CHAPTER 5

ALTERNATIVE POLICY PERSPECTIVE FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

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5.0 Introduction

As has already been mentioned in Chapter 3 and 4 that there is no exclusive policy for the all round development of the visually challenged because of which some of the persons went to the extent of saying that there is no policy for them, it is clear that the policy for the visually challenged is a part of major policy for the specially challenged in India and diverse section in South Africa. It is also been mentioned that while in the former case, initially, the source of such policy remained the directive principles of the state policies because of which, at least, for two decades, whatever was done was sheer ethical steps whereas in the latter, the source of these policies became the 'no discrimination' clause under the constitution. It has also been mentioned that the development of the policies for the visually challenged in India took place in 1977 whereas some such development started taking form in South Africa after the formal acceptance of its constitution. However, in both the cases, the policy for the visually challenged remained the part of major policy of either the specially challenged or the diverse group. Due to this special position, policies of the visually challenged of both the countries have some shortcomings because of which the desirable result in terms of all round development cannot be achieved. Keeping this in view, this chapter will deal the alternative policy perspectives for the visually challenged and some related problems. The process of policy-making involves various sections of the people like bureaucrats, i.e., policy-makers and its implementers; voluntary organisations to express the standpoint of the consumers or beneficiaries; impact of the international agencies and, last but not the least, the views of the expertise in the field. Hence, this chapter will be divided into four sections, namely, outlook of the bureaucrats, outlook of the voluntary organisations, outlook of the expertise and expectations of the concerned international agencies.

Before dealing with the various actors of the policies, it is pertinent here to mention that the discussion about policy for the visually challenged is concerned with the theoretical problems relating to reaching to the unreachable, the concept of
Daridranarayan or antyodaya popularised by some of the Socialists of India base of which can be traced to the concept of general will propounded by Rousseau where it was suggested that the real will of each and everyone should be taken into consideration while developing any policy. Though in the modern age such things are possible to a greater extend and if not, similar role can be played by the voluntary organisations of a given segment of the society. As has already been stated that the provision of the policies pave way to the rising expectations as there uses to be gap between policy-making and policy implementation due to so many reasons ranging from ignorance to vested interests in terms of how far one has a role in electoral politics as both the systems under study are democratic so far as the form of government is concerned. If the pressure groups of the concerned segment are active, there are all chances of push and pulls between the government and the voluntary organisations which are nothing but the pressure groups. The role of such pushes and pulls play a conspicuous part in the development of the policy.

Such policies are also to be understood in terms of the realisation of the dream of the constitution-makers as the policies, even if formulated to reveal the welfare character of the state, finds its source in the constitution. If the constitution of both the states under study are critically analysed, both of them are touching upon the principle of equality and justice. The moment it speaks about the 'equality for all', whether it is exclusively mentioned or not, it is bound to cover the specially challenged in general and the visually challenged in particular. The difference lies in the fact that the Constitution of South Africa makes an exclusive reference of specially challenged (disabilities) in its no discrimination clause. Such exclusive reference adds the special consideration of a state but does not justify that another state has not included this segment in its orbit. Of course, this does not compel that state to necessarily include those segments of society in its policy-making about which no description is made in the constitution. It also tells about the priority of the constitution-makers. From that viewpoint, the priority of India was not the specially challenged. If this is accepted, it is a viable question how then the bureaucrats of India could take up the problems of
the specially challenged including the visually impaired during the initial two decades. Its reason can be traced from the preamble of the Indian constitution and some of the provisions for this segment made in the Directive principles of the State Policy description of which was made in the previous chapters. However, it is worth mentioning that when the preamble of the Indian Constitution says: “We, the people of India” denotes all the people of the country whether they are specially challenged or with no challenge whatsoever.

As has already been stated that it touches the question of equality and justice, despite the fact that the days have gone when equality used to be understood in the absolute sense and the maxim of ‘equality amongst the equals’ has been theoretically accepted irrespective of the impact of globalisation. This is a different question that due to impact of the globalisation, social issues are being side tracked in the name of its being non-profitable or extra burden on the economy description of which has been made in the previous chapter. In the light of the description made in the previous paragraphs, it is pertinent to know the viewpoint of various actors to find some alternative perspective not just for the welfare of the visually challenged but for the purpose of making them a useful segment of the society.

For this purpose, semi-structured interviews are made for which five bureaucrats of each state and 25 representatives from five organisations of and for the visually challenged from each state are being taken. For the convenience of research, the respondents of South Africa will be termed as 1 and the respondents of India will be treated as 2. As there are two types of respondents, namely, the bureaucrats and the representatives of the organisations of and for the visually challenged, these will be termed as ‘a’ and ‘b’ respectively.
5.1 Outlook of the Bureaucrats

Governments are changed as it is a part of democracy but bureaucracy remains the same. It is this bureaucracy which works as a chain for the development of any system irrespective of any democratic change. It is a mechanism which not only works as policy-maker but also constitutes a main mechanism of its implementer. Despite this fact that the offspring of any policy uses to be the legislative assembly of any nation, but how a policy is supposed to be introduced and what kind of language is given to the policy is the prerogative of the bureaucracy. It is the bureaucracy which points out the government what is within the law and what are its limitations. Hence, while discussing about any policy, its formulation and implementation, one has to analyse the opinion of the bureaucracy. As the subject matter of this chapter is the alternative policy for the visually challenged, it is pertinent to understand how this issue is being looked at by the bureaucracy of both the countries. Moreover, as the problem of the visually challenged is almost the same in both the countries, this matter will be discussed in a general way so that it may suit the need of both South Africa and India.

Whenever there is a discussion over the problems of the specially challenged in general and the visually impaired in particular, first and foremost concern is shown about how this could be cured. For the practical purposes, this problem is divided into two parts: the curable or preventable challenge and incurable or non-preventable challenge. There is no one who can deny this fact that the preventable challenges should be prevented and so is the case with the visual challenge. That is why, a need was felt to develop a policy for the prevention of the preventable visual impairment description of which has been made in Chapter III. It is also witnessed that the money spent on the prevention is not yielding the desirable result in both the countries because of which it is felt to rethink over this issue and find whether there is a need to substantiate this policy with new ideas or it is necessary to be changed in totality.
It is felt that “as majority of the bureaucrats are born and brought up in the urban environment, there is a need of involving some representatives from the rural areas so that their problems can be understood and a realistic policy can be developed. Similar representation is supposed to be given to the rurally-based people while implementing it.”

This view advocates the philosophy of the involvement of the sufferer and even the last man of the society may it be through their representation. It becomes necessary because without knowing the real picture of the problem, the policy will remain an ivory towered discussion. In any democratic set up, there is a chain of administration from top to bottom and village heads can be used to represent the village folks. This will have twofold effects: first, it will develop a sense of participation even at the level of villages and secondly, it will help in removing the superstition as the message will go that there are some other remedies to prevent the visual impairment. This will also reduce the unnecessary dependence on Sangomas and priests.

There are many diseases relating to the visual impairment which are time consuming and involving a lot of finance. Hence, “there is a need of developing such a policy which facilitates these patients free of cost.” This can be a boon at least to those who cannot approach hospital due to the scarcity of fund. But this will be a burden on the finance of the state. It is a question of choice between the financial loss and the increase of the visual impairment. It is proposed that “the state may find other ways to recover this loss. There is no rationale of increasing the number of the preventable visual impairment in the want of funds.”

There is a need of educating the people at large about the visual impairment and “it is strongly felt that the onus of the policy for the prevention of the visual impairment is more on treatment than on educating the mass at large about its causes and effects.

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1 Statement of la3 during the field trip dated May 3, 2005.
2 Statement of 2a5 interviewed on March 7, 2005.
3 Statement of la4 during the field trip dated May 5, 2006.
Hence, there is a need of developing such a policy which involves the educational aspect of this problem and make use of the voluntary organisations for this purpose.”

Hence, these problems can be made part of the syllabus at different levels with a provision that a question will be asked from this section so that the teacher is also bound to teach it. It is generally witnessed that despite the involvement of such issues in the syllabus, these are sidetracked in the name of unimportant chapters.

Over the operation of the cataract, it is proposed that “There should be the provisions of follow up and monetary support in case of cataract operation so that the patient need not have to go to the work just after the operation as in such cases, there are all chances of the failure of the operation in want of proper rest.”

It is generally found that the cataract operations are either done in bulk or by a team moving for this purpose. In such cases, in the absence of no follow up work or in the absence of no monetary support, these patients could not be cured because they have to go for their work as their families are dependent upon their daily earning. Under the given circumstances, there is no remedy or this solution but to provide a support base which can either be provided by the community or by some such provision cited above.

Over the policy on the education for the visually impaired, it is proposed to devote separate section for the visually and hearing impaired as these are only two sections which need special care. “Casual references as made in People With Disability Act or in the White Paper 6, cannot be taken seriously.”

So far as the visually challenged are concerned, there is a need of detailed description of Braille and their way of teaching while laying down policies for their education. There is an exclusive need of monetary arrangements along with fee concessions at all levels and subsidised equipments for the education of the visually challenged as their education is costlier than the ordinary students.

4 Ibid.
5 Statement of 2a4 during the interview on March 10, 2005.
6 Statement of 1a4 during the field work on May 7, 2005.
"In case of India, there is a need of the inclusion of the problems of the low vision students while formulating the educational policies for the visually challenged as they can neither be adjusted with the visually impaired nor with the sighted." This is a unique problem of the persons with low vision which is generally not being given due care. If they join normal school, they are forced to adapt themselves with the black board because of which they could not cope with them and lose their rank. If they join the special school, they are forced to learn Braille despite of their ample vision to read magnified alphabets. Even in the absence of proper technique, they use to lag behind. Of course, such cases are not the regular practice for which one may think in terms of developing infrastructure in each and every school but "a couple of schools in each district can be earmarked for such students to pay the desired attention."8

The concept of integration, despite its humanitarian rationale and despite its economic viability, is a fake concept if the policy about it fails to speak anything about the provision of solving the problem of the visually impaired. There is a need of developing the standard of the school in such a way as they may be made capable of understanding the problem of the visually challenged. For all practical purposes, as it is an impracticable proposition for all schools, there is a need of delegating this responsibility to a couple of schools in one district so that the impediments in the education for the visually challenged can be removed. So far as teaching Braille or learning arithmetics is concerned "which cannot be taught in the ordinary environment of the class, needs a special teacher for this purpose."9

When there is a policy of retaining both the systems simultaneously, there are negligible chances that the special schools may provide their services as a resource person to the inclusive schools. "It would be better to make use of the services of the visually challenged for this purpose."10

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7 Statement of 2a1 in the interview on March 3, 2005.
8 Ibid
9 Statement of 2a5 during the interview on March 3, 2005.
10 Statement of 1a3, op. cit.
Main aim behind any policy for the diverse section is to bring it in the mainstream, not as a charity but with a view to use its strength in the nation-building process. This needs a positive attitude to realise the latent potentials of a particular group. It should not be a window dressing only but it should be a positive support. Keeping this in view, both the countries adopted different patterns but could not succeed in providing ample jobs even in the government sector. Is it due to the fact that there is something wrong with the policy? Or, is it due to the fact that there are some problems with its implementation? If yes, does it mean that the wrong policies are yielding wrong results? In fact, both the countries have different types of experiences on which the policy relating to the employment for the visually challenged is formulated. This is true that in case of India, it was the strong feeling of the policy-makers that there had been a legacy of unequal treatment with some castes in the society but they did not presume any disparity on the basis of specially challenged. Perhaps, such presumption was beyond their thought as such discussions were not in the air or perhaps, this was a scattered minority and could not play any role in the democratic politics. As majority of the constitution-makers were representing the elite class, it would be wrong to call them innocent and ignorant about the use of the specially challenged in general and visually impaired in particular. Whatever the case may be, this is the fact that this segment of the society was sidetracked from the framework of reservation. Some historical events, detail of which is given in Chapter III, led to the declaration of 3% reservation orders in ‘C’ and ‘D’ categories of posts and later on it was accepted in all posts with the appendage of a word ‘identified’.

On the other hand, South African policy-makers preferred another discourse. They made it clear in their constitution that no discrimination will be made on the basis of specially challenged but while talking about the preferential treatment, all the diverse sections were clubbed together. Had there been no provision of unemployment allowance, the situation must be critical in South Africa so far as the visually challenged are concerned. It is felt that “some remedy should be given to the visually challenged by which they can be assured of some space in the employment. This is
true that some of the visually impaired are engaged in the private sector but, in majority of the cases, they have been included out of the wilful attitude of the concern. No law forces them and in the absence of any law or compulsion, such wilfulness cannot work everywhere. Hence, there is a need of the inclusion of some such clauses by which the government agencies be forced to leave some space for their absorption in the jobs as majority of them come from the poor section and it is virtually impossible for them to stand in the competitive market.”

This is true that this preferential treatment is given in all jobs excluding defence, medical and so on to the specially challenged which include the visually challenged in its fold, “but it would be better if some efforts, at least at the initial stages, be made to enlist some of the probable jobs for them which could have facilitated the government to think in terms of their absorption at least in some such jobs. Undeniably, the identification closes other venues if the list is not positively updated, but this earmarking may also yield some positive results.”

In Indian context, the clubbing of all specially challenged pose problem despite the fact that there is a roster system. The non-availability clause and consequent mutual change paves the way to do whatever the head of the department deems fit irrespective of the fact that he is supposed to seek permission from the personnel department. To find the reality, one is supposed to approach the court which is beyond the reach of the ordinary visually challenged. Hence, “There is a need to include such clauses through which the administrator is forced to retain a specific job for the specific category for a longer period as is happening in case of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. At the same time, some clause is supposed to be included by which the administrators be forced to update the identified posts after three years failing which they should be penalised. In the absence of any penalty,

\[11\] Statement of 1a2 during the field trip on April 30, 2005.
\[12\] Ibid.

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there are doubts of such rules being followed seriously and sincerely as the scattered minority has no say in the democratic set up.”

There is a difference of opinion over these two issues, i.e., merit and identification. The merit is understood in contrast with reservation. The supporters of the merit are of the view that the reservation is a hindrance over the open competition and, thereby, is anti-merit whereas the supporters of the reservation are of the view that the persons who are involved generally in the implementation of such policy are, in majority of the cases, ridden by preconceived notions, prejudices and ignorance about the potentials of the segment under question. This necessitates the provision of reservation in the absence of which such people are overlooked and fail to contribute their worth in the nation-building process.

Over the issue of identification, it is strongly felt that it restraints the potentials of the people for whom such identification is made. But such identification becomes necessary at least for those who are totally unaware of the jobs which can easily be performed by visually challenged persons. This ignorance leads to overlooking and reduces the chance of getting jobs. Until and unless the bureaucrats are duly socialised about the capabilities of the visually challenged, there is a need of such identification and, at the same time, there is a need of its being regularly updated keeping in view the development of new skills and techniques.

Over the issue of rehabilitation, it is felt that “in the given circumstances, as rehabilitation involves a lot of issues, it is necessary to correlate it with the economic conditions of a state. However, there is a need of special provisions on some issues like barrier-free environment, access to information etc. as it means differently to the differently challenge.” However, the economic limitation should not be an excuse in this regard. Keeping this in view, “there is a need of two types of planning: one should be a planning for the present and another should be a future planning and such

13 Statement of 2a5 on May 5, 2005.
14 Ibid.
provisions are supposed to be made by which the state may be compelled to take steps for the materialisation of the present planning.”

In sum, it can be stated that the present policy of both the states needs to be altered in terms of adding some provisions. It is also emphasised that there is a need of exclusive provision for the visually challenged as within the specially challenged groups, it is the most vulnerable in terms of the attitude about their potential and this follows a chain of practices which make this segment more excluded. It is this concern which should be a guiding force for any policy-maker.

5.2 Outlook of the Voluntary Organisations

As had already been stated in Chapter IV that the voluntary organisations of any country work as a channel between the consumers and the government. So is the case with the voluntary organisations of and for the visually challenged of both the countries. It is also mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter, for this purpose 5 representatives from each organisation is taken and on the whole, five organisations from each country has been selected. Hence, it is a selected group of 25 respondents from each country. It is also worth mentioning that due to the similarity of the viewpoint over the issues relating to the policies, common views will not be discussed to avoid the repetitiveness. The idea of giving their views on the policies for the visually challenged is to highlight the issues involved in it and give some representative views over the alternative policy.

Over the issue of the policy relating to the prevention, it is expressed that “If the government needs the partnership of the voluntary organisations over this matter, considering the fact that it is bound to reframe its infrastructure by sharing such responsibilities with other section of the people in this field, there is a need of giving a financial support base to the voluntary organisations so that such responsibility can

\[\text{15 Statement of 2a4 during interview on May 7, 2005.}\]
be shared.\textsuperscript{16} Of course, this is a positive attitude of the voluntary organisations under the changing circumstances. This is a debatable question how far these issues will be taken seriously.

The issue touched upon in the previous paragraph is a participatory issue and needs a further clarification. The issue like prevention is supposed to be taken seriously and without the involvement of the qualified persons with the voluntary organisations cannot be given easily to them even in the name of sharing the responsibility. Hence, there is a need of qualitative assessment of the organisation or a set of organisations. So far as the inclusion of some such provision is concerned, there is nothing wrong but such step needs a careful examination. By saying this, the idea is not to doubt the integrity of the voluntary organisation, but over such issue, there is a need of the inclusion of provisions which are carefully examined as this is not an ethical work.

Over the issue of integrated education, it is viewed that “without providing sufficient infrastructure for the visually challenged, it is useless to implement this policy. As majority of the stake holders are from the poor section of society, it is not possible for each and everyone to adjust in the mainstream schools.”\textsuperscript{17} This is an issue because of which majority of the visually challenged students are still depending upon the special schools because such schools are bound to give minimum infrastructure in favour of these students in the absence of which they find themselves to be segregated and overlooked.

Over the issue of unemployment allowance, the representatives of both the countries supported it because of the fact that there uses to be a gap between the completion of education and training and the absorption in a job. In the absence of no sheltered workshop and due to the negative attitude of the parents, the lives of the visually impaired persons become helpless and, at this juncture, “there is no better help than

\textsuperscript{16} Statement of 1b14 during the field trip on May 4, 2005.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
unemployment allowance which should be a support base rather than a charity."\textsuperscript{18} As has already been mentioned in Chapter IV that so far as the provisions of the unemployment allowance in South Africa is concerned, it is given equally to all the unemployed visually challenged but in India, this varies from state to state. As it is a problem of survival and this is an issue which does not have anything to do with the citizenship of this or that state, there is a need of developing a universal policy over this issue.

It also touches upon the issue of disinterestedness of the recipient of such support. Undoubtedly, there may be some cases of this type but in the majority of the cases, any well-educated and duly trained person will wish to use his potentials if chances are awarded. As policies are formulated in the larger interest, there is a need that some such provision should be included in the policy for the visually challenged.

It is also felt that "there is a need of separate policy for the visually challenged so far as their employment problem is concerned in the absence of which there is no chance of justice as the society does not have positive attitude towards them and there are all fears that they will be side tracked due to these notions."\textsuperscript{19} In an age of the cut throat competition, there is a need of exclusive provision for the visually challenged so far as their employment is concerned.

As rehabilitation is a wider issue, variety of the views was expressed. For the convenience of the research, their suggestions are given hereunder:

(i) As all the visually impaired cannot join either the official work or as a school teacher, there is a need of making provision of training as a skilled or semi-skilled worker. This training may be imparted either with in the mainstream training centres by providing necessary infrastructure or arrangements be made to provide training in the special training centres.

\textsuperscript{18} The statement of 2b11 on February 17, 2005.
\textsuperscript{19} The statement of 1b21 during the field trip on February 23, 2005.
for which the use of voluntary organisations can also be made by providing ample financial support base.

(ii) The provisions should be made to fix a quota in the allotment of the accommodation and for this purpose a direction be given to the banks to be liberal about providing financial support for this purpose.

(iii) Special provisions should be made for a barrier free atmosphere for the visually challenged bearing their special impediments in mind.

(iv) The policy should include the issue of access to the information in all matters so that not only the lives of the visually challenged are made smoother, they can also be given chance to play their interactional role. "The cost in this regard is very meagre and there is no point for an administrator to make excuse under this guise." 20

(v) If the government finds it difficult to run old age homes for the visually challenged, proper support base should be provided by the government to the voluntary organisations so that such care can be taken of.

(vi) Such provisions should be incorporated so that the aids and appliances for the visually challenged, persons with low vision and later aged visually impaired can be purchased at the subsidised rates.

(vii) There is a need of including a provision of exemption in the license fee, if any, for television, radio and other means of entertainment.

(viii) If full concession cannot be provided in bus, train and air travel, there is a need of making such provisions of some concession as the lives of the visually challenged is costlier than others.

In sum, the suggestions given by the voluntary organisations are generally admitting the limitations of the government and these organisations wish to play a participatory role if proper financial support is provided by the government to develop necessary support base to provide various facilities. This is, of course, a constructive attitude of the voluntary organisations of and for the visually challenged of both the countries.

However, there is a need of the provision of social audit while facilitating these organisations in the absence of which such schemes may not give the desirable results to its consumers.

5.3 Outlook of the Experts in the Field of Visual Impairment

Though there is no exclusive expert opinion over the problems of the visually challenged, whatever attempt is made by some of the experts in the field is nothing but taking the specially challenged altogether despite the feeling that “Each child's unique needs would be met through a tailor-made programme.”^21 As this is not practicable under the given circumstances and there is a need to group these problems. Hence, it can be said that one has to derive from the opinion of the experts regarding the specially challenged.

Generally, there is a tendency of borrowing the ideas from abroad and including them in the policy of a country. There is a group which is of the view of indigenisation of the policy. Every country has its uniqueness and it is necessary for the policy-makers to take this uniqueness in consideration this fact while developing a policy. That is why, it is said that “One cannot hope to solve the problem of rehabilitation of disabled by 'Xerox-copying' technologies developed in the West. They are inappropriate and too expensive, Most of the aids and appliances used to rehabilitate our disabled are not accessible to our people and also not affordable by them. Experience has taught us that blind uncritical importation of designs developed in Western countries into the Eastern countryside may prove to be totally inappropriate. Our life styles, our functional needs, our climatic conditions, our barefoot walking, our squatting on the ground, all these require an innovative approach to the design of aids for the disabled in our country.”^22

This indigenisation can be equated with the traditionalism and may be treated as anti-modern. In fact, there is a difference between indigenisation and traditionalism. Indigenisation demands for adaptation as per the need of the nation concerned. It can be exemplified by a developmental process in which initially a machine is imported but, keeping in view the economic constraints of the consumers, attempts are made to make it duty free. With the passage of time, efforts are made to import the parts of the machine and assemble it in the country to reduce the cost further more. With the passage of time, the same or similar machine is being manufactured indigenously. It is this process which has something to do with indigenisation. This is true that while laying down any policy, one has to consider the limitations and specific need of the nation concerned.

Another concerned issue of the policies for the specially challenged in general and visually challenged in particular is the attitude of the bureaucrats while formulating a policy. The moment one starts thinking about the specially challenged, particularly, about the visually impaired, it is treated as a liability to take care of and, while doing so, the policy-makers reduce them to a ‘handicapped’; a receiving entity or a non-contributory poor guy. This is a wrong and gone by attitude and needs to be changed. This attitude is the part of the medical model description of which is made in Chapter III. However, it is pertinent to mention that this attitude includes the issues like how far one can walk, how he can eat despite his visual impairment, how far he can perceive the object, so on and so forth. In contrast with it, there is a view of having ‘no pity’. It is not only a message for the beneficiaries to express their rightful views but a message for the policy-makers to develop a policy without showing any unnecessary compassion to the specially challenged in general and visually challenged in particular. This is a call for developing a policy through which the segment can be integrated in the society. This integration is not just inclusion, but inclusion with the dignity of the segment, acceptance of their virtue and contribution.

23 The term ‘handicapped’ literally means ‘a cap in the hand’.
It means “not just a goal for a few with the mildest disabilities but a feasible and common good and a right for all.”

This interactional and participatory approach of policy-making and implementing calls for a movement of self-advocacy which is only possible if the representation is given to the aggrieved group. This can develop the sense of involvement which can be seen in the various committees of both the government where the representation is used to be given to the organisations of and for the visually challenged and other categories of the specially challenged.

The acceptance of the participatory role of the specially challenged in general and the visually challenged in particular opens a vista for playing a role by the protagonists of self-advocacy. Its height can be seen in the ideas like ‘nothing about us without us’ and that becomes the title of two famous writers: one from the United States and other from South Africa. These books emphasise the necessity of the role of the physically challenged in general and visually challenged in particular while formulating policies for them.

In sum, it can be stated that the experts in the field of the policies relating to the visually challenged in particular and the specially challenged in general are of the view that there is a need of indigenisation of the policies which can not only think about the specific need as per the atmosphere of the country but also take into consideration its cost effectiveness. There is a need of democratisation of the policy-making process. This will pave the way for the involvement of the affected segment of the society. This process will make integration a realistic and practical. Hence, the experts in this field wish to direct how such policies should be formed and what should be the aim of such policies. These are some of the basic questions about which the experts gave their opinion. It is these fundamental questions upon which the whole policy is rested.

25 Shapiro, Joseph p., op. cit., p.144.
5.4 Expectations of the Concerned International Agencies

As has already been discussed in Chapter III that the policies for the specially challenged in general and the visually challenged in particular are influenced by the directions of the international agencies and in this direction, vital role is played by the United Nations. As the emergence of this agency revolves around the issue of human rights and as the problems of the diverse section are covered under this fold, its impact is self-evident. Irrespective of the fact that both the countries are having their educational programmes in the field of the visual impairment in existence from 19th century, the dependence over UNICEF and other agencies of the UN is witnessed just after a couple of years of its existence.

As the United Nations make several declarations time to time, its members are supposed to be active to show their allegiance, these two countries under research also remained no exception to it except over the declaration of the International Year for the Disabled Persons. Due to some internal problems, South Africa could not observe this year in 1981 and the same was observed by it in 1986. So was the case with the declaration of the International Decade for the Disabled Persons. However, both the countries followed the slogan of the equal participation, details of which can be found in Chapter III. In this regard, most important role was played by Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific in its meeting which took place at Beijing on 1st to 5th December 1992 with a view to launch the Asian and Pacific Decade of disabled Persons from 1993 to 2002. A resolution was adopted in this meeting for full participation and equality of people with disabilities and it is this resolution and the subsequent developments in India which paved the way for the enactment of The Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) which is known, in common
parlance, as PWD Act, took place which has been discussed in detail in Chapter III. Undoubtedly, similar declaration was made in 1981 but, due to the strong feeling that a lot is needed to be done in Asia, such resolution was adopted at the regional level.

Furthermore, this concern became more exhibits when a space is given to the specially challenged in non-discriminatory clause of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa. This is a question which is purely related with the concept of equality and the commitment to this concept is seen even in the Indian Constitution in its article 14-18 but while making specific reference to various segments of the society, it fails to refer physically impaired irrespective of the fact that India is known for its commitment, may be at the verbal expression, through the dictum of Vasudhaivkutumbakam (the world is a family). How far the world is a family is a debatable question when one finds that there is an inhuman behaviour for certain castes. It seems that this dictum would have been an ideal—an ideal which is not supposed to be achieved but supposed to be work as a guiding star.

It is the same tenth decade in which the idea of globalisation started taking its shape which has been talking only in terms of profit and loss and reducing the state from welfare to almost a police state of 19th century with all ideal jargons. It is this contradictory position in which one has to see the expectations of the global agencies and its implementation.

The international agencies are expecting to make the specially challenged which includes the visually challenged as well an equal member in the society so that it can participate in the developmental process of the nation. How can the visually challenged get equal treatment until and unless the state is prepared to equip him with proper education and employment. This cannot be done without the use of economic sources and the international dictum talks
about the structural adjustment programme which directs to adjust one's economy by way of curtailing one's expenditures. In a common practice, in the name of curtailment, it is the welfare programme expenditure of which is used to be curtailed as welfare is not the necessity.

If something has to be followed in any case, the other strategy in the name of Structural adjustment programme is to give such programmes on contract and in case of welfare programme, give it to the voluntary organisations. Over such issues, even the international agencies also come forward to assist such programmes financially. So far as the superficial analysis is concerned, it seems a justified step as it enhances the involvement—even the involvement of the international agencies. But, leave aside the casual studies, no social auditing whatsoever uses to be made of such programmes and in the absence of a critical study from the viewpoint of the consumers or the beneficiaries, the story on the receiving end remains untold and unfolded. If nothing is known about the group for which these programmes are being taken, what kind of equality has been tried to achieve at is self-explanatory.

In the absence of implementation of the programmes relating to the education and employment, there are lesser chances of bringing this segment of the society at equal footing and in the absence of equality, how the ideal of full participation is achieved is a point to ponder.

This is not only true for the visually impaired but is true for all diverse sections concern about which is shown in the Constitution of South Africa and India. In fact, this is a vicious circle. One needs finance to implement the programmes relating to education and training so that they can be equipped with playing their participatory role and the structural adjustment programme which is a tool of globalisation directs to check one's finances. To solve this, provisions are made of the financial support by International Monetary Fund or by the
World Bank. Generally, this is used to be a conditional support which involves the way of using and repayment in which no direction uses to be given in favour of the welfare programmes as it is not possible to get benefit from them. Under such conditions, the concepts like integrated education, unemployment allowance or special benefit to the private sector if they absorb a particular number of the diverse section are floated. In the real sense, all these concepts are temporary solutions and there is a need to make its further explanation.

In the name of reducing the cost of infrastructure, the concept of integrated or inclusive education was floated by giving a human touch that the visually challenged in particular and specially challenged in general may get education in the homely atmosphere. There is no difference of opinion on it. But, without proper environment and facilities, such suggestion is nothing but imagination. It will be a burden for a teacher as he is supposed to cope with the special challenge and it will affect the atmosphere of the class as they have to adapt and adjust themselves with a couple of specially challenged. Mere training and adjustment is insufficient in the case of specially challenged. He needs special training to learn reading, writing and rhetorics and, more so, he needs special aids and appliances. This is true that a village level school cannot understand these needs and even their finances are not sufficient enough to fulfil such requirement.26

A solution of the employment of the specially challenged in general and visually challenged in particular is found in two ways. First of all, the policy is laid down to provide them an unemployment allowance which is nothing but supposes to be the solution of the crisis period when they finish their studies or training and wait for their absorption in the mainstream as a contributor in the form of a worker. So far as a temporary solution, there is nothing wrong

with it but if this is treated as a permanent solution, it is against the dictum of making them the participatory member and will be nothing but a kind of window dressing. This will make them handicap in real sense. It is even against the principle of mainstreaming the diverse section and makes this marginalised section more marginalised.

Other solution of this problem is approaching the private sector for their absorption by giving them some incentives. Such provisions were thought about by both the countries. But, in practice, there are couple of private concerns which are coming forward irrespective of the fact that they had been threatened for the penalty. No government can compel the private entrepreneurs and it is found that in most of the cases, they are reluctant to absorb the specially challenged so easily. In case of the visually impaired, the situation is worse as due to the attitudinal barriers and under the pretext of the financial constraints to provide conducive atmosphere, they shirk to absorb the visually challenged person. Hence, in case of the visually impaired, the position is very critical as due to the shrinking of the jobs in the name of the structural adjustment programme, there are lesser chances for them and private sector is reluctant in this case, what can be the solution. Hence, it is a vicious circle which finds no solution but beating about the bush by providing unemployment allowance or by harping about the self-employment for which there is no liberal financial support in real sense.

In the name of sharing the responsibility and in the name of reducing the cost of structure, a trend is develop to give the task on contract and so is done in case of the specially challenged by giving a grant-in-aid for the service oriented or employment generating projects. Generally, there is nothing wrong in decentralising the funds but so far as the role of the voluntary organisation is concerned, in the absence of expertise and in the absence of social auditing, such sharing raises lot of questions. Moreover, the
parameters of salary and other service conditions are generally below the average because of which it becomes difficult to find qualified persons which, in turn, affect the quality of the project.

In sum, it can be stated that there is a contradiction between what is expected by the international agencies in terms of the programmes for the specially challenged in general and the visually challenged in particular and the dictum of globalisation. This widens the gap between the elite section and the ordinary members of this segment as the affluent group due to their own support base may take up some self-employment or may become one of the member of any private sector and paves the way for the policy-makers to cash his name but, in real sense, it makes the situation more despicable and the reason for no substantial progress in this field is nothing but this vicious circle. It becomes the duty of the policy-makers and experts to find a way to come out of it.

In fine, this chapter covers the viewpoints of various contributors in the policy formulation. These include the bureaucrats, the voluntary organisations, the experts in the field. Majority of the contributors were of the view of a separate policy for the visually challenged. If this could not be done, the emphasis was laid down on the inclusion of separate exclusive provisions for them in different facets of the policy. This is needed because of the fat that the clubbing of all the specially challenged or clubbing of all the diverse groups make this segment more marginalised as within the specially challenged or even the diverse group, it is the visually impaired about which there are lot of pre-conceived notions, prejudices and unawareness about their probable role in the developmental process of any nation. No policy is made for window dressing. So, the same should be applied for the visually challenged. In fact, this big human resource, comprising more than 1% of the total population, and, if this is overlooked, no justification can be given by any policy-maker for
the overlooking. Even in the present scenario of the technological development, since the audible softwares are developed, no excuse can be given by the policy-makers in the name of some such development. In fact, these developments have empowered the visually challenged in such a way that it can read and write any document with the help of these softwares and the same can be used by its sighted counterpart. Under these circumstances, there is no logic whatsoever to refuse the visually challenged for any job which needs the reading and writing on the ordinary text.

So far as the experts in this field are concerned, they stressed on the indigenisation of the policy and make some such provisions as to make it more democratic. This democratisation may pave the way in removing the misconception from the minds of the policy-makers through the process of interaction.

The section of the expectations of the international agencies and the changing scenario exhibits the contradiction between the expectation and globalisation. It went to the extent of calling it a vicious circle where there is no escape and where one can doubt the intention of the international agencies. The example of the dictums of structural adjustment programme is self-explanatory. It is strongly felt that this is a revival of the old philosophy of police state and under such conditions where everything is measured in terms of profit and loss, welfare of the diverse section is impossible as the policy for the visually challenged may not provide immediate profit. How far a government may go to support this section and how far their steps are justified in the eyes of the IMF and the World Bank is a debatable question. Perhaps, the possible remedy is to develop the indigenous sources to make best use of this human resource by spending indigenous funds for their education and training so that they may become a contributory segment for the development of the nation. Dependence on the foreign funds for this purpose may not yield desirable results as it is difficult for any nation to fulfil their preconditions.
The concept of developing indigenous resources can only be practicable if the fact of treating visually impaired a useful human resource may be realised. Unfortunately, despite all lip sympathies, both the countries are notserious about treating this segment even at least a human resource. Under this condition, the idea of indigenisation of the sources becomes farce.