

Special Education and Rehabilitation of People with Visually and Hearing Impairments in Russia

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要旨

障害を持った人に対する支援には、支援に携わる人たち、教育の形、教育カリキュラム、目的とする職種、によって種々の形がある。障害（視聴覚を含む全ての障害）をもったロシアの大学生の総数は今日約2000人である。視聴覚に障害をもつ人々の教育に携わっている先導的な教育機関はバウマン国立モスクワ工科大学（モスクワ、聴覚障害）、国立芸術専門大学（モスクワ、視聴覚障害）、ゲリツェン国立ロシア教育大学（サンクトペテルブルグ、視聴覚障害）である。ロシアの東部において障害（おもに聴覚であるが視覚および運動も含まれている）を持つ人々の初等、中等、高等職業教育は、ノボシビルスク国立技術大学に設置されたInstitute of Social Rehabilitation（社会自立学院）で本文表1に示す9個の分野で行われている。近年これらの特殊教育は特殊あるいは公立の図書館と協力して行われるようになった。

Abstract

The system of special education in Russia includes different forms of organizing the help for people with disabilities. These forms are distinguished by the various staff, forms of teaching, teaching plans and programs, and professional orientation. Today the total number of students with all kinds of disabilities (including students with visual and hearing impairments) in Russian universities is about 2,000. In Russia leading educational institutions for people with sensory impairments are the Moscow State Technical University by Bauman for students with hearing impairments, the State Specialized Institute of Arts (Moscow) for students with visual and hearing impairments and the Russian State Pedagogical University by Gertsen (St. Petersburg) for students with visual and hearing impairments. In the eastern regions of Russia primary, secondary and higher professional education for people with physical disabilities (mainly hearing and also visual and mobility impairments) is implemented for 9 specialties in the Institute of Social Rehabilitation at the Novosibirsk State Technical University. Lately in Russian universities works on additional and basic education are developed in the cooperation with the special and public libraries.

1 . Introduction

Russia occupies a huge territory of more than 17075.4 thousand sq. km. The population of the country in 1994 was 148.4 million people, and 108.5 million of them (73%) live in cities, 39.8 million (27%) live in the country. There are more than 120 nationalities in Russia, but 82% of the total population is Russian. There are 42 million of children under the age of 18, which is 28.5% of the total population, only 14% of children are practically healthy, 35% have chronic illnesses, 50% have some problems with their health [1].

Today the social and economic situation in Russia doesn't give confidence in the future to most of its citizens. Disabled

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people are in a critical situation, as their pensions are small and they are less competitive. The young generation of this category of people is in the most difficult situation. They have to stay on the verge of the society being not educated enough and having no profession. There is still an increase of the number of children with disabilities. The government and society face the problem of social rehabilitation of the vast number of people.

Judging by the statistical data, only 15% of all persons with disabilities have a job, but 55% [2] want to get any job. 1.6 million children have disabilities, that is 4.5% [3] of the total number of children. And only one fourth of the needy children get special educational help. Annually 30,000 disabled people need to get professional education.

The net of special health educational establishments is not enough, the geographical distribution is not even, there is the lack of such establishments in the Eastern part of the country. Professional rehabilitation is very important as it provides the employment and thus salary, the existence.

2 . The system of special education

The system of special education in Russia includes different forms of organizing help for children with disabilities. These forms are distinguished by the various staff, forms of teaching, teaching plans and programs, and professional orientation.

Children receive pre-school education in special nursery schools or special groups for children with poor hearing and low vision. The secondary education can be received in the special boarding schools for blind and visually impaired and also in the extra-mural schools and special schools for the disabled people. Such schools are mostly boarding schools.

The secondary education is given in the boarding schools for deaf children and children with visual problems where they are taught for 12 years. Children with poor hearing can attend two types of secondary school: the first department, where children with slightly defective ears are taught for 10 years and the second department, where deaf and deaf-and-dumb children are given the program of a 9-year ordinary school for 12 years. The students in the special schools for the visually impaired children differ by their visual abilities, etiology and clinical forms of the blindness and low vision. The number of totally blind children in special schools is 6-8%, while the rest of the children has low vision. The number of children with sight keenness from 0.05 till 0.2 is 35%, with the sight keenness from 0.2 till 0.4 is 65%. The professional secondary school includes 13-15 years in the special secondary evening and extra-mural school for people with poor hearing and low vision or in the special groups in technical schools for disabled people in Russia. There are more than 60 special boarding schools in Russia, lately some of them have been opened in Orenburg, Voronezh, Naberezhny-Chelny.

There are special medical schools, where students can get the profession of masseur. Most of these schools are situated in Kislovodsk, St. Petersburg and Tomsk, and there is the Ufa Medical College. In Krasnodar region there is a special musical boarding school for blind and visually impaired children. The young people with low vision can continue their

education in the Kursk Musical High School or the State Special Institute of Arts [4], where 300 students with visual problems and poor hearing study at three faculties (paint, music, theatre) of that Institute.

The higher education was limited to some special classes in the Moscow State Technical University by Bauman [5], the Russia External Polytechnic Institute in Moscow, the Saint Petersburg North-West Polytechnic Institute. Besides, disabled people can attend ordinary universities with all the other students but it was very difficult and that's why not many capable deaf people received the higher education.

Today the total number of students with disabilities in Russian universities is about 2000. Most of them study in Moscow.

There are two forms of teaching disabled students in Russia: the first one is when one or several disabled students are included into an ordinary group, and the second way of teaching is to create a special group of people with a certain disability. Visually disabled students can enter more than 20 professions. They study law, native language, literature, history, mathematics, singing, composing, etc. There are 78 students and 10 postgraduate students with visual problems in St. Petersburg [8]. In the Russian State Pedagogical University by Gertsen there are special groups of blind and deaf students and a group of students with mobility problems. The administration of the university supports these students during their study. Usually the university concludes an agreement with the social care establishments or the Ministry of Common and Professional Education.

3 . The Institute of Social Rehabilitation

Nowadays the Institute of Social Rehabilitation is created on the base of the Novosibirsk State Technical University (NSTU) [6]. It is a special educational establishment where only disabled people are taught. It is a system, which includes three educational stages (primary, secondary, and higher). The students attend two faculties: technical engineering and applied arts. It is the only educational establishment in the Siberia region, where students from the entire country are taught. The specialties for primary, secondary and higher professional education for people with physical disabilities implemented in the Institute of Social Rehabilitation are indicated in Table 1.

This Institute is provided with workshops, studios, a gymnasium, a dining room, and has computer classes and classes for collective work. There is a medical center with a department of the Regional Mute Center. For deaf and deaf-and-mute students the educational materials are given with the help of special mute translators.

In the Institute conferences and seminars on problems of disabled people regularly take place. Special attention is paid for providing the schooling process with new technologies [7].

4 . Computer technologies in rehabilitation of visually impaired people

The last decades are characterized by the reduction of manual work within production technologies and by the increase of the automatization level, the use of robot equipment and different computers. The importance of intellectual work has also increased. The traditional ways of employment of people with visual impairments are not so common now, especially in those branches where the knowledge of computer information and communication technologies is needed.

Nowadays in Russia visually impaired people are employed with the help of computer technology studies. With the assistance of the Republican Center of Computer Technologies within the All Russian-Society for the Blind in Moscow, 15 working places were provided for the blind in private companies, aviation agencies, legal advice offices, academic institutions and publishing houses [9,10].

There are all conditions for the creation of well-equipped working places for a lawyer, a legal adviser, a director, a high school teacher, a programmer, an information service operator, a publishing house editor, an operator of the commodity distribution network and a paging company in large Russian cities such as St. Petersburg, Nizhniy Novgorod, Ekaterinburg and Novosibirsk. These working places must be equipped according to the special needs of the blind and visually impaired and their participation in the working activity. The physical characteristics of this group of people should be taken into account. This is the use of the compensatory mechanisms which influence the mental abilities, speech and logical memory. Special school programs concerning the profession choice are being worked out.

Table 1. The implemented specialities
(H: hearing, V: visually, M: mobility)

1. computer operator- clerical worker (H,V)
2. computer science and engineering (H)
3. software of computer engineering and automated systems (H)
4. maker of wooden works of art (H)
5. maker of decorative design works (H)
6. modelling and designing of clothes (H)
7. decorative applied arts and folk crafts (H)
8. social work (secondary education; H,V,M)
9. social work (higher education; H,V,M)

5 . Special libraries as the core of educational activities

The free access to information for the visually impaired is the biggest problem. The system of the libraries for the blind and visually impaired gave the stable resource for this group of the disabled - they were provided with large print and Braille editions and they have access to the modern adaptive technologies. This is the reason why the work on additional and basic education is developed in cooperation with the special and public libraries [11].

The Novosibirsk Regional Special Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired is a typical example of such activity in the East of Russia[12].

The Library successfully develops educational programs for the blind and visually impaired school children and high school students who study English and computers. Special Braille editions and audio cassettes were made for these purposes.

The Library became famous as the center of different special computer programs, providing the enlargement of a screen picture, speech capacity, reading machines, electronic magnifiers, manual devices for information outlet.

At present it is one of the best technical bases of the adaptive devices in the Ural region, Siberia and the Far East. That is why a seminar called “ The organization of the remote access and information exchange in the libraries of Ural, Siberia and the Far East ” took place in Novosibirsk in April, 1999. Representatives from 17 areas took part in it. In the beginning of this school year the Library supported the enrollment of a group of blind and visually impaired young people (the profession of a computer operator and a chief clerk /office worker) into the social rehabilitation college. In the

future it will involve the creation of special audio and Braille materials for the educational courses both for daytime and distant education.

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