

**Blind children's education (at preschool and primary school, at home)
Problems, Challenges, Solutions
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Abstract

I was interested in the issue of education for the blind during my Master's studies.

In 2006, I finished a master's course with a focus on education and defended a master's thesis the topic- "Involvement of blind parents in the process of their child's development". The research in the mentioned direction was conducted for the first time in my country and, therefore, the work received great interest and approved. Normally, the master's topic was relatively broad, and I am continuing my dissertation research in the same direction-"Involvement of parents of blind people in the process of their child's development, pre-school age".

This article refers to the presentation of the data analysis conducted by me in the first state of the research. In the space of my country, several problems have been identified that significantly hinder the perfect education of the blind and their socialization. The presenter article also refers to the detailed description and important recommendations of this study.

Keywords- Education, blind, school/primary school, Georgia

One of the strongest human need in life is a normal flow of sensations that directly nourish the human bring, providing it with vital impressions. It is commonly that there are five sense organs, but in reality, as they say, their number is much more. They collect light, color, sound, smell, taste and temperature information from the outside world of the body in the front of touch. He considered the loss of all channel connecting the outer worlds to be the greatest tragedy. The influence of blindness on the psycho-physical developments of a person is so strong that completely different psychological types of people are formed on this basis. The famous researcher Burklein goes even further: he perceives the blind, unlike the sighted, as a completely different person, and the main flaw of his view stems from the underestimation of the role of the pedagogical process and the environment in general. This is key issue that determines during work on this issue. According to second view, blindness is only a physical defect of a person. One of this current representative, Dr. Cohn, writes directly: "To compensate the blind from lost sight. It has so many possibilities that it can be boldly said: it has everything except an indefinite means of displacement.

The purpose of this is to investigate:

- 1.The impact of blindness on human development;
- 2.To review and compare the opinions of Burklein and Kohn about blindness;
- 3.What is the impact of parental involvement on the development of children with similar disorders. All these questions led to the writing of this article, and therefore, I tried to answer the existing questions.

Historical perspective of education for the blind

It is known that the blind originates from ancient Egypt (3000 years ago) where there were cases of treatment and teaching of the visually impaired (including the blind). The first cognitive book was in Spain at the beginning of the 17th century, and in the 18 century, the philosophical interest in the relationship between sensibility and cognition deepened, which was reflected in the philosophical thought of John Locke (1632-1704) in the same country. There was an opinion that deaf and blind people did not have the ability to learn. In order to clarify this version, intensive researches were started in Paris to see how correct this opinion was. Until now, we can consider the historical perspective of the blind in three main ways:

- 1.In ancient Greece, blind newborns were cared for by their parents;
- 2.An adult blind man sold as a slave;

3. Women were employed as prostitutes.

There was even a horrifying proverb about them, which was full of cruelty and exactly echoes the attitude of the blind population towards the blind – “If you see a blind man, open the door for him, why should you be better for him than God himself”. It should be noted that Georgia had a completely different attitude, the state had a liberal attitude towards the blind. This is evidenced by the reign of the blind Thaddeus in the kingdom of Abkhazia in the 8th century, and Bagrat- who was blind by a political enemy in the 18th century, on the throne of Imereti.

Schools for the blind in Georgia

Georgia has always been distinguished by its tolerant attitude towards different people, in our country, in the capital, there was only one boarding school for the blind, where blind people from all over the country studied and lived there. During the Soviet rule, blind people were employed mainly in factories and factories, e.g brush manufacturing factory, iron workshops and factories. 2017, the approach of the state has change dramatically, it was decided that blind students should be educated in schools, and at the end of the day they should definitely return to their homes, to their family members. According, the transportation of citizens living near the capital and/or its surroundings is provided by the state, where blind people living in western Georgia stay at school (Tbilisi Public school 202).

According to result of the general population census conducted in 2014, the population of Georgia was 3 713 804 people. Of these, men – 1 772 864 and women – 1 940 940. From total population -0.25%-9 158 people have been given the status of fully blind throughout Georgia, 12.62%-468 710 people are partially blind, 2.65%- 98 480% people have significant vision impairment, and 0.2% - of the population - 7 262 people refrained from answering the mentioned questions, as for 0.88% of the entire population or 32 650 people, did not indicate information about their eyesight.

At the legislative level, our state has developed a professional standard for teachers in 2008, but there is no controlling body that will study the situation in terms of law enforcement. The professional standard of teachers in 2008, Chapter 5 deals with issue of a special teacher, where you can find a note on the function-duty of a special teacher: in case of need, he should be a recommender for other teachers, parents.

In order to develop the necessary ability of a students with special educational needs, the function of a special teacher is perfect at first glance, and all parties are involved for the perfect educational of a child with special educational needs. Obviously, the state shows its readiness, it creates documentation that looks at the development of the child from different perspectives, it involves both the teacher, the special teacher, and the parent in the process, and they work together on the creation and implementation of the documents of the individual educational plan. In order to plan and implement the effective educational process of a student with special educational needs, alternative curricula are used (professional Standard of Teachers, Article 15 “b”, “d” subsection.) Dimitri Uznadze’s phrase is quoted to indicate the main essence of the goals written in the national curriculum – “The primary importance in learning is not the product that it gives us in the form of a specific habit or attest with a specific content, but the development of the student’s strengths in a specific direction. In accordance with the national goals of education, it is important for the school to take care of the development of skills and competencies defined by the national curriculum. According to the National Curriculum, “the school should promote the learning and teaching of subjects, school projects, sports, artistic and club activities (with the involvement of students, teachers, parents): establishment of mutual respect, tolerance and equality between students, parents and teachers regardless of their social, ethnic, religious, linguistic and worldview” (National Curriculum, Article 18). In accordance with the mentioned document, the teacher should be supporter of the process of integration of the students into the school space (National Curriculum, Article 18), and for teaching in diverse environment, it is especially important for the teacher to have strong motivation and sensitivity, which, according to the teacher’s professional standard, is mandatory for all categories of teachers (Teachers’ Professional Standard, 2020). It should be noted that the law supports the student’s parent, according to which the parent has the opportunity to request the

special teacher to attend the lesson process, observe and give recommendations. After observing the teaching process of the special teacher, he will give both the parent and the main teacher recommendations and instructions on how to behave in a specific situation. The professional standard of teachers also includes the recommendations of the leading special for working with children with sensory disorders. In this case, my opinion and that of the author of the last document coincide. It is necessary to determine the ways of optimal use of residual vision, for which the ability to assess the functional vision of a student with low vision special educational needs is mandatory. Determining the need of technical equipment according to the level of need of a visually impaired child.

At first glance, it can be said that the state expresses an opinion for the socialization of the blind, works on various documents, creates legal frameworks, however, in practice, the actions that will directly improve the daily life of the blind are very small. Moreover, it can be said that only in the capital and a few big cities, a small number of events are held, and it cannot be generalized to the whole country. As a result of my personal observation, I encountered such a problem as lack of resources. According to the professional standard of teachers, the main goal is to support the blind student to move to another stage of life, to work on his skills and interests. And for this, the most important thing is to examine the interests of the student with special educational needs- to identify the strengths and then use them to the maximum. At first glance, the state is focused on the socialization of blind children, however, on the other hand, I received the following response to the information requested from the Ministry of IDPs, Labor, Health and Social Protection from the occupied territories of Georgia, which was related to the collection of information on the provision of state services for blind children: "I would like to inform you that blind children can benefit from various sub-programs approved by the resolution of the Government of Georgia on December 31, 2020- activities within the framework of the 2021 state program for social rehabilitation and child care, although the said program is not defined separately Requirement / Condition regarding the provision of the program in case of the status of blindness, we are deprived of the opportunity to provide you with information about the number of beneficiaries involved in the sub – programs in this regard".

The purpose of this article is to study the issue in depth, therefore, I conducted in-depth interviews with experts works on the subject of the blind and specialists in the field. While working in the issue, I conducted an in-depth interview, on the basis of which it is possible to conclude that the majority of citizens living in the territory of Western Georgia, who need help from a psychological point of view, are related to this issues of improving inclusive education: deaf-mute child, children with psychological disorders, children victims of family violence, children of divorced parents. It is significant that during the last 15 years, not applied to ant blind parents. As the reporter noted, he reasonably doubts that there will be blind people in the wester part of Georgia who need psychological help, but suggests that parents from various reasons refrain and to keep their blind children at home.

Information obtained the framework of my research: from Tbilisi Municipality City Hall, a IP Tbilisi Kindergartens Management Agency, Ministry of IDPs from the occupied territories of Georgia, Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Education an Science of Georgia and also from the National Agency of Statistics of Georgia.

It should be noted that the RM school for blind (public school 202), which is one of the schools from the blind in the whole part of Georgia, currently has 49 students enrolled. Enrollment in the school is done by 2 methods:

1. The child has 10 % or less of visual acuity;
2. At the request of the parent of the visually impaired child

The psychologist of the 202nd school, Mrs. Irina Ardotel, works complexly with blind children and special teachers in the following direction: behavior management, learning cognitive and social skills. The respondent has 10 years of work experience in the mentioned direction. He notes that first-graders who come to school today are un the same condition as 10 years ago – they are not ready for school. To the question, how ready are the parents of blind children to accept the psychologist's recommendation, to share the psychologist's advice for complex work on the child's development, the answer is as follows –

only about 5 % of parents are eager to take into account the recommendations and follow the advice step by step, and in such case, the maximum result is obtained. The second category of parents hear such recommendations, but do not take them into account (do not pay attention), and the third category of parents are simply not interested in the psychologist's recommendation and consider their approach more justified.

If a student is short-sighted or visually impaired and does not wish to enroll in the above-mentioned school, the Ministry excluded from society. y of Education will enroll him in another public school. By such action, the state expresses its attitude that any person, regardless of the disorder, should be a healthy member of society and should not be excluded from society. The multidisciplinary team of the Ministry of Education is strictly monitoring to prevent arbitrary transfer from school 202 to any other school. According to the guidance of the psychologist, there have been cases where the level of learning and development of a student who has transferred from a public school is much lower than that of a student who attends a special school. Mrs. Irina is given as example of a second grade student who transferred from one of the public school. "The child did not know how to write, read or recognize colors, however, the academic quality of the same student's learning improved so much that it became age-appropriate already in the 5th grade." In the course of the interview, the "guilt" of the parents was revealed several times, they constantly try to "do good job" for their children.

The state's approach is socialization of blind and access logistical issues. Children are equipped with necessary literature, supporting manuals. Years ago, the 202nd school had a school-boarding load, studied and lived in the school area. Today the attitude has changed and the state believes that blind children should not be separated from their families. Moreover, from their socialization, students are served by private transport, which provides students with daily activities, both in Tbilisi and in the surrounding area of Tbilisi. As for the students who live in the regions away from Tbilisi, are from Western Georgia - for them, the 202nd school has an offer and said students remain in the school as it was before the reconstruction of the school. Thus, for today, the state promotes the socialization of blind children.

In conclusion, it can be said that the hyper-involvement of parents is the primary problem in the process of child development.

In order to present the complete picture in Georgia. I applied to the City Hall of Tbilisi Municipality and requested the exact number of blind beneficiaries according to age, however, the scarcity of information presented by them allows me to assume that in fact almost no care is taken for the development/socialization of children of this spectrum. According to the information obtained from the City Hall of Rustavi within the framework of the desk research (I requested information about the number of students enrolled in kindergartens under the control of the City Hall), the City Hall does not implement a target program for blind children at all. It only has programs for general inclusive students, the blind are not specifically singled out or taken as target groups. The service does not implement a target program for blind children. The City Hall allows blind children to participate in all events that are generally inclusive. It is possible that the mentioned children received help with the status of disabled or socially disadvantaged, however, it is impossible to identify them with the status of blindness, based on the information stored in the database of the service, because there is no need to collect information on this status based on the goals of the mentioned program. In 2020 – 3694 children between the ages of 3 and 6 benefited from the social program provided by the budget of the city service of health and social services.

"According to the information provided by the agency for the rescue of kindergartens of AIP Tbilisi, in the kindergarten established by the agency and functioning in the territory of Tbilisi municipality, blind children are enrolled (Krtsanisi district 36th kindergarten), where they receive an identical (similarly to other problems) do not have children to preschool education (in agreement with the child's parents); is integrated with other children, as for any special programs or social projects, they have to be implemented in the mentioned kindergarten.

It should be noted here that the number of the population in regions, self-governing unit, gender and visual impairments is provided by the education management information systems, as of November,

2014. After that, the data was not updated. Regarding the validity of the data collection methodology, I cannot take responsibility as a researcher on my own, because I completely rely on the information provided by the statistical service.

Table 1. The population of Georgia according to gender visual impairment

	Not at all	partially	significantly	completely	Refusal to answer	Not specified
common 3 713 804	83,41	12,62	2,65	0,25	0,2	0,88
man 1 772 864	86,13	10,29	2,17	0,26	0,23	0,93
woman 1 940 940	80,92	14,75	3,09	0,24	0,16	0,83

Conclusion and recommendation:

Therefore, as a result of the study of the existing reality, I conclude that a large part of the population does not participate in the survey, as the question and the answers are serve for them. The main problem is the gap between law and reality; as a recommendation, it can be said that:

- 1.It is effective for the state to develop such programs that ensure heroic socialization of the blind; it will be effective to instruct city mayors to implement special operations developed by the state;
2. It will be effective for the state to allocate a psychologist who will help blind parents/family members with their children in education;
- 3.It is effective to have a specific body child is carry by the parent to an age-appropriate educational institution;
- 4.It is desirable for the state to carry out an information campaign, e.g distribute relevant information booklets to blind parents/relatives and/or simply interested persons of society;
- 5.It is desirable to have at least one school for the blind in every large region of the country, so that children do not end up without education due to moving and leaving the region.

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