

## **Promotion of inclusion of mainstream school children with their visually impaired classmates through integrated camp**

**KV. Ananda Rao**

Education Officer

The National Association For The Blind

C A Site No.4, NAB Road

Jeevan Bima Nagar

Bangalore - 560 075

**INDIA**

[nabk@vsnl.com](mailto:nabk@vsnl.com)

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The National Association for the Blind, Karnataka Branch, was established in 1977 with the mission of rehabilitating the visually challenged persons of Karnataka. To achieve the mission, The National Association for the Blind, conducts a number of Educational, Training and service programmes. One such programme is 'Integrated Education' of visually challenged children.

### **INTEGRATED EDUCATION:**

It is not necessary to define Integrated Education, elaborate its objectives or philosophy, as all the participants present here are conversant with these. There are different models of Integrated Education. The National Association for the Blind – Karnataka Branch implements the itinerary model of Integrated Education. In this model, there is generally only one visually challenged child in a mainstream school. The National Association for the Blind – K.B. has about 400 children studying under 40 units, spread over 8 districts of Karnataka.

Integration of sighted and visually challenged children must take place in all activities curricular and co-curricular. To bring about all round holistic integration, camping somewhere away from routine work and school environment is ideal. Such camps are referred to as INTEGRATED CAMPS.

**AIM:**

It is possible to sensitize sighted children to the needs of visually impaired children and along with their peer groups participate in physical education, performing daily living activities, integrated games, cultural activities and other literary activities.

**OBJECTIVITES:**

1. Sensitize sighted children to the needs of visually challenged children.
2. The sighted children and visually challenged working together in curricular and co-curricular activities.
3. Together for a continuous period of a week develops bonding.
4. Sighted children learn the special skills like Braille, abacus, Taylor frame, tactile method of learning etc.,
5. To help the visually impaired children to develop independence, personality development, leadership and to promote mutual interaction through play.
6. Children work together to learn and are responsible for one another's learning as well as their own.
7. To develop team efforts.
8. To orient and train sighted children to the special aids and equipment used by visually impaired children.

**METHODOLOGY:****SELECTION:**

Select 24 children (12 visually impaired children + 12 sighted children of the same class and of the same age – both boys/girls) covering two or three units of the same place along with resource teachers who are to play key role in the camp.

**DURATION OF THE CAMP:**

5 to 6 days – residential, usually camp is conducted in nearby forest resorts, scout camping site and National Parks etc.,.

So far The National Association for the Blind, Karnataka Branch, has conducted four Integrated Camp in different places of Karnataka.

1. The Bart Scouts & Guides site, Bezant Park, Doddaballapur.
2. Suttur, near Mysore.
3. Bangalore.
4. Bandipur, National Park.

**ACTIVITIES:**

Covers both extra curricular and co-curricular, cultural programmes through play.

On the opening day of the camp the sighted and visually impaired children are introduced to each other. After the brief introduction, the camp is inaugurated by some senior officers (Government) or Socially regarded persons or the Block Education officer.

A detailed time-table was chalked out in which the activities are planned from morning 6.00 A.M. to 10 P.M. in the night. The activities included physical, literary, cultural and academic.

The following activities are covered during the camp period.

A set of photographs taken during the camp are being presented.

**I. PHYSICAL EXERCISES:**

1. Warming up exercises
2. Mass drill
3. Daily living skills
4. Orientation and Mobility
5. Cleaning the rooms

**II. INTEGRATED GAMES:**

- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Simon says     | 2. Memory games       |
| 3. Skipping       | 4. Running Race       |
| 5. Dog & The Bone | 6. Tug War            |
| 7. Tree climbing  | 8. Pick & Act         |
| 9. In & Out       | 10. Sack Race         |
| 11. Cricket       | 12. Throwing the Ball |
| 13. Long Jump     | 14. High Jump         |

**III. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES:**

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|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Mono acting  | 2. Singing & Dancing |
| 3. Group Dance  | 4. Group Songs       |
| 5. Anthyakshari |                      |

**IV. LITERARY ACTIVITIES:**

- |                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Debate        | 2. Pick & Speak        |
| 3. Story telling | 4. Word building games |

**V. ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES:**

1. Reading & Writing (Braille)
2. Arithmetic

**VI. VISITORS TO THE CAMP:**

1. The concerned School Head Master/Teacher
2. Foreign visitors, who visited Bandipur, National Park
3. Local forest officials and persons also observed the activities of the children.

On the last day a camp fire was organized and all the children enjoyed the camp fire.

**BENEFITS:**

1. Builds capacities.
2. Provides peer support, encouragement and motivation
3. Fosters excellence through competition
4. Promotes inclusion
5. Greater awareness, good communication/listening skills
6. Attitudinal change
7. Enhanced competencies.

**CONCLUSION:**

The Local Visitors, officials and functionaries find Integrated Camps activities very innovative. It is observed that after the camp, the sighted children and visually challenged children, study together. The sighted child takes the visually challenged child along with him to play during the lunch break. The other sighted children also include the visually challenged child in games and other school activities. The children enjoyed such camps.