“Self-pity is our worst enemy and if we yield to it, we can never do anything good in the world.”

- Helen Keller
CHAPTER - VIII

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS
8.0 Introduction

The study highlighted lack of uniformity within the Special Institutions for the Blind in Kolkata. All the institutions in Kolkata did not provide same learning opportunity. Not only that, even the facilities provided in the institutions varied. However, uniform facilities and uniform learning opportunities were two of the most important characteristics of the special institutions for the blind in Tokyo.

8.1 Concluding Observations

✓ The number of special institutions for the blind in Kolkata should be increased to avoid over-crowding of blind children in the existing institutions.

✓ Like in Tokyo, all the special institutions for the blind in Kolkata should be made co-educational to ensure equal opportunity of education to both boys and girls. However, if turning an existing boys’ institution into co-education is difficult then at least an effort should be made to start another institution for girls. Otherwise, the choice of institutions for blind girls in Kolkata is very limited.

✓ In Kolkata, the Preparatory stage was only of one year that too in only two institutions. As was prevalent in the institutions of Tokyo, the Preparatory stage should be increased to three years to give the blind children exposure to educational environment for a longer period of time.

✓ In order to increase the duration of the Preparatory stage the institutions in Kolkata would need a lot of financial assistance to improve their educational and infrastructural facilities. The Government has to take an initiative in this respect.
If initially, increasing the duration of the Preparatory stage to three years seems difficult then it should at least be increased to two years and gradually to three years.

It would be better if residential facility is made optional in the special institutions for the blind in Kolkata.

Vocational training facility should be provided in all the institutions of Tokyo. In Kolkata all the institutions should provide vocational training facility to both boys and girls instead of only to boys or only to girls.

Transport facility should be provided in all the institutions of both Kolkata and Tokyo. However, using this facility should be kept optional.

There should be separate toilet for boys and girls on all the floors in the institutions of Kolkata to ensure their convenience.

Like in the institutions of Tokyo, canteen facility should be started in the institutions of Kolkata.

All the institutions in both Kolkata and Tokyo should have a medical unit and the health of the blind children should be regularly monitored.

Emergency facilities should be uniformly available in all the institutions of Kolkata. At least fire extinguishers should be made available and teachers should be trained in using those. Blind children should be made aware of emergency situations and also told how to deal with those. In the institutions of Tokyo, such talks and lectures were held regularly and this practice should also be started in the institutions of Kolkata.

Lift facility should be made available in all the institutions of both Kolkata and in that particular institution of Tokyo which did not have
a lift. This should be done to make the blind children familiar with using a lift. However, they should not be allowed to use it regularly as it would hamper their mobility training.

✔ There should be handrails along the walls of the staircase in the institutions of Kolkata. This would ensure independence of the blind children. They can hold these handrails while moving up and down the stairs and walk freely without any fear of falling down.

✔ The name/number of each classroom should be inscribed in Braille outside the respective rooms. This would enable blind children to identify the rooms independently without having to ask their low-vision peers.

✔ At present only one institution in Kolkata has the provision of keeping the books in the classroom. Therefore, like in Tokyo, all the institutions in Kolkata should have the provision of keeping the books within the classroom so that blind children do not have to carry the voluminous Braille books to and from the library every day.

✔ All the institutions in Kolkata should have a separate laboratory for Social Science subjects and the teaching aids for Social Science subjects should be properly displayed.

✔ One institution in Kolkata which did not have a swimming pool and playground sometimes took the blind children to a nearby ground and lake. This should be done regularly.

✔ It is important that all the institutions in Kolkata provide similar facilities to the blind children.

✔ Blind children should be encouraged to take admission in the beginning of the session.

✔ The process of admission, whether at the beginning of the session or for those children seeking transfer from one special institution for the
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blind to another, should be similar in all the institutions of both Kolkata and Tokyo.

✓ In the institutions of Tokyo, there should be provisions for screening blind children seeking admission from general schools.

✓ Just like the practice in Kolkata, similarly in the institutions of Tokyo blind children should first be placed in an Ungraded Class and given training in Braille, Mobility and Daily Living Skills. Then depending on their ability and competence they should be placed in the appropriate class.

✓ In Tokyo, all the special institutions for the blind admitted blind children with other disabilities. Infrastructural facilities of the institutions of Kolkata should be improved and provisions should be made to admit blind children with other disabilities. Teachers have to be specially trained to deal with these children.

✓ The Government has to take an active part in helping these institutions. (For example: in order to accommodate a blind child who is also orthopaedically handicapped ramp with handrails and lift become mandatory. Similarly, in order to accommodate blind children who are also mentally retarded the curriculum needs to be modified.)

✓ Just like the practice in the institutions of Tokyo, similarly in the institutions of Kolkata provisions should be made to either divide the class into sections or appoint two teachers in case the number of children in a particular class exceeded the maximum limit. This would enable the teachers to pay more attention to the needs of the children.

✓ It was seen that in Tokyo there was a prescribed syllabus for all the subjects including Physical Education. All the institutions followed the prescribed course of study. But, in Kolkata the course of study was similar in all the institutions only for those subjects which had a
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prescribed syllabus. For subjects like Physical Education and Industrial Arts which did not have a prescribed syllabus learning opportunity varied depending upon the institution in which the blind child was enrolled.

✓ Therefore, all the institutions in Kolkata should work out a common course of study for all subjects.

✓ Industrial Arts which helped in enhancing finger dexterity of blind children should be included in the curriculum of all the institutions of Kolkata.

✓ As is prevalent in the institutions of Tokyo, Industrial Arts should be taught to the blind children as long as they needed training in it.

✓ While providing training in Craft, emphasis was more on preparing children for some kind of vocation in the institutions of Kolkata. But, in Tokyo emphasis was more on developing the creative abilities of the children. This was probably because in Tokyo, certain professions like massage, acupuncture etc. are reserved only for blind individuals. But, in Kolkata there is no such provision of reserving professions exclusively for blind individuals. A provision like this should be adopted in Kolkata.

✓ Along with preparing blind children for some vocation their creative abilities should also be developed through different kinds of craft work.

✓ Like in the institutions of Tokyo, similarly in the institutions of Kolkata training in different subjects of Plus Curriculum should be provided as long as the blind children needed.

✓ While teaching Mathematics, it would be better if blind children in the institutions of Kolkata were first given blocks where the digits were inscribed in the form of dots. Once, the children could remember
the arrangement of the dots then they should be introduced to Taylor Frame. It is easier to remember the inscriptions on the block than understanding the position of lead types representing various numbers.

- All the institutions in Kolkata should provide instructions in Computers inspite of it being or not being a regular school–teaching subject.

- The method followed to teach computers should also be similar in all the institutions of Kolkata. The authorities of the institution should work out a single method so that a blind child does not have to suffer or face any confusion in case he shifts from one institution to another.

- In the institutions of Tokyo, blind children should be introduced to the normal keyboard along with Braille key boards in order to reduce their dependance on the latter.

- All the institutions in Kolkata should follow a uniform system of examination.

- Instead of conducting unit tests, half–yearly and annual examinations the institutions should shift to semester system to reduce the burden on children.

- Exemption of examination till a particular class (as is prevalent in Tokyo) depends on the policies of the government. Therefore, the institutions in Kolkata will not have any say in this matter. Even if examinations are exempted, yet the progress and level of children’s learning should be regularly monitored.

- In the institutions of Tokyo, along with observing, practical examinations can be conducted to check the progress of the blind children in the subjects of Independent Activity. These examinations
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will only be complementary to the existing practice of observing the blind children.

✓ The system of taking the help of scribes during examination can be adopted in the institutions of Tokyo.

✓ Tin/Plastic Board (with inscriptions of English alphabets) should be used in all the institutions in Kolkata. In the institutions of Tokyo as well Tin/Plastic Board with inscriptions of Hiragana and Katakana script in Japanese can be used.

✓ In order to teach reading in Braille, along with marble board all the institutions in Kolkata should use models of Braille (six pins on a wooden block) as used in the institutions of Tokyo.

✓ Along with the Braille embosser, blind children in Tokyo should also be trained in using Braille slate, stylus and guide because those are easier to carry than the embosser.

✓ Models for teaching Daily Living Skills which were used in the institutions of Tokyo should be introduced in the institutions of Kolkata. Similarly those models of Daily Living Skills used in the institutions of Kolkata should be introduced in the institutions of Tokyo.

✓ Mobility Maps should also be made available in all the institutions of Kolkata.

✓ Blind children in Tokyo should be encouraged to use Braille books instead of audio books because reading and consulting Braille books would enhance their ability to read and recognize Braille alphabets.

✓ The availability of tactile globes should be increased in the special institutions for the blind in Kolkata.

✓ Blocks with numbers inscribed in Braille (as used in the institutions of Tokyo) should be used in the institutions of Kolkata as they were
more convenient to recognize numbers and reduced any chance of human error.

- The special institutions for the blind in Tokyo should use Geo–Board along with models of geometric shapes. During the unavailability of any model of a geometric shape, the Geo–Board could be easily improvised and any model of a geometric figure could be represented.

- Certain equipments like Colour Talk, Light Probe Meter and Temperature Announcer should be used in the institutions of Kolkata. By using these equipments, the blind children would be able to conduct their experiments in Science subjects independently.

- Since all these equipments are quite expensive, the Government will have to take an initiative in arranging for these teaching equipments (especially Colour Talk, Light Probe Meter, Temperature Announcer and Thermoform Machine).

- Text Reader Machine should be made available in all the institutions of Tokyo.

- Similarly, all the institutions in Kolkata should have Braille printers.

- Computers with Braille key boards should be available in the institutions of Kolkata along with computers with normal key board.

- Thermoform Machine should be made available in all the institutions of Kolkata to enable the teachers to get tactile copies of pictures whenever required.

- Instead of using different teaching aids in different institutions, the three institutions in Kolkata should use similar type of teaching aids.

- Like in Kolkata, there should be a provision of reservation of seats for Special Children in all Government Educational Institutions and Educational Institutions receiving aid from the Government in Tokyo.
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✓ The provision of reducing the class strength of a particular class in a regular school in case a child with special needs was admitted in that class should be considered by the Government in Kolkata because this would ensure greater attention of the teacher to the special child.

✓ In Tokyo, it was made sure that there were no drop-outs. The authorities of the institutions in Kolkata will also have to take all the required measures to prevent drop-outs. They have to make sure that children complete their education in the institution.

✓ The Government in Kolkata should try to raise awareness among parents regarding the importance of education for those children who are blind or are suffering from any other disabilities.

8.2 Conclusion

The researcher collected data from the Special Institutions for the Blind in Kolkata and Tokyo. The suggestions were made on the basis of an analysis and interpretation of the collected data.