THE IMPACT OF AN INTEGRATED EDUCATION UPON VISUALLY DISABLED STUDENTS

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For All Visually Disabled Students

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ABSTRACT

Gülderen DURNA   **June 2012**

THE IMPACT OF AN INTEGRATED EDUCATION UPON VISUALLY DISABLED STUDENTS

The aim of this study is to reflect on the academic and social impact of an integrated education system on visually disabled students. As the type of education determines both the level of academic success and socialisation of the visually disabled students, not only negative but also positive aspects of an integration have been revealed through the data obtained from interviewees and the longitudinal observation conducted among visually disabled students and teachers attending a high school in Istanbul. Prior to the evaluation of the integration programme from students' perspectives, teachers' attitudes and tendencies toward the disabled students are released in order to illuminate their effects on the academic and social life of disabled students. Their approaches, expectations and personal efforts in relation to their department, age and experience play a crucial role in disabled students' development of social identity in mainstream society. On the other hand, visually disabled students are analysed as part of the process of being a mainstream member of the society by transforming from special education into an integrated system of education. Furthermore, through the comparison of special and integrated education, it has been deduced that integration presents a setting for the coexistence of the visually disabled students within mainstream society by facilitating the interaction between these groups.

Keywords: Visually Disabled Students, Integration, Attitudes

KISA ÖZET

Gülderen DURNA   **June 2012**

KAYNAŞTIRMA EĞİTİMİN GÖRME ENGELLİLER ÜZERİDEKİ ETKİSİ

Bu çalışmanın amacı; kaynaştırma eğitiminin görme engelli öğrenciler üzerindeki akademik ve sosyal etkilerini yansıtmaktır. Eğitimin türü, görme engelli öğrencilerin akademik başarı ve sosyalleşme düzeyini belirleyici bir rol oynadığından; kaynaştırma eğitiminin hem olumlu hem de olumsuz yönleri lisede bulunan öğretmenler ve görme engelli öğrenciler arasında yürütülen uzun süreli katılımcı gözlem ve mülakatlar vasıtasıyla elde edilen verilerle ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Kaynaştırma programını engelli öğrencilerin perspektifinden değerlendirmeden önce; öğretmenlerin engelli öğrencilere yönelik tutum ve eğilimleri ele alınmış böylece bu tutumların öğrencilerin sosyal ve akademik gelişimlerini ne ölçüde etkisi olduğuna ışık tutulmuştur. Bunun nedeni ise; öğretmenlerin yaşına, branşına ve hayat tecrübelerine bağlı olarak değişen yaklaşım, beklenti ve şahsi çabalarının, görme engelli öğrencilerin sosyal bir kimlik geliştirmesinde önemli bir role sahip olmasıdır. Öte yandan; görme engelli öğrencilerin toplumun doğal bir parçası olma sürecinde özel eğitimden kaynaştırmaya geçişi analiz edilmiştir. Ayrıca; özel eğitimle kaynaştırma eğitiminin karşılaştırılmasıyla, kaynaştırmanın engelli bireylerle toplumun birlikte iç içe yaşamalarını sağlayan ortam sunduğu ve etkileşimi artırarak her iki tarafında birbini tanımasına olanak verdiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Görme Engelli Öğrenciler, Kaynaştırma ve Tutumlar

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INTRODUCTION

Whichever school you visit, you are likely to come across a disabled student who is part of an integrated education programme. These groups of students, who constitute a minority, include visually, orthopedically or mentally disabled individuals among the majority of non-disabled students. Due to my personal experience of special and integrated education in addition to close connections with the organisations for the blind, visually disabled students are of focus in this research. Moreover, when compared to mentally impeded people, visually handicapped are more observable as they can be communicated without the guidance of anyone and they can reflect their own opinions explicitly. In the field of disability literature, the visually disabled are evaluated within the context of their parental relations in a psychological and educational sense. The effect of parental attitudes regarding the disabled people's psychological condition and education life on the basis of a medical and social approach. On the one hand; medical approach focuses on a disabled individual. If he has some difficulties in his daily life, it stems from his physical deficiency. On the other hand; social approach regards mainly society as a determining factor of disability. If a person has some obstacles such as transportation, education and employment; this is the result of barriers put by society. Furthermore, while analysing disabled students, they are not categorised according to their disability which leads to the generalisation and equalisation of all kinds of impairments. Nevertheless, whatever the issue related to disability is, it shall be contemplated according to their impairment in the realm of education because general problems and solutions concerning both technical and emotional dimensions differ from each other in relation to the type of education. While a visually handicapped student may crucially need Braille or audio materials, orthopedically handicapped students are in need of physically well-designed buildings to facilitate their educational and social life. What is more; a mentally disabled child may require the use of different teaching methods, whereas a visually impaired child necessitates audio-oriented descriptive learning styles. Therefore, it is quite useful to make clear distinctions among disability groups in order to analyse their personal and social

lives specifically. Apart from that, this study contains both particular and universal aspects. It has substantial particularity since it evaluates visually handicapped students attending a high school in Istanbul. It has, on the other hand, holistic perspective in terms of its illustration of an integrated education in Turkey. With the analysis of this dialectic, the impact of an integrated education has been reflected on in relation to visually impaired students in terms of its effectiveness for their academic success and participation into social life in the future. Even if this sort of education seems to have drawbacks, they may be changed into opportunities for their proceeding life.

Thus, it is considered that basic conceptions such as impairment and disability are necessary to know in order to understand practices and the direction of attitudes according to their levels of impairment. Similarly, the type of educations applied in the field of disability education is described to present a clear introduction to the subject.

In the following part general perspectives about disability in different countries throughout history are reflected on by glancing at the revitalisation of thoughts in different periods which shape the mentality of the society as it is through this thought that social memory and cultural norms determine the majority of attitudes and behaviours. Although some technical and social implications have been refreshed, stereotyped ideas may not alter so quickly. Even today, it is possible to come across such kind of mentality dating back ancient civilisations. Hence; it is aimed to illuminate the process of historical attitudes toward disabled people and grasp actual reasons behind contemporary behaviours

In the next chapter, progress in the realm of disabled children's education is evaluated within the framework of political occasions experienced in Turkey between 1920 and 2008. As the problems become more intelligible and the applications start to contradict the policy of the government, more functional steps have been taken by means of non-governmental organisations, political representation for the disabled and the gaining consciousness of human rights and democracy for all. As governmental policies change, some progressive implications for education have been put forward. Together with economic growth and

strengthening the sense of democratization; Turkey has witnessed a remarkable alteration in the field of special education for a few decades.

In the fifth chapter, one of the most essential parts of the study is illuminated by characterising the real life experiences of teachers. It is explored whether their perceptions of visual disability have changed and how they have utilised special teaching methods to make courses more effective and practical for visually disabled students. If so, how their perspectives have revived and what kind of methods they have benefited from are questioned through interviews with three teachers from each department of the school under study. Before visually disabled students are inquired, teachers' behavioural and academic inclinations have been revealed since model of teacher and his teaching style are considered as vital elements determining success and socialization of visually disabled students.

After teachers' evaluation of an integrated education are pointed out, the transition from challenging process into the position of being well-prepared for harsh life conditions is analysed. This transition has been actualised through the passage from an exclusive special education into an inclusive integrated education which witnesses the interaction of mainstream society with visually disabled individuals. How drawbacks of an integrated education turn into a contribution for their daily social life is discussed by comparing and contrasting special and integrated education. These comparisons are mainly based upon the narrators' educational and social life experiences. Finally, some suggestions for the solution of problems are put forward by making a general evaluation of the study and identifying gaps for further research and development.

METHODOLOGY

This research project aims to reveal the impact of an integration programme upon the academic and social life of the visually disabled students. The reason why it has been chosen as a research topic is primarily based on two factors. One of the determiners is dependent upon personal experiences. I worked in a rehabilitation centre which serves for a great number of blind children coming from different parts of Turkey. It has lasted for nearly five months which has initiated the process of close observation concerning the visually disabled individuals in the atmosphere of special education. After working there, participation in blind organisations has brought interaction with many other visually disabled people. In the following months, I was appointed as a state officer to a high school which included a few visually disabled students accommodated in a dormitory. These experiences triggered me to wonder about the education of visually disabled students who are transferred from special education into an integration programme. The second factor is the scarce literature sources related to the education of visually disabled individuals from a sociological perspective in Turkey. Therefore, another goal is to contribute to the educational field of the visually disabled,who have been an unrepresented group in Turkish society, and enhance the diversity of studies conducted in the literary of Turkish educational sociology.

This research tries to shed a light upon the problems of the visually disabled students from their perspectives. What is more; reciprocal relations between teachers and disabled students are investigated to illustrate whether an integration programme has reached to its goal in practise.

In order to address to the research topic; hypothetical deduction method has been utilised. First, the problem is put forward. In other words, it is asserted that an integrated education has remarkably positive impacts on visually disabled students in terms of its contribution to the development of their academic and social skills. In proceeding steps, this hypothesis is explored to test whether this statement is justifiable or not. Furthermore, data is obtained from the use of interviews, questionnaires and participant observation research methods. Fifteen visually

disabled students were interviewed, both individually and in a group. The interview method has been the main research tool of the study due to the fact that it is considered that impressions and narrations of the visually disabled students and teachers are more likely to reveal the covered realities from their point of view. Moreover, this study is ethnographic as it consisted of short visits and sessions. At the beginning of the research, visually disabled students were visited at their schools or dormitories in order to meet and build a bridge between the researcher and the researched which facilitated the flow of information on the basis of reliability and scientific validity. At the beginning of the conversations, participants hesitated to share their ideas about their teachers and the education system. As the interviewees were encouraged to narrate their social and academic life by regarding their level of social interaction in mainstream society, they felt more confident in the study and were encouraged to take part in it. These participants have not been asked questions consecutively within certain durations, but through a repetitive process carried out twice a month so that a sincere and close relationship between researcher and researched was created. It increased the reliability and objectivity. If an interviewee did not want to reply or felt uncomfortable during the conversation they were not forced to answer but welcomed because they may not reflect the reality if they participated into conversation involuntarily. In creating an empathetic setting, interviewees expressed themselves more explicitly and closely when they realised that person interviewing with them was also visually impaired. Apart from visually disabled students, teachers were interviewed individually to determine their attitudes toward disabled students, and their reflections and inclinations towards the teaching methods. As opposed to visually disabled students, teachers were more careful while mentioning their ideas on these kinds of students so as not to be seen to be uttering despising or humiliating words in relation to them. What is more, my being impaired also directed them to be softer. As far as I asked them more specific questions, they felt themselves freer and answered more sincerely. Nevertheless, as it is assumed that they may not reflect their actual thoughts and seem unbiased or mild toward the visually disabled students, participant observation has been applied as more reliable research method in order to conceive them better and eliminate the missing or invalid points.

In addition to interviews and participant observation conducted in schools serving special and integration programmes, questionnaires were also utilised. The number of visually disabled students involved in the questionnaires has not been counted exactly, but it is nearly thirty students. The reason why this has not been attributed much significance to the study is the fact that the findings were just used to justify the preceding reflections. Likewise, the questionnaire is not regarded as reliable as interview because if the participants are not known beforehand, it cannot be sure enough to rely on that data. There is a high possibility of not writing in the way they think or when there is an obscure point, it cannot be questioned at that moment as opposed to face to face interviews. Hence, the questionnaire has been benefited as a subordinate method to prove the findings rather than a basic one.

Quantitative methods have not occupied a remarkable space in the methodology owing to two main elements. The first is related to the measurability of attitudes. It is hard to construct a basis for quantitative research methods to measure the attitudes of both teachers and visually disabled students. It is dependent on the case of observation and the experiences of these people. The second point concerns the lack and scarcity of enough comparative statistical data on visually disabled students. First, visually disabled people constitute merely the two per thousand of the whole population in Turkey. Therefore, they are not paid much attention and not regarded as a group worthy of research. The second deficient point is related to the validity of statistics. What are the criteria for measuring disability? It is not clearly distinctive. For instance, the Ministry of National Education regards a student part of integration when he has an official report from the Administration of Counselling and Research Service. While gathering a data concerning visually disabled students, this report is taken into account. On the other hand, some schools suppose the students even wearing glasses are a disabled individual. This creates a conflict in data collection deriving from disagreements upon the criteria for the legibility of disability. One of the Chief Administrators responsible for Special Education and Counseling Services summarizes this contradiction as follows: "We, as an Administration of Education asked the whole high schools in Istanbul to point out the number of the visually disabled students. Some of the schools have labelled 300 students as disabled. However; it is improbable case because even in special blind

schools, there are not so many students. Thus, we have realized that there are still some missing points in official data." In short, qualitative methods are considered more efficient than quantitative in order to present different dimensions in a developing literary field.

As a research setting, six public schools were originally identified. One of these schools is a school just for visually disabled students. In Istanbul, there are two blind schools which educate disabled students on the basis of special education. The names of these schools are Orhan Pamuk and Elif Shafak primary school for the blind. The data in this study is based on special education supplied from Elif Shafak primary school. This primary school has been utilised in order to get a sense of special education by searching its advantages and disadvantages in relation to disabled students. One of the high schools has been chosen intentionally since it contains more than five visually disabled students staying at dormitory each year and I have been working at that school for six months which gives me a chance to closely observe the manners of both teachers and students. While selecting the rest of the four high schools, their inclusion of visually disabled students has been a primary criteria..In addition to these public schools, one rehabilitation centre was part of the research, which helped to clarify the strengths and weaknesses of special education. The number of the blind schools is already restricted. Thus, choosing only one of the schools was thought to provide enough data. Furthermore, the rehabilitation centre is one of the most popular in Turkey. It gives special training courses such as independent movement, reading Braille and the use of a talking computer for the blind living in different parts of Turkey such as Izmit, Bursa and Gaziantep. On the other hand, the other schools have been chosen randomly since most of the high schools in Istanbul have integration programmes, including a visually disabled student and it is nearly impossible to visit all of these schools within a limited time and space. Additionally, it is contemplated that the number of high schools does not change the official practices from one school to another, therefore, there was not much necessity to focus on a number of these schools. Even though a great number of high schools have not been visited, an enormous variety of visually disabled students have been met and asked about their experiences, impressions and ideas about special training and integration programmes thanks to national organisation

arranged for the blind each April of the year which brings together the blind form Eastern and Western parts of Turkey. As such, possible deficient methodological points in this study were eliminated as best as possible.

Participants in the surveys consist of two different groups: teachers and the visually disabled students. Twenty five teachers were interviewed in order to determine their socio-academic attitudes toward the visually disabled students in the integration system. These teachers were working at primary and high schools mentioned above. Two or three teachers from each department were chosen. One third of the teachers were quite young, which affected their academic and social inclinations toward disabled students. The rest of the teachers were middle-aged, ranging from 35 to 55. Mainly verbal and numerical course teachers were focused on because the most remarkable distinctions have occurred among them. However, social course teachers like physical training, art and music have were not disregarded. Seventy percent of teachers did not have any background information about visual disability which influenced the manners of the teachers in an academic and social sense.

Visually disabled students consisted of a total of forty five individuals. One third of these students have been primarily focused on and reviewed. These fifteen students have been chosen as an embodiment of distinctive features concerning visually disabled students. As the level of sightedness affects the materials disabled students are using, social perception and obstacles they are facing, the students have been evaluated as partially sighted and totally blind students. Six of them are totally blind, half of whom lost their sights during their middle childhood, whereas the rest were fully unsighted at birth. These kinds of differences have illuminated their social adaptation processes since children who are blind by birth are automatically sent to the schools for the blind. Moreover, awareness of their disability accompanied by the acceptance of this situation is accelerated. On the other hand, children losing their sight later on are less likely to accept this case and in the following years of their life, they become part of special education. Besides, the blind by birth are more inclined to learn Braille and use it effectively when compared to the partially sighted or those losing sight later. Nine of these students have partial sight, most of whom cannot read the hard copy of the books by means of their eyes. Only three benefit from their

visions while reading with the condition that they are provided large-print books or documents. These partially sighted students widely record lectures or take handwritten notes. Their being partially sighted or not is also crucial in order to reveal whether the perceptions of teachers have changed while interacting with them in an academic and social context. All of these participants have educational backgrounds concerning special education which have helped them to enlighten the reflections of visually disabled students transferring from special education into an integrated system of education. The rest of thirty visually disabled students were selected randomly in order to measure the validity and applicability of justifications acquired from the interview actualised with fifteen visually impaired students. Pseudonyms have been used throughout.

While studying for this dissertation, there have been not only positives but drawbacks as well. One of the most positive aspects of the project is the fact that it has provided the construction of new linkages between visually disabled individuals. Through new friendships, a variety of experiences have been shared in order to help alleviate the obstacles of the other disabled individuals. Even at present, most of the contacts are ongoing which creates a supportive network among the disabled students having similar problems but different solutions. Apart from its contributions to the development of social relations, there have been challenging dimensions of this study as well. One of the most difficult points stems from technical issues. The articles and the books have been covered and taken notes by listening which has sometimes prevented me from noting down the page numbers of the resources while referencing the citations due to the fact that the person reading the book does not tell the page number which has made me dependent on the assistance of friends or parents. I overcame this problem by checking the numbers from hardcopies of books or via net. Furthermore, analysing data and materials by listening has taken a longer time in relation to the usual expected time while reading a document with eyes since I listened to some parts repetitively while taking notes. Additionally, as the pronunciation of some words are very identical, there may even emerge some spelling mistakes on the names of references. To handle it, I wrote their names on search motor as I imagined, then the system already justifies the name or offers new options so that I could find appropriate form.

The second challenging issue is related to the process of literary research. In Turkey, there are very few studies on the education of the visually disabled students from a sociological perspective. Hence, mostly foreign sources have been utilised to investigate what kind of studies have been conducted. However, the availability of books and articles in audio or electronic format, with the assistance of the university library, has been overcome throughout the research. In national documents, it has been mostly applied to audio libraries whereas English materials have been reached via university data base and then converted into audio format again.

The last obstacle is about the process of contacting with target interviewees. In order to collect data from official institutions, it is required to get official permission from the Administration of National Education which necessitates some more   time. I have contacted with my acquaintances that have some links with these institutions to shorten this long process so that it facilitated reaching to target group through my personal connections.

Consequently, the research Project carried out among teachers and visually disabled students on their reflections of integrated programme has enhanced the disability literature which paves the way for new researchers in Turkey who are curious about the educational situation of the visually disabled students with the comparison to special and integrated education. This, this research has opened the doors for others to follow by focusing on the real life experiences of visually disabled students rather than drawing a theoretical framework on the case.

CHAPTER 1

BASIC CONCEPTS IN THE FIELD OF DISABILITY INTEGRATION

Before the analysis of the revival of the attitudes towards the disabled and developments in the Turkish education system, it is necessary to define and distinguish some terminological concepts such as impairment, disability, special education and integration.

Light, colour, shape, dimension and distance are the conceptions acquired by means of eyes. It is also possible to get information about features of objects through other senses. However, that kind of perception is quite restricted when compared to vision. In relation to this perception, visual impairments are divided into four categories as follows. Visual impairment is a deficiency which includes partially sightedness, low vision, legal blindness and total blindness. Partial sightedness is a partial loss of vision which requires special education. Low vision also refers to a little vision that can be utilised at a maximum level by means of some technical devices like glasses. The loss of vision based on aging could be put into this kind of impairment as well. The third category is people having no vision (Enç, 2005). Legal blindness, on the other hand, is a term within the context of the Constitution. A person who has lost ninety percent of his sight is defined as legally blind. Additionally, total blindness is attributed to complete vision loss. These definitions have been constructed mainly on a medical model which evaluates a person as of ill health. According to the medical model, the impairment of a person is measurable. Nevertheless, this may not reflect the real vision perception of an individual. There may be two individuals whose vision may be determined as the same even though the prerequisite for perceiving the setting and the need to benefit from assistive devices change from person to person, as every impairment has its own distinctive effects on individuals. The kinds of impairment mentioned above have been a significant factor determining what kind of documents they will need and how mainstream society behaves toward them. While the totally blind are in the need of Braille materials, low vision individuals may benefit from their sight or audio books.

Besides, totally blind children may be pitied and overprotected whereas partially sighted child may not be recognised due to their invisible impairment.

In addition to these definitions, Evelyn J Lessard (1995) distinguishes impaired students according to use of their sight while moving, reading and writing as low vision and perception efficiency, textual perception efficiency, and reading and writing in textual and visual medium. Basically, children are divided into two groups and educated as textual and visual learners (John, 1961). Textual learners are those who use Braille materials in order to read and write. Visual learners, on the other hand, consist of individuals who benefit from their vision at a maximum level. Barraga's (1964) pioneering work on low vision demonstrates that legally blind children who learn to read tactually but have some degree of vision could be taught to use their sight as well.

While the terms of disability, impairment and handicap are used interchangeably in public writing, disability is transmitted into a more social and political context rather than a medical perspective. Disability is no longer conceived as a personal characteristic or merely a deficiency but a form of discrimination which society exercises against people by looking or behaving differently towards them (Barnes, 1991; Barton 1993; Swain, 1993). The concept of "disability" is a statement of identity in much the same way as the term "black" has been used to promote positive identity and raise awareness in relation to the issue of racism (Oliver, 1991; Swain, 1993). While this conceptualisation is in line with the removal of barriers, the approach of inclusive education and the case of identity is more complex.

More recently the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand 1990) has focused on the rights of all marginalised groups in basic education. Prior to that, UNESCO has been involved in appraising the situation related to special education services since 1960s (UNESCO, 1960; 1970; 1974), whereas other literature has primarily focused on the rehabilitation and medical aspects of disability (Common Wealth Foundation, 1977). In this definition, special education is differentiated from ordinary education by two criteria. One of the preconditions is the target group which consists of visually impaired students. In other words, any education of "disabled" children is labelled as special education (Abang, 1992; Anson-Yevu, 1988; Danida, 1993; Ross, 1988). Another criterion is teachers who are

specially trained on the education of the visually disabled. It is also supposed to be essential for the social and academic well-being of these children who have "special needs". The belief that special educators are needed for the development of special education which is in turn essential for disabled children has had and continues to exert a major influence on policy and practice in developing countries (Csapo, 1986; 1987). It has formed the basis for the development of a specialist system in Kenya (Abilla, 1988), which is held up as a model (Danida, 1993; Kisanji, 1993). In the West, the concept of disability has gradually moved away from the concept of special educational needs, as increasing numbers of children who were not seen as "disabled" were recognised as experiencing difficulty in schools. This separation is even more explicit in the inclusive education literature referred to earlier (Ainscow, 1991), in which the environment not the child becomes the target. Whilst this approach has met with substantial support from professionals, parents and disabled people, it ignores some of the key issues in relation to the education of disabled children.

The original consumers of special education, disabled people in both the West and developing countries, particularly Africa, have been increasingly vocal on education over the last decade (Khalfan, 1994; Malinga, 1991; Rieser and Mason, 1992). They introduce disabled people's perspectives on the concept of disability into the special education debate. Owing to the isolating effects of special education, the concept of exclusion is attributed to it whereas an integrated education is contemplated with the idea of inclusion.

Integrated education is a model which aims to provide coexistence of disabled students among nondisabled children in regular mainstream classes. Another definition is that it is in support of disabled students' education in mainstream classes with the help of special trainers (Lewis and Dowlock, 1987: 4). It is also defined as a replacement of disabled having physical, mental or behavioural problems into mainstream classes and who are not heavily handicapped to adapt the system (ibid.). The policy of institutions, personnel, tools, programme and organisation are primary factors in the success of integrated education (Aktavcı, 1999; Roynerd Clark, 2000, Jacobson, 1997: 141).

Integrated education initiated in 1985 in Turkey. Qualitative and quantitative lack of institutions, teachers conducting the programme and teachers of special education have been on the agenda (Diken, 1998; Sucuoğlu, 1996). Integrated education based on mainstreaming policy and benefiting from appropriate training and teaching methods provides social interaction of the disabled with their peers and acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills to lead an independent life (Jacobson, 1997: 140). According to Hall, Healey and Harrison (2002), the totally exclusive approach would ignore any barriers in the participation of disabled students and do nothing to accommodate them or to overcome these barriers. In contrast, a totally inclusive approach would seek to thoroughly reconstruct the fieldwork from the perspective of disabled students and to ensure that no barriers to their participation were present. Enç (2005) summarises that the idea has contained "integration presumption" for more than thirty years under which school districts should presumptively educate disabled children with children who are not disabled in a fully inclusive educational environment."

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL OVERVIEW ABOUT THE ATTITUDES OF MAINSTREAM SOCIETY TOWARDS THE DISABLED

General background information about the perception of disabled people is explored in this section with reflection on the transition from a dehumanised position in mainstream society into acceptance as a member of that society so as to clarify how attitudes of society have changed. That will also be helpful to grasp why some problems are still faced and necessary solutions have not been put forward. The process from exclusion of a disabled person into an inclusive participant as a member of mainstream society is the main concern of this chapter.

Somers (1944, p.104) points out that there are four main categories in the mind of public: a) blindness as a symbol of punishment, b) fear of being suspected of having a social disease, c) feeling of guilt due to transgression of social or moral code or negligence and d) blindness in a child as a personal disgrace to the parents. No criteria or distribution are given for these judgements (Lee Meyerson, 1953). Furthermore; Hanks (1948) classifies social status of disabled people in five categories. The first status is depressed classes of whom society does not take care and regards as an threatening item for its subsistence. The second point combines tolerance with mutual benefit. In that sense, family members share daily responsibilities. Anotherr idea is to regard the disabled as an economic burden on society. The forth category is restrictive participation into social life. Final status determined for the disabled is ignorance, indifference and exclusion which disregards personal skills and social identity of a disabled individual. These elements constitute the basis of attitudes or sentiments toward the disabled throughout history. The turning points related to the history of disability shall be identified as follows: a) the period of ancient civilisations and nomadic tribes, b) the birth of wholly religions like Christianity and Islam, c) the age of enlightenment, d) the proceeding years of World War I-II and e) recent developments.

It is possible to observe some controversial approaches toward the disabled in ancient civilisations and nomadic tribes. In most primitive societies, to lead a life as

an individual, a person was required to have skills such as productivity, fighting or magical power. A person who needed protection of others permanently or temporarily was regarded as a burden on society. As these tribes were moving from one country to another, carrying the disabled with them necessitated great effort and time which led to different practices for centuries.

According to a survey conducted by anthropologists, a variety of information has been obtained about this related issue. What determined attitudes of ancient tribes was their lifestyles and conditions, such as drought, famine, nomadic and warrior lifestyle (Schwiffler, 1956: 73). The natives living in North Alaska were leaving old and disabled members of community to death on their own by supplying some food and burnings. When the time of migration neared (Morgan, 1987) in Eskimos living around North Hemisphere, the disabled were left to be frozen in ice. In some African primitive communities, the disabled were burnt alive. A father had a right to kill his handicapped child. Euripides writes on his tragedies that the best way for a disabled person is to commit suicide. Instead of having a painful and sorrowful life, death was the more acceptable choice for the disabled according to him.

In ancient Israel, there was an assumption that disability was the result of a sin committed by a disabled person himself or by his parents. However; disabled child would not be killed but cared by family. In Yeddiish culture, financial conditions played a significant role in elevating life standards of a disabled person. If he had a wealth, he could lead a comfortable life. Otherwise; he would be doomed to poverty. Besides; in Old Testament; Isaac is stated to have lost his vision at 100 longing for eighty years. Similarly; Jacobs was oen of the most prominent blind figures (Demirci, 2005: 110).

In Greek Civilisation, helping and protecting the disabled was considered to frighten gods as well. That is why; torturing, killing, getting away or selling them as slaves were thought to provide god's appreciation (Morgan, 1987). Additionally; there was a belief that a handicapped person punished by one god was protected by another god as a result of competition among them (Garland, 1995). Therefore, a person losing his one sense such as seeing or hearing was assumed to be rewarded by other gods through giving them a special gift. The belief was so widespread that the blind had skills for music and foreseeing future. Homer illustrates this idea in Odysee

by writing that Ulis lost on a island was welcomed and hosted by the leading figures of the country. He entertained and relieved those men with music so much that it was said he was talented musician whose eyes were lost but equipped with another well-developed senses and skills by god (Demirci, 2005: 117). In Old Greece, the reason why magicians and pianists were blind stemmed from that idea. When compared to the sacrifice of the handicapped the abuse of them was more bearable and humane. In China, public singing was the prevailing way of maintaining their lives (Quarkley, 1975: 4). Furthermore; the first organization for the blind was founded in Beijing which gives occupational training and defends their legal rights. (Demirci, 2005: 111). Even today, it is possible to recognise the remains of those days. When you look around the streets in Turkey, you will encounter with blind musicians and public beggars. It is possible to meet people thinking the blind as individuals whose eyes of spirit are open which see the world from the sphere of the absolute spirit, God.

In the Roman Empire, the disabled were used for begging, pirating or entertainment (Covey, 1998; Gowman, 1957). Apart from those above, in West African tribes, while Banyaka tribes behaved toward the blind affectionately and protectively, Bantu tribes were killing and eating the disabled people (Koty, 1934: 183). Furthermore, in Ancient Egypt, the blind were accepted as part of societies who were appointed to different positions in the state. Heredot and Heraklites visiting Egypt reflect on their impressions by saying that they had come across many blind people who had been working in different fields. In those times, while other civilisations did not regard visual problems as curable health problems, Hipokrat states that there were many doctors who were specialised on eye ailments, and were aware of the presence of twenty eye illnesses. There were so many blind people in streets that Heraklites names Egypt as the country for the blind. According to the survey conducted among fifty tribes; Ryd (1960, p. 255) has revealed that negative attitudes were more widespread than positive ones.

The birth of recent major religions such as Christianity and Islam has positively affected attitudes toward disability. Nonetheless; mentality has not rapidly changed but lasted for a long time (Koty, 1934: 190). In the holy books, the belief of protection and affectionate behaviours towards the disabled and old were common.

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As a result, temples turned into shelter for these people. Thus, religious institutions began to establish self-care houses. Additionally; religious organisation was improved by means of help and financial donations. In the Middle Ages, clash between church and state caused state interference with the financial income of church. Hence, the state took over the responsibility of these organisations. The understanding of disability as a punishment in Jewish culture was replaced with a special providence by god in Christian tradition. One day, while Jesus and his disciples were walking along, they saw a blind man. Upon that case, the disciples asked whether blind person himself or his parents were guilty for disability. Jesus replied that neither of them was responsible but special providence by god (Johannes, 9: 1-3).

Besides, the community was advised to accompany with a blind person who could not find his way (Kothy, 1934: 173). Similarly, the Islamic approach toward the blind is illustrated through surah *Abasa*, which means to frown. It warns the prophet to welcome the blind and contribute to his purification. The case is told in the following lines. "(The Prophet) frowned and turned away, because there came to him the blind man (i.e. 'Abdullah bin Umm-Maktum, who came to the Prophet while he was preaching to one or some of the Quraish chiefs), But what could tell you that per chance he might become pure (from sins)…Of him you are neglectful and divert your attention to another, Nay, (do not do like this), indeed it (these Verses of this Qur'an) are an admonition. So whoever wills let him pay attention to it" (Our'an, *Abasa*, 1-12). Upon that event, in Arab tribes the blind were welcomed in society. Moreover, many talented blind figures were brought up like Maari who inspired Dante on his writing the Comedia. In Islam, people are encouraged to assist and facilitate the lives of the blind. It is recommended that whoever accompanies a blind person for forty steps, entrance into Paradise becomes obliged upon them. The sense of protection for the blind has been so intense that when a sitting person in a bus recognises a blind person, he immediately tries to give his own seat or help them while walking along the street. These are the indicators of trial for gaining the acceptance of God. Thus, religions have played a crucial role in shaping social mentality and attitudes by means of warnings, rewarding or advice stated in both teaching of prophets and the holy books.

In the era of scientific research and progress, scientists began to search for the reasons of impairment. According to a longitudinal survey carried, it was revealed that it derived from genetic factors. Nonetheless, this also brought the suspicion of defectiveness in generation attributed to racial inferiority which was highly important to prove superiority through genes at the turn of the twentieth century. Being ashamed of a disabled child or hiding them resulted from this mentality. One of the guidance institutions dependent on the government confesses: "We were visiting the villages in Çorum and were counting the number of the people living there. Yet, we did not count the disabled person as an individual. His family did not think him as a part of population so we did not say anything. When I think the case at the moment, it is a shameful happening for me. We should not have accepted this kind of approach which supposes a disabled equal to a dead person". The person saying these words is now the chief of the guidance service under the administration of the government for the children needing special education.

What is more, in the 18th and 19th centuries, philosophy and science have shaped views remarkably. The question of what the source of knowledge is paved the way for understanding of the fact that the source of knowledge is the information obtained from five senses. Besides, Diderot, Cadillac and Berkeley began to be interested in the momentary lives of the blind. The letters about the blind written by Diderot are signs of this interest. In some periods of history, some people despite their disabilities have gained reputation and superiority over the society with their high intellectual accumulation and talents in distinctive fields such as literature, physics, theology and public administration. The epic writer Homer, a very famous leading physician Saunderson, the English writer John Milton are just a few of these prominent blind symbols. Their lives have indicated that they can be educated and accomplish in various fields (Çağlar et al., 1981). The first attempts for training the blind in a formal schooling has been actualised in Paris by Valentine Haüy who tried to educate a blind child and became successful. French academic institutions supported the foundation of schools for the blind so that the first school for the blind was opened in 1784 by Valentine Haüy. While establishing the school for the blind, he had three main principles including the belief in the education of the visually disabled people, the acceptance and the application of Braille and supplement of

occupational training in addition to academic education (Lwaventellth, 1975: 74). In short periods England, Australia, Germany followed the same steps. On the other hand, in Turkey, Grati Efendi established a part for the blind and deaf in occupational school in Istanbul in 1889. At the end of 19th century, some missioners also opened schools for the blind in Beyrut and Mardin. After Gratia Efendi, a second attempt was the school founded by private charity organisation in Emir in 1922. Nonetheless, they did not last for long.

On the other hand, there are very few references to the fact that communities have cared for and educated their disabled members for thousands of years outside of formal schooling. Anson-Yevu (1988) in reference to Ghana states that in the traditional system, disabled children would follow the normal pattern of boys being apprenticed as artisans to learn a trade, and girls being attached to women to learn mother-craft. Severely disabled children would usually be fed and cared for in the extended family (Colker, 2005).

Between World Wars I and II, the lack of qualified workers necessitated the employment of disabled people. Previously, disbelief in a disabled person's abilities kept them away from employment for years. Nevertheless, overprotection and pity have been substituted with the construction of a bridge between mainstream society and the disabled by means of their participation into workplaces and the field of education. The more closely society has known the capacity and skills of visually handicapped individuals the less prejudicial attitudes it develops. This has brought the idea that the disabled could be functional and productive in the industrial field. World War II strengthened this perception in an approving way. Furthermore, the disabled were realised as being more efficient than nondisabled workers. With the increase in the rate of employment for the handicapped, society's prejudice or pity for them changed positively (Çağlar et al., 1981).

Later on, thanks to the Constitution, Randolf Shepherd, legislated in 1936, the USA aimed to systematise the employment of the disabled and give priority to the disabled for certain occupations. Moreover, via the Constitution put into exercise in 1944, England supported the employment of the handicapped. Apart from that, the article putting forward occupational rehabilitation in 1943 has been the first

Constitutional arrangement concerning rehabilitation which is represented as the Magna Carta of World Rehabilitation Movement.

After recognition of disabled people's efficiency in workplaces, they were considered to be participating in the field of education as well. During 19th and 20th centuries, exclusive special training was regarded as an ideal type of education for the disabled. At present, the fact that individual differences in the field of education have been realised, developments in democracy and human rights have paved the way for acceptance of a rejecting approach which excludes disabled students from mainstream educational opportunities and brought integrated training system in special education (Kuz, 2001).

Taking everything into account, the disabled have shared a common history including oppressive, isolating, ignorant, and abusive views throughout the history. They have managed to subsist owing to their stubbornness and skills as well as the support by families, friends and local organisations at different dimensional levels. In contemporary times, they struggle to gain their identities and socio-political rights (Anspach, 1979; Gill, 1997; Linton, 1998: 3). Barriers and prejudices constructed by society towards the disabled may be diminished by means of breaking out of preconceived ideas. That can be provided via education which gathers mainstream society and the disabled together in a broader sense with the refusal of isolation from social life. Schools are the settings uniting different kind of people from different backgrounds and classes consisting not only for students but also parents. Thus, inappropriate attitudes, misrecognition and indifference toward the disabled may be eliminated through education which facilitates society in benefiting from physical, mental and social capacity of the disabled in an efficient way by putting an emphasis upon their skills rather than their deficiencies. Isolating the negative approach towards them shall be compensated with their inclusion and acceptance as an independent individual rather than an abnormal being. Interaction between these groups play a crucial role in the development of reciprocity, intimacy and linking close relations resulting in the unity and building of an awareness toward the problems of the small groups inside of society.

CHAPTER 3

THE PRCOESS OF TRANSITION FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION INTO INTEGRATED EDUCATION MODEL IN TURKEY

After a brief introduction on the evolution of society's views on the disabled in daily, occupational and educational life, progress and alterations in the realm of visually impaired individuals' education in Turkey are evaluated within the context of political revolutionary events.

Leading blind figures have proven that a disabled person can accomplish their goals, with scientific research supporting educability of the visually disabled in mainstream society, as well as the necessity of establishing special schools for the disabled. Grati Efendi established the first occupational school for the blind and deaf in Istanbul in 1889. After his pioneering work for the foundation of special schools for the disabled, a second attempt was made by a private charity organisation in Izmir in 1921. Foundations of special rehabilitation schools have been greatly influential on contributing to the individual abilities to acquire some basic skills such as independent movement by white cane, reading in Braille, cleaning, cooking and sewing, etc. Despite its advantages, it has also drawbacks since this kind of education has been insufficient to meet the increased number of visually disabled people attending schools but instead caused their alienation from mainstream society as a member of the wider community. The first established special education institutions were based on the idea that the disabled shall be mainstreamed through special devices and education for them. Provided that individuals get this sort of education, they can be prepared for life conditions. For centuries, this type of application has shown that it caused adaptation problems in society rather than preparing for social and personal life. Hence, special education was integrated with formal education. In the schools including classes for special education and moving teachers is the product of this point of view. In an integrated system, a disabled child finds a chance to cooperate and adapt themselves to mainstream society as a usual member of the

organism. Moreover, healthy people can comprehend closely and truly what kind of people the disabled are.

At the beginning of the application of special education, it was regarded as an ideal type of education for the visually impaired. Additionally; a disabled person needing special help means that they shall be trained in special classes. In time, the disadvantages of special education have been eliminated and new ways for new educational fields have been sought by parents and teachers (Jacobson, 1997: 10). Moreover, improvements in democracy and human rights, which gained recognition in 1981 through the declaration concerning the disabled by United Nations, have facilitated transition from exclusive education into inclusive integrated system. The main reason for acquiring an integrated education is the fact that the equality of opportunity and democratic education has been widely applied (Nickley, 2001). Hence, in the current period, individual differences in the sphere of education have been recognised. Developments in democracy and human rights have necessitated rejecting an approach which excludes disabled students from mainstream educational opportunities and brought integrated training system into special education.

In Turkey, the history of development in the field of special education related to the disabled can be divided into three main parts: as the periods until 1950, between 1950 and 1980, and after 1990. When these time periods are evaluated from the perspective of Turkish political history, these years refer to a transitory timelines passing from a single party system into multiple one, followed by various military coups and the change in governmental policy through an adoption of social and democratic state policy.

In the first years of the Republic, the role of public institutions such as schools in preparing children for social life was quantitatively minimal. Family, religious institutions and common educational organisations have been mostly responsible for preparing children for life conditions. 76th article legislated in 196 proves the implications of those years. 243rd point of the article states that parents have to take care of their disabled child and educate them morally as well. It has not suggested any new practices or solutions for conditions of the disabled but jjust drawn akready known picture of those days. While nothing could be exercised in the realm of education for the handicapped, their health care was provided at homes and

a limited number of organisations. This case did not change positively from the foundation of the Republic to 1950s. Until then, handicapped individuals were regarded as ill and uneducated. In other words, they were considered not to manage leading an integrated social life in mainstream society. During those years, a small number of institutions (rehabilitation centres and nursing home) opened to serve the disabled functioning as health care institutions rather than presenting required conditions for equal educational and vocational services. Founded institutions were dependent on the Ministry of Health and Social Help. As families of the disabled could not know how to bring up their children for life conditions, they just dealt with their children's needs of daily care. . The sole concern about the disabled was their medical care. Their participation into mainstream society in the realm of education, employment and cultural activities was ignored. Their isolation from workplaces is summarised in the following event. In 1930s, a blind person finds a chance to meet the Minister and he demands a job from him. The Minister replies: "Can't thirty two million citizens look after you? How can I find a job while I cannot do it for mainstream citizens?" When his manner is taken into consideration, it is realised that the actualisation of social change will take a long time.

By 1950, there was not a single special education schedule for these children. The reason for the unsystematic education of the disabled was the low rates of schooling and literacy as well as the presence of teachers in restricted numbers. In the same period, when the other countries are looked at, the idea of the fact that the disabled could be educated and have independent function in a society was widely spreading and developing.

In 1950 the great change in Turkish political system was its transformation into a multiple party system. Due to the multiplication of parties, further steps were put through democratisation and policy in the realm of education inevitably altered. Before, concerns related to the disabled were dependent on the Ministry of Health and Social Help as a sign of the medical model. However, after 1950, it was understood that the issues concerning the education of the handicapped shall be linked to the Ministry of Education. Mithat Enç and his colleagues pioneered the idea that the visually handicapped could be educated and involved in schools like other non-disabled children. As a result of their enterprise on this field, schools for the

blind were established and special programmes were arranged for them. In addition, Mithat Enç founded an organisation for the blind which demanded the rights for the disabled in the 1961 Constitution since that voluntary organisation named "Altı Nokta" (Six Points) functioned as a voice of blind people. While special education institutions were opened, there was a lack of teachers in them. Thus, the department of Special Education was opened to produce teachers for training the visually impaired more effectively. Special education services were provided according to the type and level of disability. In previous decades, for instance, the blind and the deaf were trained at the same school. In 1950s, the handicapped were trained in relation to their disability. Even at present, special education services are provided according to the medical model which classifies disabled individuals into the level of their deficiencies measured by doctors. As schools have been considered as a place which teaches how to read and write and solve problems, only the disabled whose level of intelligence is above average have been accepted to special education. The disabled whose intelligence is between percentiles fifty and seventy-five could attend special education whereas the ones whose intelligence is under fifty could not attend schools. According to medical model, deficiencies determine learning skills. Therefore, blind schools for those who lack vision and deaf schools for those having the lack of hearing were opened.

Within the context of progress in the visually disabled person's education, it is worth to looking at the situation of teachers. The most significant item in the realm of education is teachers. From 1950 to 1980, mainstream primary school teachers were appointed in the schools for the visually handicapped. These schools were the settings where teachers wanted to move from country to city. In order to encourage teachers to maintain working at those schools, a different salary system was applied. Furthermore, a programme for special training certificate was organised so as to improve the qualifications and standards of teachers through cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the Teaching Faculty of Gazi University. In the following years, the programme of special education was opened in Anadolu University. Via these programmes, teachers were trained according to the medical model. The midst of twentieth century has witnessed the first profound attempts which signalled the adaptation and actualisation of new practices.

The last two decades of the twentieth century faced a military coup which reconstructed the Constitution and shaped Turkey both structurally and internally. Since 1980, there have been three turning points facilitating the socialisation of the disabled. The first application is the foundation of the school for mentally disabled children under the control of the Ministry of Education. This practise indicates remarkable changes in educational policies. Schools are supposed to be a setting where not only teachers teach how to read and write as well as mathematical skills but also improves the skills such as self-care and in leading an independent life. What is more, the number of schools has increased so that waiting to attend schools for years has died away. The 42nd Article legislated in 1986 guarantees necessary precautions for the special education of disabled children with the idea that no disabled children can be prevented to benefit from educational opportunities. It is quite a remarkable step which refers to alteration in educational policy of the state. While a visually disabled person was considered that he could not be mainstreamed and participate into social life in previous decades, mentally disabled individuals are aimed to involve in the realm of education and workplaces at present. The second important phase is that some amount of money was paid to the disabled child for his education if his parents were a member of the social security institution. It provided the variation and development in the field of special education. The third outstanding point is the reconstruction of university departments by opening new departments in relevance to special education. In the first years of the founded faculties, the main issue was focusing on deficiency. Nevertheless, this approach turned into evaluating the subject in terms of their abilities with a transformation from medical model into social model defending how that society determines social position and the participation process of the visually disabled into mainstream society. Besides; while programme-oriented training model which ignores personal distinctions, was applied until 1980s, a student-cantered programme focusing on students' skills was accepted later on.

When compared to special education, integration is more influential on the personal, social and academic development of the visually impaired students for their future. Legally, since 1985, the model of integrated education has been accepted and from then on many articles have been legislated. For instance; 23th Article legislated

in 2008 related to special education offers that a disabled student shall be educated in "the least restricted setting" which makes required arrangements and takes necessary precautions for an effective training. Nonetheless, theory and practice have not fulfilled each other. Social pressures and regulations on individuals have stepped beyond the Constitution while controlling and shaping life of the society. No matter how the government makes an effort to cope with problems faced by visually impaired students and puts forward new suggestions for an effective training, problems cannot be overcome without passing the social barrier and changing the attitudes of the society. Besides; the implementation of these articles has been cpnstructed on theoretical framework rather than solution oriented practices relevant to teachers and visually disabledd students. Thus; these technical and social problems faced by teachers and students from the former's views constitute main concern of the following section in order to identify possible solutions by illustratibg how negative points turn into creation of sense of togetherness as a whole positively. In evaluating the work on special and integrated education an education system shall facilitate the education of the disabled child in regular classes in terms of appreciation, being understood by mainstream society and regarding them as an individual like their peers. In this way, that kind of education is beneficial and effective. However, integration programme shall not be presumed as an ultimate solution. It also has deficient points in its application in the system of Turkish education. While integration has been implemented for twenty years it remains a structurally insufficient system of organisation, and it contains problematic aspects. Nevertheless, it still has a great impact on the academic and social development of visually impaired students as well as mainstream individuals by helping them to gain awareness of disabled members in the society.

CHAPTER IV

ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARD THE DISABLED AND INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES

The first groups involved in an integrated education were visually disabled students (Bishop, 1986; Carpenter, 1991). The application process started in 1985 and spread within a few years. However, it brought forward some problems apart from its successful outcomes in the academic and social lives of visually impaired students. When the integration model is compared to special education the former has enormously influenced social and academic progress, which triggers the interaction between mainstream societies and the visually handicapped by leading them know each other more closely and understand them more truly. The problems faced by impaired students have been revealed through a survey conducted among 45 students, who take part in integrated education and have a background of special education in the school for the blind in Istanbul. While interviewing them, the following questions were asked to explore the distinctions between special and integrated education, the problems experienced during the period of high school and the impact of an integrated education upon visually disabled students in terms of academic and social efficacy, as well as the alterations of the attitudes of teachers over time,

▪ What are the basic problems you faced at high school?

▪ What are the positive and negative aspects of special and integrated education?

▪ How do the attitudes of teachers have influenced on your academic success and socialisation into mainstream society?

On the other hand; teachers are presumed as a vital component of education for carrying students up to success. Therefore; in addition to the approaches of the unsighted students, teachers also have been participated into the survey in order to reveal whether they are using special teaching methods to promote the success of the

disabled students and their perception about theses individual have changed or not with the relation of their age and social background.

- Do you utilise a special method to promote the course more efficient for blind students?

- How do students react to your efforts and you provide their inclusion and active participation into mainstream class?

- Do you have an experience on special training?

- How do you cope with the problems you face in regular classes including handicapped students?

- How was your perception of the disabled before you met a disabled person? What kinds of changes to your point of view have occurred?

- In order to conduct a survey, two or three teachers from each course have been selected to compare behavioural inclinations toward the disabled students. Their department, age and cultural background have determined their tendencies in academic and social sense. Hence; teachers' attitudes related to their department and social background will be illuminated by exploring how their behaviours and point of views on visually disabled students have altered via integration from the beginning of interaction among them on. In the second part of the chapter; their inclinations will be analysed by attributing to the relation between age, teaching styles and behavioural change and taking into account personal differences and exceptions which derive from lifestyle or personality.

4. 1. The Construction of Teachers' Attitudes towards Visually Impaired Students

Before the analysis of the data carried on twenty-five teachers, it is vital to mention something about the definition and components of the concept "attitude" which indicates the independent variables such as age, department and knowledge

reflecting the hidden reasons behind these manners toward visually disabled students. Attitude is a psychological manner. They are emotions and thoughts which are built up inside an individual or a subject. It has three fundamental components: knowledge, emotion and behaviour. What is known about an individual or a subject determining the direction of attitudes constitutes the basis of knowledge. Attitudes can be changed as far as they can be interrogated. The information gap may also cause negative sentiment upon people. When a person has positive feelings toward someone, they are more inclined to behave mildly toward that person whereas a person who has negative emotions is more likely to get away from that person (Demirci, 2005: 38). Age plays a significant role in the change of attitudes. As a person gets older, it becomes harder to alter settled views. Nonetheless, age merely has not been determining pattern but gained an attention when accompanied by other factors. In addition to age, an individual's desire for change determines the reshaping of the ideas.

In the table below, the department, age, social background and teaching methods are presented in order that it is easier to point out the relationship between independent variables and attitudes

Table 1. Determiners of Teacher's Attitudes

Department	Age	Social Background	Teaching Methods
Literature 1	35-40	- Have mentally disabled neighbour - No close relations beforehand -	Basic methods used in literature teaching
Literature 2	35-40	- No acquaintance with the blind	Common teaching methods
Literature 3	30-35	- No familiarity of the disabled person's lives	The use of general methods
History 1	30-35	- Graduated from Bosphorus University	Question-answer method and taking notes
History 2	40-45	- Observation in the dormitory	Mainstream history teaching methods
Geography 1	30-35	- Reading books on special education	PowerPoint, descriptive and explanatory teaching
Geography 2	45-50	- No information about the visually impaired	No special teaching method
Foreign Language 1	20-25	- Has a visually impaired friend	The use of audio materials dominantly
Foreign Language 2	50-55	- No relationship with the visually disabled	Mainstream teaching methods
Math 1	25-30	- Mild approach due to her personality	Reading the arithmetic loudly she wrote on board Help student writing in capital letters and catching up with the class
Math 2	35-45	- Prejudiced approach	Mainstream teaching methods by disregarding the blind student
Math 3	30-35	- No awareness	Reading loud the problems Checking the level of understanding
Biology 1	20-25	- No links beforehand	Making figures from carton to make the subject concrete
Biology 2	35-45	- Have no disabled acquaintance	Individually care for the disabled
Chemistry 1	45-50		No unusual method
Physics 1	45-50		No unusual method
Philosophy-Psychology 1	35-40	- Counselling model	- Mainstream way of teaching
Philosophy-Psychology 2	45-50	- An authoritative role model	Underlining the important parts
Physical Training 1	35-40	- Unconscious about the disabled	
Physical Training 2	45-50	- Familiar with the disabled as a result of his experience	
Music	35-45	- Accommodating near the organisation for the blind	

4. 2. Relationship between Department, Social Background and Approaches

As the department and social background of teachers vary, their psychological and academic attitudes differ from each other. When verbal course teachers such as literature, history or music are compared to numerical course ones like maths and chemistry in terms of their approaches toward visually disabled students, the attitudes of the former group of teachers are more inclined to be positively shaped. Upon the review of a variety of teachers working different high schools, it has been revealed that literature and history course teachers have unexceptionally built up more sensitive and supportive manners to the disabled students as a result of the essence of these courses since visually disabled students have been pushed to manage mostly these kind of courses in Turkey's conditions.

First, a literature teacher interviewed was asked whether she had any type of relationship with a disabled person in her daily life beforehand. She stated that she had a neighbour who is mentally disabled. Apart from that person, she says that she had not met a blind person beforehand. For her, integration programmes in the school give her the chance to know such groups better through communication and interaction with them. She explained her feelings about the visually impaired students with positive and energetic impressions by saying, "Those students are so emotional and intimate that they give me dynamism and encouragement for life. They are very outgoing and sociable students". The reason why she considered this is the fact that these students participate in literature courses actively and express themselves clearly. A person who has not met a visually disabled person may shape mild attitudes toward them with the help of students' outgoing personality. The second and third literature teachers, who were unaware of visually disabled individuals in society beforehand, gained the sense of both awareness and consciousness by coming across these students in a closer way. One stated, "We had no information about the lives of visually disabled people. By observing the visually impaired students at school, we have acquired some impressions about their daily social life."

History is another course which visually disabled students are mostly welcomed by those teachers. The first history teacher had a very affectionate and motivating attitude toward disabled students. When she was questioned about her contacts with the visually disabled, she explains the case by saying, "One of the main reasons behind my manner lies in the fact that I have graduated from Bosphorus University which is the most populous university attended by the blind and has the most enhanced technical setting for the education of the visually disabled students. This paved the way for me to meet many blind people and interact with them frequently so that I have familiarity with the basic problems faced by the visually disabled." Moreover, she had taken a view that the visually impaired may also be successful as much as mainstream students. She said she did not discriminate them from mainstream students and tried to mainstream them by encouraging them to participate in class discussions.

On the other hand, a second history teacher had no such kind of personal experience before working at the high school. She pointed out, "I have begun to know the visually disabled people after I have been appointed as an administrator of the dormitory inasmuch as nearly ten visually disabled students are accommodated in this dormitory. By taking care of them, I have gained recognition on them and behave more tolerantly. I do not force them to clean or prepare the meal like other students." Behind this kind of attitude, there is marginalisation of visually disabled students by excluding them from daily responsibilities, with the idea of their inability to sustain housework. However, there is no malicious intention apart from the sense of simplification of their lives.

When geography teachers are evaluated in terms of their knowledge about visual disability it is observed that the first geography teacher, who reads books related to special education disability, behaves more consciously and carefully towards visually disabled students. She stated, "I have not taken any course during my university years, when I am appointed to the high school including many disabled students, I had no information about them so wondered their lives and psychology." She is stimulated to research this subject personally since she presumed that being familiar with the psychological and social aspects of visually impaired students is one dimension concerning her occupation. The second geography teacher

behaved neutrally while communicating with disabled students. In an academic sense, he may raise the grade of visually impaired students whereas in social life, he does not have close relations not just only with impaired students but also mainstream students. As explicit; curiosity, dedication to knowledge and inclination to construct new relations with different kind of people may shadow the type of department.

Foreign language teachers have different manners toward visually disabled students. A foreign language teacher who started to work for the first tine reflects her impressions by saying, "Just as I have come across with blind students, I have felt pity for them. Besides, during the first days of schools, I could not know how to behave toward them so hesitated to interact with them in case they may be hurt. I have wanted to accompany with the visually disabled students to help them go down stairs and go out when they have a break. However, I was warned not to interfere with then to provide their acquisition of independent movement skills." As times goes ahead, the sense of pity turns into understanding their spiritual world and she grasps that their disability does not necessitate behaving differently toward them. The second and third foreign language teachers' approach to disabled students was exclusive and indifferent. The second middle-aged teacher thought that students were not studying and following the courses. Therefore, she made those students sit behind the class which resulted in break up with the course and teacher as well. If a student makes an effort by themselves or with the support of their parents, the student is welcomed but no special effort was put on them as a result of their apparently indifferent attitudes.

The last verbal course is music which is the most joyful one for a blind student. Music teacher says: "A great majority of visually disabled students already like the course. They are active participants of the course and highly talented at memorizing and singing songs. Hence; I participate them into music chorus and assign them individually in national celebrations for singing or playing an instrument. I am very pleased with them." Obviously, she believes in her students' capability so encourages them by not excluding them from mainstream students.

The attitudes of teachers lecturing on verbal courses have been generally positive towards visually disabled students. They have been conceived as individuals

who are already inclined to achieve in these courses apart from teachers' personal experiences or acquaintance with the disabled. However, sometimes there is a conflict between the attitudes of teachers from the same department resulting from their personalities and point of views. For instance, psychology and physical training course teachers may be put into this margin. While the first interviewed psychology teacher is a guiding role model in the classroom by giving a sense of relief to students and making disabled students active participants in class discussions. She states that everybody is a candidate for being disabled one day, thus, a conscious behaviour shall be adopted. While communicating with students, she acts comfortably and intimately which makes her beloved among them. On the other hand, the second psychology teacher is an authoritative figure in the class, which calms down the atmosphere of the class, creates a sense of fear and retreat among them, and discourages students to talk or ask anything. She expresses the main factor in her behaviour as that she does not rely on students and wants disabled students to abuse her feelings by showing their impairment as an excuse for their achievement. When she is evaluated within the borders of these words, she is right to claim it. Nonetheless; later on, she points out that she does not wish to engage with these kinds of students any more. She considers visually disabled students problematic so she tries to keep herself away from them as much as possible.

Other personal differences are reflected in the attitudes of physical training teachers. Their attitudes are shaped in relevance to their vocational experience and personality. The first physical training teacher is not conscious about impairment. On the other hand, the second physical training teacher has built a close relation with disabled students and adopted formal requirements for grading visually impaired students. Therefore, he behaves softly towards them and demands them to prepare a project related to the course. What makes him conscious upon the issue is primarily based on his experience and personal characteristics such as maturity and tolerance. Undoubtedly; the visually disabled can be involved in sport activities successfully as an embodiment of the whole group. Nevertheless; when sighted students and teachers are not informed sufficiently, they do not know how to include disabled students for sport activities. That is why, he behaves them accordingly by not forcing them to play basketball or volleyball among sighted students in case of sport injuries.

When the courses gain numerical dimensions, the attitudes of teachers become more discouraging and indifferent, apart from some individual exceptions. In this case, there are four mathematic teachers. Even though their ages and background information on the visually disabled individuals are similar, teachers' approaches are highly distinctive as a result of their prejudiced and misrecognised ideas. While first and third teachers believe in the success of visually impaired students, second and forth mathematic teachers do not expect anything from them in these courses. The latter isolates disabled students from regular classes by throwing them out the schedule. The third mathematics teacher has two visually impaired students, one of whom is totally blind whereas the other partially sighted, stated, "I do my best to facilitate the course for them as much as possible by helping them during the course". Nevertheless, the level of academic success of these students is not the same though the lecturer is the same. At that point, parental support exists as a turning point towards attaining success. While totally blind student's parents care for their child in both academic and social sense, the partially sighted student's parents do not pay attention to them as much. According to this teacher, a disabled student who has low vision uses his impairment as an excuse. The teacher said that she had not met a blind person before, and no information related to them. Nonetheless, by means of these students, she clarified, "I have developed a sense of belief that they can get even higher grades than sighted students when they are adequately supported by a teacher and family". Her neutral manner was substituted with a positive one. On the other hand, the second mathematics teacher said, "I do not anticipate formally visually disabled student to understand and solve numerical problems without visualising them." This teacher has put barriers into their mind that such students are doomed to sit and just listen to the course if they wish. Such kind of manner causes the exclusion of visually disabled students from the course and class which later on is reminded in students' memories as a most horrifyingly boring course.

Some teachers have no background information about special education and disabled students since there are no relevant courses in universities. Most of these teachers have been acquainted with visually disabled people via an integration programme during primary or high schools. Their attitudes have been shaped in relation to their department and personalities. Verbal course teachers have drawn

positive pictures in their minds about the disabled because of students' success and their lively, sociable and outgoing personalities like other mainstream students. On the other hand, as the courses get a visual dimension, the perception of teachers changes into disbelief and suspicion as whether these students can attain the same success or not. This kind of perception is also a sign of indifference and a conditioning psychology which pushes teachers standardise visually disabled students by letting them pass the course with ease. Provided that individual effort and care is made towards students' academic progress, inflexible ideas tend to alter as a result of positive outcome of those trials. Sometimes, teachers may behave towards visually disabled students as if they were mentally disabled people who have a lack of understanding. Yet, a lesser visual impairment does not prevent disabled students from catching up with their mainstream peers and in involving themselves in the social life.

Half of the teachers interviewed had come across two or three visually disabled students each semester. However, not all of these teachers had developed an equal sensitivity and awareness since the factor which determines the direction of attitudes towards visually disabled individuals is the quality and density of the relations rather than the number of disabled individuals communicated with (Anderson et al. 1987: 81).

4. 3. The Effect of an Age on Attitudes and Teaching Methods

Each teacher was questioned whether they have utilised special teaching methods and tried particular examination styles to promote visually disabled students' success.

One of the literature teacher explains her way of teaching by telling the subject and then writing down notes on blackboard by repeating them loudly in order to facilitate the visually impaired students' taking notes easily. She said, "I do not have any problems with my disabled students. They can answer the questions I asked them and participate into my lecture even more actively than some other sighted students. There may be some reading assignments for the whole class. However, this can be dealt with the use of audio libraries or the support of parents and sighted students."

The other literature teacher also pointed, "I do not see any barriers for the visually disabled students to accomplish in the course since these kind of students are more likely to be successful in oral courses through the power of grasping and memorizing the topics much easily than other courses." Moreover, the teacher states that a low sighted student is the most hot-shot one getting the highest grade in the class.

The teaching methods of literature teachers do not vary according to their ages because literature in its essence is a type of course which is the most appropriate to absorb the subjects and internalise it effectively. Thus, common way of literature teaching does not disturb either teachers or the visually disabled students. The literature exam paper may consist of longer questions. Besides this, the questions are read aloud to students who require more time and effort to understand someone's reading. Therefore, time extension is applied for the visually disabled students. Apart from this practice, the questions based on comprehension and interpretation remains the same.

One of the Turkish grammar teachers noted, "I would like to assist the visually impaired students one by one. Yet, overpopulation in classes does not let me pay special attention to them. Therefore, I suggest the decrease of the number of students when there is a disabled student in the class." Actually, there is an article manifesting such kind of situation. If there is one disabled student in a mainstream class, the population of mainstream students shall not exceed twenty-five students in order to cover the subjects more fluently and facilitate the process of adaptation and integration into both class and course. Nevertheless; it is not widely put into practise. The classes I visited comprised of thirty students or above despite the fact that the class includes at least two disabled students.

The other Turkish grammar teacher makes clear that they did not benefit from a special teaching technique. She covers the grammar topic by writing down on the board. Even though she may tell the words she wrote loudly, they may have difficulty in grasping the subject which necessitates breaking up sentences and words into smaller units. However, her attitudes toward the blind students were very helpful and sensitive. Blind students especially like her personally because she tends to talk about the problems of these students and help them in a compassionate way. This is a

sentiment that is a mixture of both pity and love. However, neither her age nor her positive inclinations towards the disabled students make her productive in her lessons since she does not know special techniques apart from general ones.

The second field in which visually impaired students accomplish the course is in the department of history which is based on the use of both analytical and memory skills. Perhaps, the easiest course in terms of following the lectures has been the course of history since students may take notes and the teacher prefers to cover the lesson by asking questions and making them responsible for the examination. Her use of question-answer technique helps the increase of academic success of impaired students. While most students cannot get the highest grade, an unsighted student can get full marks. Apart from teaching methods practiced in the classroom, the effectiveness of teacher's mild attitudes have played a crucial role in building communication skills such as clear expression, approaching the problems with a solving manner and asking for help when they need it. She also encourages disabled students to present the subject like a teacher in the classroom, without excluding them from mainstream students and giving them a chance to express themselves before the crowd. Her energetic and demanding attitudes derive from her age and familiarity with visually disabled people beforehand. The younger a teacher is, the more likely she is to make an enormous effort to enhance the academic knowledge of the students. The older history teacher, who was also administrator of the dormitory, was less likely to try new teaching methods or encourage students to internalise the subject. She says that after a certain age, it is difficult for teachers to acquire new habits and try new teaching styles. Such kind of implications shall have been taught in the early periods of their occupational histories.

By the time Turkish grammar and history teachers are evaluated in terms of their contribution to the academic and social success of the impaired students, it is deduced that a teacher helping his students to build a self-confident personality by means of their academic success will go further in raising a motivated, ambitious and moral generation. As academic achievement encourage students to become more social and active a sense of self-esteem, positive manners of teachers are accompanied by the choice of the most appropriate teaching methods. As long as

these two complimentary elements proceed together, the expected targets may be reached.

The age of teachers gains significance in the courses requiring visualisation. As a teacher gets older, the eagerness of the teacher for overcoming problems faced by the visually impaired students and the possibility of building up new methods decreases. Biology, for example, is primarily a verbal course which also demands the use of vision in order to make the subject more concrete in the minds of students. The older biology teacher helps visually impaired students while taking notes by repeating missing points, describing the shapes orally and asking them whether there is an unclear point related to the subject. It enhances the external motivation of students to make more effort and awaken their desire to achieve the course.

The younger biology teacher, on the other hand, said, "I really try to make disabled students visualise and absorb the core of the topic as much as possible by bringing some figures concerning the human body and the structural parts of flowers etc. If these sort of materials are not available in the laboratory of the school, I myself have made up necessary figures out of cartoons to give a chance for these students to understand by touching and feeling the shape of these objects". She managed to work for the benefit of visually disabled students because she has a full energy and ambition to encourage participation of these students into mainstream society.

Geography is both verbal and numerical course which necessitates the use of sight for visualising the map, direction calculations and earth figures. Hence, geography would need to benefit from different teaching methods. The younger geography teacher who has a MA degree conducted a survey investigating whether modern teaching methods or classical models are more influential on the success of the students. At the end of her study, she found that modern teaching methods have been more effective for geography teaching. She stated, 'I benefit from modern teaching methods by means of PowerPoint presentation and video-watching instead of just explaining the subject without the stimulation of any visual and audio senses of the students. While applying these techniques, the visually impaired students seem to be influenced form this style negatively. Nonetheless, I manage to eliminate these drawbacks by describing and expressing the topic in a more detailed and clear way."

In other words, in order to illuminate the subject, she uses more adjectives, explanations and directive words which clarify it in the minds of disabled students. She is aware of her occupational responsibilities which lead her to call upon all kinds of students. On the condition that her dynamism is combined with her personal efforts and information about the disabled, the access to success is indispensable. On the other hand, the older geography teacher uses classical methods just by telling the subject after he makes the students summarise it. His classical way of teaching does not influence the academic success of the students positively. He was so old that he was closed to new methods or to make intensive efforts for the sake of students. Except for age; unwillingness, the lack of legal arrangements which do not stimulate teachers and personal characteristics draw a parallel direction with teachers' attitudes and teaching methods.

The most challenging courses which require tremendous effort on the part of teachers to include the disabled student into the flow of lesson are mathematics and foreign languages. When the younger mathematics teachers are asked how an integration programme has contributed to their occupational and social experiences, the youngest one has replied, "I have made some basic additions to my previous teaching style. In previous years, I was writing the problems on the board and solving the problem without explaining the process loudly in a detailed way, at present, I am reading loudly while writing and solving it to clarify the problem with the help of vocalisation." Likewise, she explains which step she is following during the solution of the problem to concretise the topic. Furthermore, she gives an extra time for visually disabled students to catch up with the daily schedule while taking notes. The other young math teacher who was concerned about the problems of all her students said, "I read aloud what I am writing. Then, I observe the impaired student whether she could write or not. If I recognise that the student has missed a point, I myself write the arithmetic on student's notebook in capital letters which simplifies the visualisation of the page." By means of teacher's support for the student together with student's great effort has brought success to her in university entrance exam by solving 19 out of 21 questions. If that teacher had not supported and followed that student closely, perhaps that student would not have been motivated and conditioned to achieve the course so much. While examining the level

of students' understanding, teachers who believe in the accomplishment of visually impaired students, do not assign them for different exam questions apart from diagrams and geometrical shapes. However, one of the older mathematics teachers asked visually impaired students about mathematical definitions. He did not force them much since the grades of visually disabled students are standardised. The other math teacher asks the students to write ten questions and solve them on their own which does not change their marks somehow. As teachers grow older, changing their standardised attitudes and teaching style get harder.

The last troubling course is foreign language which contains distinctive features concerning both visual and audio abilities. English is a language course in which teachers usually exercise on the black board and its pronunciation and writing format are not the same. Although it carries oral characteristics, it is not written as it is pronounced, there may be information gaps and it may be quite hard to follow the course which results in remaining out of the course while a teacher is talking in English and explaining about the subject. In English course, three teachers are involved in the research. One of them, the youngest one, is working at a school for the blind. The other two is lecturing at a high school for more than fifteen years which most probably affects their manner and the attempt to try new teaching methods. The youngest female teacher explains how she covers subjects by activating auditory skills of the students. "English is a course based on the use of language skills, the subjects get easier from their perspective since. She thinks the loss of one sense strengthens the function of other senses. "While teaching a foreign language, the importance of auditory skills shall not be ignored. Therefore, I try to benefit from their auditory skills rather than concentrating on vision. When I ask them to take notes, I pronounce and repeat the letters one by one to clarify the words and let them understand better." In order to cover topics reflectively, specifically prepared sources may be provided by the Ministry of Education. The lack of commonly used materials shall be compensated with the abundance of audio texts, story books, dictionaries and other materials. She continued, "In order to cope with these document problems I lecture via internet. However, it is vital to systematise technical issues." Mainstream students can get their books as soon as schools open. On the other hand, visually impaired students wait for nearly three months to follow

a Braille book. As it is very apparent, her being young and motivated constitute an advantage for blind students since she tries new ways to encourage her students and meet the demands of all students in the class by focusing on their strong and functional skills.

In chemistry and physics courses, teachers are inclined to ask the explanation of a few topics. The aim of these teachers is just to actualise the formal procedures to mark visually disabled students. Somehow, these students pass the course but nothing above the standards.

Interestingly enough, at some high schools, visually impaired students are involved into art course instead of music. Naturally, they shall not be assigned to draw but present a topic related to fine arts. In addition to teacher's effort, if a student is supported by his parents and motivated to work harder, efficiency could be attained.

In short, the role of young teachers which stimulates visually disabled students to overcome with daily problems and courage them to reach their goals has been undeniable because they perform their tasks in an ambitious, dynamic and idealist way. As individuals get older, on the other hand, the maxims of tolerance, encouragement, great effort and idealistic model of teacher decline. That kind of role model is replaced with indifferent, excluding and classical negative manners. The reformation of strictly rooted thoughts is quite harsh inasmuch as the individuals have internalised his views. However; that does not mean whole old teachers are resistant to change. In contrary; it shall be reminded that they could develop positive attitudes together with their motivational drives providing that they are re-educated about disability by means of an official training programme, blind organizations or universities. Likewise, it shall not be forgotten that personal differences may exist except for department and age. Social perception, norms and the practices concerning the disabled have played a crucial role in shaping the ideas,; yet, as it is not main concern of this part, it has not been heavily focused. The attitudes of different societies toward visually disabled people have been shed a light in previous chapters. Apart from social memory, the impact of mass media shall not be ignored since the blind people have been just reflected as beggars or public singers in films and novels which exposed the society to know visually disabled individuals as far as they have watched or read through media. Furthermore, the rate of their participation into

public life was so low that it was hard to come across with a visually disabled person. Thus, when people realise a blind person walking with his white cane at present, they look at him very carefully as if they saw an alien. Recently, neutral or negative inclinations have been softened though witnessing the lives of visually disabled people who have started to go out with their participation into the field of education and employment. Therefore, younger generation is more aware of visually disabled people via integration programme and the units including the issues related to the disability in primary schools.

As democratisation processes and the awareness on human rights have gained momentum, the presence of visually disabled people, their obstacles and the existence of blind corporations for required solutions have become more obvious in Turkey which leads the society accept the disabled as a mainstream citizen who shall have rights and recognition among other people.

CHAPTER 5

THE CONDITIONS OF THE VISUALLY DISABLED STUDENTS IN AN INTEGRATION PROGRAMME

Even if an initial training begins in the family, the school plays a crucial role in the determination of one's individual, social and academic performance. Visually impaired people have been unrepresented minor group in many fields such as education, culture and sport for years. They have been exposed to remain behind the mainstream society. Most of information which cannot be obtained from family is acquired and practiced by means of a training programme. While family consists of a limited number of individuals, education brings a great variety of people together from different backgrounds so that this gathering facilitates the flow of information among people which gives them an opportunity to be familiar with different people in different conditions. While learning particular information, the mostly used sense is vision to perceive and internalise it. However, if a visually disabled student is considered within this context, he cannot be evaluated with other mainstream sighted students under same circumstances. Hence, he is exposed to both special and integrated education. On condition that an individual is blind or partially sighted by birth, he is widely sent to schools for the blind. When a blind student prefers to sustain his training in that school arranged solely for the blind, he is welcomed for eight years. After completing primary school, he has two options: the first one is to continue his education life in a mainstream school with sighted students. The other way is to give up at that level or go ahead training via home schooling. The main concern of this study is definitely integrated education. Its drawbacks on the disabled students owing to insufficient structural basis, the lack of resources and the negative attitudes of teachers toward these students will be assessed in proceeding part. It is also presented how those negative aspects have contributed to the development of a visually impaired student in terms of learning how to cope with difficulties in daily life, build up an effective interaction and communication skills as well as developing a self-sufficient, self-confident and socio-academically successful personality. Briefly, the type of education determines the degree of academic success and

socialisation of the visually impaired. In order to conduct a survey upon the thesis, fifteen visually disabled students have been reviewed. Half of them are fully blind, whereas the rest are partially sighted. Before starting to analyse their inclinations to integration programme, giving concise information about them will be more appropriate to get familiar with them. Two out of six students are blind by birth. The rest of four students have lost their vision fully at their early childhood. The age when the disabled has lost his sight is quite significant because child and his parents' acceptance of his disability, taking precautions and guiding the child throughout his life and developing some manners such as overprotection, restriction of his independent movement and forcing him to have an inward personality with a very limited connection to outer world vary in relation to the age of vision loss.

Barren identifies five barriers for a participation of visually disabled to higher integrated education as follows: a preventative physical environment, problems of typification (which was mentioned in the preceding chapter), failure of equal opportunities policy, the practice of evaluating and reacting all the students in the same way resulting in the discrimination again, and self censorship on the part of students. On the other hand, Ben (1989) states that visually disabled student's success depend upon five items: attitudes, skills, sources, organisation and schedule, the last three of which are the basic items of this section.

Bishop (1993) studying visually impaired students found successful components of an integrated education. According to the survey carried out on 88 teachers working on special education, 62 integrated education teachers, 52 administrators and 56 parents; a flexible teacher, the acceptance of a disabled student by his classmates, interaction, academic success, positive personal identity, independence, instinctive motivation, qualified personnel and necessary resources are required for an effective integration. Transition from special education into integrating one contains a dialectical subsistence in order that a visually impaired students who are excluded unconsciously or intentionally, are involved in the system at the same time. The level of success at the beginning of the high school may decrease when compared to schools for special education schools for the blind. However, this negative side may be transmitted into an opportunity for the

construction of an intellectual accumulation. Realisation of his deficits in course may make the disabled feel more competitive to succeed if he is adequately supported technically and psychologically. In other words, positive aspects of an integrated education versus its drawbacks for visually disabled individuals' future life. After reflecting negative aspects of an integrated education in relation to special training, it will be analysed how it is transformed into the benefit for proceeding lives of visually disabled children. In other expressions, in what way the lack of documents and particular reactions from society toward them contributes is to learn how to cope with problems and communicate influentially as an included member of mainstream society.

Table 2. The Variation of Technical Sources and Attitudes in relation to the Level of Impairment

The Level of Impairment	Assistive Devices	Academic Life	Social Life
Partially Sighted 1	- Reading and Writing Braille - Tape recordings - Audio Books	- Highly Successful and Motivated	- The Lack of Independent Movement owing to Parental Restriction - - Sociable and Integrated
Partially Sighted 2	- Braille notes and recordings	- Indifferent to lessons - Less Participation into Group Discussions	- Lack of family support - Outgoing personality in daily life
Low Visioned 1	- Magnified glasses - Largely printed documents - Handwriting	- Active participant - Successful in exams - Support of friends and motivating teachers	- Quite energetic and demanding - Close relations with mainstream people
Low Visioned 2	- Recorded class notes - Braille books	- successful at verbal courses - discouraged by the manners of teachers	- Misunderstandings owing to invisible disability - The ability of independent movement
Totally Blind 1	- Braille materials	- Ambition for accomplishment - - No academic difference from mainstream students	- Family support - Dependent movement - - Lively personality

5. 1. The Lack of Resources

Technical support is a vital element in terms of following the course and being prepared for lessons like other sighted students and studying on the units without depending on other student's help. According to the findings, students who have his own special course materials such as Braille, audio or recorded documents, have been more successful than those who need someone's help while studying.

When the students involved in the research have been asked what the common problems they are facing, they unexceptionally have stated as the lack of course materials. At this point, students may be classified as Braille text users or tape recorder listeners since different solutions may be put forward even though the problem is the same since the materials used by the blind and low visioned student mat change. While totally blind students are dependent upon Braille and audio books, the partially sighted students may benefit from their vision at maximum level through the use of magnity or largely printed books.

The lack of sight necessitates the use of Braille but it is not widespread in Turkey as it is in the USA or England because of decreasing demand for it with technological innovations, its high price, limited number of printing centres and its dysfunctionality. A visually disabled student utilise their auditory and sensory skills as an initial sensitive channels for learning how to read and write via Braille. Like mainstream sighted students, visually disabled students shall have some predatory skills to read. As they read in Braille, they are supposed to learn using their fingers and hands effectively. Additionally, they shall develop reading skills awareness. Sighted children can observe from his environment that people can acquire knowledge by reading and imitating how people turn a page and read. In order to develop reading skills, richly furnished library supplying Braille books is required but unfortunately, there has not been founded well-enhanced Braille library meeting the demands of the visually disabled. There is one particular library serving for the blind in metropolitan cities Nevertheless, this limited number of libraries cannot meet the needs of visually disabled individuals satisfactorily because Braille books are either too old printed years ago or unsuitable to read due its overuse and missing letters. On the other hand, visually impaired children cannot develop an awareness and desire for reading. This habit can be injected to those students in the blind

schools. However, as special training teacher states that there are still a great number of blind children who do not know Braille alphabet at the age fifteen. Unless a student knows it, there is no way of reading and writing which prevents his participation into activities and assignments. She already cannot see and read mainstream alphabet. If she also does not achieve reading in Braille, she gets completely dependent upon someone's help during her educational life. This is one aspect of the case. A person who loses his sight later on may not learn Braille since his material is recorded in cassettes or supported by his parents on dealing with lessons.

Another dimension of the situation is the change in the available materials. For instance, on condition that a student is registered as a visually disabled student, the Ministry of National Education delivers Braille format of the scheduled materials. Nonetheless, students complain about the care by saying, "We are pleased as we have materials. Yet, in the following weeks, teachers decide to cover another course book. Then we do not have sources to follow the class. We cannot benefit from the former delivered material as its content or language level is not appreciated by teachers." For example, there is the of consideration of English and psychology lessons. If the visually impaired have same materials with other students, they believe that their academic success will rise since they are able to participate into reading and writing activities by following the book at the same time. When this sort of activities may exclude these students from the spirit of the lesson, as opposed to exclusion, attitudes of teacher may include and motivate for activation and involvement in the lesson. This mostly depends on teacher's manner and teaching method. Additionally, teachers may pay close attention to choose materials which can be reached easily at least as a soft copy. Psychology teacher computer users can easily scan any hard copied books and then convert it into audio format. One of the interviewees, Sevgi, a graduate of high school, shares her experience by saying, "I have no difficulty in providing my documents as I can scan the books firstly and then load them into a talking programme named Jaws which facilitates educational life is also related to be specialised on technological devices which eliminates negative aspects faced during academic and social life".

However, most of high school students interviewed, do not have their personal talking computers. What is more, they do not know how to use Jaws programme effectively. Their low economic conditions and the lack of computer lessons for the blind neither allows theses students to get computer nor to learn basic computer skills. At this information and network age, yet, it is indispensable to exercise some daily activities without the help of computers. If they manage to use computer effectively, they believe that they will be able to come up with a solution to the problems faced while seeking for someone to read and record the book providing the clarification of the subject with many repetitions.

In one of the high schools, having ten integration students has attempted to give computer lectures for the visually impaired students. However, permanent and regular organisation could not be provided since it was based on the principle of voluntariness. If such kind of activity were illustrated as an obligation, these students would take it more seriously. Besides, the teacher could not attend regularly, as well. This reciprocal comfort has prevented the effectiveness of the course. If a teacher were paid as personnel of the school, attendance would be felt obligation. It is crucial to systematise the planned activities so that remarkable organisation could be arranged in schools.

The reason why the number of resources for the blind is their unawareness of the existing institutions providing audio and Braille documents for them apart from the presence of internet Access. Most of the students have heard the voluntary organisations pioneered by Bosphorus University or local municipalities. However, they could not attempt to get in touch with these voluntary organisations to demand books as a result of inadequate conditions in dormitory and inaccessibility of net.

Providing that designation of a special room for the visually impaired which includes technical machines such as scanner, computer with network accessibility and Braille printer in dormitory is arranged, the obstacles for academic success of these students would be minimised. What is more, the lack of resources contradicts to the principle of equal opportunity for all students because blind students are not served in teaching necessary sources as other students do. In primary schools for the blind, such kind of technical problems from the side of students are not faced very

often since all the students are unsighted and teacher can cover any books by converting the document into Braille format.

While discussing integrated education, it is important to touch upon special education and its effects on disabled students. Apart from its advantageous sides, the students participating into research claims that the subjects are covered more slowly and less units are taught to the blind in special education so they fall behind their sighted peers in terms of following the regular programme. Regardless of their covering or fulfilling the topic, they are supposed to have the same responsibility while being evaluated for official exams organised by the Ministry of Education to get submission form Anatolian or science lyscees. In other words, they are responsible for all topics included in official Schedule. However, special education does not suffice to fulfil the needs of visually impaired students and do not lead them through success and give the chance for competition with their sighted peers on an equal surface. On the other hand, students may have information gap but recognise their weak sides and find an opportunity to catch up with the mainstream programme. One of the blind students Hasan, having a background of special education mentions about the positive aspect of an integrated education, said "I was not aware of the presence of so many topics so have studied very limited number of units which resulted in knowledge limitations on social and scientific issues. After attending the high school, I gained consciousness of the fact that there is an urgent need for studying hard." Students who develop a sense of competition via integration programmes are more likely to pass the university exam. One of the leading blind administrators named Kemal Tas is responsible for special education services. He as an individual having a special education background, shares his experience by saying: "Ahmet as a disabled student attending blind schools may compete just with nine or ten students in his class. After passing these ten students, there is no much to do because he is not aware of his rivals. When he starts to attend high school, he learns that he has an enormous number of rivals competing with him. Thus, he feels himself obliged to work harder."

Special schools, on the contrary, incline to apply the programmes which focus on the improvement of some basic skills rather than cognitive skills of the students. That causes the decline in the standards of education (Quay, 1968; Don, 1973).

Hence, when science lycess whose level of education is at highest rate are glanced at Turley, it is nearly impossible to come across with a visually disabled students attending these highly enhanced high schools since they are isolated in the setting of special education and not aware of the outer world rationally. On the other hand, when the rate of visually impaired students is glanced at, their attendance to the universities has dramatically risen due to their integration into mainstream society.

In conclusion, the problem related to the insufficiency of materials for the visually disabled shall be overcome through official arrangements. In other words, the publication institutions shall be officially obliged to press books in both audio and largely printed copy format regardless of its being a course book or an entertaining one so that an institution publishing any kind of books will present a facility for the disabled and simplify the process of accessibility to a source without the loss of time and energy. Furthermore, assistive devices such as tape recording, scanner and Braille printer shall be supplied as well as training programmes for computer, independent movement and make up lessons. Additionally, a Project may be initiated to meet the demands of the visually impaired student. The project group shall consist of the voluntary sighted students. These voluntary or assigned student groups may be organised to actualise the needs of the blind by reading books for them, assisting them to understand the lessons well and sharing their notes or information with these disabled students. This small corporation contributes to the development of cooperation, brotherhood and sensitivity among students and learn how to cope with a problem within group work. Providing that the obstacles are diminished step by step, it will be realised that the level of academic success of visually impaired students will highly increase. The more they get accomplished, the more socialised and active personality they build up.

5. 2. Evaluation of Teachers and Classmates' Attitudes by Visually Disabled Students

According to Ben (1988), one of the components of an influential integration programme is attitudes. Barren identifies these attitudes as the problems of typification and practice of treating all students in the same way causing discrimination. In preceding chapter, teachers' attitudes toward visually disabled

students have been illustrated from teachers' perspectives. Their feelings created by teachers upon the disabled will be explored from these students' point of view. Students regard most of their teachers as intolerant, discriminative and indifferent.

Through to the end of the survey, it has been realised that the partially sighted students having invisible disability with their eyes, are approached intolerantly by teachers since the shape of their eyes seem healthy and they act like a sighted person. Hence, teachers may not believe in the condition of students and may ask an official health report proving their low vision perception. Likewise, teachers may forget their impairment while assigning or examining them as well. For example, a visually impaired student named Zeynep whose eyes seem quite healthy, do not use glasses. In physical training lesson, a female teacher forces her to tumble. The student tries to express her situation but the teacher does not believe in the student and asks her to prove her condition via health report. She cannot bring the report immediately so she is assigned for tumbling. The teacher begins to looks down upon her before class and causes the student to hurt her neck. According to official applications, on the other hand, a visually disabled student shall be excluded in physical training course on condition that she reflects her low vision by means of health report. To some extent, a teacher may have right to demand such kind of an official document. Yet, she could behave in a more tolerant way. Another physical training teacher assigns those disabled students to search about one topic related to the content of the course and makes them oral exam by asking questions so that they are graded. However, as these students are apparently blind, he does not insist on their approving their condition.

Each human being has been created with distinctive features though. While some people's features can be observed from outside, others' cannot be realised. For instance, an individual having a heart disease is not reacted and behaved differently from ordinary people, similarly the visually disabled desires to be accepted as an organic part of mainstream society. That is a trial for getting away from typification. Nonetheless, while accepting and regarding the visually impaired person as a part of society, individual differences stemming from disability shall not be ignored as well. Not only teachers but sighted friends shall be able to balance these two items. For instance, Burcu decides to register for the branch of child education in an

occupational high school. Nevertheless, some parts of lessons are based on design and drawing. Despite of the fact that she informs the teacher many times, her case is ignored and obliged to design and draw. Normally, she is unable to draw and gets low grades at that course. A visually impaired student shall not be demanded to draw or make complicated experiments like other students just in order to approach them equally. Under such kind of circumstances, individual distinctions gain importance rather than standardisation of all students. Moreover, at required periods, flexibility and tolerance should be provided for students.

Visually disabled students have been studied to see what would happen if they are given a chance to attend special education at high school level, two third of the students have undoubtedly preferred attending the high schools for the blind. They all agree upon the positive outcomes of integrated education in their proceeding life because they are made to feel different from other mainstream students which causes them have the sense of discomfort in mainstream society. Marty Abramson (1976) also states that many children prefer to remain in special educational programme because social acceptance does not accompany with integration." The students asked in which training style they feel themselves comfortable, unexceptionally have answered as special education. The reason for that choice depends upon the idea that they are not the mere blind student in the earth and there are other unsighted children like them Living together with unsighted individuals sharing identical experiences creates a relief on their psychology. According to Abramson (1976), the problem is not simply that these disabled children are not welcomed by their classmates but they are rejected by their class teachers. To some extent, that view is not acceptable as it has some missing points. Teachers may behave indifferently, unconsciously or by refusing to acknowledge the concerns. Nevertheless, there are some attitudes that can change positively because the mainstream society finds an opportunity to know the visually disabled people closely and better. A human being is the enemy of what he does not know. As the community gets in touch with the disabled, their prejudices, misunderstandings and unacquainted sides dies away as the reviewed teachers have reflected. Four years ago, I was working at rehabilitation centre for the blind voluntarily and one of special education teachers was visiting schools not accepting disabled students to the

mainstream school once a week. She was talking to the administrator of the school and trying to persuade by informing those officers about the education of the visually impaired students. When they are clearly informed and their doubts and prejudiced point of view are eliminated, there has not remained any pretext to prevent disabled children from attending to integration so that they are convinced to help.

A great number of studies have indicated that regular classroom teacher perceive visually disabled children socially and academically inferior to mainstream students. This perception of inferiority is valid especially for the courses such as math, physics and foreign language. As students internally accepted that they could not achieve it or are made to believe so, they are not included in the flow of the lesson. There is a partially sighted student named Emel who demands for learning something in mathematics like other sighted peers. She said, "Could you please help me facilitate the learning process?" However, the teacher replies by saying: "I cannot do anything for you because you are required to see what I am writing in order to follow the questions." Emel states: "I have no willingness for attending that course anymore. He is asking simpler questions to let me pass the course easily. Yet, this is not satisfactory for me as there is a likelihood of getting higher grades, why am I restricted to get lower marks?" Another math teacher does not reflect his idea explicitly but he standardises the blind by giving them two out of five for their exams. He asks those students to write down ten problems and solve them. Even though they write different questions, the results remain the same. From the point of teachers, to let those students pass such kind of lessons is a satisfying result. Nonetheless, if those students are paid close attention during breaks and some little interventions are actualised to provide their involvement for the lesson, their standardised grades will absolutely rise up because these unsighted children are not mentally disabled. Often, these two disability types are mixed with each other unconsciously while behaving toward the disabled. The blind or low visioned students are thought to have lack of intelligence rather than deficient sight. Hence, the expectations of teachers are rather low. They ask much easier questions when compared to the commonly asked ones. However, when the attitudes of teachers whose students are successful are observed it is indicated that the more success a

teacher anticipates from his disabled students, the more inclined the visually disabled students are motivated tend to achieve.

One of the blind students talks about her feelings and reactions to her English teacher. "In each lesson, she wanted me to change my seat by going behind the class. The teacher remarks: "You are not already participating into the lecture so you needn't stay in front of me." There is a necessity to correct this tendency. Who will provide participation in the class is a teacher. Especially, if a student is not sighted, he needs to be directed and guided much more. Therefore, such kind of an expectation from a blind student who has not Braille or audio materials for course is wrong.

On the other hand, students express their excitement and happiness in their history course by saying: "Our history teacher has assigned us to present a topic before the class as she practiced with other sighted students. After we have presented the subject, she appreciated us." It is easy to observe their motivation for that course. These partially sighted and blind students are working very hard both to catch up with her expectations and not to frustrate her about them with the fear of losing her confidence. The result is accomplishment by getting full mark besides active participation into class..

One of the partially sighted students are remarkably supported by her literature teacher. She cannot complete the exam in its usual duration so the teacher comforts the student by saying: "Do not panic and go on writing. When you finish, bring the paper to me." The reason of his reaction systems from his being aware of the fact that a partially sighted student reading the question on her own needs more time in order to fulfil the task. His mild approach leads that student through success. It may be questioned how these attitudes may be related to disabled student's personal and social development. The answer is given by the older sister of a visually impaired student by remarking: "I have no doubt that my brother will have no difficulty in communicating with his sighted peers and expressing himself clearly owing to an integrated education. In special education, children may not completely learn how to behave and interact within mainstream society"

The actual problem derives from teacher's insufficient knowledge about special education. Certificate programmes are not organised to train teachers about

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special education and disability. Thus, teachers do not know how to act toward visually disabled student. In some parts of Turkey, there may be training programmes for teachers arranged by the Ministry of Education. However, as theory is not accompanied with practice obliging to work in a blind schools or rehabilitation centres, these efforts remain useless. As well as visually disabled students, teachers shall be integrated into the system of special education so that mutual understanding and developing awareness toward these students may be put into practice. One of the students called Hakan emphasises the importance of having an pedagogical training for special education by pointing out: "We have very few teachers who approach us consciously and know how to help us in an efficient way, whereas most of them do not have any information related to the disabled and special education." When those limited number of teachers are questioned whether they got training of special education or not, they remark that they read a number of books written on special education and try to develop themselves in that sense so that they aim to compensate the information gap. As it is apparent, there is no need for official pressure to provide broadening the intellectual accumulation of teachers in deed. This depends mostly on personal effort as well. Nobody can be forced to learn and actualise some voluntary oriented exercises.

Blind students explain that most of the teachers do not have any information about the functionality of Braille documents. At the beginning of the semester, one of the philosophy teachers states that the books arranged by the Ministry of Education will be replaced with other publications. This is not challenging for mainstream students to supply it. Yet, it is practically impossible to find these materials in Braille. The visually impaired students explain that they will not be able to supply it to the course teacher. She offers them to write the whole book as Braille which indicates that she does not know how long writing the book will take. Such kind of attempt requires both an enormous amount of time and energy including wasting a great number of special papers.

Another weak point of an integrated education is overcrowded classes. One of the grammar teachers implied that he cannot lecture to the mainstream students in such an overcrowded room, thus his getting interested in visually disabled students seems improbable. On the other hand, visually disabled students clarify why they

feel themselves relaxed by mentioning about the small capacity of classes in blind schools. Hobbes (1975) explains the impact of special education as follows, "In special schools, classes are smaller and more suitable for the characteristics of the students. As the number of the students is very limited, students can be cared individually. As teachers are experienced on that field, they can take care of students more closely and consciously. Moreover, training and health services can be supplied in an efficient way. They also do not regard themselves different from others." When visually disabled students are asked to state the advantages of special education, they mainly mention two elements. It contributes towards the visually disabled students acquiring some daily and academic skills. And, a sighted person may learn some daily routines such as self-care, cooking and washing, etc., by observing their parents and imitating them. On the other hand, visually impaired student need special care and sparing much more time for learning these skills. Moreover, as they cannot see properly, they are required to learn Braille in order to read and write in addition to independent movement. These are taught either in the schools for the blind or at the rehabilitation centres. However, these skills may be obtained through the support of rehabilitation centres.

Another positive aspect of special education is that a visually disabled persona realises the existence of other disabled children like themselves so that they do not feel alone or different from other children until they are transferred into an integrated education. Hatice, one of the blind students interviewed said, "I feel myself in secure and comfort [environment] as there are also other disabled children with whom I share mutual emotions."

Ahmed Hamdi reflects his ideas on special and integrated education by saying, "Of course, integration programme has undeniably a great number of advantages supported also through state policy. However, special education provides for a blind child to accept his disability. When I was a child, I would ask to participate into football matches or other plays with sighted children. They did not use to want me to play with them by looking down upon my blindness. Upon that, I cried for hours. After taking special education, I could bravely say that my blindness does not interest them".

Nonetheless, one of the visually impaired students named Tarık said, "I was thinking that all people living on the earth was just like us, blind, owing to the fact that I have always been among the unsighted people until I begin to attend high school." He continues by saying, "Special education pushes the disabled into an isolation and unawareness of outer world. By means of integration, a visually impaired child may break his barriers and integrate with mainstream society."

The survey conducted in England (French, 1996) revealed that the visually impaired students attending special education consider that their experiences have played a restrictive role in their social lives and feel the pressure of support for dependence on other people. One of the university students named Yasemin reflected her ideas by stating, "Socialisation and getting awareness of outer world start by means of education at school, integration is undoubtedly plays a crucial role in our socialisation and taking a part in community as an usual component of it actively."

In order to provide the change of attitudes and opinions towards the disabled, they are required to coexist within mainstream society by going out and interacting with people. If the visually disabled are not allowed to go out by their parents or supplied assistive devices and equipments around their environment, they are doomed to live in isolation. Mainstream society may get familiar with visually disabled people on condition that the disabled are sent to integrating schools rather than special ones. The earlier the visually disabled student attends integration programmes, the more easily they get adapted to mainstream society and daily life conditions (Anderson, 1973). In turn, the presence of the disabled students in regular classes accelerates the process of mainstream students' adaptation to them (Shakespeare, 1975). Likewise, Beichor (1968) evaluated attitudes of primary school students toward the disabled. According to his findings, these attitudes of these children at an early age are objective and realistic. Thus, the writer suggests the beginning of an integrated education at very early age.

To summarise, the real obstacles experienced in daily life do not stem from blindness itself but misrecognition, prejudice and the lack of opportunities. The actual requirement for the blind is not protection, pity, derision or being just a consumer, but understanding, opportunity, equality, independent life and being a productive citizen (Walker, 1950). Education meets both the demands of students

and the requirements of their age. The more training qualifications are increased, the more students lead a successful academic and social life. Moreover, families are not guided and informed about special training so families may not know how to behave and counsel their disabled children. Additionally, teachers lecturing at those schools do not know Braille reading and writing. Therefore, they may not be helpful to the blind students. There is no standardised educational unity among integration programmes, which causes disabled students to be dependent upon their teachers' personal tendencies and efforts as the font of their academic and social success. As long as there is an equipped class setting, specialised teachers and family support are provided for visually disabled students at a systematised level, the integration programme will achieve the coexistence of disabled individuals in mainstream society through their participation in academic and social life.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study has focused on the investigation of the impact of an integration programme which has played a crucial role in shaping society's mentality towards visually disabled people because throughout the history, visually disabled individuals have been a marginalised group in mainstream society. As visually disabled people constitute a minority in society, they have not been included in the field of education and employment by state policy until the end of the twentieth century. Furthermore, they have been regarded as inefficient or sick people who need health care and protection, leading them to isolation. While mainstream members of the society benefit from educational, occupational and cultural opportunities, disabled people have fallen behind these activities. The presence of prominent blind figures in history has paved the way for understanding that the blind people could also be successful in socio-academic and occupational fields. Mainstream society has begun to know the disabled closely with their participation into education and workplaces so that pitying, overprotective and indifferent attitudes of people have been substituted with conscious and tolerant manners over time. Even if the involvement of visually disabled people in the realm of education has been provided for many years, it has been disregarded that the special education has resulted in exclusion from mainstream society by training disabled people within the borders of schools that only contain blind students. However, this is not the real reflection of life. They can stay away from mainstream society during their primary education but what happens after the graduation? They are thrown into the heart of mainstream society which is full of obstacles for them. A disabled person building their own world in special education has to struggle with negative attitudes of sighted people and the technical problems encountered in the wider social world.

Integrated education as a recently developed programme has not structurally fulfilled its ultimate goal for effectively serving disabled students. Therefore, it may have presented drawbacks for the students in terms of their coping with academic and social barriers put up mainly by teachers and the official arrangements stemming

from them. From the data analysis of interviews, it has been revealed that the blind students have experienced a lack of resources. Moreover, they may not be welcomed and supported by some of their teachers as opposed to the setting of special education. Nevertheless, integration has given a chance for visually disabled students to recognise multidimensional aspects of life itself. Additionally, the negative case has turned into an acquisition of positive behavioural inclinations such as problem solving skills, the sense of cooperation and awareness of the existence of different kind of people within the same society. Moreover, a visually disabled student attending integrated education is more likely to develop a sense of competition which will lead him to success among their more better-sighted peers.

Apart from its positive impacts on a visually disabled student, it has contributed to mainstream individuals as well, owing to the fact that it has constructed a bridge which stimulates the interactive relations between the visually disabled students and mainstream individuals. With the help of integration the visually disabled whose problems resulting from their impairments and legal rights have been ignored for years, have been vocalised. Through the illustration of the impact of an integrated education upon the visually disabled students' academic and social life, great alterations concerning both Turkish mainstream society and the visually disabled students have been developed in an academic and social sense. While visually disabled students are on the way to participate into mainstream society via integration more frequently than before, Turkish society has also begun to know more of the lives visually disabled individuals by means of interaction and socialisation with them. However, as adequate legal arrangements have not been completed yet, there is a long way to go in order to effectively provide for coexistence between the disabled together with able-bodied people.

This dissertation has been an evaluation of the transition process of visually disabled students from special education into an integrated system of education. Further research may be conducted on visually disabled students at the level of primacy school including both special and mainstreaming education in order to analyse the effects of integration in a more detailed and explicit sense and in the comparison to these two control groups.

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