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5.1 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The aim of this research study is to examine the status of total rehabilitation of the visually impaired persons in West Bengal. For the present purpose the term total rehabilitation has been delimited to Self Concept of the visually impaired persons, their attitude towards life as well as the parental perception about them and their employment status. In addition to it, a thorough survey of 20 vocational training institutes throughout West Bengal (that includes the views of the trainees about the availability of adequate training facilities and that of the trainers) was conducted to contextualize the study in its immediate surroundings. The survey also included the views of the training institutes about the problems they are facing in providing vocational services for the target group.

In order to delve into the problem a sample of 170 participants belonging to 3 categories (visually impaired persons, their parents and different vocational training institutes) were taken.

The tools used in the study to assess the different aspect of rehabilitation included 1) Tennessee Self Concept Scale, 2) An Open Ended Semi Structured Interview Schedule to assess Attitude towards life, 3) Interview Schedule for parental Perception, 4) Checklist to examine the infrastructural status of the Training Institutes, 5) an Interview Schedule to explore the problems faced by the Training Institutes, 6) views of the impaired persons regarding training.
The summary of major findings is as follows

**Research Question 1**

**Whether the mean Self Concept Scores obtained by the Employed Visually Impaired Persons differs from that of the Unemployed Visually Impaired Persons.**

In the present study, the results indicate that -

No significant difference exists between the employed and the unemployed visually impaired persons regarding **Identity.**

No significant difference exists between the employed and the unemployed visually impaired persons regarding **Self Satisfaction.**

No significant difference exists between the employed and the unemployed visually impaired persons regarding **Behavior.**

No significant difference exists between the employed and the unemployed visually impaired persons regarding **Physical Self.**

No significant difference exists between the employed and the unemployed visually impaired persons regarding **Moral Ethical Self.**

No significant difference exists between the employed and the unemployed visually impaired persons regarding **Personal Self.**

No significant difference exists between the employed and the unemployed visually impaired persons regarding **Family Self.**

No significant difference exists between the employed and the unemployed visually impaired persons regarding **Self Criticism Scores**

Significant difference exists between the employed and the unemployed visually impaired persons regarding the **Social Self.**
No significant difference exits between the employed blind and unemployed blind regarding the **Total scores**.

It can, therefore, be concluded that employment did not play a significant role for the visually impaired persons to bring in a change of their self-concept though their concept about his social self was affected by employment as difference was noted between the two categories regarding this dimension.

**Research Question 2**

**Whether the Attitude towards life of the Employed Visually Impaired Persons differs from that of the Unemployed Visually Impaired Persons.**

**ISSUE 1**

No significant difference exits between the employed and unemployed blinds attitude regarding the **Difficulty faced due to lack of eyesight**

From the responses it is observed that mobility is acute problem for both the categories but it is more so for the unemployed blind. Majority of the responses from both the groups pointed towards lack of independence. Similar responses are seen for the different practical problems they face due to lack of eyesight. The employed category showed a sense of helplessness more than the other group. Unemployed individuals felt that they lacked social status unlike the employed persons.

**ISSUE 2**

Significant difference exits between the employed and unemployed blinds attitude regarding the **Treatment by the community**

Both the categories are of the opinion that they are treated by the community as nonproductive. There is a difference of opinion between the
two groups regarding the attitude of pity and hatred. Difference of opinion has also been found regarding the sympathy of the community. The employed visually impaired persons felt that the community is more co-operative towards them unlike the unemployed persons. Difference has also been observed regarding the attitude of indifference as none of the employed individuals reported of indifference of the society towards them.

ISSUE 3

Significant difference exits between the employed and unemployed blinds' attitude regarding the Essentials for leading a better life. Differences of opinion have been noted between the two categories regarding independent living. The unemployed category unlike the employed persons felt the need to develop positive attitude for a better life. Difference have also been noted regarding the importance of development of self confidence and need for more social interaction by the employed category.

ISSUE 4

No significant difference exits between the employed and unemployed blinds attitude regarding the Blame for being Blind.

Positive attitude was noticed though in a small percentage among both the categories. They have accepted their impairment as any other normal illness and want to look beyond life without blaming any one for their condition.

ISSUE 5

No significant difference exits between the employed and unemployed blinds attitude regarding The basic facilities required for a blind person
Requirement of Government help was reported by both the categories for leading a better life. Only the employed group required the help of the society to lead a better life. Significant difference was noticed regarding the requirement of a well coordinated information service. A large number of persons belonging to the unemployed category needed social acceptance for better life. The percentage differed among the categories regarding the need for education and job security but both the categories wanted the implementation of the PWD ACT OF 1995.

ISSUE 6

No significant difference exits between the employed and unemployed blinds attitude regarding the Expectations from the society

Significant difference has been observed between the categories regarding the expectation of help from the society. The unemployed person unlike the other group feels that the society should be more sympathetic towards them. The need for social recognition is also more among the unemployed category. Almost the same percentage of responses has been obtained regarding the expectation of change of negative attitude of the sighted world.

ISSUE 7

No significant difference exits between the employed and unemployed blinds attitude regarding the Consequences of inability to see others

The unemployed category has the urge to know the person they interact with. There is more misunderstanding and confusion among the the employed persons as a consequence of inability to see others. More than 30% of the responses obtained from both the category indicates that they feel a profound sense of pain and despair for not being able to see others. The same percentage of responses from both the category felt that they were unable to express themselves.
ISSUE 8

No significant difference exits between the employed and unemployed blinds attitude regarding the Concept about the world. More than 75% of responses obtained from both the categories indicate that the impaired persons find the world as a beautiful place to live in. An equal percentage of both the category viewed the world as a mysterious place. A sense of despair and frustration was also observed from the responses of both the categories.A small percentage found the world to be partial.10% of the unemployed category did not have any concept of the world.

Research Question 3

Whether the Parental Perception of the Employed Visually Impaired Persons differs from that of the Unemployed Visually Impaired Persons.

In our country the family is still the most important part of the child's social network. This is because the members of the family constitute the child's first environment and is the most significant place for a child during the early formative years. The family is the matrix in which a person grows up. Attitudes of those who interact with him along with the parental perception in his childhood have the deepest influence on shaping the child's personality and in the sense preparing a mental set which determines the quality of all future interaction of the child. From contacts with family members, children lay the foundation for attitudes towards people, things and life in general. They also lay the foundation for pattern of adjustments.

Significant difference exists in parental perception between the employed blind and the unemployed blind. The calculated chi square value 21.08 is higher than the table value 15.07 determining the difference. The positive responses recorded from the parents of the employed is higher than the
unemployed category, in all the nine dimensions which indicates that for the parents employment is important as they believe that rehabilitation can only be achieved with employment.

**DIMENSION 1**

*Person to person interaction*

Out of 200 responses for dimension 1 the number of positive responses of the parents of the employed blind is 140 and for the unemployed is 82 indicating that there is a difference of perception between the parents of the 2 categories regarding their impaired wards interaction with other members of the family.

**DIMENSION 2**

*Responsibility*

For dimension 2 the number of positive responses of the employed blind and unemployed blind is 160 and 60 respectively. This indicates that unlike the parents of the unemployed blind the parents of the employed blind feel that their son or daughter has become more responsible after being employed.

**DIMENSIONS 3**

*Co operation*

For dimension 3 the positive responses of the employed and unemployed categories are 174 and 142 respectively. The parents of the employed blind think that employment has made the individual more cooperative towards the family.
DIMENSION 4

Family integration

For dimension 4 the positive responses of the parents of employed blind is 172 which is more than the positive response of the unemployed category 142. This indicates that the perception of the parents of both the categories is different regarding the individual's integration in the family.

DIMENSION 5

Emotional attachment

For dimension 5 the positive responses of the employed impaired persons is 164 which is much higher than the responses of unemployed blind which is 99 indicating that the parents of employed blind consider that their employed member is more emotionally attached to the family unlike the other group.

DIMENSION 6

Self help

For dimension 6 the employed blinds parents' positive responses 132 are higher than the responses of the other group which is 86 indicating that employment has made them more independent than others in activities within the family.

DIMENSION 7

Sociability

For dimension 7 the positive responses of the parents of the employed blind 132 is higher than the responses of the other group which is 86 indicating that employed individuals are more social than the other category.
DIMENSION 8

Personality make up

For dimension 8 the positive responses of the employed individuals’ parents 166 are higher than the responses 119 of the parents of unemployed blind denoting that there is a difference of personality makeup among the two categories.

DIMENSION 9

Overall perception

For Dimension 9 the positive responses of the parents 151 is higher than the responses of the parents of the other category 108 which shows that employment has been an important factor for the participants from both the categories.

From the above Analysis it can be seen that the positive scores of the parents of the employed blind is much higher than the scores of the unemployed blind. It suggests that the parents of the employed blind are more optimistic about their son or daughter and fee that employment has changed the persons life as he/she has become a productive member of not only the family but of the society at large. However with in depth probing, they parents expressed that the unemployed blind are in a hopeless situation full of despair and anxiety and it is only secured employment that might be significant to change their perception about their visually impaired wards.

Research Question 4

➢ Whether the existing Training Centers in West Bengal facilitate total rehabilitation of the Visually Impaired Persons.

Basic rehabilitation endeavors the client to adjust fully to his handicapped condition. It helps him to restore his shattered confidence in
himself along with his physical restoration. It trains him in personal management, personal grooming, in the techniques of daily living, in the skills of home economics, in vocations and in social spheres. Likewise proper training not only enables him to re-learn how to lead his new life of darkness but it also helps him to overcome the common losses consequent upon the onset of blindness and restrains his residual senses to serve him better. Basic rehabilitation along with proper training thus helps a blind man to restore and rebuild his total personality.

The researcher explored twenty training institutes in West Bengal to assess whether the facilities provided by them are able to meet the goal of total rehabilitation of the visually impaired persons.

The findings revealed that 90% of the training institutes in West Bengal are set up with Academic Institutions. Vocational training is provided by these institutions as per the curriculum prescribed by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education. Training facilities in these institutes are extended to the adult blinds of both the sexes as well. None of these institutes are uniform in nature and differ from each other in various aspects. Though placement services forms an integral part of vocational rehabilitation most of the institutes do not have a separate placement cell and a rehabilitation officer. Workshop facilities are limited to only 40% of the requirement. More than 80% of these institutes have hostel facilities which are not meant for the adult blind trainees. Both long time and short time courses are provided by these institutes.

Vocational rehabilitation is an important pivot of total rehabilitation program for the visually impaired persons. In devising program for the integration or re-integration of disabled persons into his life and society, all forms of training should be taken into consideration which includes necessary vocational preparation and training, modular training, training in activities of daily living, in technical literacy and in other areas relevant
to vocational training. The majority of the training institutes in West Bengal specially meant for the blind persons are not geared in meeting the demands and requirement of a blind man and hence do not facilitate the concept of total rehabilitation.

**Research Question 5**

> **Whether the views about existing training facilities of the Employed Visually Impaired Persons differs from that of the Unemployed Visually Impaired Persons.**

In India an individuals worth is often judged by his or her contribution in the society and employment status. A job helps the person with disability to get respect not only from others but also from his family members. The basic aim of vocational training must be focused on developing employment opportunities. Social inclusion is possible if people with disabilities get employment, raises their family and shares the responsibilities for the common interest of the country.

From the present study it was found that the views of the visually impaired persons regarding training are co related with the structure of the institutes and the problems incurred in obtaining training. The study revealed that the participants from both the categories are of the opinion that training facilities available in West Bengal totally lack proper scientific approach and is not multidimensional in nature. Views regarding the requirement of specialized institutes meant exclusively for visually disabled persons were similar in both the group of respondents. The employed and unemployed blinds were of the opinion that they had less choice in the training courses and hence had to choose what ever course offered. It sometimes did not match with their requirement, interest and capability. Training is wasted unless it leads to placement in the training trade or in similar trade. Both the set of participants strongly believed that training and placement are co related and must be given
equal importance in the training program for the blind individual. The majority of participants irrespective of their employment status agreed that training has helped them improve their daily living skills and their social interaction.

The response pattern indicates that employment played a role in bringing a difference in opinion among both the categories. The unemployed trained persons felt that training was not relevant to the demands of the present industry and capability of the incumbent. Need for sheltered workshops was the view of the unemployed blind persons unlike the other category. The same category felt that there is lack of information about the training institutes and this is more prevalent in rural Bengal. Opinion of the two groups also differed regarding the importance of training in self employment skills, open employment and employment in co operatives. Majority of the unemployed persons felt that all training institutes must have a counseling cell attached to it to address the psycho social needs of the trainees. Views of the two sets differed regarding their positive attitude as the unemployed group felt that training did not help them to develop a positive attitude towards life.

**Research Question 6**

**What is the status of total rehabilitation visually impaired persons in West Bengal**

One of the most important objectives of the study was to interpolate the status of total rehabilitation taking into account of the different variables (Self Concept, Attitude towards life and parental perception) of the visually impaired persons residing in West Bengal. From the analysis of the Self concept Scale it was found that the employed blind and the unemployed blind did not differ in their self concept except the social dimension, which clearly indicates that employment did not act as the sine-qua-non in changing their self concept.
The analysis of the Attitude scale indicated that there is no significant difference between the two categories regarding the attitude towards life. However, difference in attitude was found among the two categories regarding the treatment from the community and what they should do for better living. This basic difference shows that though employment was not a significant factor to bring a change in attitude, the employed blind being more exposed to the society felt that the society regarded them as productive member. Hence to be useful to the society all disabled member should earn a source of revenue. Employment also played a significant role in the life of a blind man as it has brought in him the essence of better living unlike the unemployed blind. Both the categories (78% of the employed and 72% of the unemployed) felt that the world is beautiful which clearly indicates that despite their disability they are very positive about the world they live in which is a key to total rehabilitation.

The perception of the parents of the two categories differed indicating that employment has contributed in bringing a positive perception among parents, as for them economic stability means rehabilitation.

Hence it can be said that psychological rehabilitation (measured by Self Concept and attitude) was not affected by employment status though its effect was seen in social rehabilitation (measured by parental perception).

The Training Institutes aiming at vocational rehabilitation are unable to render adequate service oriented program according to the needs and aspiration of the visually impaired persons and hence economic rehabilitation for most of the blind individuals have remained a far fetched dream. All the aspects of total rehabilitation are correlated and inter dependent with each other and the status of total rehabilitation in West Bengal has not reached a satisfactory level for the visually impaired population.
5.2 DISCUSSION

Like other members of the society, the disabled individuals also have hopes, aspiration, rights and privileges. One might assume that lack of opportunities for the disabled are a problem which can be tackled with overall improvement in the economic sphere. But such a parochial and discriminatory approach not only undermines their basic human rights but also the economic benefits occurring to themselves, their families and the state itself, if they were to be productively engaged into the workforce, thereby mainstreaming them into the fabric of the society. Even in this century the society accepts the disabled as inadequate, dependent, and unsecured normally relegated to the margins of society turning to charity or begging as a means of sustenance.

The disabled population is increasing every year by some 15 million as a result of war, accidents malnutrition and diseases. (Harper and Momm, 1989 p.77). Based on this estimate the world population at present would be 532.68 million approx. The magnitude of the disability problem varies from society to society. People with accredited impairments living in India experience higher level of poverty combined with limited welfare systems and support. (Coleridge 1993, Charlton 1998).

The causes of such disadvantages are not simply attitudes and prejudices against the disabled. They are deep rooted in structural inequalities and social process. The disabled population in India is disproportionately unemployed, under employed and underpaid. More than 80% of India's estimated 60 million populations live in areas which lack the most basic amenities of life with medical treatment and support systems and the problem of inequality and injustice are so massive that it appears to be unmanageable. (Ghia-2001).
According to the conservative estimate, approximately 6% of India's population is disabled. No authentic data about disability was available till the 2001 census and one had to rely on the data issued by National Sample Survey (Singh, 2000). 6% disabled population of this vast Nation is waiting for the appropriate welfare policies to be taken by the Govt. Prior to the 2001 census the policy makers never gauged the magnitude of the problem that the Nation was wasting the 60 million potential human resource. One can easily imagine the impact on Indian economy by deliberately ignoring the productive ability of the 60 million making them 'prisoners of circumstances' at home and depend on charity and few facilities available for them.

The Indian Govt. finally recognized disability as a issue and as a welfare measure for this section, the PWD Act of 1995 was passed by Parliament in 1995 which finally became the law of the land. Chapter VI of the Disability Act 1995, is titled "Employment Clause 41" categorically mandates incentives to employers, both in public and private sectors, who ensures that at least 5% of their workforce is composed of persons with disability.

Apart from the fact that 3% reservation is mandatory for both the sectors for inclusion of disabled persons in their employees list, one can easily understand the impact of the law by a research study conducted by NCPEDP in 1999 to examine the employment practices of the 100 Indian Corporate Sector with reference to people with disabilities. The result indicated that 0.54 % employees with disabilities are in the public sector and 0.28% employees are in the private sector and 0.05% in the Multinationals Out of the 70 respondent companies 20 companies did not employ any disabled population at all. Only 10 were found to have 1% or above disabled employees and there was no company where even 2% of the workforce was comprised of the disabled population.
The result when compared in the Global context shows that Germany every employer with 16 or more post has a mandatory 6% quota for disabled people; in France enterprises with more than 10 employees have to offer 10% of the job to people with disabilities; Turkey 2% quota for undertakings with 100 or more workers; Austria 4% for employers with 25 or more employees; Ghana 0.5% for every employer; Pakistan fixed 1% quota for all establishment with more than 100 or more employees. (Source- Equity, Vol.2, Issue 1, April 1999).

The objective of the present work was to explore the status of total rehabilitation in West Bengal where the psychological component has been assessed by measures of self concept and attitude towards life of the visually impaired persons. Likewise the vocational component is represented by the employment status of the visually impaired persons and the sociological component is represented by parental perception of the visually impaired persons. Since the aim of the study is to examine the status of total rehabilitation it is very important to consider the status of the components of total rehabilitation.

**Objective: 1**

A person's level of aspiration is intimately related to his self concept. The kind of person he considers himself to be is an important determinant of what he thinks he is capable of doing, what he expects to do, and what he tries to achieve. A person's self concept is in turn, largely a product of other people's evaluation of him. Most Self Theorist agrees that the Self Concept once clearly differentiated and structured is fairly a stable entity. They also agree however that through out life the self concept is incessantly developing and changing. The development is influenced by one's cultural environment, the people who he comes in contact with, the change in his pattern of relationships and his occupational world. The point of crucial impact of all these social influences makes him conceive
of himself as adequate or inadequate as he sees himself in the evaluation of others.

The result of the t Test obtained from the self concept scores have indicated that there is no significant difference between the employed and unemployed visually impaired persons across different dimension. However, significant difference between the criterion group was observed in the social dimension of self-concept.

The self concept blends together into a unified and dynamic whole. Its parts interact freely yet cohesively with each other concurrently any given part, or the whole, may be interacting with external aspects of his phenomenal world. Snygg and Combs (1949) defined phenomenal world as the individuals' perceptual or psychological world. Once the individual leaves the confines of his known setting several factors begin to shape his self concept like his own aptitudes, abilities and skills which is more reflective among visually impaired persons. Several studies (Williams and Cole, 1968; Gay, 1966) have shown slight but significant positive correlation between self concept, intelligence and school achievements. Since self concept is affected by the experiences of a person it might influence the manner one approach and utilize his new experience. The interaction effect was illustrated in a study by Lynch (1979), on intense human experience.

The results of the t Test suggests that the self concept of the employed blind was not affected by the change of environment his job provided him with and he was unable to utilize the new experience acquired by him in a positive manner, hence no difference of self concept was found among the two categories irrespective of their employed status. The difference noted in social self in both the categories may be due to the fact that the employed category is subjected more to an interactive social world with a
wide variety of experiences and tries to build his behavior according to the demands of the occupational world.

**Objective: 2**

The study aimed to compare the Attitude towards life of the employed and unemployed visually impaired persons. The result indicated an overall sense of positive attitude towards life. No difference in attitude was observed between the two categories apart from the two issues i.e. Treatment by the community and Essentials for leading a better life.

It is generally noticed that the non disabled majority tends to maintain a certain social distance, often treating the disabled as outsiders. Many non challenged people feel uncomfortable in the presence of a challenged person. The sighted community finds it difficult to accept and mingle with the blinds as they do with other people. The challenged persons are often forced either to associate with each other or become socially isolated. They are frequently segregated physically, psychologically and socially. Social behavior towards the blind persons is prejudiced, discriminatory and segregated. This very attitude towards disability tends to create social distance between the disabled and their families on one side and the community on the other. The distance is often expressed by non acceptance of the blind individuals in social functions, religious services, educational programs, occupational environment and family relationships leading to economic and social isolation. This often leads to a feeling of dejection and dependency accompanied with loss of self confidence for the blind individuals.

No difference in attitude between the two groups has been observed regarding the problems they face due to their impairment. The sense of helplessness among the employed category was unexpected considering their economic status. In- depth probing revealed that despite being an earning member, they felt that they are unfit to do all types of job hence
they are deprived from lucrative jobs thus being unable to compete with the challenges of the open skill demanding market.

Similar unexpected response has been observed regarding the employed blind persons views about the treatment of the community. Though these persons have a working status they are unable to remove the social stigma of being nonproductive members of the society. The employed category being more exposed to the society have felt that the society is aloof towards them and the expression of prejudice and discriminatory stances of the sighted world are projected through their treatment towards the blind persons.

The need to develop positive attitude for better living was felt more by the unemployed indicating irrespective of job status the blind individuals have come to terms with their impairment and has an urge to interact, socialize and be accepted by their sighted friends. A positive attitude to look beyond their physical loss by both the categories without blaming anybody for their distress shows that perhaps social acceptance is more significant for them than their employed status.

To have a positive concept of the world does not only depend on the working status of a blind person. From the response pattern it was noted that the unemployed category also felt that they live in a beautiful place. They can hear the sounds of nature, feel the changing of seasons and weather, the phenomena of day and night. The essence of these complete feeling has made the world a beautiful place to live.

The response from both the segments suggests that there is apparently no difference between them regarding attitude towards life. The researcher is of the opinion that attitude of the visually impaired persons are reciprocal with the attitude of the society which still marginalizes this segment as non productive worthless persons whose destiny is to live on charity and pity. Both the section irrespective of their job status is trying
hard to bring in a change of the stigmatized attitude of the society with their rational mind, trying hard to come to terms with the words like despair, frustration, fate and misfortune.

The study also reveals that though employment is an important parameter of vocational rehabilitation, total rehabilitation of an individual is governed by the society in which the person resides. Some common attitudes of the society towards the disabled are curiosity, pity, over-solicitousness, indifference, dislike or embarrassment. By definition 'an attitude' implies a changing emotional state of mind. It must be remembered that attitudes are not only expressed by word and language but more explicitly by facial expression and behavior. Though the participants of the study are visually handicapped they still can feel the negative attitudes exhibited towards them irrespective of their economic status or work status. The attitude of the society has a direct impact on the attitude of the visually impaired persons. Hence these could be the probable reasons for having no difference in the attitude towards life between the employed and unemployed blind persons.

**Objective 3**

The study aimed to assess the perception of the parents of the visually impaired persons to measure the sociological component which is one of the major pillars of total rehabilitation. The family is the matrix in which the child grows up. Generally a disabled child has to function in a limited and restricted sphere, hence the life experience of the individual are limited. The restriction is dictated partially by nature and partly by the result of the social attitudes and cultural experiences. Perception of the family members specially that of the parents has the deepest influence in shaping the persons personality and in a sense preparing a mental set which determines the quality of all future interactions including the choice of any vocations for the person.
The perception and expectations that many people have about the visually impaired can have a significant negative effect on the personal and social development of visually impaired people (Scott, 1969) including the development of self concept and self esteem (Tuttle, 1993). Parents of children with visual impairments tend to expect less of them, which may lead to the child's lesser accomplishments and slower development (Warren, 1984). Over protection over assistance, denial, and negative parental attitudes may inhibit visually impaired children's development of initiative, independence and realization of their abilities. (Farrell, 1986; McBroom, Tedder, and KangJi, 1992; Tuttle, 1984; Warnke, 1993).

Several studies have indicated that the initial reaction of the disabled child's parents is not conducive for the child in his formative years (Mori, 1983). The initial stages of shock, denial, disbelief and anger ultimately culminates into frustration, depression followed by acceptance and overprotection. In India and particularly in West Bengal majority of the participants in the study belonged to a low socio-economic status and poor educational background which made them ignorant. Ignorance and poverty had a deep impact on their perception about their ward.

The positive responses of the parents of the employed and unemployed blind revealed that a difference existed in the perception of the parents of the participants regarding their wards. From the response pattern it can be said that for the parents of the participants selected in the study employment played a significant role in their lives.

Parents have felt that a job status for a blind person is important as he will be able to develop a positive interactive role in the family since he has to interact in his work place. Several studies have shown that once the parents overcome the initial reaction of denial and shock they tend to be over protective towards their child which makes the child incapable of shouldering any kind of responsibilities.
The present study revealed that once the visually impaired person secured a job he became more aware of his civic rights and responsibilities and his behaviour pattern with his family, friends and community members have undergone a positive change. Parents were also of the opinion that he has learnt to be co-operative and more closely integrated with all the members of the family. The parents said that they observed a sense of belongingness more among the employed blind than that of the unemployed category. Visually impaired persons with a work status have developed an emotional bonding with the members of the family and they are able to redefine personal problem solving strategies to strike a balance between their own and their families' aspiration.

Most schools in West Bengal give training on self help skills. Studies regarding training on self help skills (Childs, 1974) have shown that this type of training in school is already late since the pre-school years embodies the stages of perceptual motor development underlying the ability to perform simple tasks such as grasping, pouring liquids or lifting objects. A visually impaired child in West Bengal lacks systematic pre-school training in developing self help skills and mostly depends on the special schools for mastering such techniques. The schools do not provide structured approach in training which involves graded tasks of increasing difficulty and complexity. The parents of the visually impaired persons are of the opinion that employment has brought a visible change in their wards as they have learnt more by compulsion to master specific skills of self help and hence there is automatically less dependent on their family members unlike the unemployed persons.

The positive responses of the parents of the participants related to the dimension of sociability indicated that employment has helped them, master techniques for building positive social relationships. His social competency has improved considerably due to economic security in a
stable framework of dependable events and reaction from family members, friends, relative's employers and his colleagues.

Parents view regarding overall perception about their wards differed. Parents of the unemployed persons felt that a regular job with an assured income would have brought a change in their lives of their sons and daughter. In- depth probing revealed the anxiety engulfed with pain and frustration of the parents of the disabled persons without employment, as they have their doubts and uncertainties with regard to their future because they realize that embarking on a particular career is extremely difficult for their wards.

**Objective: 4**

The economic aspect of rehabilitation of the visually impaired persons has been measured by the employment status of the participants of the study. The researcher tried to assess how much the training institutes facilitated in the area of vocational rehabilitation of their trainees.

Unemployment is the frontier that must be conquered in the 21st century for people with disabilities and are to be fully integrated into the mainstream of the society. Several explanations for the high unemployment rate of people with disability appear in the rehabilitation literatures. Some focus on the individual's inadequacies such as lack of adequate training, physical and mental limitation and discouragement (Zola, 1989). Numerous research studies and cost benefit analysis show that many benefits and advantages are derived from environment of persons with disabilities(Bank, et.al.,1986). Some studies highlight on other relevant issues like architectural barrier, public attitude and decimation. Still others emphasize both personal and societal barriers. A study presented by Bonnie O' Day(1999), revealed that perceived employment barriers of 20 employed blind adults experience personal societal and programmatic barriers to employments. The Research study
also substantiated another hypothesis that the policies of the Government in building income maintenance, heath care and rehabilitation programs themselves contain elements that contribute to this high unemployed rate for the blind individuals. The study supports the finding of the present research work. It has been found that almost 80% of the training institutes that have been surveyed are a part of the special schools of the visually impaired children following the curriculum prescribed by the Board of Secondary Education of West Bengal where pre vocational training is an integral part.

**Objective: 5**

The problem faced by the training institutes are related with the placement of visually impaired persons The importance of vocational training and the placement for the blind person needs no further emphasis because it is one of the major pillars of total rehabilitation. But in our country there are certain reasons for low employment rate among disabled which points out towards the inadequacy in proper planning and its implementation (Murickan; Georgekutty, 1995). These are:

- **i)** There are very few specialized training institutes with modern approach to educate and train them in relevant skills required by the modern employment market.
- **ii)** Training is at times inadequate and do not help the individual in securing the right kind of job.
- **iii)** Employment is not enforced by law.
- **iv)** Negative attitude of the employers along with the low level of acceptance of the disabled by the fellow employees, their accident proneness and their resultant compensation involved after their recruitment.
Every nation in the world faces the gigantic problem of successfully rehabilitating all its disabled population. Despite rapid scientific and technological advancement even the developed countries have failed to rehabilitate all their handicapped population. Rehabilitation programs is a major socioeconomic responsibility of a nation and various plans and schemes are developed aiming to reduce the hardships of the of these individuals. Vocational rehabilitation resulting in placement or employment of persons with disability is the crux and culmination of the entire rehabilitation process. The General Conference of the International Labour Organization in 1955, defined vocational rehabilitation as "that part of the continuous and co-ordinate process of rehabilitation which involves the provision of those co-ordinate services, e.g. Vocational guidance, vocational training and selective placement, designed to enable a disabled person to secure and retain suitable employment". Although economic returns are the most immediate benefits of employment, they are not the most important factors. The in tangible outcomes are equally significant Work is essential for all human being for economic independence and developing his self esteem, self dignity and self worth which nurtures an positive self referred behaviour and enhances a sense of efficacy and accomplishment. It fosters the sense of normalcy both in self perception and in the perception of others( Brown, Shiraga et.,al 1984). For disabled persons it is all the more important as self esteem and economic independence generated from it offsets to a large extent, can alter the negative attitude of the society.

Since right to work is a basic to life ultimate aim of rehabilitation should provide gainful employment to the disabled population keeping in view his disability, age, educational qualification and experience. A visually impaired person must be helped to find a suitable job, to achieve economic independence, to realize self-confidence and enjoy social status. If the policy makers fail to shoulder this responsibility, they might be a greater burden to the society by consuming the resource of the society and finally turning to be a serious economic liability.
**TABLE : 5.1**

Employment Status of disabled population in seeing in India and West Bengal: 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Total Disabled Non Workers in seeing</th>
<th>INDIA</th>
<th>WEST BENGAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60.06</td>
<td>62.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Total Disabled Workers in seeing</td>
<td>39.94</td>
<td>37.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Disabled Population To Total Disabled Population</td>
<td>48.55</td>
<td>46.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Of Disabled Population In Seeing To Total Population</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled population in seeing</td>
<td>10634881</td>
<td>862073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Disabled Population 2001</td>
<td>2.13(21906769)</td>
<td>2.30(1847174)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population 2001</td>
<td>1028610328</td>
<td>80176197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Report of West Bengal, 2001
The team concept in vocational training involves an inter disciplinary approach including the co-operation of a number of professionals from the field of medicine, psychology, social work, education to vocational counseling, guidance and placement services. This basic team concept is lacking among the training institutes of West Bengal. Compared to the large existing blind population residing in West Bengal in need of rehabilitation, training institutes are inadequate. Since training lacked a multidimensional approach with an eye to the remunerative sphere the visually impaired persons were forced to take up the available training course which did not relate to their choice or need.

The value of positive philosophy in structuring training, is emphasized by Kenmore (1975) who has the advantage of broadly based international experience in vocational assessment and placement programs for the visually impaired persons. She comments that successful program for the visually impaired persons embodies qualities of leadership, long range planning, high standard of work and attention to the differing needs of the concerned person. In this context of the above study the training scenario in West Bengal for the visually impaired person is not very encouraging.

There seems to be a lacuna because of the irrelevance of the types of vocational training being offered in terms of jobs available in the labour market in West Bengal. Stereo type training which is partly skilled based is still being continued without any innovations. Employment oriented training centers for providing training for real work experience is absent in the training programs. The Agricultural and Rural Development Departments of State Governments, the Village Industries Commissions and State Corporations set up for promoting Small Scale Village and Cottage Industries under the Ministry of Labour had decided that they shall open avenues for all training institutes and provide facilities for training the rural disabled. The government shall encourage all disabled
persons to avail Government approved schemes and facilities and will take active steps for the employment of the disabled in agriculture and allied jobs in rural sector. No such endeavor has been noticed by the researcher in West Bengal. The training Institutes in West Bengal along with the Government Institutes VRC seems to be lacking the initiative to bring in a change in the training program to cope with the demands of the employment market. The lack of initiative may be because of the fund constraint which is the major problem to be handled by the training institutes. The total number of academic institutions which also functions as training institutes in West Bengal are insufficient, compared to the large number of beneficiaries waiting to avail the service of both education and training. Several districts of West Bengal are yet to have a school for the visually impaired child. The following table shows the number of academic institutions functioning in West Bengal under the Dept of Mass Education, Extension, Govt. of West Bengal.

Table: 5.2
Institutions for the handicapped Under Mass Education Extension Dept. Govt. of West Bengal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>Blind</th>
<th>Deaf</th>
<th>Mentally Handicapped &amp; Allied Categories of Disability</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>24 Parg (s)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>24 Parg (N)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Hoogly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Budwan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Bhirbhum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The present study identified the major drawbacks of the training institutes of West Bengal which hinders the process of total rehabilitation which are as follows:

i) Lack of effective supervision to ensure that the training available matches with the trainees' interest and aptitude

ii) Lack of modular training for those persons who can cope with a limited range of task in a particular trade or occupation. Modular training is easy to grasp for those who have limited capabilities because their training is a combination of skills and tasks in a particular trade and occupation are grouped together into sets or modules.

iii) The training given on different aspects do not match with the local need and employment opportunities.
iv) Training institutes located in rural Bengal do not have avenues in agricultural and rural occupations.

v) Space and fund constraints are the major hurdles along with lack of adequate professional persons and negative attitude of the community.

vi) Training institutes generally emphasize on trade skills but attention on other social skills, independent living consumer skills for self advocacy is essential.

vii) There is no information data bank and the institutes lack relevant information about their trainees in respect to their aptitude in different trade skills, physical abilities, work behavior, functional literacy and social and emotional behavior.

**Objective: 6**

One of the most important objectives of the study was to interpolate the status of total rehabilitation taking into account the different components of rehabilitation (Self Concept, Attitude towards life and parental perception) of the visually impaired persons residing in West Bengal. From the analysis of the Self concept Scale it was found that the employed blind and the unemployed blind did not differ in their self concept except the social dimension, which clearly indicates that employment did not play a significant role in changing their self concept. The analysis of the Attitude scale indicated that there is no significant difference between the two categories regarding the attitude towards life.

However difference in attitude was found among the two categories regarding the treatment from the community and what they should do for better living. This basic difference shows that though employment was not a significant factor to bring a change in attitude, the employed blind being more exposed to the society felt that the society regarded them as productive member. Hence to be useful to the society all disabled member
should earn a livelihood. Employment also played a significant role in the life of a blind man as it has brought in him the essence of better living unlike the unemployed blind. Both the categories (78% of the employed and 72% of the unemployed) felt that the world is beautiful which clearly indicates that despite their disability they are very positive about the world they live in which is a key to total rehabilitation. The perception of the parents of the two categories differed indicating that employment has contributed in bringing a positive perception among parents as for parents' economic stability means rehabilitation.

Disability is a socially defined 'position or status'. The spectrum of disability has haunted the mindset of the society since prehistoric time. Different studies on diseases and medicine has shown that the notion of disease is more influenced by judgment than objective facts which had a bearing on the social attitude towards these minority communities. The concept of disability is closely related with the term rehabilitation. John Gardner the famous rehabilitation activist describes the concept of rehabilitation beautifully as "By rehabilitation I mean giving people the chance and the challenge to develop their own resources, inner and outer, to become as independent and responsible as possible. I mean giving people the chance and the challenge to make the most of their talents and their lives and to find personal satisfaction and fulfillment through participation to live with some measures of dignity."

The concept of rehabilitation therefore embodies the process in which adults in varying stages of helplessness, emotional disturbances and dependences come to gain new understanding of themselves and their environment, develop appropriate techniques to combat their problems skillfully and achieve new control of their emotions and the environment. The general Assembly of the United Nations has in its resolution( 1982) stated that more than 500 million persons are estimated to suffer from disability of whom 400 million are from developing countries.
Rehabilitation services have barely touched even the fringes of the problem in the rural areas of the third world countries. Total rehabilitation is only possible with psycho-social rehabilitation. Visual impairment limits the affected person's activity and places him under great emotional stress. The reactions projected by him are a feeling of inferiority, self devaluation, fear, hostility, and aversion. Society show conflicting attitude towards visually impaired persons. They either show pity or charity, rejection and a tendency to accept a role of recluse. Members of the society show conflicting attitude towards them. Visually impaired persons are treated by the society with indifference and aversion and only a small number treat the blind with positive attitude. Hence total rehabilitation can only be possible by strengthening the existing services, encouraging the emergence of new goal oriented services for promoting greater coverage in the rural sector in our country and above all to change the negative attitude of the society. Government initiatives regarding the implementation of Welfare Measures should be prioritized to minimize the impediments. The following graph focuses on the Global Statistics of initiatives taken by the Policy Makers of some of the World Nations for the Welfare Measures for the Disabled.
Global Statistics for Disability Programmes and Policies: 1996

Bangladesh: 0.70%
Fiji: 0.90%
Bahrain: 1.00%
Thailand: 1.80%
India: 1.90%
Sri Lanka: 3.90%
Philippines: 4.40%
Pakistan: 4.90%
Nepal: 5.00%
China: 5.00%
U.S.A.: 9.00%
Netherlands: 11.50%
Sweden: 12.00%
Canada: 13.20%
U.K.: 14.20%
Spain: 15.00%
Finland: 17.00%
Australia: 18.00%

Graph Source: Equity Journal vol. 3, Issue 4, 2001
The different aspect of rehabilitation which includes education, employment, social security, social upliftment have yet to be achieved by the visually impaired persons to make them able to contribute in the society. The major reason behind this is the lack of coordination between the Govt. and the voluntary sector in respect to allocation of funds and implementation of the different welfare schemes. The concentration of rehabilitation units in the urban sector have left the vast rural disabled population out of the arena of rehabilitation. It is important to note that though the samples of the study received vocational training their self concept was not affected by employment. Employment did not play a determinant role in changing their attitude about themselves. The negative attitude of the society is perhaps responsible for this. However the perception of the parents of the employed visually persons differed from the other category which indicates that for parents employment is a very important factor in the family set up though with in-depth probing it was found that a sense of despair and insecurity still prevailed in them. The training taken by the individuals did not always help them to find a secured job or be self employed. The Training Institutes also lacked proper scientific approach to cater to the needs of the visually impaired persons as it was found that all most all the training institutes were attached to academic institution where training formed a part of their regular activities. Hence specialized training for the adult blind did not always help them to find a suitable job and be a productive member of the society. According to the 2001 Census West Bengal has among the highest disabled persons in the country - **1.8 million** (Times of India, 8/12/08). In this perspective rehabilitation services in West Bengal needs greater emphasis to reach out to that 1.8 million and transfer them from the minority group to the mainstream society.
Total rehabilitation will enable them to attain their rightful place as equally important and contributing members of the society like the sighted by removing areas of conflict and promoting harmonious ties between them. It is a complicated process which involves accommodation, assimilation diffusion and amalgation. Integration of the handicapped person in the community as normal and complete individuals is the final and desired goal of rehabilitation. It is the final stage multiphase process of total rehabilitation. Social integration of the disabled refers to the process of ending or minimizing segregation and deep rooted misunderstanding of the society. Along with the visually impaired persons the society and the Nation are the ultimate beneficiaries of the total rehabilitation process.
5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the present research work are crucial for the positive wellbeing of the visually impaired persons along with the society as well.

✓ The study provides evidence that to achieve total rehabilitation which is a comprehensive term all the three major components (psychological, social and vocational) are equally important and that only economic resettlement of the visually impaired persons does not signify rehabilitation. All the three components should be largely prioritized. The self concept, attitude towards life and the parental perception along with their economic status should be integrated with the personality of the visually impaired persons.

✓ Findings pertaining to the attitude of the visually impaired persons towards life highlights the facts that they are yet to receive the acceptance of the society even in this millennium though the impaired persons irrespective of their employed status have developed over a period of time a positive frame of mind and are trying hard to combat with the negative attitude of the society.

✓ The study reveals that the status of total rehabilitation of the visually impaired persons is not very encouraging in West Bengal. The major blockade seems to be lying with the vocational training being provided in the different training institutes. A holistic multidimensional approach with an eye to the demands of the industrial growth has to be the priority of every training institute. It should also relate to the choice and capability and requirement of the individual.

✓ Delinking the training institutes from the schools should be done and it should be given only in specialized institution. Schools for the blind should function as separate institution where training may be given as a part of the regular curriculum.
The findings of the study may help the N.G.O’s, policy makers and personnel's working in this field to improvise this service sector and maintain uniformity in delivering service to the blind individuals. Effective information networking for the visually impaired persons residing in rural Bengal needs to be developed in priority basis. Review of the available general and special services, infrastructure and resource mobilization needs strong attention.

The study lays emphasis on effective guidance and counseling for the parents of the visually impaired persons to help them steer through the period of shock, denial, frustration and emotional turmoil and provide them with effective information about the facilities available for their wards. The family’s contribution towards the visually impaired person's psychosocial rehabilitation is immense and effective counseling of the parents may help the impaired person develop a healthy personality.
5.4 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

In spite of all sincere effort and hard work, this study has its own limitation:

1) The participants in the study-especially the employed individuals were from a scattered population with job profile ranging from skilled labourers to college teachers. This heterogeneity may have some impact on the study.

2) Since visually impaired individuals are very scattered in terms of location, a relatively little number of parents were available as data source.
5.5 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

On completion of the research study the researcher has felt the need to explore several other areas related to the field of rehabilitation. Special Education being a fast developing discipline, efforts are necessary to conduct further research in this area. The scarcity of research studies in this fascinating field requires more concerted effort to undertake studies in the following areas by others. To name a few like;

- To compare the status of total rehabilitation of the visually impaired persons of West Bengal with the neighbouring states.
- To compare the Status of total rehabilitation of the visually impaired person with other areas of disability in West Bengal
- To compare the status of total rehabilitation between the male and female visually impaired person residing in West Bengal
- To study the differences in attitude towards life between the employed visually impaired person and the sighted persons of West Bengal
- To identify the employment avenues of the developing countries and suggest relevant techniques for improvising vocational training
- To explore the field of vocational training in comparison to other developing countries for the visually impaired persons
- To study some distinct features of successful rehabilitation program for the visually impaired persons of the neighboring countries