CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Over a period, visual impairment has been recognized as a social issue and not a medical or physical issue, it therefore requires social solutions. In spite of the dramatic expansion of rehabilitation services and programs, legislative enforcement and increased amount of public awareness, important issues such as quality of services, full participation, and equal status of visually impaired still remain major area of concern. Tirussew (1995) states "Like other people, persons with disabilities can be comfortable and secure when they feel that they are accepted, appreciated and liked". Data indicates that with sufficient amount of support many visually impaired have made satisfactory adjustment in life and are contributing meaningfully in the family and community. In spite of the adverse circumstances in the family, many visually impaired have achieved education and are leading a successful life. They have to face many challenges in order to establish themselves in the society despite their capabilities and potentialities. Many visually impaired have mastered the competent skills and integrated in the society without significant reliance on other sighted persons. Various studies indicate that adverse attitudinal environment makes it difficult for persons with disabilities/visually impaired to lead a normal life. This is mainly reflected in the attitude of the family and community because of the preconceived negative notions against people with disability. As a result of such attitude many children, youth and adults with vision impairment are denied of their basic rights despite the persons with disability act 1995 advocating for the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities in general and persons with vision impairment in particular.

One of the reasons to undertake a study on educated visually impaired is the fact that very limited research has been done in this area in India. Whatever research that has been done is limited to institutionalized children rather than adults. It is rare to find sociological study on educated visually impaired in India. Furthermore, these studies have not used any theoretical framework to highlight the plight and challenges faced by visually impaired in
the society. Secondly, the investigator was deeply interested in this problem, particularly because she herself is an educated visually impaired person. As a result, this empirical research aims to penetrate deeply into the lives of visually impaired. Therefore, the present study has been undertaken to explore the challenges faced by visually impaired and the support offered to them, the quality of support services, and how these services can be improvised to become more useful.

Various provisions claim to provide equal opportunities to persons with visual impairment to participate in the society. However, prevalent data indicate that visually impaired persons are considered useless, helpless, and unable to be self-sufficient, hence, neglected and stigmatized. According to Ingstad & Whyte (1995) the perception of the visually impaired as useless implies that they are often regarded as the most helpless and unable to help themselves. From this explanation it can be understood that studying their perception regarding their own capabilities, potentialities, self-sufficiency and self-reliance, in relation to their education, employment and family life is important for the improvement of their integration in the society. The purpose of the present study was to know the perceptions of visually impaired regarding the role of various support systems in their lives. Three support systems have been explored that include family, educational institutions and work place environment. This brought into perspective the problems and experiences of visually impaired.

The present study was done at Punjab and U.T. Chandigarh and a simple random sample of 200 respondents was collected of both male and female. For the purpose of quantitative data, visually impaired adults of working age were interviewed, as literature clearly indicates that they need more social support to become successful and independent in life. The focus of analysis was on Visually impaired adults who passed minimum matriculation either from the 5 special institutions of Punjab and U.T. Chandigarh (Selected area for the present study) or had joined these institutions for the rehabilitation or vocational courses, both congenital and adventitious blind, pursuing for higher education, working (In the public and private sector) or looking for a job.
For the present study, interview schedule/questionnaire was made in Braille to collect data. Those respondents who were proficient in Braille had filled it and for others researcher had interviewed them. Additionally, qualitative data in the form of case studies of visually impaired adults, both males and females from the different parts of India were undertaken. In order to study in broader perspective, the subterranean aspects of their lives and their perception about various support systems, 11 case studies were undertaken. For purpose of collecting case studies, snowballing technique was used. Thus in the present study both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been used as a method of research in order to provide a better in depth understanding of how social support helps the visually impaired persons to integrate in the society.

The present study was undertaken with following objectives:

1. To study the personal history of visually impaired adults of working age, focusing on their family, academic and professional background.
2. To understand the role of various support systems in the lives of visually impaired and their experiences, reactions and perceptions of significant others.
3. To understand the strategies adopted by visually impaired to cope with visual impairment.
4. To study the attitude of the society from the view point of visually impaired.

Results that are presented in the seven chapters are summarized below:

The first chapter of the study highlighted the problem of visual impairment. This chapter documented the problem of visual impairment in India and abroad. While doing so, the extensive review of the literature regarding the various domains of the visual impairment was done. The studies ranged from the topics like, incidence of visual impairment, causes of visual impairments, problems faced by visually impaired, role of social support systems, factors which influence their successful adjustment in the society, coping strategies, attitude of the society, their social networks, their psychosocial problems etc. In the present study the phenomenological perspective
has been used which is highlighted through the qualitative data in the form of case studies. This perspective suggests that a social phenomenon must be judged by and from the point of view of the person most directly affected by them. Thus, a phenomenological perspective has been used to investigate the subjective interpretation of the situation of visually impaired in the society. In order to study the perception of visually impaired persons at a more in-depth level, case studies have been taken from the diverse socio-economic and cultural background. Further, methodology adopted by the researcher for the purpose of data collection has been elaborated. The simple random sample of 200 respondents both male and females belonging to different age groups was drawn.

The second chapter documented the medical history, demographics, socio-economic and family background of the respondents. Medical history is one of the most important aspects for the present study. Onset of visual impairment indicated that a majority of the respondents’ i.e. 58 percent were visually impaired since birth, followed by 17 percent respondents who became visually impaired in early childhood, 12 percent respondents lost their sight during childhood, 7 percent respondents became blind in the adulthood and 6 percent respondents during adolescence. In 40 percent cases the cause of the impairment was not known (Opthalma) because sometimes it is not possible to detect congenital deformities, 35 percent respondents became visually impaired due to ocular diseases and anomalies. 19.5 percent respondents reported General and Systemic cause of their visual impairment and 5.5 percent respondents became visually impaired due to injuries and accidents. In the present study 67 percent of the respondents were totally blind and 33 percent respondents were partially blind (low vision). Out of these partially sighted, 22 percent respondents were able to read ink print books with the help of assistive devices and 11 percent respondents were mobile only. The analysis of type of blindness and age of the respondents indicated that the respondents who were totally blind, 49.3 percent respondents were in age group of 26-35 years, 20 percent respondents were in age group of 36-45 years and 21.6 percent respondents were above the age of 45 years, 8.2 percent respondents were in age group of 16-25 years.
Out of the partially sighted respondents, 60.6 percent respondents were in the age group of 26-35 years, 27.2 percent respondents in the age group of 36-45 years, and 6.1 percent respondents were in the age group of 16-25 years, and 6.1 percent respondents were above the age of 45 years. Out of the totally blind respondents, maximum respondents i.e. 60.4 percent were males and 39.6 percent were females. Out of the partially sighted respondents, 72.3 percent respondents were males and 27.7 percent were females. These findings precisely indicate the lower representation of visually impaired females in the sample.

Occupational status achieved by these respondents indicated that out of the totally blind, a maximum number of respondents i.e. 59.7 percent were engaged in middle status occupations, 19.4 percent respondents were unemployed, 11.2 percent respondents had lower status occupations and 9.7 percent respondents had higher level of occupation. Out of the partially sighted respondents, 62.1 percent respondents had middle level of occupation, 18.2 percent respondents had lower level occupation, 10.6 percent respondents had higher level of occupation and 9.1 percent respondents were unemployed. These findings show that more preference is given to partially blind in the employment. Income is one of the most important variables for any study. In the present study, 19.4 percent respondents were totally blind and 9.1 percent partially sighted respondents were unemployed, hence their income was nil. 43.2 percent totally blind respondents had income of more than Rs. 10,000 per month, 20.9 percent respondents had income between Rs. 5000-10,000 and 16.4 percent respondents earned up to Rs. 5000 per month. Out of the partially sighted respondents, 57.6 percent had income between Rs. 5000-10,000 per month, 19.7 percent respondents were earning more than Rs. 10,000 per month and 13.6 percent respondents had income up to Rs. 5000 per month. Results regarding the treatment taken for visual impairment showed that out of 200 respondents, a majority i.e. 97 percent took treatment and 3 percent of the respondents didn’t receive any treatment for the visual impairment. Type of treatment taken showed that 48.5 percent respondents took medical and spiritual treatment, followed by 24.5 percent respondents who took only medical treatment, 18 percent
respondents took both medical and surgical and 6.5 percent of the respondents took every type of treatment i.e. medical, surgical and spiritual treatment. Parents of 88 percent respondents bore the expenditure of treatment of their visually impaired child where as parents of 3 percent respondents took help from the various social agencies or charity for the treatment. All the respondents faced general difficulties while getting the treatment but 6.5 percent of the respondents reported that due to financial incapability and ignorance on the part of doctors, they faced serious difficulties. In a few cases surgeries were not performed at right time. Duration of treatment indicate that maximum number of respondents, i.e. 58 percent took treatment up to the period of 5 years, followed by 21 percent respondents who took treatment up to the period of 10 years, 14 percent of the respondents were still continuing with treatment. Place of treatment indicated that 34 percent respondents took treatment from the various hospitals of Punjab, Chandigarh and Delhi, 29.5 percent respondents visited hospitals of Punjab and Chandigarh, 26 percent respondents visited various hospital of India and even sent their reports to abroad for consultancy and 7.5 percent of the respondents took treatment from the special eye hospitals of Delhi only. In the present study, out of the 200 respondents, only 1 percent had disability other than visual impairment. Out of these 1 case was slow learner and other case had hearing impairment. Data indicated that, 71.5 percent respondents were living in the nuclear house hold while 28 percent lived in the joint house hold and 1 case was orphan and she was nurtured by a charitable organization. Size of the family of orientation of the respondents indicated that 49.5 percent respondents had medium size family i.e. 4-6 members in the family, followed by 36.5 percent respondents who had large family i.e. 6-10 members and 12.5 percent respondents had smaller family i.e. up to 4 members and 1 percent of the respondents had very large family i.e. more than 10 members in the family.

Health status of the parents of the respondents was also examined and it was found that, there were only 2 percent of the respondents whose parents were also suffering with the visual impairment and parents of a vast majority i.e. 97.5 percent were not suffering with any kind of impairment. (1 case was
Health status of the siblings shows that 26.5% were suffering with visual impairment and siblings of the majority of the respondents (i.e., 73%) were not suffering with visual impairment. Educational background of the head of the family indicated that, fathers of 26% respondents were illiterate, 21% had primary level of education, 10% were middle passed, 10% were matriculate, 10% were graduates and there were only 5% whose fathers were post-graduate. Occupation of head of the family indicated that 31.5% respondents' fathers had middle level of occupation, 25.5% had low level of occupation and 13.5% had higher level of occupation. Out of the 200 respondents, 27.5% respondents belonged to the middle income group (i.e., between Rs. 7500-15,000 per month) followed by lower income group (i.e., 25% who were earning upto Rs. 7500 per month) and 18% respondents belonged to higher income group (i.e., above 15,000 per month). 29.5% respondents had no income. Thus, a majority of visually impaired in the present study belonged to middle class background.

Marital status of the respondents indicated that a majority of the respondents (i.e., 66%) was married and 34% respondents were unmarried. Among the married respondents, 44% were males and 22% were females. Findings also indicated that 1.5% respondents got divorced. Almost all the respondents faced difficulties in getting married because of the visual impairment. 32.5% of the respondents reported that they didn’t find suitable match according to their choice, 18.5% respondents didn’t find match of their own socio-economic status and 15% of the respondents were rejected many times due to their functional abilities. Reasons for not getting married indicated that 17% respondents were unemployed or employed as temporarily and had no economic security, 12.5% were searching for a suitable sighted match and 4.5% of the respondents were rejected many times due to the absence of family and social support. Out of these, 4.5% respondents were females. Age of marriage of these respondents indicated that 32% of the respondents got married between the age of 26-30 years which is little late as compared to the sighted people, followed by 16
percent of the respondents who got married between the age of 18-25 years. 14.5 percent respondents got married between the age of 30-35 years and remaining 3.5 percent respondents got married after the age of 35 years.

A considerable proportion of respondents had their spouses age at marriage ranged between 18-35 years. 29 percent of the respondents got married between the age group of 25-30 years followed by the 24.5 percent spouses who were married between the age group of 18-25 years. Health status of the spouses indicated that 29 percent of the respondents had a sighted healthy spouse, 8.5 percent respondents had a partially sighted spouse, 27.5 percent of the respondents got married to totally blind spouses and 1 percent respondents had physically handicapped spouse. It is important to note that out of 29 percent respondents, who had sighted spouse, 25 percent were males and only 4 percent were females. Caste background of the spouses indicated that, spouses of 35 percent respondents belonged to upper caste, 19 percent belonged to middle caste and remaining 12 percent respondents had spouses from the lower caste. Religious backgrounds of the spouses indicated that 47 percent were Hindus, followed by Sikhs i.e. 14.5 percent, 1 percent were Muslims and 3.5 percent were Christians. There is a difference in the religious background of the respondents. Such findings throw light on the fact that few inter-caste and inter-religious marriages have taken place among the visually impaired. Educational background of the spouses indicated that 17.5 percent were post-graduate with professional degrees and diplomas, 14 percent were graduates, 10 percent were matriculate, 9 percent were qualified up to high school, 7.5 percent were primary, 5 percent were middle passed and 3 percent were even illiterate. Occupational background of the spouses indicated that 29 percent were not working, 24 percent engaged in middle level occupations, 12 percent were engaged in low level of occupations and 2 percent were engaged in high level of occupations. Income of the spouses indicated that 21.5 percent had income between Rs. 5000-Rs. 10000 per month, 9 percent were earning above Rs. 10000 per month and 6.5 percent had income between Rs. 1000 to 5000 per month. However, 29 percent were not working, thus, had no income. In the present study, 28.5 percent respondents had 2 children, 21 percent respondents had one child, 5
percent respondents had 3 and more children, and 11.5 percent respondents had no child. There were 23.5 percent respondents who had children between the age group of 6-15 years, 21 percent respondents had children up to five years, and 10 percent respondents had children above the age of 15 years. Health status of children showed that, majority of the respondents i.e. 55.5 percent had normal healthy children, 2 percent respondents had both visually impaired and sighted children, 1 percent had physically handicapped and 1 percent had only visually impaired children.

Second objective of the present study focused on the role of social support systems i.e. family, educational institutions and work place and their experience, perception and reactions of significant others. Third chapter dealt with family support system, the perception of significant others, behaviour of their parents and family members, type of support provided to them and the reasons why some of the respondents didn’t receive any support from their parents and impact of negative support on their well being. Findings of this chapter indicated that, a majority i.e. 72 percent of the respondents didn’t have any kind of difference of opinion with their parents and family members where as 27.5 percent of the respondents had difference of opinions with their parents on various issues. In the present study one case was orphan and she hadn’t given any views. Issues of conflicts indicated that 18.5 percent of the respondents had difference of opinion with their parents on almost all the issues such as daily needs, financial needs, mobility etc., 9 percent of the respondents had difference of opinion on basic daily needs and mobility related issues. Results indicated that a maximum number of respondents i.e. 77 percent were treated positively by their parents. Findings also indicated that, there were 23 percent of the respondents who were ill-treated by their parents. These respondents were many times ignored and there was lack of communication. 18 percent respondents were demeaned, criticized and even insulted, 11.5 percent respondents were threatened, shouted and abused by their parents, 7.5 percent respondents were even resorted to physical violence and 2.5 percent respondents were locked up by their parents and family members. In 12 percent of the cases the main perpetrators of violent behavior were the parents and siblings, followed by 6 percent who blamed
their parents only, 3.5 percent reported their siblings only and in 1 percent of the female cases, sister-in-laws were held responsible by the respondents. The results indicated that 21.5 percent of the respondents initially felt sad and depressed, with the passage of time they accepted their impairment and took it as a challenge and fought for their rights and 1.5 percent of the respondents became vengeful, when the sufferings became unbearable, the respondent tried to hurt their family members in order to make them realize the sufferings of a visually impaired. In the present study, majority of the respondents i.e. 77 percent reported that they received equal treatment in the family in all the matters of life, whereas 22.5 percent respondents were discriminated. 15 percent of the respondents were not treated equally by all the members of the family, i.e. parents, siblings and grandparents, followed by 3 percent by their parents, 3 percent by their siblings and 1.5 percent respondents were not treated equally by their grandparents. There were 7.5 percent of the respondents who didn’t receive equal treatment in the financial matters. These respondents were not given any share in paternal properties and they did not receive any financial assistance, followed by 6.5 percent of the respondents whose educational needs were totally ignored, 6 percent didn’t receive equal treatment in their basic daily needs as they were not given proper food, clothes and other basic facilities and 2.5 percent were considered as a stigma for the family and were not allowed to participate in any get together or taken out by parents.

Support of parents indicated that a majority of the respondents i.e. 89 got support from their parents in one way or the other. 11 percent of the respondents didn’t receive any kind of support from their parents. Out of 89 percent respondents who received support from their parents, 61 percent of the respondents got every type of support from their parents i.e. their all needs related to financial, educational, psychological and social matters were fulfilled by their parents. Their parents taught them daily living skills, admitted them in one of the special school, arranged study material for them, learnt Braille to help in their studies and arranged study material, gave them financial support, supported them to cope with the stressful life situations, took them out for social functions and Some of the parents also made efforts in
findings a suitable match to settle their married life. 18 percent respondents got support of parents only in the matters of educational and social because of lower socio-economic background, their parents could not spent any money for their education and were not aware about their psychological needs, and 10 percent respondents got educational and financial support from their parents but their parents kept them isolated from their society because of the stigma attached with visual impairment. In the present study, reasons were also examined for the lack of support. It has been found that Parents of 7 percent respondents had negative attitude towards their visual impairment and 4 percent respondents didn’t receive any kind of support from their parents due to the illiteracy, poverty and lack of awareness of parents about the special needs and facilities available for the visually impaired. Impact of lack of support and negative behaviour indicate that out of the 23 percent who were ill-treated by their family members and out of these 11 percent didn’t receive any support, 12 percent experienced feelings of loneliness, insecurity, frustration. As a consequence they lacked confidence and developed inferiority complex. 11 percent of the respondents had developed personality disorders like useless rotation of head and body. All these respondents had reported that because of the negative behaviour and lack of family support, they faced additional challenges. They could not set their targets for the future life and they had to struggle hard to achieve their education and earn their livelihood. Therefore, however, all the respondents gave great importance to the family support for the normal growth and development of a visually impaired child.

Parental reaction to visual impairment highlighted the fact that, parents of 44 percent respondents treated visual impairment as a result of bad deeds of the past or punishment of sins committed in the past, followed by 40 percent who accepted it as will of god, 9 percent believed that impairment occurred because of the natural or medical causes and 6.5 percent believed in black magic. A majority of the respondents i.e. 81 percent were not blamed by their parents and 18.5 percent respondents were blamed by their parents for visual impairment. They were blamed with disability remarks, considered as a liability, discriminated and were socially isolated.
In Indian society marriage is considered to be the very important institution and it has the same significance for the visually impaired. Therefore, along with the support of parents and family members, support provided by spouses of the respondents has been studied. Findings of the behaviour and relationship of respondents with their spouse indicated that out of the 66 percent married respondents, 29.5 percent respondents had difference of opinion with their spouse, and remaining 36.5 percent didn’t have any difference of opinion with their spouse. Usually the issues for conflict, in 10.5 percent cases was due to matters like daily needs, money matter and mobility etc, 9 percent cases had only since both the spouses were totally blind matter pertained to mobility only, 5 percent respondents had conflict because of the financial matters and 5 percent because of the daily needs. Findings also showed that 57.5 percent of the respondents didn’t face violent behaviour by their spouse and in-laws. But 8.5 percent of the respondents reported that they faced violent behaviour. All these respondents were many times ignored and there was lack of communication, followed by 8 percent cases where the respondents faced excessive criticism, denied permission to express views, and faced a demeaning attitude on various occasions. 6 percent respondents were threatened, shouted and even abused by their spouses. There were 2.5 percent respondents who were physically abused. In the present study, however, it was also found that the respondents who were victims of family violence, majority of them were females and some of them had sighted illiterate spouses.

In 4 percent of the cases, the perpetrators of the violence were the spouses, followed by 3 percent cases where both spouses and members of the in-laws family indulged in abusive behaviour against the respondents and in 1.5 percent cases the perpetrators were found to be only in-laws. Reactions of the respondents to spousal violence indicates that 4 percent of the respondents who were the victims of family violence got frustrated, followed by 2.5 percent respondents who developed negative thoughts, 1.5 percent respondents felt sad and depressed and one case became vengeful when she was ill-treated by her mother-in-law.
It has been found that a majority of the respondents i.e. 59 percent had received support from their spouses. Those respondents who got support from their spouses further reported that, a majority i.e. 26 percent respondents got sufficient amount of support from their spouse. There were a few respondents whose spouses helped them in accomplishing their task of daily living, escorting and management of household accounts. There were 16 percent of the respondents who felt that along with other support, their spouse also provided them with psychological support. Findings also indicate that, there were 7 percent of the respondents who expressed that their spouse didn’t support them, majority of these respondents were women and they had a illiterate spouse. These were the cases where family violence also existed.

Hence, it can be argued that with the mutual understanding and cooperation visually impaired can lead a successful and happy family life, however, ill-treatment and physical violence can make the visually impaired more vulnerable and double sufferer.

Chapter 4 of the present study dealt with the educational support which visually impaired had received during the course of their academic life. A majority of the respondents i.e. 34.5 percent had studied from the Vocational Rehabilitation Training Centre, Ludhiana, 22.5 percent respondents were from the Institute For The Blind, Chandigarh, 17.5 percent respondents were from the School For The Blind, Amritsar, 17 percent respondents were from the Government Institute For The Blind, Jamalpur and remaining 8.5 percent respondents had joined National Association For The Blind, Chandigarh which has been recently established to impart vocational skills to visually impaired. Educational qualification of the respondents indicated that 45.5 percent of the respondents had attained higher level of education i.e. post-graduation with professional degrees and diplomas, 25 percent respondents had middle level of education i.e. graduation with professional degrees and diplomas and 29.5 percent respondents had attained lower level of education i.e. matric or high school with vocational trainings.

Findings showed that, 52.5 percent of the respondents got information about the special educational institution from informal sources like friends.
neighbours, relatives, followed by 19.5 percent respondents who came to
to know from teachers and doctors. There were 14.5 percent respondents who
reported that other educated visually impaired persons provided them
information. There were 11.5 percent respondents whose parents were
educated and had awareness about the special educational institutions and
there were only 4 percent respondents who came to know about special
institutes through media which is very insignificant number. All the
respondents had joined these special institutions either for basic education or
for vocational courses. Findings show that a majority of the respondents i.e.
94 percent reported that these special institutions played a crucial role in their
lives. There were 6 percent respondents who had entirely different views, they
reported that these special institutions did not play any role in their lives, as
these institutions were lacking in quality education, basic infrastructure and
modern equipments. 60.5 percent respondents reported that they received
basic education, learnt daily living skills, orientation and mobility skills, and
communication skills, vocational skills which helped them to attain higher
education and become financially independent. 17.5 percent respondents
expressed that they learnt daily living skills, vocational skills and got suitable
employment due to their institutions. The remaining 16 percent respondents
acquired basic daily living skills and vocational skills out of which some were
adventitious blind and were rehabilitated in these institutions. They learnt to
accept the trauma of disability and cope with the new environment, learnt
Braille reading-writing skills, mobility and orientation and learnt various
vocational skills. Findings regarding the curriculum show that 75.5 percent
respondents were satisfied with the curriculum but 24.5 percent of the
respondents were not satisfied with the curriculum due to the restricted choice
of subjects. A majority of the respondents i.e. 97 percent respondents felt
comfortable in the company of other visually impaired persons whereas 3
percent didn’t like the company of visually impaired as these were
adventitious visually impaired. Participation in the extracurricular activities
indicate that a majority of the respondents i.e. 74.5 percent respondents had
participated in different co-curricular activities like sports, music competitions,
poetry and debates etc and had won prizes at state, national and international
level. There were 25.5 percent respondents who did not participate in any
activity due to lack of proper infrastructure. Data indicated that a majority of the respondents i.e. 72.5 percent had studied from the trained teachers whereas 27.5 percent respondents did not study from the trained teachers in the special schools. A majority of the respondents i.e. 60.5 percent received help in their studies from the teachers, the classmates and the family members, followed by 26 percent respondents who were helped by their teachers, classmates and the social workers (which included some sighted friends or hostel mates and some paid readers), and the remaining 12.5 percent respondents got help from the family and the social workers. A majority of the respondents i.e. 62.5 percent faced various difficulties while receiving education where as 37.5 percent respondents didn’t face any kind of difficulty as majority of these students had left their studies after the high school from the special school or they had sufficient amount of family support. 

Out of the total 62.5 percent respondents who faced difficulties, 40 percent of the respondents faced difficulties due to the non-availability of study material in the alternative formats and arrangement of readers-writers for their examination and non-availability of accessible technology, followed by 12 percent respondents who faced difficulties due to the non-cooperation of teachers, lack of study material and insufficient educational opportunities and negative attitude of the authorities. Some of the respondents faced difficulties because of lack of family support. They were not able to meet the educational needs because the stipend given by the Government for higher education was not sufficient to meet their needs.

Findings indicated that 58.5 percent respondents got individual or special attention and 41.5 percent respondents didn’t receive any kind of special attention from their teachers. In the present study, 51 percent of the respondent felt difference in the attitudes of visually impaired and sighted teachers. There were 49 percent of the respondents who did not notice any difference. Those respondents who experienced difference in the attitude of visually impaired and sighted teachers further reported that visually impaired teachers teach in a better way as they understand the needs and limitations of the visually impaired, they use different strategies and methods to teach visually impaired students. A majority of the respondents’ i.e. 72.5 percent felt
that their teachers had a motivating and favorable attitude and there were 27.5 percent respondents who faced the negative attitude of their teachers due to various reasons. Out of these, 15 percent reported that the attitude of teachers was unfavorable because they had low expectations from visually impaired students, followed by 12.5 percent who said that sighted teachers lack awareness regarding the potentialities and capabilities of visually impaired students which make them biased. 79.5 percent of the respondents reported positive and helpful attitude of the other staff members of the special schools whereas 20.5 percent had experienced negative behaviour of the staff members. They were not giving them proper food, other necessary items required for daily life and making fun of their impairment.

Chapter 5 of the present study dealt the work place environment of respondents who were either employed in the public or private sector, their relations with superiors, colleagues and subordinates, type of difficulties they faced in getting an employment, reasons for their discrimination and accommodation they made in their work place. Work status of the respondents indicated that out of 200 respondents, a majority i.e. 84 percent were working either in the public or private sector whereas 16 percent of the cases were unemployed. It was reported that these respondents had appeared for interviews number of times but were rejected due to negative attitude of the employers and out of these 11.5 percent respondents were females and 10 percent were totally blind.

The employed respondents were further asked if they faced any kind of difficulty in procuring a job, 46 percent respondents faced difficulties like, negative attitude of the employers; rejection due to lack of awareness and more preference was given to partially sighted. Age of employment indicated that 37.5 percent of the respondents were gainfully employed when they were in the age group of 26-30 years, which is a little late as compared to individuals with no disability, followed by 30 percent who got employed between the age of 21-25 years, 9 percent respondents became economically productive as they reached the age group of 31-35 years. There were however, 7.5 percent respondents who had started working at a younger age i.e. below 20 years of age because of the economic necessity.
They were engaged in unskilled occupations. Occupation status achieved by these respondents revealed that a maximum number of respondents i.e. 60.5 percent had occupied middle level of occupations such as school teachers and lecturers (Music), telephone operators, receptionists, stenographers, and clerks, followed by 16 percent respondents who were unemployed. 13.5 percent had occupied lower level jobs like that of caners, peons, library attendant etc and there were only 10 percent of the respondents who had occupied higher level of occupations such as college lecturers, administrators, supervisors, auditors and even bank manager. The relationship between age and occupational status achieved indicated that out of the 60.5 percent of the respondents who had occupied middle level of occupations, 49.6 percent were in the age group of 26-35 years, 23.1 percent in the 36-45 years, 19.8 percent were above the age of 45 years and 7.5 percent were between the ages of 16-25 years. Respondents who were unemployed, 65.6 percent were in the age group of 26-35 years, 18.8 percent in the 16-25 years, 12.5 percent in the age group of 36-45 years and 3.1 percent (1 case) were above the age of 45 years.

Respondents who had occupied lower level of occupation, 66.7 percent were in the age group of 26-35 years, 18.5 percent in the age group of 36-45 years, 14.8 percent were above the age of 45 years and there were no respondents in the age group of 16-25 years. Respondents who had occupied higher level of occupations, 45 percent respondents were in the age group of 36-45 years, 35 percent respondents were in the age group of 26-35 years, 20 percent respondents were above the age of 45 years and there were no respondents in the age group of 16-25 years who had occupied higher level of occupation.

The relationship between sex and occupational status indicated that respondents who had occupied middle level of occupations, 63.6 percent respondents were males and 35.4 percent were females. Out of the unemployed respondents, 71.9 percent were females and 28.9 percent were males. Respondents who had occupied lower level of occupations, 85.2 percent were males and 14.8 percent were females and respondents who had occupied higher level of occupations, 95 percent respondents were males and
5 percent (1 case) was female. These findings precisely indicate that less opportunities, more unemployment rate among visually impaired females as compared to males.

The relationship between regional background and occupational status revealed that respondents who had occupied middle level of occupation, 54.5 percent respondents were from urban background, 45.5 percent respondents were from rural background. Respondents who were unemployed, 53.1 percent were from urban background and 46.9 percent were from rural background. Respondents who had lower level of occupations, 33.3 percent were from urban background, 66.7 percent were from rural background and respondents who had occupied higher level of occupations, 80 percent were from urban background and 20 percent were from rural background.

The relationship between educational qualification and occupational status indicated that respondents who had attained middle level of occupations, a maximum number of respondents i.e. 57 percent had higher level of education, 21.5 percent respondents had middle and 21.5 percent respondents had lower level of education. Respondents who were unemployed, 56.3 percent had lower level of education, 25 percent respondents had higher and 18.8 percent respondents had middle level of education. 55.6 percent respondents had lower level of education, 44.4 percent respondents had middle level of education and no respondent had higher level of education. Respondents who had higher level of occupations, 70 percent had higher level of education and 30 percent respondents had middle level of education and no respondent fall in the lower category. These findings indicated that a majority of the respondents had higher level of education but were working in the middle level of occupations.

The relationship between income and occupational status revealed that, respondents who had middle level of occupation, 56.2 percent respondents had income above Rs. 10,000 per month, 23.1 percent respondents were earning up to Rs. 5000 per month, 20.7 percent respondents had income between Rs. 5000-10,000 per month. Respondents who had occupied lower level of occupation, 85.2 percent respondents had income between Rs. 5000-10,000 per month, 11.1 percent respondents had
income up to Rs 5000 per month and 3.7 percent (1 case) had income above Rs10,000 per month. Respondents who had occupied higher level of occupation, 95 percent had income above Rs10,000 per month and only 5 percent (1 case) had income between Rs5000-10,000 per month. Most of the respondents were working in the public sector and getting salary according to the government scales but in the private or charitable institutions they were getting less salary. The relationship between support of family and occupational status achieved revealed that, respondents who had occupied middle level of occupations, 90.9 percent had got support from the family and 9.1 percent didn’t receive any support from their family. Respondents who were unemployed, 87.5 percent had received support from their family and 12.5 percent didn’t receive any kind of support from their family. Respondents who had occupied lower level of occupation, 81.5 percent had received family support whereas 18.5 percent respondents didn’t receive any help. Respondents who had occupied higher level of occupations, 90 percent respondents had received support of family.

The relationship between onset of visual impairment and occupational status achieved indicated that respondents who had occupied middle level of occupations, 57.1 percent respondents were congenitally blind and 42.9 percent respondents were adventitious blind. Respondents who were unemployed, 56.3 percent were congenital blind and 43.7 percent were adventitious blind. Respondents who had occupied lower level of occupations, 59.3 percent respondents were congenital and 40.7 percent were adventitious blind. Respondents who had higher level of occupation, 65 percent respondents were congenital blind and 35 percent respondents were adventitious blind. Such findings endorse the fact that adventitious blind find more difficulties vis-à-vis congenital blind in the occupational field.

Nature of job of the respondents indicated that a maximum number of respondents i.e. 62 percent got employment in the public sector whereas 22 percent were employed in the private sector such as in the charitable institutions or on contract basis or under some projects etc. Out of the total employed respondents, 59.5 percent were continuing with their first job, however, 24.5 percent of the respondents had changed their job to avail
better opportunities in the form of higher status, higher salary and permanency.

Mode of recruitment indicated that a maximum number of respondents had got employment through the normal procedure of hiring an employee. 48.5 percent of the respondents got employment through formal procedure i.e. advertisements and employment exchanges, followed by 29.5 percent who got job through informal procedure i.e. personal contacts and 6.5 percent got through special drive i.e. with the special efforts of National Federation for The blind. Commuting is one of the major problems for the visually impaired because of their restricted mobility but the findings of the present study indicated that all the respondents had learnt mobility skills and majority of them were using long cane and were able to commute independently to their work place. These respondents were using different sources to commute their work place. Findings indicated that a majority of the respondents i.e. 53 percent had made their own arrangements like personal vehicle with drivers, school transportation and some had their work place at walking distance and most of the female respondents were escorted by their family members or were provided with transport facility by the institution, followed by 31 percent of the respondents who were using public transportations as it is free for visually impaired.

As one of the objectives of the present study was to study the social support which these respondents obtained from their work place, it was necessary to study their relationship with their colleagues, super ordinates and subordinates and also the reasons for their unsatisfactory relations.

There were 38.5 percent of the respondents who had satisfactory relations with their colleagues, followed by 36 percent respondents who had cordial relations and 9.5 percent respondents who had unsatisfactory relations with their colleagues. A maximum of these respondents were employed in the middle and lower level of occupations. Reasons for their unsatisfactory relations indicated that their colleagues had negative attitude and were biased against them. Their colleagues were prejudiced against them and were of the opinion that visually impaired got jobs only because of the reservation otherwise they are not capable. Employers' attitude is one of the
most important aspects in the successful employment of a visually impaired person. In the present study, 42 percent respondents had satisfactory relations with their superiors as there was hardly any interaction between them, followed by 33.5 percent of the respondents who had cordial relations with their superiors. These respondents revealed that only when their employers became aware about their capabilities they accepted them. Additionally, their performance at workplace also changed their negative image and their superiors developed good opinion about them. There were however, 8.5 percent respondents who had unsatisfactory relations with their superiors. Employers of 3.5 percent respondents considered them as burden, 2.5 percent treated them inferior and 2.5 percent had negative attitude towards them. They considered them incapable and didn’t give them any work to do. In the present study, 13.5 percent of the respondents were working in the lower category, hence they had no subordinates. Relationships with subordinates revealed that a maximum number of respondents i.e. 38.5 percent of the respondents had satisfactory relation with their subordinates, followed by 28.5 percent respondents who had cordial relations with their subordinates and 3.5 percent of the respondents had unsatisfactory relations with their subordinates. Reasons for their unsatisfactory relations with their subordinates indicated that their subordinates had the negative opinions about their capabilities and in some cases the subordinates were unhappy with the fact that in spite of the respondents being disabled they were earning more and had a higher position. Their subordinates didn’t give them any respect and didn’t accept them as their seniors.

There were 54 percent of the respondents who expressed that they were treated at par with other sighted counterparts at their work place. A majority of these respondents were teachers and their workload and salary was equal to their sighted counterparts. Their employers and colleagues had positive attitude and were co-operative. There were 30 percent of the respondents who faced discrimination and unequal treatment by their employers and colleagues at their work place. There were 8.5 percent respondents who were not given equal opportunities of work like their sighted counterparts because their employers had negative attitude towards their
impairment and lacked confidence in their capabilities. Some of them were not
even given any kind of job responsibility. Many of them were made to sit in the
office only or just to attend the telephone calls. There were 8 percent
respondents who were facing disparity in salary and 7.5 percent reported that
they were not considered capable for leadership role. In spite of the fact that
they were senior they were denied the privileges of leadership. There were 6
percent of the respondents who were ignored, they were never involved in
group activities and were excluded from group discussions which lowered
their self-esteem and confidence level. Such findings indicate that people with
visual impairment are not fully accepted in the society in terms of equality.

Satisfaction with job revealed that among the employed respondents,
52.5 percent respondents were satisfied with their present job. They had
achieved a status compatible or equivalent to their academic qualification
whereas 31.5 percent respondents were not satisfied with their present job.
Out of these, 16.5 percent of the respondents were not satisfied because their
job was not compatible to their educational qualification and 8.5 percent
respondents who were unsatisfied due to discriminatory attitude at their work
place. Participation in the decision making process at their work place indicate
that 29 percent respondents who were holding the position of responsibility
were involved in the decision making process, whereas 55 percent
respondents who were employed at the middle or lower level of occupations
were not involved in the decision making process. Findings of the present
study also indicate that 52 percent respondents consider their disability as a
major hindrance in their progress at the work place because of the absence of
accessible environment, assistive technology. Some of the respondents had
also reported that due to the impairment, they were not given timely
promotion.

There were 32 percent of the respondents who didn't consider their
disability as a hindrance in their progress. Out of these, 20 percent reported
that people at their work place had optimistic outlook towards visually
impaired. They received full cooperation of their colleagues and super
ordinates and they regarded their abilities. They were given only those
assignments which they could do independently and efficiently. They were not
discriminated and had full privileges of their rights and facilities. There were 12 percent of the respondents who reported that some alterations and modifications had made in their job profile and work place environment. Their work place was equipped with modern assistive devices and accessible technology like computers with screen reading software, screen magnification software and other electronic devices which made them comfortable and proficient. According to them, they had overcome their disability and were at par with other normal individuals. The views of respondents regarding the best jobs suited for visually impaired indicated that a majority of respondents i.e. 68 percent respondents were of the opinion that if visually impaired are imparted with sufficient vocational, communicative and modern technical skills and receive equal opportunities in education, they can perform well in various occupations like administrators, lecturers, auditors, teachers, lawyers, computer programmers, bank officials, physiotherapists, telephone operators, stenographers, etc. Therefore, however, such findings indicate their own experience, confidence in their capabilities and level of awareness.

CHAPTER 6th of the present study has dealt with the social support system in which various aspects of their social life, social issues, attitude of society, coping strategies adopted and awareness about their rights and opportunities available had been studied from their perspective. Out of the 200 respondents, a majority i.e. 52.5 percent was of the opinion that visual impairment occurs due to medical and socio-economic reasons, followed by 29.5 percent respondents who believed in the medical reasons and 18 percent respondents had faith in various superstitions prevalent in the society. Thus, it can be concluded that educated visually impaired have scientific approach regarding the occurrence of disability. They are aware about various diseases and deficiencies which cause impairment and do not consider previous life's sins as causative factors for their visual impairment. In the present study 57.5 percent respondents expressed that educated people who are aware about the capabilities of visually impaired and have previous experience or closer contact do not attach any kind of stigma to visually impaired but 42.5 percent of the respondents who reported that illiterates from rural background and who lack awareness usually attach stigma with visually impairment.
maximum number of respondents i.e. 78.5 percent had reported that use of Braille, manacle lenses and cane make them feel more independent, confident and capable of reading, moving and doing things with little assistance and 21.5 percent of the respondents felt dependent while using these devices. Acceptance of disability is very essential for the successful rehabilitation. In the present study, a majority of respondents i.e. 84 percent respondents had accepted their visual impairment as a permanent condition. Those respondents who were adventitious blind didn’t accept their blindness. All the respondents had mastery over daily living skills indicated since all the respondents had attended special schools (Educated group). The effect of mastery of daily living skills on their lives indicate that 77.5 percent respondents felt more independent, they were able to manage their personal life without feeling utterly helpless and 22.5 percent respondents expressed that their mastery over the living skills had made them independent as well as enhanced their personality.

Findings indicated that a 55 percent respondents reported that they concentrated on the objectives of their life to cope up with their visual impairment, 24 percent respondents compared themselves with more disabled and satisfied themselves that they are better off than others, followed by 12 percent respondents who reported that they did not think much about their visual impairment. They ignored their impairment and continued to lead their life and remaining 9 percent respondents adopted different strategies to cope with the situation. They concentrated on objectives of their life and when depressed they adopted different defense mechanisms such as comparing themselves with more disabled persons, doing introspection not thinking much about their impairment.

Data indicated that 41 percent respondents had a strong social network of friends and colleagues. They shared their personal matters with their friends and colleagues, followed by 33 percent respondents who shared with their parents, siblings, friends and spouse depending upon the situation. There were 14.5 percent of the respondents who shared their personal matters only with their spouses and all these respondents were females. 6.5 percent respondents with parents and siblings and 5 percent of the
respondents who never shared their feelings or views with anyone. These respondents were those who faced negative behavior of their parents and didn't have family support and they became introvert. There were 42 percent respondents who took advice from parents, siblings, spouse and friends depending on the situation, 36 percent respondents took advice of their parents and other family members, followed by 10 percent respondents who were entirely dependent on their spouse for advice and guidance in difficult situations, 7 percent respondents took advice from their friends and remaining 5 percent of the respondents never discussed their personal matters and problems with anyone thus, did not seek any advice from others.

Data indicated that a majority of the respondents i.e. 66 percent felt insecure in many situations where as 34 percent respondents lacked such feelings. Out of respondents who had the feeling of insecurity, 20.5 percent of the respondents had economic insecurity, followed by 17.5 percent respondents who had fear of public places due to inaccessible physical environment and while crossing roads during rush hours and 12.5 percent respondents who felt insecure due to the fact that their impairment is congenital and may be passed on to the next generation. The remaining 5.5 percent respondents had fear of public speaking due to lack of confidence. It is argued that visually impaired are more prone to psychological problems.

Data indicated that 47 percent of the respondents experienced loneliness. Out of 47 percent respondents who felt lonely, 22 percent respondents felt lonely due to social isolation, (when others considered them inferior and inadequate in social gathering), 12 percent respondents felt lonely due to lack of inclusive recreational activities for them and 11 percent of the respondents who felt lonely because of lack of family interaction and 2 percent respondents had no child. Hence it can be concluded that social isolation, attitude of people, lack of family interaction and communication, less recreational activities and absence of child in the family are the major factors which generate the feelings of loneliness among the visually impaired. Different mechanisms adopted by visually impaired to cope with stress indicated that 54.5 percent respondents chose music, prayer, news/interaction with family and friends, 21 percent respondents preferred writing and listening
to music, 12.5 percent respondents used computer, surfed internet, listened to news and music and the remaining 12 percent respondents cried or used prayer as a method to relieve their stress. Almost half of the respondents i.e., 50.5 percent took the major decisions of their lives on their own, 20 percent respondents asked their spouse for their opinion, 19 percent respondents were depended upon their parents for decisions and there were 10.5 percent respondents who preferred asking their friends, colleagues and teachers. There were 52 percent respondents who were satisfied with what they had accomplished in their lives and 48 percent respondents were dissatisfied with what they have achieved in life. Out of 48 percent respondents who were disappointed with what they have achieved, 20 percent respondents reported that the opportunities they got were none compared to what they were capable of, 11 percent of them felt they lacked support, 9 percent respondents were unhappy by the negative attitude and lack of awareness among people and the remaining 8 percent respondents thought that they could not avail various opportunities like the sighted individuals.

The study revealed that 35 percent respondents considered lack of opportunity as the major factor hindering their progress followed by 32.5 percent respondents who felt the need of financial support, 12.5 percent respondents did not receive family support and 10 percent respondents said that lack of awareness affected their success. There were 51 percent of the respondents who revealed that financial support, social support, awareness of welfare schemes, equal opportunities and good guide are main elements for the achievements in life, 35 percent respondents gave importance to the social support because it plays a vital role in achieving rightful place in the society, and while 14 percent respondents gave importance to the equal opportunities. All the respondents were of the opinion that government must own all the responsibility of the rehabilitation of disabled people and properly implement the policies for them. 56 percent respondents were totally aware about the concessions and welfare schemes available for the disabled while 44 percent respondents were only partially aware. The source of information was teachers of special schools friends and NGOs, i.e. 45 percent respondents, 30 percent respondents gave credit to the media like literature,
radio and internet, while 25 percent respondents mentioned only their teachers. About 62.5 percent of the respondents had availed concessions in travel, education, employment, conveyance and rebate in telephone rent and income tax and remaining 37.5 percent benefited from travel and educational concessions only. About 76.5 percent of the respondents were using the assistive devices and out of these, 49 percent respondents were using cane and mobile, 12 percent respondents were using computer with screen reading software, 6.5 percent respondents were using Braille and mobile, 5 percent respondents were using computer with scanner and magnifier and 4 percent respondents were using Braille, computer and mobile. These findings indicate that a very few respondents were using modern gadgets. The study revealed that a maximum number of respondents i.e. 73.5 percent got help from the public in reading-writing, mobility like crossing the roads and locating the places and 26.5 percent said that they had taken every type of help from the society.

The present study indicated that a maximum number of respondents i.e. 81 percent were not cheated by the sighted people and 19 percent respondents had experienced cheating. Out of these who experienced cheating, 8 percent respondents were deceived financially and 7 percent respondents emotionally, 4 percent faced both financial and emotional bamboozlement. Majority of the respondents i.e., 56.5 percent were of the opinion that general public was aware of the potentialities of the educated blind persons whereas remaining 43.5 percent held opposite views. 52 percent respondents admitted they got appreciation for their sincerity, hard work and achievements. There were 48 percent individuals mentioned that they did not receive any social recognition. Findings of the present study indicated that 55.5 percent of the respondents reported that attitude of society towards disabled people is becoming positive in urban areas while 44.5 percent expressed that society still lacks awareness about the capabilities of the visually impaired, thus lack positive attitude towards them. 55.5 percent respondents expressed that society is making desired changes as per the convenience of the disabled so that they can fully integrate in the society. There were 44.5 percent respondents who reported that society is not making
desired changes as per their convenience. They had to encounter many barriers while traveling, in the public places, educational institutions and at the work place.

In the present study in addition to taking quantitative data of 200 adults, qualitative data in the form of 11 case studies of visually impaired adults was also undertaken. The seventh chapter covered the case studies and their analysis. In order to study the broader spectrum of the perception of visually impaired persons at a more in-depth level, case studies have been taken from the diverse socio-economic and cultural background.

Profile of the cases: Out of the total 11 cases, 5 cases were congenitally blind and 6 cases were adventitious blind. Among the adventitious blind, 3 cases lost their vision in the adolescent, 2 in the adulthood and 1 case in the childhood. The cause of impairment indicated that in 6 cases it was ocular diseases and anomalies i.e. cataract and retinitis pigmentosa and in 3 cases it was road accident, eye cancer and wrong medicine and in 2 congenital cases the cause was unknown. Type of visual impairment indicated that 8 cases were totally blind and 3 cases were partially sighted (low vision). 9 cases had taken treatment from the various hospitals and 2 cases didn't take any kind of treatment. In spite the spiritual treatment, 5 cases had taken medical and surgical treatment and 4 cases had taken medical treatment. Their parents bore the expenditure of treatment. Out of 9 cases who took treatment, 4 cases were continuing their treatment as they were in regular contact with the doctors either for gaining the sight or to maintain their residual vision. Out of the 11 cases, 3 cases had another disability also. 2 cases had developed the habit of mannerism and 1 case had hearing impairment. It was also observed that 6 cases were between the age group of 26-35 years of age and the remaining 5 cases were in the age group of 36-45 years of age. Out of the 11 cases, 6 cases were males and 5 cases were females. 6 cases were unmarried and 5 cases were married and out of these married cases 2 were females. Out of the 6 unmarried cases, 3 were males and only 1 case was partially sighted. Out of these 3 cases were employed. 2 cases were looking for a job to gain economic security and in 2 female cases, parents were looking for sighted person of their own religion in
which they were not yet successful. One male case that was working as a lecturer and was looking for an educated person of other disability and 1 female case remained single due to lack of family support. After the death of her parents, her siblings were not interested in her marriage and didn’t support her.

The qualitative data indicated that all the married cases got married between the ages of 25-30 years of age. All the cases got married within their own religion and caste, except 1 case that was a Christian but married a lower caste Hindu. The health status of the spouses indicated that 3 males and 1 female case had sighted healthy spouse and spouse of one female case was partially sighted. Educational status of the spouses indicated that the spouses of 3 cases were post-graduates and 1 case was under-graduate. The spouse of 1 female case was illiterate. The qualitative data had also depicted that spouses of 3 male cases were housewives, 1 female was a middle class employee with salary of Rs. 15,000 per month (partially sighted teacher) and 1 female case had an unemployed but sighted husband. It is pertinent to mention here that all the male cases were married to educated sighted spouses. In female cases, 1 was married to educated but visually impaired person and 1 female got sighted but illiterate spouse. Marriage of 3 cases was arranged by their parents and relatives, 1 male case selected his partner on his own and marriage of 1 female case was arranged by non-familial members i.e. a charitable organization from where she was rehabilitated. All the married cases had 2 to 3 children between the age group of 2 to 14 years and all were studying in good schools. Health status of children indicated that 2 cases had visually impaired child with the same cause i.e. congenital cataract.

Caste background of the cases indicated that 6 cases belonged to the upper caste, 3 belonged to the lower caste and 2 cases belonged to middle caste. 7 cases were from rural background and 4 cases were from urban background. At the time of study all the cases were residing in urban area either for higher education or for employment except 1 case that had completed his education and was unemployed. Religious background
indicated that 8 cases were Hindus and remaining 3 cases were from one of these religions i.e. Sikh, Muslim and Christian, respectively.

Educational qualification of these cases indicated that out of the 11 cases, 7 cases had achieved higher level of education (2 cases had attained post-doctoral degrees and 5 cases were post-graduate with professional degrees and diplomas), 1 case had middle level of education (computer science graduate with professional diplomas like stenography in Braille) and 3 cases who were females had attained lower level of education (i.e. high school passed with elementary teacher training and diploma in telephone operation and stenography in Braille). Occupational status of the cases indicated that 8 out of the 11 cases were employed. Out of these 4 cases that were males had occupied higher level of occupations which were compatible to their educational qualification (i.e. administrator and lecturers). 4 female cases were employed at middle level of occupations (i.e. clerks, teacher and stenographer).

Out of the 8 employed cases, 7 cases had a permanent job and 1 female case had temporary job. 6 cases got their job through advertisement, 2 cases got through personal influence and contact. Out of the 8 cases, 7 cases had changed their job to achieve a higher status and permanency. Out of the 8 cases, 3 cases had started working at an early age because of the economic necessity and all the cases got their job at the age of 25-30 years. Out of the 3 cases that were unemployed, 2 were males and 1 was a female. 4 cases had monthly income of more than Rs 15,000 per month, 3 cases were earning between Rs 10,000-15,000 per month and 1 case who was highly educated earned only Rs. 5000 per month as she was working in a charitable institution.

8 cases belonged to nuclear family and 3 cases had joint family. 7 cases had a large size family of 10 members, 3 cases had medium size family and 1 case had a very large family i.e. more than 10 members. In 5 cases fathers’ had education up to high school, fathers of 4 cases had lower level of education i.e., illiterate to primary level and there were only 2 cases whose fathers were highly educated i.e. post-graduates with professional degrees. In 6 cases, parents of 4 cases had expired and in 2 cases, 1 mother and one
father had expired. Fathers of 3 cases were labourers and 3 were farmers in 3 cases fathers had retired, and only 2 were engaged in high level of occupation. Parents of all cases were normal except in 1 case whose father had developed visual impairment due to retinitis pigmentosa in the middle age. Siblings of all the cases were normal except 2 cases where siblings suffered from same cause.

**Family support:** 7 cases reported that they had difference of opinions with their parents on issues such as money matters, daily needs and mobility. 4 cases didn’t have any difference of opinion with their parents. 8 cases faced negative behaviour in the family. They were not allowed to express their views. 4 cases faced extreme kind of negative behaviour i.e. they were criticized, insulted, abused, threatened, physically assaulted and even 2 cases were locked up in order to isolate them. 5 cases faced negative behavior of their family. 1 case faced ill treatment by step-mother and 2 cases were ill treated by their siblings and sisters-in-law. 6 cases felt bad, depressed and 2 cases became vengeful and violent but majority of the cases with the passage of time developed tolerance and accepted their situation. Among the cases that faced negative behaviour in the family, majority of them were from lower socio-economic background with illiterate parents. Negative attitude of the parents, in some cases absence of parents or more than one visually impaired child in the family resulted in abusive behaviour. The cases that faced extreme negative behaviour of parents were discriminated against by their families in accessing food, clothing, and education. They are left out of familial financial matters and shares of paternal property. Their parents considered them as a liability and thought that any money spent on them would go waste. They were not taken out for social functions because of the stigma attached with visual impairment.

Parents of 7 cases considered visual impairment as a result of sins committed in the past and blamed their children, 3 cases had accepted it as will of god and parents of 1 case accepted it as a medical problem and were solution oriented.

4 cases got every type of support from their parents i.e. educational, financial, psychological and social needs, 2 cases got educational and
financial support but were ignored in the psychological and social matters. 5 cases didn't receive any kind of support from their parents and family members. Their parents disowned them or left them in the special school and never paid any attention to their needs. Along with education, they caned chairs, did music tuitions and other musical programmes to earn their livelihood. These cases had to struggle hard to achieve education and gain economic security. They felt lonely, frustrated, and insecure and their lives were unplanned and directionless and 2 cases even developed abnormal mannerism.

Since in the present study, the respondents were adults, along with family of orientation, family of procreation was also studied. All the married cases reported that they had difference of opinions with their spouses but they solved the matters with mutual co-operation and understanding except one female case who had marital conflict with her spouse on issues like money matters, daily needs, mobility etc. Out of 5 married cases, 2 female cases experienced negative behaviour in the family. They were ignored, criticized, demeaned, denied permission to express views and were insulted on various occasions. 1 case was even threatened, abused and many times even physically assaulted by her husband. In 1 case, the perpetrator of family violence was husband and in other case it was mother-in-law. Both these cases felt depressed and many times got frustrated but they also started resenting their aggressive behaviour. Such finding reveals that only the female cases had experienced negative behaviour of their spouse and other family members whereas male cases had smooth and happy family life. They supported them in all their needs and their children are also a major source of support for them. Their sighted spouse and children escorted them to public places and read ink print material for them.

**Educational support:** Out of the 11 cases, 6 cases had started their education from the different special schools for the blind located in Punjab and Chandigarh whereas 4 cases had joined these special institutions for their rehabilitation, vocational courses and continued their education as they became visually impaired in the adolescent and adulthood. 1 case who was partially blind since birth had studied from the regular school. He faced
number of difficulties in attaining education as the teachers were not trained to cater to the needs of visually impaired and text books were not available in the large print formats. His parents, siblings and classmates helped him in his studies. 2 cases faced difficulties in the special schools as these schools were not providing proper facilities, their basic needs were not taken care of, teachers were not trained to cater to their needs, they didn’t teach them the daily living skills and reading-writing skills, only music was taught and were promoted on the basis of oral exams.

4 cases got sufficient amount of support from the special schools. They learnt daily living skills, reading-writing skills, mobility and orientations, use of assistive devices and their basic requirements were taken care of. Teachers were trained to cater to their specific needs. These schools helped them in the preparation of notes in Braille and arranged writers for them. 4 cases who were adventitious blind joined special schools for their rehabilitation, learnt special skills as well as alternative techniques to cope with visual impairment which made them economically independent. After passing out from these schools, 2 female cases had left their studies and other cases continued their higher studies. All the cases who pursued higher education reported that they faced a number of difficulties, 3 cases were refused admission in the institutions of higher education due to the negative attitude of the higher authority. Lack of awareness of teachers, restricted choice of subjects, less educational opportunities, non-involvement in the group discussion, non-availability of text books in the alternative formats like Braille, audio-electronic and large print formats, problem of reader services, arrangement of ascribe (writer), library services, inaccessible technology etc were other major problems of educated blind. 4 cases also faced financial difficulties because of the lack of family support and less amount of scholarships and high cost of assistive and technological devices.

Work place support: Out of the 8 employed cases, 5 had cordial relations with their super ordinates except 1 case who had satisfactory relations with his super-ordinates as he was discriminated in his leadership qualities and 2 female cases, who were working as clerks, had unsatisfactory
relations with their super ordinates and colleagues because of their negative and discriminatory attitude and satisfactory relations with their subordinates.

Out of the 8 employed cases, 5 cases were satisfied with their job as they were getting equal opportunities at their workplace and were able to perform their duty efficiently, had good interaction with their colleagues and were getting equal salary. There were 3 cases who were not satisfied with their present job as 1 case had temporary job with low salary and the other 2 cases were never assigned any work responsibility. Due to the negative attitude and lack of awareness, their super-ordinates never interacted with them and always refused to let them work. They were considered incapable to perform any work. Their super-ordinates were of the opinion that visually impaired have to be accommodated due to the government reservation policy otherwise they are not capable.

5 cases didn’t consider their disability as a hindrance in their progress because of the positive attitude of the super-ordinates and colleagues, modified work place with assistive devices and 3 cases considered their disability as a hindrance in their progress at their work place because of attitudinal and physical barriers. Their employers had pre-conceived notion regarding the image of visually impaired and discriminate against them. 4 cases were participating in the key decisions at their work place and the remaining 4 female cases were not involved in the decision making as they had occupied middle level of occupations. All the cases were of the opinion that visually impaired can work as administrators, teachers, computer programmers, telephone operators, stenographers and can do skilled and unskilled jobs successfully if they are imparted with competent skills, modified work place and accessible environment.

Coping mechanism adopted by visually impaired: Qualitative analysis indicated that visually impaired use different coping mechanism to cope with visual impairment and to overcome psychological stress. In the present study, out of the 11 cases, 6 cases concentrated on the objectives of their life. 5 cases concentrated on the objectives of life and when got disappointed they compared themselves with more disabled people to satisfy themselves. They used different strategies to cope with stress and loneliness.
They used music therapy, listened to news, interacted with their friends and family members, wrote poetry and surfed internet with the help of screen reader software. All the cases were religious and prayed to relax themselves. Few female cases along with music and prayer, also cried sometimes. Out of 11 cases, 9 cases were members of different social organizations which were working for the upliftment of visually impaired. They were aware of the welfare schemes and concessions given by the government. All the cases wanted that government must own all the Of the 11 cases, 3 cases had received honored, 1 case was a social activist who fought for the employment rights of visually impaired and 1 case acted as a resource person and created awareness among the general public. 3 cases had been honored by the state government for their immense contribution.

5 cases were satisfied with their achievements and remaining 6 cases were not satisfied in their lives because of the less opportunities, discriminatory attitude, lack of awareness of family and community. All the cases considered equal opportunities and social support were the main elements of achievements in the lives of disabled person. All the cases had received help from the general people in reading-writing, locating the places, while traveling and crossing roads. All the cases were of the opinion that attitude of people towards disabled becoming positive and favorable but only in urban areas. All the cases reported that the society has made desired changes for creating accessible environment for the disabled but still physical and attitudinal barriers were the major barriers for their full participation in the society.

Research Questions Answered

The present study aimed to answer the research questions such as:

- Does the presence or absence of support from family affect the well being of visually impaired person?
- Do the educational programs impart competent skills to blind for their independent living?
• Does the gender play a significant role in the type of relationship in various support systems?
• Does the class play an important role in achieving success by the visually impaired?
• Do the visually impaired get job opportunity according to their potential?
• Do visually impaired achieve in life only if they have additional support?

The section below provides a summary of answers to the above-mentioned questions based on the findings of the present investigation

1. A significant correlation of family support and well being of visually impaired respondents in both the quantitative data and qualitative analysis was found. Those respondents who received sufficient amount of support from their family, were more satisfied, and were socially well adjusted in life. On the other hand those who didn’t receive any kind of support had to face additional challenges. They suffered from inferiority complex, lacked confidence and were insecure about their future. There were, however, a few exceptional cases, who excelled in life without family support and achieved a higher social position but their path of struggle was very difficult.

2. It was observed that various educational institutions under study were imparting necessary competent skills like Braille reading-writing skills, daily living skills, orientation and mobility, communication and vocational skills etc. These skills make both congenital and adventitious visually impaired independent and they learn to adapt to new ways of life. But as these respondents become conscious of their rights their expectations from these institutions increase. They feel that these institutions lack in modern facilities, adequate infrastructure, modern vocational skills, technical skills like training in assistive devices and software’s, trained personnel etc, which is essential for higher education, employment and integration in the society.
3. It was found that gender emerged as an important factor in both the quantitative and qualitative analysis. It was observed that visually impaired females were doubly disadvantaged because they had less access to education, employment and rehabilitative measures. Many of them had left their education after the high school. They were either unemployed or under employed and were earning less salary as a result suffering from poverty and dependency. Visually impaired females also faced discrimination in the family. Due to lack of support, a few female respondents were deserted and some of them remained single due to negative social attitude. The consequences of visual impairment are more for females as compared to males, visually impaired men are better employed, get married with sighted person but for a female it is even difficult to find a visually impaired partner. In spite of these gender biases existing in the society it was noticed that due to increased awareness and educational opportunities, visually impaired females are also opting for the higher education and seeking employment opportunities.

4. It was observed that those respondents who were from upper socio-economic background received ample support. In majority of the cases, they were not blamed by their parents and family members for their visual impairment. Their parents helped them in all their needs and learning skills, as a result, these cases were more confident and well-integrated in the society and leading fairly successful lives. Their Parents had supported them in all their needs like educational, financial, psychological and social needs. Their parents gave them equal treatment in the family, taught them the art of daily living skills, communication skills, escorted them to various educational institutions even provided psychological support. On the contrary, those visually impaired who were from lower socio-economic background, their parents were not aware of their special needs, capabilities and limitations. They had no time and money to spend for them. Poverty and illiteracy further worsened the situation of a visually impaired
person. Further, due to illiteracy, they didn’t have any knowledge about the welfare schemes.

5. It was observed that a majority of respondents in spite of the higher qualification were working in the middle category jobs. Very few respondents were employed in the higher category jobs. Further it was males who were employed in higher level of occupations and got job according to their potentials. Due to lack of awareness, negative attitude of society in general visually impaired were not considered competent and proficient for the positions of responsibility.

6. It has been found that visually impaired achieve in life when the society becomes aware about their capabilities and potentialities and they had positive attitude towards visually impaired. But a majority of the people lack awareness which is a big obstruction in their integration in the society. A majority of the respondents expressed that attitude of society towards blind has changed to a great extent but these changes are more observant in the urban areas. In rural areas people still attach stigma with visually impaired, consider them incapable, inferior and dependent and even consider their visual impairment a result of bad deeds. It is only in those cases where respondents had family support, they are able to generate positive support for themselves at educational institutions and workplace. Further, Family support has a direct relationship with class background of the respondents. Class also determines gender bias in the lives of visually impaired. It is an interplay between class and various support system that determines that attitude of society towards visually impaired.

After summarizing the results an effort has been made to highlight the main findings of the study.

MAIN FINDINGS

- A majority of visually impaired respondents in the quantitative data in the present study were congenital blind.
A majority of respondents presented in both quantitative and qualitative analysis were totally blind which negate the findings of WHO, (2011) which states that a majority of population worldwide is of partially blind.

Findings of the present study indicate that totally blind face more difficulties in getting employment than partially sighted. Results refute the findings of Jan et.al 1977; Scholl, 1986.

A majority of the respondents in the quantitative data were from the urban background which negate the findings of Jain & Sandhu (1982).

A majority of the respondents in the present study were from middle socio-economic background. Results do not support the findings of Gilbert (2008) and Kuper, et. al. (2010).

The findings of the quantitative data reflected that number of visually impaired women in the sample was relatively low. These findings indicated that visually impaired females are denied the required education and vocational trainings. Similar picture has emerged in the qualitative analysis. These results are inconsistent with the findings of the Disability Awareness in Action, (1995).

The findings of the present study indicated that visually impaired had occupied higher, middle and lower level of occupations such as administrators, bank manager, auditors, lecturers, teachers, stenographers, telephone operators, library attendant, caners. Results are incongruence with the findings of (American Foundation for the Blind, 1997). A majority of the respondents in the present study had occupied The findings of the present study indicated that a majority of the respondents have occupied middle level of occupations and the qualitative analysis also indicated that males occupy higher positions in the society as compared to females which throws light on the gender disparity.

In the present study a majority of the respondents was married but percentage of females was comparatively half. This shows that visually impaired males have more chances of getting married. They don't face much difficulty in finding a sighted spouse where as visually impaired
females get even handicapped spouse with great difficulties because of the social attitude. Parents either marry off their daughters to an illiterate person or remain them unmarried. Results endorsed the findings of the different researchers, (Hema, 1996; Baquer and Sharma (1997). the findings of the qualitative data also presented the similar picture.

- Findings of the quantitative data indicated that women with visual impairment were at more risk of verbal and physical abuse in marriage and family. These results support the findings of Klasing (2007), (Turk & Brown, 1993; Sobsey & Doe, 1991). The findings of the qualitative data presented that men and women are at equal risk of abuse and neglect in the family but men achieve success in life with their struggle and become independent but females remain economically dependent, unmarried and are deserted because of the negative attitude of the society and limited opportunities available for the women.

- The findings of the present study showed that parents and family members were the important source of support and assistance related to house work and daily functioning. These results support the findings of Kent (1983); Wolfe & Sack, (1997), Cimarolli & Boerne (2005)

- The findings of the present study indicated that positive attitude of parents and friends had a significant impact on the self-concept of visually impaired. Parents with positive attitude helped the visually impaired to maintain a positive outlook towards life which endorsed the findings of Lukoff, (1972); Versluys, (1980).

- The findings of the present study emphasized the importance of support from the family and friends for both job seeking and job retention and adjustment by boosting motivation and confidence. These results are inconsistent with the findings of (Bolton, 1983; Crudden, 2002; Crudden & McBroom, 1999; DeMario, 1992; Kelley & Lambert, 1992; McShane & Karp, 1993; Moore, 1984).

- Quantitative data and qualitative analysis indicated that parents attach stigma with their visually impaired child and their attitude is greatly
influenced by stereotypical view of society which coincide with the findings of Goffman (1963).

- Findings of both qualitative and quantitative data indicated that visually impaired are ill-treated by their siblings also as they require great energy, time, money and emotional resources. Results support the findings of (Winzer 1987).

- Findings of the quantitative data and qualitative analysis highlighted the fact that a majority of respondents who didn’t receive support from their family were either unemployed or under employed and had more chances of familial conflicts. These findings coincide with the findings of Hagemoser (1996) and Flanagan, (1990). Those visually impaired who have received sufficient amount of support from their family and school had attained higher level of education. These findings are in line with the findings of (Garwood, 1983).

- The findings of the qualitative and quantitative data pertaining to the difficulties faced by visually impaired in achieving education indicated that non-availability of text books in alternative formats, absence of reader services, problem of scribe for writing exams, Non-availability of computer based services, inaccessible technology and high cost of assistive devices and lack of awareness of teachers and personnel were the major difficulties faced by majority of visually impaired. Similar Results were reported by Arivanandham (2007).

- The findings indicated that a majority of the respondents got job through the formal procedure i.e. advertisement and employment exchange. Results refute the findings of CNIB,( 2005).

- The Quantitative data and Qualitative analysis showed that employers’ attitude is one of the major hindrances in the employment of blind. Results endorse the findings of Nathanson and Lambert (1981).

- Quantitative data and Qualitative analysis reflected that a majority of the educated visually impaired are well adjusted in life, are socially accepted, and socially recognized. Results endorse the views of Tanksale (1988) and Bhalerao (1983).
The findings of the qualitative and quantitative data indicated that those who achieve higher status in the society have more social interaction, larger social networks and more familial support than the unemployed, which coincide with the findings of Roy et al. (1998).

The findings of the present study had indicated that those who received sufficient amount of support at their work place and their employers had a positive attitude were successful which endorse the findings of Crudden et al. (2005) and Forrester-Jones et al. (2004).

Findings of the quantitative data and qualitative analysis indicated that positive social support is very important in finding and maintaining an employment. Those visually impaired who are employed have harmonious familial relations and those who are unemployed have increased familial conflict. Results support the findings of Hagemoser (1996) and Flanagan (1990).

Findings indicate that a majority of the respondents had accepted their visual impairment, and were psychologically adjusted and had received better rehabilitational services which support the findings of Dodds et al. (1991) and Snead and Davis (2002).

All the visually impaired in the present study had learnt daily living skills and were able to manage their life independently. The mastery of these skills had given them acceptance in the family, work place and community. These results are in line with the findings of Dodds, (1988); Hallahan and Kauffman (1991) and Hill (1986).

Results showed that people in rural areas have misconceptions about the visually impaired which coincide with the findings of Alemayehu et al. (1995). The findings of the present study indicate that attitude towards visually impaired is becoming favourable in urban areas and it is linked with the literacy which endorse the findings of Christy et al. (2005).

The findings of the present study indicated that a majority of visually impaired in both the quantitative data and qualitative analysis were not satisfied with their achievements because of less opportunities and...
negative attitude of the society. They were not getting opportunities according to their capabilities and qualification.

Discussion

Since the evolution of history, visually impaired have suffered because of the negative attitude of community, prejudices against them, lack of awareness about their abilities and rejection of their rights and misconceptions which lead to their marginalization, powerlessness and non-acceptance in the society. They are perceived as inferior, dependent and miserable, are punished for the sins committed in the past, deserve pity and sympathy, and need to be compensated for the vision loss through charity. Various cultural beliefs regarding the disability are present in the society that is being passed on from generation to generation. The biased attitude of people obstructs the full participation of visually impaired in the society. The attitude of the society is negative because of the following reasons:

• Inherent attitude as a result of superstitions.
• Stigma associated with visual impairment.
• Ignorance about the capabilities and rights of visually impaired people in the society.

The Government of India since independence has taken various initiatives for the disabled in general and visually impaired in particular to bring them in mainstream. Increase in educational and employment opportunities, modern technology, legislative enforcement and awareness of all these developments have played a significant role in improving the position of visually impaired. Many visually impaired persons have achieved education, employed and are leading a successful life. They have learnt the alternative skills and techniques; as a result visually impaired are able to make their own decisions and are confident enough but still are deprived of the place they deserve.

They achieve education with great hardships and are becoming graduate, post-graduate with professional degrees. But when they enter into the work force, they face a number of difficulties. Employers overlook blind
and visually impaired because of the unfounded misconceptions and negative attitude. They doubt their capabilities and potentialities and reject them. Due to the fewer employment opportunities, visually impaired have to protest. In spite of their rights and privileges, they have to fight to get their rights. Many visually impaired have achieved success in life in spite of the diverse circumstances like poverty, illiteracy, rural background, negative attitude of parents. Many are still striving to achieve their rightful place in the society since they have not been given a position of responsibility and of higher status.

They are able to accomplish their goals but many times their capabilities are doubted. They have to prove their talents to show their potential so that they are regarded as equal. They are considered incapable and their functional abilities are always doubted. They are not getting jobs according to their intellectual abilities and skills. A majority of them are employed in the middle level jobs. The posts are created for them but still the seats lie vacant for a long time which is very frustrating and discouraging. Thus, it can be stated that real problem is not the visual impairment itself, or acquisition of skills, techniques or competency but lack of understanding and the misconception which are embedded in the roots of our culture which permeate every aspect of social behavior and thinking.

The visually impaired women experience an inferior status in the society. They bear a double burden of womanhood and disability. The condition of congenital and completely blind women is even worse. As compared to men, social implications of visual impairment are more for the women because of the limited opportunities in the field of education, employment, marriage and recreational activities.

There is an improvement in the status of blind because of the education and training. However, given the small proportion of the blind who are employed, it cannot be stated that the social conditions and the social status of the visually impaired has fully improved. Although lack of sight imposes certain limitation on the independent functioning of an individual but with appropriate learning of skills, modifications, adaptive technology and accommodations, blind and visually impaired people make a meaningful
contribution in the society. They can accomplish many task, hold a wide
variety of employment options. Thus more emphasis should be given to the
education of the blind to bring them in the mainstream of social life.

State government has framed various policies, enacted legislations and
programmes for the awareness but its implementation is not proper.
Employers are unaware and unwilling to employ visually impaired and doubt
their employability. Although government provides a wide range of services
but they are not easily accessible. They are not flexible enough to meet the
individual needs of visually impaired people who are seeking employment
services. Program resources are scarce and successful approaches are not
often shared. Due to shortage of trained and qualified personnel, many
programs employ professionals who lack knowledge about blindness issues.
What is required is increased coordination among existing programs and the
development of new ones to fill in gaps and emulate the best practices of
those already in operation.

Community sensitization is very vital in addressing the challenges
faced by visually impaired because blindness is more of a social problem.
People are not disabled, they just do things differently. We cannot consider a
person disabled who holds a job, runs his or her life, advocates for others,
makes his or her own decisions.

LIMITATIONS

It is imperative to inspect research findings in the milieu of its
limitations.

• Major shortcoming of the present study has been that it has primarily
focused on the educated blind and visually impaired but a majority of
blind and visually impaired population live in the rural areas and a
majority of them are illiterates. They face more problems which the
present study has not explored.

• The number of women in the sample is proportionately low but they are
the more disadvantaged group because of their less access to
education, vocational courses and rehabilitative measures. They are the double sufferer in the society.

- To understand the role of support systems for the visually impaired the role of parents, family members, teachers and employers should have been included in the study.

- As number of educated blind and visually impaired is increasing. Intensive survey should be undertaken to explore more avenues of employment for the blind and visually impaired.

- Misconceptions and cultural beliefs result in a disadvantaged position of visually impaired in terms of employment and education but also in social and family life. Therefore to improve the status of visually impaired in the society studies highlighting the capabilities of visually impaired in the society should be undertaken.

Despite its limitations, the study provides important preliminary information on social support systems for the adults who are visually impaired. The findings should be viewed as a catalyst for future research in this area.

**DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

- The future research related to this issue can focus on descriptive and analytical study of visually impaired in different types of communities like metropolitans, small towns or rural areas.

- Research needs to be done with a group of nondisabled adults to compare the relationship between the blind and sighted population.

- What type of support strategies are to be developed to promote the inclusion of visually impaired in the society is area of further research.

- To improve inclusion of PWDs in society Disabled should be brought to mainstream. It goes beyond the scope of this research to study and recommend way of mainstreaming disability in development. A research about how to achieve the mainstreaming of disability in development (in different sectors like education, employment and healthcare) and what obstacles and challenges can be expected can
contribute to a full and equal inclusion of persons with visual impairment.

Although the present research has had a primarily educational focus with adults as the target population, the tentacles of vision loss cross the boundaries of many fields of study. This research has also been interdisciplinary in nature, drawing from the fields of, sociology, education, history, medicine and adult education, advocate further for special accommodations, until there is universal acceptance and understanding of the world of blindness, until that time, there is always room for further research.

Conclusions

Helen Keller says that the most unfortunate person in a society is one who has sight but no vision. In order to understand the abilities of a visually impaired person, one needs to have a broad vision of humanistic values. An inclusive society needs the support of parents, teachers, professionals and other community members. It is clear that the impact of vision loss is far reaching. The research evidence appears to demonstrate that family members play a significant role in the lives of blind persons, that several aspects of family function are associated with better outcomes for persons with blindness, and that family members may be at a risk of their own problems with adjustment that may subsequently affect the quality of support they provide and the outcomes of rehabilitation.

The present study highlights the fact that visually impaired are at disadvantaged at three levels; firstly when they are compared with sighted; secondly when they are compared with other disabled and thirdly when they are compared amongst themselves, whereby type of blindness, class and gender come to play their role. The focus of the present study was on the third dimension. It was assumed that the need for research on the adjustment of family members, teachers, employers and visually impaired people is more urgent than ever in this particular area. Due to stereotypes, folklores, and fears surrounding blindness, it is important to realistically examine the effects of vision loss on the individual in order to facilitate the development of successful coping strategies. Thus, it can be concluded that visually impaired
do not constitute a homogeneous category. There is a variety of groups encompassing the entire spectrum of vision loss: those who are born blind, those who lost their vision after early childhood, those who have no vision, those who have some vision, those who have additional exceptionalities (gender, class etc) and those whose only disability is blindness. Due to the diverse composition of this group, continued research and application is needed to nail down their problems. It is essential to understand the problems of visually impaired belonging to different categories before constructing some constitutional provisions for them, only then they will be benefitted. Results of this study indicate that perceptions regarding blindness and blind persons are still related to educational levels and economic status which has implications on providing opportunities for blind persons in underprivileged communities. Additional research is needed to explore the possibilities to create positive impact towards visually impaired persons in the community.