

## Analysis of regular screening of children in schools for the blind – Its importance!

Huang *et al.* in their study<sup>[1]</sup> have brought out well the importance of analyzing the children enrolled in schools for the blind: results of past (a decade ago – 2007) versus present screening (2018). The 2007 results reveal how erroneously children were recruited in the past; nearly half of all children in schools for the blind had potentially avoidable visual impairment (VI) and blindness. This avoidable blindness in children decreased from 50% (2007) to 39% (2018) in a span of 10 years – a difference of 10%, which implies that we need to screen schools for the blind more often and diligently, and improve technology, diagnostic methods, human resources, appropriate referral, and treatment.

There is also an implication that the methodology for recruiting children in schools for the blind may not be clear. This needs to be modified and redefined. In addition, corneal opacification secondary to measles and vitamin A deficiency was identified as the leading cause in 2007 screening<sup>[2]</sup> as compared with global abnormalities in 2018, which highlights a changing pattern of causes of VI and blindness. This helps us in understanding the importance of regular screening of children in schools for the blind.

This kind of disparity can exist in any other country too, especially so if it is a developing country with a large population and unequal distribution of eye care facilities.

Strategies for certifying blindness have to be standardized and implemented universally so as to avoid unnecessary confusion in recruiting children in blind schools. This also calls for uniform distribution of eye care facilities especially with good optometry services, pediatric eye care services, and low vision services to cater to children with low vision and free them from being recruited in schools for the blind. Likewise, integrated education should be promoted along with schools for the blind, and frequent review of the same is essential.

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