narrates, "Soon we arrive at a crowded garden restaurant, and even before the car engine does its last cough, a wave of disco sound hits our ears. At the control desk, right in the glaring sun, sits a young, good looking man, earphones over his head, absorbed by the hot rhythm, his whole body rocking with the beat. Name: John Donovan, 21 years old, totally blind. Week-end job: Disk jockey."

John is delighted to have visitors, takes a break, chats with them in a relaxed manner,..."Can I buy you a drink, anything special I should play for you?" He looks like an athlete,



**Innovation in Rehabilitation**  
*John Donovan: Disk Jockey*

with broad shoulders and protruding muscles. To keep fit, he indulges in weight-lifting, has won a number of prizes. During the week he studies at the Centre run by the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired, helped by Mr. Fonseca, a retired Chief Education Officer who is now blind himself. John Donovan is determined to complete his secondary education. He is a worker and scholar - blindness can not stop his enthusiasm and zeal.

## 3. One Out of Ten:

In the proclamation of the International Year of Disabled Persons, the slogan given was "One out of Ten". The statement, however true it may be, does not say anything

about the distribution of the disabled around the world. If one looks at the distribution of the disabled, particularly the blind, one will understand the magnitude of the task of rehabilitation. 80 to 90 percent of the disabled of the world live in very poor countries with annual per capita income below Rs.3000/-. Handicap is closely related to poverty and poverty is closely related to disease. I wish it was true that one out ten persons in West Africa and in South India was a disabled person. In some villages in Ghana in West Africa, 50 percent of the people are totally blind as their optic nerves were destroyed by a microphilaria, a disease known as Onchocerciasis, commonly known as river blindness. In some areas in East Africa, 99 percent of the population is affected with trachoma which is still a major blinding disease.

#### **4. Failure of Society: Prevention of Disability:**

With the recent developments in health care and introduction of preventive measures, most of disability can be prevented. We have failed to do so because of public ignorance and lack of a system of delivery of services. I am now referring to the world society that permits so many children to go blind; that permits so many children to die of hunger and starvation; and that permits the constant spread of disease in the vast parts of the world. Where is human global responsibility and solidarity? I believe if there was a slight better distribution of wealth, perhaps 80 to 90 percent of all the disabled of the world would be normal people. What an accusation to mankind!

#### **5. Need for Innovations:**

There is a great need for introducing innovative, result oriented and practical programs. When we refer to such masses of people, we have to find new avenues, new

channels, new techniques and new convictions. I am sure there is room for more innovations and experiments in rehabilitation. By innovation, I mean to forget everything we have done yesterday and try something new today. For too many years in the field of education and rehabilitation of the blind we have been guided by the ideas that were born 150 years ago.

#### **6. Ignorance of the Client:**

The existing approach to rehabilitation has been dominated and guided by what is called antiquated patterns and concepts. Always the rehabilitation programmes and the institutions are emphasized and disabled persons who should be the central figure are generally ignored. Our approach to rehabilitation can be best explained in medical terms of conducting surgery without knowing the patient. We forget that our client is an individual and has his own values and expectations. Thus establishing a trusting and caring relationship with our client should be the guiding factor of each rehabilitation programme.

Mr. Stein has made a special reference to the plight of blind women in India. According to him there is hardly any blind person in the world who is leading such an arduous and tough life as a blind women does in India. The average blind women does not learn anything and is not permitted to do anything. She is regarded as a scourge in the family, a punishment inflicted by the Gods and what not. To cap it all she has to carry the burden of a heavy stigma which is almost as serious as one of leprosy. How does one approach and tackle rehabilitation of such a blind women in India? There are thousands of these women and thousands yet not discovered, he pointed out.

## 7. Community Based Rehabilitation:

As a solution to this colossal problem, he referred to the Musiri Project on Social and Economic Rehabilitation of the rural blind. According to him the blind women in this programme are learning to dress themselves, to clean their homes, to fetch water and firewood, to operate a grinding stone, to care for brothers and sisters, to cook a simple meal, to sweep the house and yard and to help in the production of fuel and other domestic matters. Within the limits and constraints of the life in the Indian village and working on the assumption that these girls and young women will never be able to leave their village, and in accordance with the concept of rehabilitation as the art of the possible, they have been rehabilitated.

Rehabilitating a blind farmer in a community with such a high incidence of blindness does not mean anything but helping him to perform as he used to perform prior to his blindness is what rehabilitation really means. After all rehabilitation is settlement of a person in the mainstream of life, within its boundaries.

During his field visit to Visnagar Integrated Education Project, Mr. Stein met a blind farmer. He reports that our client is a young man, 22 years old and educated at the village school up to standard IV. A community based rehabilitation worker helped him for a while to become familiar with farm work and, after having successfully been trained, the project implementing agency donated him a water buffalo. Now he's on his own. The visiting team watched him for sometime as he did his daily chores - cutting grass and feeding his buffalo, sorting out grain for threshing and even operating the small generator that provides electricity for the village's irrigation scheme.

At his house, during slack periods of farm work, he makes good and strong door-mats which he sells with a profit of Rupees four a piece. To the utter amazement of Mr. Stein, he then produced a small braille frame and some braille notes. He had kept a careful weekly account of his income and expenditure.

In the village, he is respected as a skilled and competent farmer. Is it not a perfect case of complete rehabilitation?

## 8. Rehabilitation From Within:

Mr. Stein, however, feels that there is no need or compulsion for the rural blind person to learn braille. There is no need to teach him braille when 99% of the village is illiterate. It is far more important for him to learn how to find his plot of land or how to distinguish between a weed and a sapling. This is all he has got to learn. One may say that the goals of rehabilitation are rather limited but within these limits he can function. This is what rehabilitation should aim at - to help people to function, to perform and to exist as respected fellow beings as they functioned, performed and existed prior to the onslaught of the handicap.

Rehabilitation is thus an inherent process that evolves from within rather than being inflicted from without.

## 9. Community Participation:

The programmes on rehabilitation of the blind should be individual need based, cost effective and non-institutional. It should involve the community, local administration and other welfare services at all the levels of planning. It should aim at the wide spectrum of social, economic and general aspects. Under such programmes, the home becomes a centre, society the setting, for the rehabilitation through

active involvement and participation of the community.

The community, particularly the family, should be an integral part of the rehabilitation program. According to Mr. Stein, it is society that needs to learn more about their handicapped fellow beings. It is society that has to permit the disabled to function; to allow him to be rehabilitated; and to help him regain his human dignity. Thus it is more important to educate and rehabilitate society than the client himself.

To summarize 'Rehabilitation - Art of the Possible' - is the reabsorption of the blind person into society in accordance with his capabilities and ability to adjust with the environment to the extent possible and with the active involvement of the community.

## **TRAVELS OF A TEACHER**

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### **I. TOUR OF DUTY: INDIA (10-25 APRIL, 1989)**

Mr. Stein visited several integrated education projects in the different states of India with a view to learning the different regional diversities and the scope of the itinerant model to survive in these differences. He also visited the resource centre model of integrated education and he has studied both models very carefully and pointed out the merits and demerits of each system. The report that follows is Mr. Stein's own report in his own language and is summarized herewith. His use of words and his picturesque description of events makes his visit come alive.

#### **1. Purpose of Visit**

Our jeep is following a lonely, deep-sand trail, seemingly leading to nowhere. On our right and left-nothing but sun-baked brown earth. Not even mid-day, but the thermometer climbs over 45 degrees centigrade. Who would dwell in this wilderness? Yet, suddenly there is a hint of human habitat: A cluster of small mud huts, surrounded by a necklace of trees, lazy buffaloes ruminating, a well, heaps of cow-dung "cakes" drying along the hut walls, some women threshing grain on a nearby field, an old man resting on a primitive bed frame, half-naked children playing at his feet, unperturbed by the glowing sun. And a young boy, bare-footed, using a white cane walking home from school. He is totally blind, still, he attends a standard village school. Would you believe it? This is what my report is all about.

What has now been adopted as Government of India Policy - Integrated Education for Handicapped Children - has



been widely practiced in many countries since after World War II. In fact, integrated education of visually handicapped in many countries has become the norm rather than the exception. In India there are only small beginnings, a few programmes scattered over several states. Recently, the Director of Sight Savers (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind), Mr. Alan Johns, asked me to take a closer look at some of these projects, in particular to examine their educational and social impact. This was the purpose of my last visit to India.

## 2. Journey to Viramgam

Early in the morning we have left Ahmedabad for the first field visit of my journey, to the Viramgam Integrated Education Project-Viramgam is about 60 kms. from Ahmedabad. My travel companions: Nandini Rawal, Bhushan Punani and a young teacher, Vijuben Joshi (we call her Viju). The programme was started just over two years ago; today it serves 24 blind children who are being supported by four itinerant teachers. Viju is excited that she can show us five of her "cases" today at school and in their homes. She carries her daily food supply in a canvas satchel - some raw vegetables and a can of water. Normally she travels the long distances (10 to 15 km) between the scattered villages on a bicycle - a jeep ride like this is sheer fun. Why does she like to teach these blind kids? "It is in my blood. My grandfather was a school headmaster, my father was a teacher and so are my two younger sisters."

We find her first protege in a small village school: Ashok, nine years old, in Standard I, as he is still struggling with Braille. Viju visits him three times a week and spends about two hours with him. When she first contacted the family, she found him neglected, very dirty, with poor manners. Now, after two years he looks smart, alert, full of life, with

excellent mobility. The class teacher says: "He is a very happy boy, the other children are fond of him. We sometimes forget that he is blind". The extremely poor parents, after having witnessed his progress, are quite co-operative.

Next child: Zarina, ten years of age. We meet her on her way from school to her house, using a white cane. Skillfully she avoids obstacles (and there are hundreds in an Indian village) and Viju introduces us to her Muslim parents. Zarina is a rather special case: She was studying in a residential school, but when she learned that other visually impaired children attended the village school, she insisted that she should also go there. Her parents didn't like the idea, still, Zarina overruled their objections. She is not among the best students in her class, sometimes even naughty, but her teacher speaks rather proudly of her self-determination and confidence. When Viju explained to her parents that they should help Zarina in some areas of daily life she protested: "I can take care of myself". Among the other children and neighbours she is well accepted; her parents looked very proud when they talked about Zarina and her achievements at school.

We are a bit too late; our next student has already gone home when we arrive at the school, so Viju takes us to his house. This is going to be quite a performance - apparently the entire village has been waiting for our visit in order to present - with obvious pride- Kanti to us. Kanti is about 12 years old, studying in standard V. He lost his eyesight only three years ago, and today he reads Braille in Gujarati, English and Hindi (!). Viju has every reason to be proud! She whispers into my ear: "These villagers are 100% illiterate, they don't even know the Hindi language, but my student can even read it in Braille!".

What follows is another demonstration of Kanti's social

acceptance and participations: With some village boys of his own age he plays "hop and touch" - a very common game here, and his loss of vision does not exclude him from this fun - his play-mates keep clapping their hands "so that he can locate them".

We still have two more blind children to see before we return to our base. But the observations are the same: We have seen five handicapped children integrated into the mainstream of education, and without exception they are all happy. *Perhaps no academic giants, but embraced by communities that have admitted and accepted them in their midst.*

### 3. Visnagar Visit

My second field visit was to Visnagar to see the programmes run by the NAB Mehsana District Branch. This is by far the greatest integrated programme for visually handicapped children in the State of Gujarat. It is headed by Professor Ramnik Halari and with a nucleus of 20 itinerant teachers, it today covers nearly an entire district.

We could only visit some of the children, but it was a delightful experience. Admittedly, there are shortcomings as far as educational achievements are concerned. Some of these are reflected in the recommendations at the end of my report. However, what we witnessed everywhere was an atmosphere of total change of attitude towards the blind children. They are accepted in their classes by both, teachers and classmates, they are well treated in their families. Several times I watched villagers who surrounded them with friendliness and kindness. The blind children are now fully participative in the mainstream of life.

Integrated education offers congenial company instead of physical isolation was what I was convinced of when I saw the children so happily settled in their communities. The children know that they are "wanted" rather than being thought of as oddities.

I saw a small blind child in a school sitting with the other children. His equipment is quite simple - a small frame for writing Braille, an abacus or a "Taylor Frame" for arithmetic, a white cane to assist in his mobility, a kit for tactile drawing. The Sight Savers (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind) and the National Association of the Blind jointly provide this equipment for every child in the programme. Indeed it costs a little money, perhaps Pounds 15 to 20 - too much for a passport to liberation? One must take a look at the economy of this type of education of the handicapped. My Indian colleagues are convinced that it costs less than one third as compared to residential education.

When we returned to our base another surprise was waiting for me. Some twenty blind children had travelled with their parents to meet me and my colleagues. Some of them live as far as 100 km away I was told. We interviewed every child, had discussions with each parent. Without exception they were happy and pleased that their children could go to a normal school and some of them gave examples of amazing achievements of their children - both at school and at home. Two mothers admitted that they would have never sent their children to a far-away residential school.

I was touched by the warm and friendly atmosphere in which our meeting was held and by the dignity and grace of the people - most of whom were very poor.

#### 4. Shahpur (Bihar) Visit

The next programme is far away. We have to cross almost the entire Indian sub-continent from West to East as we go to our next destination Patna, State of Bihar. Dr. S.M. Upadhyya, Hon. Director of the first integrated education programme in Bihar receives us at the airport and also takes us to the next field visit the following morning.

This is a pioneer project which was started only last year. While we travel to the project centre in Shahpur, about 70 km from Patna, Dr. Upadhyya talks about the many difficulties and obstacles during the introductory phase of the programme. Being an Ophthalmologist himself he is aware of the major causes of child blindness in this state - poverty/malnutrition/vitamin a deficiency/infections. What was found in other areas is also true here - in almost every village there are one or two visually impaired children.

The Shahpur Programme is presently serving 22 blind children, but there are many more waiting to be admitted. Expansion is hindered by lack of funds and shortage of teachers; at the moment only two teachers are sharing the case load, a third teacher is still undergoing training.

On this very hot day - 47 degrees centigrade - we are confronted with extreme poverty among the families that we visit. Most of them live on a monthly income of Rs.300 - Rs.400 (Pounds 12 or Pounds 16 respectively), some have even less, hardly enough to survive. It is in this environment where we find our clients, young blind boys and girls. One must remember that they have had their first exposure to education just over one year ago. We meet a ten year old boy at home. His parents are working in the fields. Extremely poor family, the teacher found the boy totally neglected, dirty; he was always sitting in a corner

the hut. Resisted to go to school. Lots of efforts by the teacher were needed to persuade him, also to convince his parents that he must go to school. Now he is very much changed, attends class regularly, moves about in the neighbourhood.

A boy, six years old with light perception. Good Braille (astounding after such short period of learning) and a very cheerful character! Class teacher is very happy to have him among the sighted pupils - "he is the leader of the class". The family is co-operative.

A girl, nine years old, also totally neglected when first met by the teacher. Nobody talked to her..... Academic and social progress very slow, she is shy, poor posture. Teacher goes to her home quite often, helps her with daily living skills, hygiene. Gradually she improves. Class teacher takes great interest in her; he remarks to the itinerant teacher: "You should come to see her at school twice a week - not just once..."

We also meet a boy, six years old, at his home; quite exceptional, because this family has a regular and sufficient income. They are most appreciative of the programme and with great pride they talk about his progress in braille and his constantly improving mobility (which I also was impressed with). While we sit there the boy smiles and often makes lively contributions to our conversation. He says that he just loves to go to school....

A boy, ten years old, at school. Light perception attributes to his excellent mobility. He grew up in total isolation, used drugs (quite common here), and was found very neglected and left alone in his misery. His class teacher points out to us how much this boy has changed- he is well behaved, clean, responds politely. Academic progress rather slow,

Braille reading difficult because of finger deformity on both hands (he reads with thumbs). He wants to become a factory worker - like his father. I'm somewhat confident that he is going to make it.

It is a pity that we can't see more children, but there are several meetings arranged for the afternoon. We are leaving the scene with yet another positive impression, namely that the intervention of these blind children has truly liberated them from a life in confinement and isolation.

### 5. Meeting with CBR Workers

This afternoon has a special "session" - I am meeting with twelve CBR- workers and itinerant teachers. They are all ever so new in their jobs, they have been given only very basic training, their salaries are low, and material resources are limited. So - they have many questions and I enjoy our discussion greatly.

These young workers are the backbone of our programmes, the task-force of a new generation of teachers/trainers. Their enthusiasm, dedication and commitment will be the decisive factor on failure or success. While I would still insist that these programmes must be operated with strict frugality, we must also make continued efforts to equip these workers better - with knowledge and material.

### 6. Haryana Visit

We next take the flight from Patna to Delhi; by car to Hodel near Faridabad where we are met by Mr. N. Kumar who travels with us to the "field". The programme routine is the same as during the previous field trips: Visiting visually impaired children at their schools and homes. I have been

in Haryana before; in 1987 I visited several community based rehabilitation projects and the integrated education programme had only just begun. Now, both programmes are well established in the Faridabad area and I was once again amazed with the acceptance of these activities among the villagers.

### 7. Visit to Capital of India - Delhi

On my return to Delhi, I spent some time at the "Nursery for Blind Children" run by the National Association for the Blind, Delhi Branch, which I had also visited on a previous occasion. The institution serves 44 blind children and the focus is on helping them to be prepared for schooling. I was very pleased to learn that the concept of early integration has also been accepted here and that eight of the children are now attending standard schools in their neighbourhood. Backup services are provided by the "Nursery" - I recommend that the name should be changed to "Preparatory School for Blind Children".

In my recommendations I have made several comments regarding Pre- Braille activities and production of stimulating, tactile materials for our blind children. At the Delhi Nursery I saw some good examples of such tactile material and it is my sincere hope that some of the itinerant teachers in other Projects will be stimulated and inspired to follow these examples. I observed that most teachers in other projects let the children practice on the "Learning Board" (wooden box with metal pegs to represent Braille symbols) and they move straight on to teach the alphabet. Some even start at this stage to teach writing of Braille. Both practices are wrong. Braille writing should only be introduced after the child has developed some basic reading skills.

## 8. Calcutta Visit:

The Society for the Visually Handicapped, Calcutta had prepared an itinerary which guaranteed a 100 per cent utilization of my time. The easier part was "orientation tour": visiting 2 residential schools for visually impaired children, one rural training centre, a rehabilitated blind client in a village. He would make a "success story" in every aspect - with his profit-making chicken enterprise, with work in the paddy fields, with his role as the recognized "chicken expert" among sighted competitors and, more significantly being socially accepted and respected in his small village as the bread-winner of a family of five.

In contrast to this inspiring encounter, the visits to the schools for the blind left me with a rather dull impression. I even had the feeling that most of the teaching staff were unhappy over the visit of a man who is known to advocate integrated education of the visually handicapped. From this corner, the Society for the Visually Handicapped cannot expect much support for their integration venture.

## 9. Final Remarks

The programmes of integrated education in the three states of India (Gujarat, Bihar, Haryana) which I visited on this tour are indicators of a new era of education of the visually handicapped. As opposed to the traditional system of segregated education, integrated education offers blind children the possibility to learn and to live in the world of the sighted community, to be an integrated part of that community even very early in life. It is not an infallible formula that solves all problems of visually impaired children, but there are some very obvious and logical reasons to further promote this system.

My report is based on my observations and my recommendations which are of a practical and realistic nature rather than theoretical premises. I hope that my suggestions which are of a professional nature are accepted by practitioners in the field. I emphasize that monitoring and supervision must be given due importance by the implementing agencies and I would like to see the supervisors of the programmes growing into the role of a counsellor who is available as a resource person to the individual worker.

## II. VISIT TO CANTON/CHINA:

### 1. A Special School:

The Canton School for the Blind Children is a special school in many ways. First of all, the atmosphere. There is laughter, excitement, and cheerfulness everywhere. This is quite exceptional in China, where you find rigid discipline in regular schools.

The headmaster, Mr. Chow, is such a keen, enthusiastic person, full of warmth and love for the children and this rubs off on his staff. Over the years I have seen a growing commitment. During the seminars I conduct, they are alert and eager to expand their knowledge. Sight Savers has also funded visits by teachers from the Ebenezer School for the Blind in Hong Kong to provide in-service training.

These teachers have encouraged another feature which makes Canton school special - the range of activities for pupils outside the school boundaries. The children really do join in the life of the community. Pupils take part in sports competitions; their small school band and choir entertain visitors to an amusement park; and they have a summer camp by the sea with swimming lessons and fishing expeditions.

The school has a total strength of 48 students up to grade 3 level. Special tuition is provided for a group of low vision children. The domestic science room is now fully equipped and simple activities have been started. Every day there is a period of gymnastics, simple mobility, even gardening activities. The children grow vegetables and they are very good at cooking.

Handwork lessons have commenced, the thermoform is in full use, teachers produce their own material. In the whole school, an atmosphere of drive and engagement prevails. The entire staff is eager to improve their services - the school is on the right track.



**The Initiation into Technology**  
*Teaching the use of the Thermoform Machine to Teachers in Canton, China*

## **2. Transition from Special to Integrated Education:**

Every effort is made to keep in line with the academic curriculum of regular schools. This lays a good foundation for our ultimate goal, which is that pupils should attend standard schools, with some extra help from trained itinerant teacher.

Much of the ground-work had been done by the headmaster of the Canton School for the Blind in China. Mr. Chow. He has already chosen a small group of low-vision children who will be the "pioneers" of this project. He has also identified a regular school in the neighbourhood of the blind school where these children will be integrated. For several reasons, I opted for the "Co-operative System" as a manageable proposition for Canton at this stage. This system, however, would be a fore-runner for an itinerant programme to be started when more teachers have been adequately prepared. This leaves us with a big task, but I am very encouraged by what I have seen at the school.

## **3. Beginning of Integrated Education:**

The first step was taken recently, when Wen Juhe, a boy with low vision, was admitted to the Pearl River Primary School. I had a meeting with the headmaster and staff, who are quite positive and encouraged by Wen Juhe's progress. Mr. Chow has set himself the target of placing a further five low vision pupils in standard schools during the coming year.

## **III. VISIT TO BELIZE IN CENTRAL AMERICA:**

This report is about children with visual problems. Some of them are totally blind, some have light perception, others can still read large print. Apart from visual deficiency they

are children!

My friend Kevin Carey is right when he insists: They are children first, their blindness comes second. Like all children they need a guiding hand that leads them into life.

### **1. Braille - A Big Hurdle:**

At the Stella Marris School, a residential facility for handicapped children at Belize city, I meet Alexandra and her brother Charley. They form a special "blind class" in the school which caters mainly to the deaf, mentally retarded and multihandicapped children.

Alexandra is 10 years old and placed in standard 3. Her useful functional vision is quickly deteriorating. At the moment, she can still read some large letters but she also masters braille which is quite useful when it comes to helping her younger brother who is totally blind.

Charley is about 8, like his sister cheerful and good natured. He moves about swiftly and securely, with and without his folding cane. He has lot of talents: together with his sister he is learning to play the violin, he sings beautifully. Without hesitating he gives a demonstration and Alexandra joins in.

Braille is still a big hurdle, daily living skills need to be tackled. But no doubt - he is going to conquer these walls.

### **2. Well Ahead of Children of Her Age:**

Alexandra likes to entertain, to please people. Without being asked, she brings books and other materials, she reads for me, takes my hand and shows me to her classroom, the dormitory, introduces me to her friends. When one teacher said that she was a "normal" child I had my

doubts. More observations of this girl's amazing social behaviour make me believe that in this respect she is well ahead of children of her age. She talks to them in an engaged manner. She is friendly with everyone in the compound, and obviously she is also liked by all the other children.

The Rev. J. Carroll associates visual impairment with the "loss of the ability to fit in among one's fellows without being marked out as strangely different". Error! Alexandra is a wonderful social being. More surprises are waiting. Alexandra has a special friend at the school; in fact she seems to be the only one who can sufficiently communicate with Anita, who is 8 years old.

### **3. Children First, Handicap Comes Later:**

Anita is stone-deaf, and she has just a little hint of vision. At Stella Maris, she can be helped only in a very limited way, since there is nobody trained in educating deaf-blind children. Yet, mixing with the other children does her a lot of good, and it is moving to see how Alexandra communicates with her. Alexandra also acts as my interpreter. Anita, so pretty and sweet, makes frantic efforts to tell me something, she gesticulates, mutters, even manages a few little cries.

Alexandra wants me to learn what Anita has learned. Alexandra rumples Anita's bed and animates Anita to do it again. Anita obliges and enjoys it tremendously. Alexandra, proud with the result, laughs and claps her hands.

### **4. Resistance to Integration:**

All the time during my visit, the question was nagging me why these children need to be educated at Stella Maris.

When I discussed this aspect with the sister-in-charge, our dialogue took an unpleasant turn. Apparently, Alexandra had been integrated for a little while, but the sister brought her back "because she did not do too well". All my reasoning was fruitless. The sister insists that even so "Integrated education may work in other countries, here in Belize it doesn't. The parents reject it, the teachers oppose it, and even the children don't like it". When I pointed out that so many low-vision children in Belize are now successfully integrated in regular schools, the sister remained adamant - "it doesn't work with the blind". I saw no point in prolonging this dialogue with a Birmingham-trained colleague".

The concerned authorities are, however, in favour of integrated education. Therefore, I appeal to all of them to use their influence and authority to enable Alexandra and Charley to attend a regular school, soonest, definitely at the beginning of the next academic year. Both these children are ready for it.

### **5. A Risky Venture:**

We find the residence of a refugee family from Guatemala. Their wooden hut, primitive and dilapidated, radiates poverty from every corner. The father works as a farm-hand for a big land-lord; his wage barely keeps the family alive. On top of their worries for survival the parents are burdened with two visually handicapped children.

Both children are partially blind, one 1-year old Lydia and second 5-years old Carlos. The elder one attends pre-school classes at the village school- with rather poor results in reading and writing. Not surprising, either, because his integration was a risky venture right from the beginning - with nobody understanding his problems at the school, no special teacher in the vicinity, with illiterate parents.

Yet Carlos is with children of his age-group, and in spite of academic frustration, he likes to go to school.

### **6. Need for Special Teachers:**

Carlos' needs are manifold. He should be properly examined by an ophthalmologist. His objective and subjective vision through his performance under different light conditions should be tested. He should identify objects and shapes prior to reading letters, tracing of pictures and symbols should precede writing. Many of these "should" will have to wait until special teachers have been trained in Belize. Until then, semi-skilled workers will have to fill the gap.

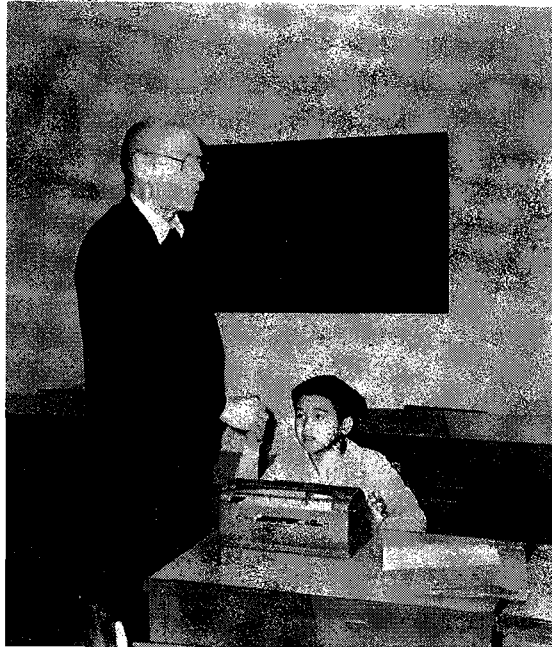
### **7. The "New Teacher":**

After having participated in the summer course for itinerant teachers conducted by the Caribbean Council for the Blind, Mrs. Teresita Bradley was appointed the first itinerant teacher in Belize during 1989. The visually impaired children under her care are scattered, assisting them involves a great deal of travelling. I was impressed with Mrs. Bradley's happy acceptance of nomadic working life, but also with the way she treats every individual child. It seems if they were all her own children! Similarly, she has established warm and friendly relationship with the classroom teachers in the regular school.

In order to demonstrate that she is not an "outsider" having an interest only in one or two visually impaired children, she takes occasionally a lesson or two, tells stories to the children in the pre-school section. Thus she has become a member of the teaching team. Mrs. Bradley has had only very basic training in teaching visually impaired children and practically no experience in itinerant teaching, yet, with



an instinct for what certain solutions require, combined with the dedication to a pioneering task in which she believes and with a lot of love for children she handles her job in an exemplary manner.



#### **Concern for Children**

*Mr. Stein touching a child and expressing his concern and love*

"new teachers" like Mrs. Bradley who we want to entrust with this "new job" in the teaching profession.

#### **8. Visit of Itinerant Teacher: A Special Event:**

Pauline is one out of four Albino children of the Barnet family in Belize-city, all four with visual problems of different degrees. Pauline has been integrated at the St. Joseph's Primary School.

True enough, there are shortcomings, and she is aware of them - braille skills, teaching of orientation and mobility, preparing material etc., but these she will gradually acquire during the next training course and through self studies. I have very much enjoyed working with Mrs. Bradley and hope that I have been helpful to her. It is

In a dark-skin community, the Albino sticks out like a sore thumb, so misplaced. Pauline can easily be spotted in this dark crowd but she is definitely not "misplaced". Like a butterfly, she buzzes around in the classroom, chatting, laughing and gossiping.

But she can also sit calmly down and discuss sober school matters with her class-mates. How fortunate that these text-books are all in large print and, therefore, within Pauline's visual comprehension. If necessary, there is always someone around who can explain. Her friends don't ask questions anymore about Pauline's visual "problems", neither are they bothered by the sun-caused blisters all over her face. They must be unpleasant, and painful but Pauline ignores them.

The visit of Mrs. Bradley is always a special event in Pauline's school routine. she brings along material which she has prepared to help Pauline to develop number concept, to identify shapes, objects. And she tells lovely stories, some times for the entire class. Whenever she finds time, Mrs. Bradley also visits Pauline at home because she and Pauline's mother have become good friends. They have one thing in common: concern for 4 albino children.

#### **9. Learning to See:**

Denzil, like Pauline, is 4 years old. Also, like Pauline he is a bright, very active and lively little fellow. He responds well and loves the exercises with Mrs. Bradley. When I watched him during recess, he was just one of many in a happy crowd of children.

For Pauline and her friend Denzil, the class teacher has reserved a small, quiet corner where Mrs. Bradley can do some extra work with her two proteges. An innocent

observer could get the wrong impression that she helps them to do their home-work. Actually, this session serves a very different purpose: Both Pauline and Denzil have been examined by an eye-doctor who has diagnosed their visual defects and measured their visual acuity. For educational purposes this is not enough.

The teacher wants to find out much more about their visual capacity. How much do these children really see, how well do they use their little vision that is left to them? How can they be stimulated and encouraged to use it better, what makes the process of "learning to see" more enjoyable and rewarding to them?

Vision is not only useful for reading and writing; it plays a vital role in the child's general development, it stimulates movement and action, helps to make the child independent and conveys a lot of information about the world around him. The task, therefore, is to help Pauline and Denzil how to see better.

In the behaviour of both Pauline and Denzil one can read all the positive effects of growing up in a normal environment. As Chris Friend said in his report - "Integrated education truly at work."

#### 10. A New School:

The most impressive thing is not only the progress of children in lessons, but by the happy, confident way they join in social life at school. This is what integrated education is all about: they are children first, their disability comes second.

Not even blindness can stand in the way of a quick mind and determined nature, and when young Karry Anne Eiffe

from Barbados made up her mind to attend the same secondary school as her sighted friends, all that was needed was a little help from the right people.

I met the young girl in February 1986, and was immediately taken with her intelligence and eagerness to learn. Karry-Anne wanted to go to school with her sighted friends and asked to attend their secondary school. In summer of 1988, I again visited Barbados and was surprised to find Karry-Anne settling down to life with her new sighted classmates. Her opinion of her new school? "Oh - it's beautiful."

#### 11. A Difficult Decision:

Mrs. Bradley works with Marlene, a low-vision girl aged 12, who is well integrated and socially accepted in a regular school. Even her class teacher is proud that she ranks 7th



*Mrs. Bradley working with Marlene*

in the class of 28. Because of distance, Mrs. Bradley can see her only once in every two weeks. Marlene has a problem - she can only read large print with her eyes almost "glued" to the sheet. Extended reading, she complains, is

painful. Should she start learning braille now?. This is in such "border-line cases" often a difficult decision to make. Many of my colleagues prefer to hang on to large print as long as possible. In her case I recommend ophthalmic investigation before a decision is made. There is some indication that she may benefit from cornea transplant.

## 12. Children First : Disability Comes Later :

When Mr. Stein met three of the children Mrs. Bradley visits, he was impressed not only by their progress in lessons, but by the happy, confident way they join in social life at school.



This is what integrated education is all about: they are children first, their disability comes second.

## TRIBUTE TO A LEADER

### MR. JOHN M. PALMER

Executive Director  
Helen Keller International  
World Headquarters  
90 Washington Street, New York  
New York 10006.

20 December, 1993

We at Helen Keller International have the greatest respect for the remarkable work that Wolf Stein has stimulated in so many countries over the last twenty years...

HKI has had a longstanding commitment to integrated education, having begun work in the Asia region in the 1960's through staff members such as Frances Wiesenfeld. Following her initial work in Sri Lanka, Frances went on to help the governments of Iran, Senegal, Liberia, and Indonesia to establish systems of integrated education. She and Wolf were great friends and admirers and worked closely together, particularly in Indonesia, where both Helen Keller International and Christoffel Blindenmission were providing assistance to strengthen education of blind children.

If the publication is designed for widespread distribution, a resource list of publications related to integrated education may be added, since a number of very useful resources have been developed on integrated education over the past several years.

**MISS E. K. CHAPMAN**

C/o. Queen Alexandra College  
Court Oak Road, Harborne  
Birmingham B17 9TG

*12 October, 1993*

Mr. Stein's reputation has been truly international.

**MRS. H. A. HEWITT**

Regional Chairperson ICEVH (Pacific)  
4 Taman Jesselton - 10450, Penang,  
Malaysia.

*30 September, 1993*

I enjoyed very much my professional relationship with Mr. Stein and one of the things I appreciated most was his ability to bring together people from many different countries often with different educational philosophies and mould them into a group who could work harmoniously together to further the education of visually impaired people throughout the world.

**MR. DUNCAN WATSON**

World Blind Union, C/o. RNIB  
224 Great Portland Street,  
London W1N 6AA, England.

*22 November, 1993*

I have heard about Wolf's work from many people who do know his work at first hand and from what they tell me it well deserves the recognition given in this publication...

**MS. SUSANA E. CRESPO**

Educational Consultant  
Christoffel Blindenmission  
e.v., Nibelungenstrasse 124,  
D-6140 Bensheim 4, Germany.

*31 August, 1993*

Mr. Stein will always be remembered as a leader and propeller of integrated education and education for life.

**MR. ALAN W. JOHNS**

Executive Director  
Sight Savers (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind)  
P.O. Box 191, Haywards Heath,  
West Sussex, RH16 4YF, U. K.

*14th September, 1993*

Wolf's contribution in this field, both at project level and at the international advocacy level, has been immense and I feel that has been very adequately captured in the hand-book...

**MR. RAMNIK M. HALARI**

General Secretary  
National Association for the Blind Mehsana Branch,  
South Wing Commercial Centre,  
Three Gates, Visnagar - 384315, Mehsana.

*22 August, 1993*

Enthusiasm, optimism and good cheer are the hallmarks of Stein's personality. His strengths include simple lan-

guage, lucid style of presentation, and his innate capacity of cultivating spontaneous friendship with the rural children, parents and villagers. He has made immense contribution in promoting an alternate form of education in India. In spite of being a foreigner to India, he blends into the Indian lifestyle with his simple living, high thinking and charismatic personality.

Mr. Stein's thoughts and beliefs are etched indelibly in each page of this publication. Integrated education is the only panacea for the visually impaired children dwelling in the developing countries. Residential education should be the last option for the development of a visually impaired child. A disabled child is an indispensable part of community and his development should be effected in the fold of the community itself - this is the gist of Stein's thoughts.

**MRS. REHMAT S. FAZELBHOY**

Clematis Gardens, Flat No.6, Ground Floor,  
12, Boat Club Road, Pune - 411 001.

24 August, 1993

Mr. Stein has recognized the need for varying standard programmes of integrated education suiting the conditions of our country. In the rural areas, even small attempts to integrate our children into regular schools were often criticized and not recognized as proper methods according to western criteria.

Mr. Stein has incorporated all the forms of integrated education which are now prevalent and that these have been recognized and accepted as necessary in accordance with our culture and our circumstances.

**MR. NARINDER KUMAR**

General Secretary  
National Association for the Blind, Haryana Branch,  
Central Green, K.C. Road, N.I.T. Faridabad

Thoughts of Mr. Stein are a gospel for the itinerant teachers and the persons who are guiding the programmes of integrated education. The book is very compact and will guide even the coming generations.

**MR. E. O. IRELAND**

Regional Director  
National Institute for the Visually Handicapped  
Poonamallee, Madras - 600 056.

W. Stein and Integrated Education is essentially a labour of "love" for one who is "loved" and respected for his contribution to the education of blind children, especially, in un-reached areas.

On meeting Mr. Stein on number of occasions and sharing views on development of appropriate mass development of appropriate mass educational opportunities for school-age visually impaired children, the following observations stand out:

1. The need for a strong administrative structure to accelerate integrated policy provision and removing bottlenecks like the present arrangement of separate administrative infrastructure for general and special education, which, invariably results in separation of teacher training and supply, funding, monitoring and other departmental delays (in India, education of the disabled, both general and technical remains in the control of the Department of Social Welfare instead of

Education/Labour).

2. Role of special schools needs drastic change to be made more outward looking and resourceful especially in curriculum planning, academic organization, professional development of teachers and liaison with ordinary schools.
3. Role of Ordinary Schools: To be more conscious of their responsibility to accept children with special needs and develop the expertise to ensure meaningful education to such children. This would essentially involve deputation of teachers for orientation/specialist training and liaison with special schools in the area and other professional agencies.
4. Pre-School Education: More emphasis on this vital area will automatically increase the level of acceptance of visually impaired children in the integrated setting.
5. Preparation for Adult Life: It would defeat the purpose of total integration if a blind integrated school leaver has to revert to a specialist setting for vocational training. Hence, parallel efforts to ensure integration in technical education should also be advocated and encouraged.
6. The need for more R & D support and legislative provision for integration are very much the need of the hour.

These are some of the areas that Mr. Stein felt very strongly about during our discussion. Inputs as such these from dictated "Gap implementors" could contribute towards a more sensitive horizontally orientated policy for improving integrated education, rather than, the in-sensitive vertical downward thrust, presently in vogue.

**MR. LAL ADVANI**

Indian Association for Special Education and Rehabilitation  
C/O Blind Relief Association  
Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg, New Delhi

6 August, 1993

I am not fully in agreement with the not so explicitly stated implication that integrated education may be the only answer for visually impaired children in rural areas. I believe, other options are possible. For instance, distance learning and some form of non-formal education or an open school system may also be appropriate in suitable cases.

The publication is a very richly deserved eulogy to the distinctions achieved by Mr. Stein in the field.

**MR. JAGDISH K. PATEL**

General Secretary  
Blind Men's Association  
Vastrapur, Ahmedabad 380 015

Mr. Stein is the finest gentleman I ever met. His thoughts on integrated education are so practical and realistic that the same could benefit a blind child in any part of the world. As a universal educator, Mr. Stein has contributed so immensely to the concept of integrated education in the developing countries that he would always be fondly remembered as "Father of Integrated Education."

**MR. R. S. CHAUHAN**

National Institute for the Visually Handicapped  
116, Rajpur Road, Dehradun

*August, 1993*

I appreciate the approach of Mr. Stein that feelings of partnership are essential while working in the field of blind welfare. Instead of thinking that we work for the blind, we should inculcate the feeling of working with the blind.

**MR. C. D. TAMBOLI**

Reader (Special Education)  
National Council of Educational Research and Training  
Shri Aurbindo Marg, Siri Fort, New Delhi

*6 August, 1993*

I feel that if we are to gain momentum in implementing the scheme in integrated education we will have to take due note of the expertise of Mr. Stein.

**MRS. SWARAN AHUJA AND MR. SURESH AHUJA**

Oval View, Church Gate  
Bombay

*1 August, 1993*

The book is a good tribute and Mr. Stein must have been very pleased to receive this on his 60th birthday. It is good to have his views on integration which would reinforce the knowledge of practitioners. It would be necessary to translate this book into regional languages and distribute the same widely and free of cost.

**MR. M. K. CHOUDHARY**

Director - Education  
Department of Education  
National Association for the Blind  
Rustom Alpaiwalla Complex,  
124-127, Cotton Depot, Cotton Green  
Bombay 400 033

The content of "W. Stein and Integrated Education" is interesting and I am sure most of the readers will share my views.

I have my own reservation about the functions of the resource room as pointed out by Mr. Stein. If a resource room is not used judiciously, itinerant integrated education programme may tend to be a parallel special education programme.

It is mentioned that for preparing educational material plastic paper should be used. I feel plastic paper should be avoided. Thrust on specific dimensions of a writing desk is undue since it depends on the height of a blind child and other factors. Hence the dimensions would vary.

**MR. S. P. BAHUGUNA**

Head: Department of Special Education  
National Institute for the Visually Handicapped  
116, Rajpur Road, Dehradun

I am delighted to go through the book which presents information about Mr. Stein and his work. This publication will be useful for the professionals working for the welfare of the visually handicapped.

**DR. RAJENDRA T. VYAS**

Honorary General Secretary  
National Association for the Blind  
11 Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan Road  
Worli, Bombay - 400 025.

*8 August, 1994*

Wolfgang is a thorough gentleman, self effacing, quiet, nice man, ever willing to cooperate and be helpful. Himself an educator by profession and a great proponent and staunch supporter of integrated education, he emphasizes that a visually handicapped child, to the extent possible, should never be isolated but must be educated with the seeing children. No latitude should be given on account of blindness.

In other words, Wolfgang believes that whatever education can be imparted to such a child, it should be done and all efforts should be made to achieve that goal; and this Wolf believes, can only be achieved by having the right type of properly qualified teachers in the field. Similarly, one just cannot have a single model of integrated education, different models will have to be developed.

I have come across many people at different levels in different parts of the world, I have come across a few persons of the type of Wolfgang. A good friend and well wisher of the blind, Wolfgang is known for the tremendous role he played in developing primary education at Global level. He played an instrumental role in developing of a braille kit and providing the same to all the visually handicapped students in the commonwealth countries on the occasion of Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth. Another major contribution to his credit is promoting education of the blind in Latin America.

A true educator - Wolfgang emerges the most outstanding promoter of integrated education of blind children the world over.

**MS. GLADYS NYAGA**

ICVEVI Regional Chairperson (Africa Region)  
Sight Savers Africa Office  
P.O. Box 34690, Nairobi, Kenya

*19 August, 1994*

Mr. Stein is a Great Teacher. His sense of humour, a man who can cope with any level forgetting he was President of ICVEVI. I have many memories and appreciations of Stein's encouragement and better understanding of what it means to sacrifice one's time, energy, comfort for the sake of blind children. His words still echo in my ears, "Take a blind child by the hand and lead him to life."

The itinerant teachers of Tanzania, Kenya and Malawi join hands in thanking Mr. Stein for his work.

**MR. ARVEL GRANT**

Executive Director  
Caribbean Council for the Blind  
Antigua

*26 October, 1994*

The Caribbean region benefitted greatly from the work of Mr. Stein. His enthusiasm and professional commitment to the issues involved have served the cause well.



**PROF. BHASKER MEHTA**

General Secretary  
National Association for the Blind  
(Sabarkantha Branch)  
Idar, Gujarat.

*8 November, 1994*

Mr. Stein, I can say without any intention to flatter, is the incarnation of the Goddess of wisdom and learning, in the field of education of the blind; particularly for the developing countries. He has devoted his time, efforts and energies unflinching and selflessly.

He is blessed with the rare and valuable bounties of wisdom which is honed by experience and spearheaded by originality.

His qualities of hardwork, affection and humanity make him an ideal for workers like us in the field. His " preachings" are like a beacon in the darkness for us. This publication , I am sure, will be to education what the Bible is to the Christians, the Gita to the Hindus .....

**MR. F.J. PORWAL**

Manager (Braille Press)  
NAB (Gujarat State Branch)  
Ahmedabad.

*9 November, 1994*

I met this great teacher and was magnetized by his overwhelming presence. He introduced me to the intricacies and intrinsic benefits of the thermoform machines and I will treasure this knowledge till eternity. His patience, his

humanity, clear and concise language helped me to understand this wonderful machine. His deeprooted knowledge of braille and his emphasis on pre-braille has impressed me to the extent that I am in awe of this great man. Mr. Stein has etched an indelible name in the field of braille and education of the blind.

**MR. H.M. PANCHAL**

Director (Training)  
Blind Men's Association  
Ahmedabad

*9 November, 1994*

I had the wonderful opportunity of meeting a great man like Mr. Stein. I am impressed by his greatness, his depth of knowledge and his warmth. He is a true teacher like our old 'Gurus' in India.

**MR. M.R.SURYAVANSHI**

Project Co-ordinator  
NAB Rural Activities Committee  
Ahmedabad

*9 November, 1994*

The integrated education scheme experts in India call W.A. Stein as father of integrated education but according to me he is much more than that. I realized this when I met him in the seminars conducted by him in India.

I can not forget his two statements which I wish to quote: One - "Take a blind child by the hand and lead him..... into life". Second, "I emphasize the vital role a teacher in working with a blind child and shaping his over all personality". If these two statements form the base for the

integrated education in our country, then the integration of the blind children in the mainstream of life is sure. I like his style of presenting his ideas and convincing people. He is like a preceptor to whom language is no barrier to communication. Though a foreigner, he is very much at home in India.

**MR. T.V. SRINIVASAN**

President

Shri Ramana Maharshi Academy for the Blind  
Bangalore 560 078

28 December, 1994

The thoughts and work of Mr. Stein is an example to be followed by all spirited people who are striving for the betterment of the visually impaired people. Mr. Stein understands blind children so well that the entire field of education of the blind has been revolutionized by his thoughts.

**MRS. VIMAL B. THAWANI**

Project Coordinator  
Blind Men's Association

15 November, 1994

Mr. Stein - his very name strikes a chord of respect and reverence. A foreigner who is more Indian than us - who values the traditions of charm, grace, humility and respect - who is good to all humans and specially caring of the underprivileged. Such people are not born often, they are handpicked by the Creator and sent to this world with a purpose of bettering the world.

**A WORD OF GRATITUDE**

In the field of education - as in many other fields - we have seen great changes in the last century. One significant development was the promotion of the education of the handicapped. However, it was only during the last 50 years that their integration into the mainstream of education became reality. Some outstanding educators have pioneered this development and Mr. Stein feels privileged to have known, become friends with and to have worked with them in many parts of the world. They have greatly influenced and inspired his own efforts. Therefore, Mr. Stein gratefully acknowledges his association with:

Mr. Freddie Tooze (deceased), U.K.

Dr. Stanley Bourgeault, USA

Dr. Jeanne Kenmore, USA

Br. Rudolf Van Oudheusden, Holland

Mr. Geoffrey Salisbury, U.K.

Miss Elizabeth Chapman, U.K.

Dr. Kurt Kristensen, Denmark

Mrs. Ana Maria da Costa, Portugal

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2. **Salisbury, Geoffrey:** *Open Education Handbook for Teachers of the Blind*, Haywards Health: Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, P.58

**SOURCE**

This publication is based on the following reports, articles & publications:

1. Keynote Address presented by Mr. W. Stein at the inauguration of the International Vocational Training Course at Haifa University, Israil during October, 1984.

2. Keynote Address presented by Mr. W. Stein at the International Symposium on Visually Handicapped Infants and Young Children: Birth to Seven, June 14-19, 1981.
3. Keynote Address presented by Mr. W. Stein on the occasion of National Conference on Centenary of Services to the Blind, New Delhi, 4-6 January, 1987.
4. Report of Mr. W. Stein on three Seminars for Itinerant Teachers of the Blind in India: January, 1990.
5. Sight Savers "Horizons" - Summer 1990 and Autumn 1990.
6. Sight Savers Review 90.
7. Tour Reports of Mr. W. Stein:
  - India/Pakistan, 10 to 25 April, 1989
  - Belize, 25 April to 5 May, 1990
  - Tamil Nadu, India, November, 1990
  - China/India, 27 February to 13 March, 1991
  - Calcutta, March, 1991
8. Maitree - Official Bulletin of Rotary Club of Behala, 7 March, 1991
9. Proceedings: Workshop on Education of the Visually Handicapped: Current Issues and Thoughts, organized by Society for the Visually Handicapped, 9 March, 1991.
10. A report of 4 Seminars conducted by Mr. Stein and sponsored by Sight Savers: 20-21 January at Ahmedabad; 23-24 January at Faridabad; 26-27 January, 1990 at Madras; 11 March, 1991 at Ahmedabad.
11. Actionaid Disability News, Volume 5, No.2, 1994
12. Comments and suggestions of Mr. W. Stein

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## APPENDIX

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### Chronology: Development of Education of the Visually Impaired in India

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#### 1. Status of Education of the Visually Handicapped in India

##### 1.1 Acceptance in the Constitution:

Right to Education' is enshrined in Article 41 as a Directive Principle in the Constitution of India. The same article enshrines right to public assistance in the case of disablement. Education and welfare of the disabled has been granted constitutional status in India.

In India, education of the disabled was not accepted as a legitimate component of general education and continued to be treated a mere welfare activity for too long. It had to wait for four decades after independence to be recognized as a component of general education and to be included in the disadvantaged groups needing special attention under equal educational opportunities. (Jangira, 1989).

##### 1.2 The National Policy on Education (1986):

For the first time considered education for all as one of the cherished goals of national development. Universalization of primary education is a step towards realization of this goal. The policy recognizes that non-enrollment and drop-out of special groups of children is one of the major difficulties in the realization of this goal. One of the special groups, which has received inadequate attention so far, is that of disabled children.

Outlining the steps for ensuring Equal Educational Opportunities for the Handicapped, the National Policy on Education states that the objective should be "to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence." It envisages that "wherever it is feasible, the education of children with motor handicaps and other mild handicaps will be common with that of others."

### **1.3 The Plan of Action (1987):**

The Plan of Action also stresses that as education of the handicapped in special schools is very costly, it will be ensured that only those children whose needs can not be met in common schools be enrolled in special schools. Once they acquire communication skills and study skills, they will be integrated in common schools.

### **1.4 The Baharul Islam Committee on Legislation for the Handicapped (1988):**

The Committee has included education in the draft legislation. It mentions that the State shall endeavour to provide free and universal elementary education to physically and mentally handicapped children. The State shall also provide assistance to them for education and training at the secondary and higher levels.

The draft legislation also lays emphasis on integrated education. It proposes that the policy of the Government should be to promote integration through "Integrated Education Programme". At the same time, includes special education as it proposes promoting setting up of special schools through Government and voluntary sectors for

those in need of special education, in such a manner that the handicapped persons living in any part of the country should have access to such special schools. The Draft Legislation even proposes that, if required, Government may set up residential schools for those who are no longer supported by common schools.

The Draft Legislation thus emphasizes integrated education and proposes that special education also be continued.

### **1.5 The Central Scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (Revised 1989, 1990 and 1992):**

The central scheme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development purports to provide educational opportunities for disabled children in common schools. A large number of State Governments have already adopted the Scheme. They have established Administrative Cells for monitoring the Scheme. However, coverage of blind children under the Scheme at present is negligible.

### **1.6 The Disabled Persons Securities and Rehabilitation Draft Bill (1981):**

This Bill of the Ministry of Welfare envisages that the State Governments shall, progressively, make suitable arrangements for imparting free and compulsory education for all disabled children until they complete the age of sixteen years. It encompasses promotion of residential as well as integrated education for the purpose of achieving universalization of primary education of disabled children.

## 1.7 Draft of the Persons with Disabilities (Securities and Rehabilitation) Bill (1994)

This Bill includes all the provisions pertaining to education of disabled children as enunciated in the draft bill of 1981. The National Council for Handicapped Welfare in its meeting convened on 21 September, 1994 decided to present the draft bill before the Parliament for its approval in the forthcoming Winter Session.

## 2. History of Education of the Visually Handicapped:

### 2.1 Residential Schools:

Stein (1990) traces the beginning of the education of the blind to a letter written by Diderot during 1748 and published in a newspaper in Paris as "Letter about the blind for the use of those who can see". Dr. Diderot, a physician by profession had two blind friends who influenced his thinking.

It was only during 1784, that Mr. Valentin Huay established the first school for the blind in Paris. Mr. Louis Braille, a student of this school later on invented the embossed six dot system of reading and writing, now popularly known as Braille.

Frampton (1953), however, maintains that in the United States, groups of blind children were first taught in a residential school on 15 March, 1832 and in a public school (integrated education) on 17 September, 1900

Soon the good news travelled abroad. Miss Annie Sharp, a missionary, founded the first school for the blind in India at Amritsar during 1887. It was shifted to Dehradun during 1903, now called the Sharp Memorial School for the Blind after its founder.

## 2.2 Chronology of Development of Education of the Visually Impaired in India:

Mr. M. Miles, however, feels that the Amritsar institution hardly began as a 'school', as understood in modern Indian or British English; the role of Annie Sharp was other than is generally imagined; there was some teaching of blind people at Amritsar years before Miss Sharp arrived; and even that was not the first effort to give blind Indians a regular schooling.

The chronology of development of education of the blind in India is presented below:

- 1826: Raja Kali Shankar Ghosal founded first asylum for blind people at Benaras which took in its first resident during January. Education for the blind boys at a similar asylum in Bareilly appeared around the same time.
- 1853: An Indian army officer was using William Moon's system of embossed types in preparing a Gospel in Hindustani for the multitudes of blind in India.
- 1861: An Indian woman at Amritsar called 'Blind Sarah' received an unspecified chapter of the Bible in Moon.
- 1870: Miss Asho, herself blind, received her first education in a school for the sighted children in Lahore, and later gained vocational skills and an aptitude for teaching.
- 1873: Moon's list of Bible portions published in England with embossed type included "the Gospel of St. Mathews in the Urdu language, for the use of blind

- in India.
- 1880: The education work at Amritsar centres around Miss Asho. Amritsar hospital manager wrote, "Asho's coming really marks the date of beginning of this school".
- 1883: Moon's list included four Bible portions in Hindustani, three in Bengali and one each in Malayalam and Tamil.
- 1884: Publication by Charles Luopolt of his recollections of education of blind people at Benaras: 20 years earlier, under the energetic hand of his wife, Jane Leupolt.
- 1886: The North India Industrial Home for the Blind was founded and its first pupils were poor Muslim women who came daily to be taught. At a later date a department was opened for resident Christian pupils, and the day school was discontinued due to lack of funds.
- 1887: Miss Annie Sharp, a missionary, founded a school for the blind at Amritsar. For the first 16 years, it was carried on in the premises belonging to the Church of England Missionary Society, then shifted to Dehradun. During these years, ninety inmates were received and cared for.
- Calcutta School for the Blind: It was started by Indian Christian, Mr. Behari Shah. Mr. Shah had to hire his first pupil to give him daily lessons, so that he might not be a loser through giving up begging as a profession.

- 1889: An institution for the blind run by the Canadian Presbyterian Mission was established at Indore.
- The report of the British Royal Commission on education for and condition of, the blind and deaf and dumb and other people in special circumstances was forwarded to Government of India and circulated to local governments.
- 1890: Palayamkottai School for the Blind: Miss A. K. Askwith began at Palayamkottai by taking six or seven blind children into her bungalow and teaching them to weave and to help in the garden. She also invented the first braille script in Tamil and transcribed the Bible. This class emerged to be the Palayamkottai School for the Blind. During 1943, this was the largest school in Asia with accommodation for 90 boys and 70 girls.
- 1893: Mrs. O'Connor founded a class of blind mendicants at Ranchi. They were taught orally and out of it emerged a small daily school.
- 1895: Under the auspices of the Society for Propagation of the Gospel, a blind school was established at Ranchi. In this school, blind men were trained in industrial work in cane and the bamboo, and the blind women were taught mat-making.
- 1896: A class for the blind run by the Canadian Presbyterian Mission was established at Ujjain.
- 1898: Moon wrote that by this time his type had been adapted also to Sanskrit, Telegu, Canarese and Punjabi.
- 1899: At Poona the Church of Scotland Mission had a

- special department in its orphanage for sightless girls.
- : In March, the Calcutta Blind School was given the status of a public institution.
- 1900: Mukti Mission associated with Pandit Rambhai established a Home for the Blind at Kodgaon, Poona.
- : Dadar School for the Blind: The American Mission School for the Blind was founded by Miss Millard in the year of famine in Bombay. The mission transferred the management of the school to the Society for the Protection of Children in Western India for an experimental period of three years. It was then renamed Dadar School for the Blind. It reverted to the American Mission in April, 1942.
- : Dr. Nilkantharai Chhatrapati, a medical professional established his first school at Ahmedabad in January after he acquired blindness. But owing to famine conditions closed it in August to reopen it in December the same year. He continued to run the school till he was invited to join as principal of the Victoria Memorial School for the Blind, Bombay.
- 1901: The School for the Deaf and the Blind was established by Mr. M. Srinivas Rao at Mysore. The management was taken over by the Government in 1927.
- 1902: The Victoria Memorial School for the Blind - a primary school with industrial classes - opened in Bombay on 13 December. Dr. Chhatrapati brought down his pupils to Bombay and amalgamated his Ahmedabad school with the newly founded one and became its first Principal.

- 1903: The school for the blind at Amritsar was shifted to Rajpur, Dehradun. Just a fortnight after the shifting had been accomplished, Miss Sharp had taken ill with cholera and expired on 25 April, 1903. The school has been recently renamed the Sharp Memorial School for the Blind in recognition of selfless services of Miss Annie Sharp.
- 1906: The Institute for the Blind, Lahore was run by the government, perhaps the first such institution specifically founded by the government.
- 1911: The Calcutta Blind School was registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act (XXI of 1860) with a Court of Governors.
- : United Lutheran Church Mission School for the Blind was founded by Mrs. Albrecth of the Mission.
- 1915: Mehasana School for the Blind was founded by the Baroda State to educate the deaf and the blind. The school was subsequently shifted to Baroda.
- 1916: The Government of Bombay at the instance of Government of India set up a Committee for the Inquiry of Defectives. It recognized the braille code developed by Dr. Neelkanthrai D. Chhatrapati.
- 1917: N.S.D. Industrial Home for the Blind, Bombay was founded on 1st April.
- 1919: Blind Relief Association, Bombay City was founded on 27th January. It established centres at Chalisgaon, Valsad and Surat.
- 1920: Committee on Sindhi Braille established.

- 1922: Patna Blind School founded by B. N. Mitter.
- : P.M. Advani presented his paper entitled "On Uniform Braille System for Indian Vernaculars" before the Second Oriental Conference at Calcutta.
- 1923: Institute for the Blind established at Amritsar by Rai Saheb Dr. S. Rozdon.
- : Karachi School for the Blind established on 1st April
- 1924: Originally started in St. Margaret's Girls High School premises, Ranchi blind school shifted to its new building.
- 1925: Happy Home for the Blind, Bombay founded on 21st April to rescue little blind beggars and make them acceptable to V.M. School for the Blind, Bombay
- : Ahmadi School for the Blind founded in June by Sahabzada Aftab Ahmad Khan, the late Vice-Chancellor of the Muslim University, Aligarh.
- 1928: S. P. G. Blind School founded at Ranchi by the S.P.G. Mission with the object of training and employing the blind.
- : Blind Relief Association founded on 22nd March by Rao Saheb Wamanrao Wadegaonkar. It established Blind Boys Institute on 19th August the same year.
- 1929: Madras Association for the Blind founded in February.
- : Tirupattur Blind School founded by Dr. F. Kugelberg was turned into a regular school for the blind in July.

- 1930: Victoria Memorial School for the Blind founded in December.
- 1931: Allahabad Blind Asylum established under the management of Presbyterian Church.
- 1932: K. K. School and Home for the Blind founded on 6th January.
- 1934: Poona School and Industrial Home for the Blind founded in January by Mr. V. H. Telang.
- 1939: Government School for the Deaf and the Blind established at Hyderabad in June.
- 1940: A course for training teachers and workers for the blind was started in July under the Teacher Training Department of the Calcutta University.
- : Kalimpong Home for the Blind was started in Darjeeling District by a retired Missionary, Dr. Miss Mary Scott.
- : Amalner School for the Blind founded at Amalner by a blind young man
- 1941: All India Lighthouse for the Blind founded at Calcutta in April by Subodh Chandra Roy.
- : Establishment of a 14 members committee for drawing Uniform Braille Code for India under the Chairmanship of the then Education Commissioner to Government of India, Mr. John Sergent.
- 1943: St. Dunstan's Hostel for Indian War Blinded, Dehradun established during July under the manage-



ment of St. Dunstan's London. This venue now accommodates the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped which is managed under the auspices of the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India.

1944: Report of Blindness in India: Sir Clutha Mackenzie, Secretary of the Joint Committee appointed by Central Advisory Boards of Health and Education produced this most exhaustive document on blind welfare services and prevention of blindness in India.

: Blind Relief Association established in New Delhi.

1945: The Navrangpura School for the Blind established at Ahmedabad.

1949: Model School for the Blind established at Dehradun

1950: Andh Vidyalaya School for Blind girls established in New Delhi by Rashtriya Virjanand Andh Vidyalaya Society.

: Blind Men's Association established at Ahmedabad.

: Government of India takes over St. Duncan's Hostel for Indian Servicemen.

: International Conference on Braille convened at Paris in March to discuss Uniform Braille Code for India.

1951: The Central Braille Press established at Dehradun

: Advent of Bharti Braille Code

1952: The National Association for the Blind established at Bombay.

: Kameshwari Priya Poor Home and Blind School established at Darbhanga

1957: Blind Boys Academy established at Narendrapur, West Bengal.

1958: Divine Light School for the Blind established at Whitefield, Bangalore. At present the organization is imparting training to resource and itinerant teachers.

1959: Adult Training Centre (School) for the Blind established at Ahmedabad.

1960: A Blind School established at Bhubneshwar, Orissa.

1962: Andhra Blind Model School established at Nasrapur.

1963: The Training College for the Teachers of the Blind established at Ahmedabad.

: School for the Blind, Dhulia founded with government grant.

: Bharat Blind School established at Shahadara, Delhi.

: Regional Teachers Training Centre for the Blind (Western Region) established at Victoria Memorial High School for the Blind, Bombay.

1965: Regional Teachers Training Centre for the Blind (Eastern Region) established at Kitchlu Marg, New Delhi.

1967: Regional Teachers Training Centre for the Blind (Northern Region) established at Narendrapur, West Bengal.

- 1969: Shree Ramna Maharishi Academy for the Blind established at Bangalore.
- 1979: All India Confederation of the Blind established in New Delhi.
- : Dehradun Centre renamed as the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped.
- 1989: The Ministry of Welfare introduces a Central Scheme on Establishment and Development of Special Schools for the Disabled.

### 2.3 Beginning of Integrated Education:

The Scottish Education Act, 1872 made provision for the education of the blind along with seeing children in the Public Board Schools. In 1879, the London School Board decided to carry out integrated education thoroughly and systematically.

Chauhan (1989) traces the origin of Integrated Education to Johann Witheim Klein, founder of the Imperial School for the Blind who mooted the concept of integrated education in the early nineteenth century. He prepared a handbook to guide normal teachers in their educational ventures for the blind. Samuel Gridley Howe (1871) voiced strong objections to "social sequestration" and advocated having the blind "attend the common schools in all cases where it is feasible." He considered special education unnatural and supported integrated education.

Madden and Slavin (1983), however, attribute the growth of mainstreaming in the USA to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, mandating the "least restrictive placement" of handicapped children. This means

that many students who were formerly taught in self-contained special education programmes were to spend as much time as possible in the regular programmes, with only as much special instructions outside the regular class as absolutely necessary.

According to Frampton (1953) it was in Scotland that an early attempt, if not the earliest one, was made on integration.

According to Lady Campbell (1921), "Blind children were placed with the seeing in Edinburgh in 1834-36, but lack of interest caused the plan to be given up. The first successful effort to place children in day school classes was made in Greenock, Scotland in 1868 only". Gallagher (1982) feels that the signs of mainstreaming blind children began to emerge during 1950 accompanied by a proliferation in the number of rehabilitation and adjustment training centres.

### 2.4 Beginning of Integrated Education in India:

Ras Mohun Halder, Principal of the Dadar School for the Blind and pioneer in the field of the education of the blind in India refers to integrated education in the regular school system in his 1943 publication "The Visually Handicapped in India." He suggested establishing of a special class, in collaboration and co-ordination with a central sighted school, where these partially-sighted (not totally blind) children can congregate in a separate room provided with special equipment and under supervision of a properly qualified teacher. The children could, with advantage, attend almost all the regular classes with the normally sighted children".

## 2.5 Chronology of Development of Integrated Education in India:

1940: Bombay Experiment: Halder (1943) reported that the first experiment of this nature was started in 1940 by the Dadar School for the Blind in cooperation with the Hume High School, Bombay. Two bright pupils after finishing their elementary education in the blind school were sent to regular schools. One boy stood first in all his examinations in a class of 40 sighted children.

Halder (1943) reported that this experiment was started out of a local need and through economic necessity. Till then there was, however, no reported case of any blind child living in his parental home and attending a sighted school anywhere in India.

1958: Individual Efforts: As reported in the Illustrated Weekly, Mrs. Rehmat Fazelbhoj, a pioneer of integrated education in India, launched integrated education during June, 1958 with the admission of two blind students in the New Activity School, Bombay. Taylor and Taylor (1970) also confirm this and report that during April, 1967 seven blind children were enrolled here.

1960: Joint Venture: According to Chauhan (1989), the first attempt in implementation of integrated education in India was made during 1960 by the Ministry of Education and the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind - now Sight Savers. This venture could not make much progress.

1964: The Palanpur Experiment: on partial integration emerged with 4 blind boys, it has grown steadily,

and now it has more than 100 blind boys and girls. One finds reference to the needs of providing special education in the Education Commission report (1964-66) which recommends placement of disabled children, as far as possible in ordinary schools.

: The Ludhiana Public School initiated integrated education by enrolling six blind children.

1974: The Union Ministry of Social Welfare launched a formal Scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children.

1978: Maharashtra government adopts the Central Scheme of Integrated Education and establishes a regular Administrative Cell at Poona.

: Seminar of Pioneers: Realizing the world-wide demand for "Total Rehabilitation", the Christoffel Blindenmission invited representatives from innovative programmes on education and rehabilitation from Africa and Asia at Bensheim, Germany. This unique get-together is popularly known as "Seminar of Pioneers"

The seminar was convened and conducted by Mr. Wolfgang Stein. It was an attempt on bridging the gap between education and rehabilitation.

The Pioneers after week - long deliberations concluded, "We express our disappointment and frustration that in spite of all the knowledge available on the subject of training, rehabilitation and integration of the blind, very little has been achieved.... particularly in the developing countries".

"We summarize the disastrous effect of most existing programmes as....

- economically unviable
- socially isolating
- psychologically stunting".

The Pioneers emphasized the need for integration and community participation with regard to education, training, placement and open employment. They expressed their unanimous belief in a new service model that assists blind clients to remain in their community, to cope with life in the community and to be an accepted member of the community.

The Pioneers thus advocated integration at all levels including at the level of education as well.

1981: Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore: establishes a major personnel preparation programme for promoting integrated education. During September, 1988 about 873 children including 644 totally blind and 229 low-vision children had been admitted in the regular schools in Tamil Nadu. This Project was a milestone for the development of integrated education in South India. Its inception was the result of painstaking negotiations between Mr. W. Stein & Mr. P.G. Michael and the Minister of Education of Tamil Nadu.

In Karnataka, the Divine Light Trust took the lead in training the Itinerant Teachers as 'a single man team' for promoting integrated education. More than 900 blind children have been admitted in the regular schools in Karnataka.

1981: The Visnagar Project: on the Itinerant Model of

integration of the rural blind children was initiated with the financial assistance of the Sight Savers - Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, during 1981 with 11 children only. During 1990, there were 232 children enrolled in the regular rural schools. The movement has spread to other areas of Gujarat as well and enrollment is more than 800. Integrated education has been accepted as a component of the comprehensive community based rehabilitation of the rural blind.

1982: The Central Scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled transferred to the Ministry of Human Resources Development.

1983: The National Association for the Blind launches two projects with the assistance of the Sight Savers - RCSB for the community based rehabilitation of the rural blind.

: The Christoffel Blinden Mission organizes a course on vocational rehabilitation for 10 project managers from Asia. Mr. W. Stein delivers key-note address. He emphasises the need for promotion of community based rehabilitation as well as integrated education.

1985: The National Association for the Blind included integrated education in its projects on community based rehabilitation.

: The Divine Light Trust for the Blind, Whitefield, Bangalore introduces Diploma Course in Integrated Education of the Visually Handicapped.

1986: The National Policy on Education covers education

of the disabled and emphasizes integrated as well as residential education.

: Holy Cross College, Tiruchirapalli introduces M.R.Sc. (Master of Rehabilitation Science) with the affiliation of the Bhartidasan University.

1987: The Plan of Action on National Policy also covers the education of the disabled.

: First revision of the central scheme in view of the National Policy of Education (1986).

: The Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED) implemented since June in the States of Maharashtra, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. The Project is funded by UNICEF and coordinated by the NCERT, New Delhi.

1989: Further revision of the central scheme covering mentally handicapped children under the scope of integrated education. The revision also enables the voluntary organizations to seek financial assistance for the implementation of the Scheme.

1990: National Seminar on Integrated Education of the Disabled convened by the National Council for Educational Research and Training.

: The Kurukshetra University introduces M. Ed. (Special Education) for the visually handicapped.

: Mr. W. Stein conducts a Workshop on Integrated Education for the itinerant teachers from Gujarat during 20-21 January at Ahmedabad; for itinerant teachers from rest of country on 23-24 January at

Faridabad; for resource teachers from South India on 26-27 January at Madras.

1991: Mr. W. Stein conducts a Workshop on Integrated Education at Calcutta during March followed by one day Workshop on 11 March at Ahmedabad.

: The Chitrakoot Gramayadoy Vishwavidyalaya, Chitrakoot starts one year degree course for the itinerant teachers of the visually impaired.

1992: Further revision of the central scheme of integrated education explaining qualification criteria of the teachers and emphasizing on the need for adopting a multicategory approach of covering all the disabilities.

1992: Rehabilitation Council of India accorded statutory status. The council has been entrusted the responsibility of standardization of various human resource development courses in the field of disabled welfare.

1994: The Blind Men's Association establishes a teacher training centre for imparting one year Diploma for the Secondary Teachers to the in-service itinerant teachers.

: National Seminar on Integrated Education of the Disabled convened by the National Council for Educational Research and Training, New Delhi.

1995: Asian Conference of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) convened at Ahmedabad (India) during 9-11 January, 1995.

- a. The continent of Asia carries 60 per cent of the global burden of the 38 million persons with visual impairment in the world, out of which at least 15 per cent are incurable blind;
- b. The present coverage of services for children with visual impairment is less than 10 per cent,

The ICEVI - Asia Region reiterated its commitment towards achieving the goal of education for all, and calls upon its member countries to pursue these objectives by adopting appropriate action plans. Recognising the positive climate and opportunities created by the declaration of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, ICEVI recommends focus on education, rehabilitation and prevention of the major causes of blindness in its endeavour to achieve the objectives.

Education: It is felt that the goal of achieving education for all children with visual impairment by the year 2000 A.D. is no longer feasible. ICEVI, therefore, projects a target to multiply the present coverage by at least 4 times in its Asia Region.

The Conference recommended a four - pronged strategy:

1. Do what is possible now
2. Disadvantaged groups come first
3. Collaboration and Coordination is the key to success
4. Reach them young.