

Discussion of the Title of Visual Impairments from the View of Special Education

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Abstract

Background/Objectives: To examine the meaning of changing the title of visually impaired persons and the title of special school for the visually impaired from the view of special education. **Methods/Statistical Analysis:** The significance of the title of the visually impaired persons was discussed by analyzing laws related to special education including Act on the Promotion of Education for the Handicapped, Act on the Special Education for the Disabled Persons, Act on Welfare of Persons with Mental and Physical Disabilities, and Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities and curricula of 12 special schools for the visually impaired. **Findings:** Visually impaired persons engaged in various economically independent jobs thanks to people's belief in their special ability such as the supernatural and foreknowledge. The titles of special school for the visually impaired have been controversial. So the Ministry of Education ordered to change the name of special school for the visually impaired in 1990. But, some special schools for the visually impaired didn't change their names. Their reasons were first, the title for the blind did not give hate, second, when the name of school for the blind was changed, school for the blind was not simply distinguished from general special school, and third, common people could accept the title of the blind more easily. **Application/Improvements:** The title of a group is important. More important is to improve its social and economic status. Even a great title can be changed over times.

Keywords: Discussion from View of Special Education, Special School for the Visually Impaired, The Visually Impaired, Title of Visual Impairments, Visual Impairments

1. Introduction

1.1 The Needs and Objectives of the Study

Terms representing disability or persons with disabilities have been subdivided with the changes or clarification of a concept over times and continuously changed to sweep off a discriminative and insulting nuance that is accumulated historically and socially.

The title of persons with disabilities was not strictly distinguished from a patient in the Three Kingdoms Period. From the Goryeo Dynasty to the Joseon Dynasty, the terms of critical illness(a malignant disease, epilepsy) and a fatal disease(idiocy, mute, dwarf) were used. Because there were no titles of persons with disabilities in early 1960s, the title of the handicapped or the fatal were used in laws. In 1970s, with the development of special

education and welfare for persons with disabilities, many disability-related titles were used. The origins of the title of the visually impaired(the blind) are various. The first case originated in the government position like the blind (sogyong, 少卿 or bongsa, 奉事) and the second title came from the job like a blind fortuneteller (pansu, 判數). The third title was from simple visual impairments like the blind (盲人) or visually impaired persons (視覺障礙人). In Korea, traditionally, the blind (盲人) was the title of visually impaired persons. After the Act on the Promotion of Education for the Handicapped was enacted in 1977, the visually impaired(視覺障礙者) was officially used. Then, since the amendment of the full text of the Act on Welfare of Persons Disabilities in 1999, the visually impaired (視覺障礙者) was changed to visually impaired persons(視覺障礙人).

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The titles of special school for the visually impaired have been controversial. So the Ministry of Education ordered to change the name of special school for the visually impaired in 1990¹. It thought that 'the blind' was not desirable in the title of special schools for the blind because it meant darkness. Five special schools of 12 special schools for the visually impaired such as Gangwon School for the Blind, Gyeonggi School for the Blind, Daejeon School for the Blind, Mokpo School for the Blind, and Jeonnam School for the Blind accepted the opinion and changed their school names to Myeongjin School, Hyegwang School, Daemyeong School, Eungwang School, and Segwang School, respectively in 1990. But, two special schools for the visually impaired like Seoul National School for the Blind and Busan Public School for the Blind didn't change their names due to the opposition of the blind groups. Daejeon Public School for the Blind changed its name into Daejeon Daemyeong School on June 1, 1987, but it was returned to its original name, Daejeon School for the Blind on March 1, 1995. Like this, the changes caused a some confusion.

Therefore, this study examined: 1. the meaning of changing the title of visually impaired persons(the blind) and 2. the meaning of changing the title of special school for the visually impaired from the view of special education. For this, the significance of the title of the visually impaired was discussed by analyzing laws related to special education including Act on the Promotion of Education for the Handicapped, Act on the Special Education for the Disabled Persons, etc., Act on Welfare of Persons with Mental and Physical Disabilities, and Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities and curricula of 12 special schools for the visually impaired from the view of special education.

1.2 Research Questions

Detailed research questions are as follows to achieve the objectives of the study.

First, what is the meaning of changing the title of visually impaired persons(the blind) from the view of special education?

Second, what is the meaning of changing the title of special school for the visually impaired from the view of special education?

2. Materials and Methods

To achieve the objectives of the study, following analysis methods were used. First, visual impairments-related

terms were analyzed through laws related to special education including Act on the Promotion of Education for the Handicapped, Act on the Special Education for the Disabled Persons, etc., Act on Welfare of Persons with Mental and Physical Disabilities, and Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities. In Act on the Promotion of Education for the Handicapped and Act on the Special Education for the Disabled Persons, etc., the titles of the kinds of persons eligible for special education were investigated. In Act on Welfare of Persons with Mental and Physical Disabilities and Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities, the titles of the kinds of persons with disabilities were analyzed.

Second, in School Curriculum in 2015 published periodically by 12 special schools for the visually impaired, visual impairments-related terms and the titles of school were analyzed. The curriculum analysis was made in title changes of special schools for the visually impaired from three points of view: 1. the subject of establishment, 2. the region of establishment, and 3) the period of establishment.

3. Results

3.1 Analysis of the Title Changes of Visual Impairments in Special Education-Related Laws

3.1.1 Analysis of the Title Changes of Visual Impairments in Act on the Special Education for the Disabled Persons, etc.

A law that provides for special education in Korea is the Act on the Special Education for the Disabled Persons, etc. made in 2007. Article 15 of the same law provides that 11 disability areas are eligible for special education: 1. visual impairments, 2. hearing impairments, 3. mental retardation, 4. physical impairments, 5. emotional disturbance or behavioral disorder, 6. autism(including the relevant disabilities), 7. speech impairments, 8. learning disabilities, 9. health impairments, 10. developmental delays, and 11. other disabilities prescribed by Presidential Decree. However, in 1977 when Act on the Promotion of Education for the Handicapped was made, its Article 3 defined 7 disability areas for persons eligible for special education: 1. the visually impaired, 2. the hearing impaired, 3. the mentally retarded, 4. the physically impaired, 5. the emotionally impaired, 6. the

Table 3.1.1. Title changes of persons eligible for special education in special education-related laws

Article 3 of Act on the Promotion of Education for the Handicapped : 7 areas for persons eligible for special education	Article 10 of Act on the Promotion of Education for the Handicapped : 8 areas for persons eligible for special education	Article 15 of Act on the Promotion of Education for the Handicapped : 9 areas for persons eligible for special education	Article 15 of Act on the Special Education for the Disabled Persons, etc.: 11 areas for persons eligible for special education
1.The visually impaired 2.The hearing impaired 3.The mentally retarded 4. The physically impaired 5.The emotionally impaired 6.The speech impaired 7.The other physically and mentally impaired	1.Visual impairments 2.Hearing impairments 3.Mental retardation 4.Physical impairments 5.Emotional disturbance (including autism) 6.Speech impairments 7.Learning disabilities 8.Other disabilities prescribed by a Decree of the Ministry of Education.	1. Visual impairments 2. Hearing impairments 3. Mental retardation 4. Physical impairments 5.Emotional disturbance (including autism) 6. Speech impairments 7. Learning disabilities 8. Health impairments caused by chronic diseases including cardiac dysfunction, mental and physical impairments, and hepatic dysfunction<Amended on March 24, 2005> 9. Other disabilities prescribed by a Decree of the Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development<Amended on March 24, 2005>	1. Visual impairments 2. Hearing impairments 3. Mental retardation 4. Physical impairments 5.Emotional disturbance or behavioral disorder 6. Autism(including the relevant disabilities) 7. Speech impairments 8. Learning disabilities 9. Health impairments 10. Developmental delays 11. Other disabilities prescribed by Presidential Decree
Enacted on December 31, 1977. Law No. 3053	Fully amended on January 7, 1994. Law No. 4716	Partially amended on March 24, 2005 Law No. 7395	Enacted on May 25, 2007 Law No. 8483

speech impaired, and 7. the other physically and mentally impaired. In this law made in 1977, the term of the visually impaired used. In 1994 when the full text of Act on the Promotion of Education for the Handicapped was amended, its Article 10 provided 8 disability areas for persons eligible for special education: 1. visual impairments, 2. hearing impairments, 3. mental retardation, 4. physical impairments, 5. emotional disturbance (including autism), 6. speech impairments, 7. learning disabilities, 8. other disabilities prescribed by a Decree of the Ministry of Education. Since then, visual impairment has been used instead of the visually impaired².

3.1.2. Analysis of the Title Changes of Visual Impairments in Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities

The representative law that provides for welfare of persons with disabilities is Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities in Korea. Article 2 of Enforcement Decree of the same law provides 15 kinds of persons with disabilities: Persons with 1. physical impairments, 2. disability

of brain lesion, 3. visual impairments, 4. hearing impairments, 5. speech impairments, 6. mental retardation, 7. autism disorder, 8. mental disorder, 9. kidney dysfunction, 10. cardiac dysfunction, 11. respiratory dysfunction, 12. hepatic dysfunction, 13. face disfigurement, 14. intestinal/urinary fistula, and 15. epilepsy. However, when Enforcement Decree of the Act on Welfare of Persons with Physical and Mental Disabilities, that was repealed after Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities was made, was enacted in 1982, persons with disabilities were defined as 5 kinds: the physically impaired, the visually impaired, the hearing impaired, the speech impaired, and the mental retarded. When the full text of Enforcement Decree of the Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities was amended in 1999, the definition of persons with disabilities was extended to 10 kinds including physically disabled persons, visually impaired persons, hearing impaired persons, speech impaired persons, mentally retarded persons, persons with disability of brain lesion disabled, mentally disabled persons, persons with development disabilities (autism disability), persons with kidney dysfunction, and persons with cardiac dysfunction.

Table 3.1.2. Title changes of visual impairments in “Act on Enforcement Decree of Welfare of Persons with Disabilities”

Act on Enforcement Decree of Welfare of Persons with Physical and Mental Disabilities(5 kinds)	Act on Enforcement Decree of Welfare of Persons with Disabilities(10 kinds)	Act on Enforcement Decree of Welfare of Persons with Disabilities(15 kinds)
The physically impaired, the visually impaired, the hearing impaired, the speech impaired, and the mental retarded 〈Enacted on February 17, 1982.〉	Physically disabled persons, visually impaired persons, hearing impaired persons, speech impaired persons, mentally retarded persons, persons with disability of brain lesion disabled, mentally disabled persons, persons with development disabilities(autism disability), persons with kidney dysfunction, and persons with cardiac dysfunction 〈Fully amended on December 31, 1999.〉	Persons with 1. physical impairments, 2. disability of brain lesion, 3. visual impairments, 4. hearing impairments, 5. speech impairments, 6. mental retardation, 7. autism disorder, 8. mental disorder, 9. kidney dysfunction, 10. cardiac dysfunction, 11. respiratory dysfunction, 12. hepatic dysfunction, 13. face disfigurement, 14. intestinal/urinary fistular, and 15. Epilepsy 〈Partially amended on June 30, 2014.〉
Enacted on February 17, 1982. Presidential Decree No. 10730	Fully amended on December 31, 1999. Presidential Decree No. 16682	Amended in other laws on June 30, 2014. Presidential Decree No. 20679

tion. Since then, a term, visually impaired persons, has been used instead of the visually impaired.

3.2 Analysis of Title Changes of Special School for the Visually Impaired in School Curriculum in 2015

For title changes in 12 special schools for the visually impaired, four-time changes were found in 2 schools (Seoul School for the Blind³, Daejeon School for the Blind⁴); three-time changes, in 3 schools (Busan School for the Blind⁵, Gangwon Myeongjin School⁶, Incheon Hyegwang School⁷); and two-time changes, in 5 schools (Daegu Gwangmyeong School⁸, Eungwang School⁹, Gwangju Segwang School¹⁰, Chungju St. Mary School¹¹, Hanbit School for the Blind¹²). On the other hand, 2 schools (Jeonbuk School for the Blind¹³, Cheongju School for the Blind¹⁴) have never changed their names. In other words, 12 special schools for the visually impaired changed their names 2.25 times in average.

The results of analyzing the titles of special school for the visually impaired are as follows. First, there was a difference in the titles of 12 special schools for the visually impaired according to the subject of establishment.

While national or public special schools for the visually impaired commonly used ‘the blind’ for their titles, private ones did not use the word.

Second, there was no specific difference in the titles of special school for the visually impaired according to the region. While special schools for the visually impaired located in Seoul, Busan, Daejeon, Cheongju, and Jeonbuk used ‘the blind’ for their titles, ones located in Incheon, Daegu, Gwangju, Chungju, Gangwon, and Jeonnam did not use the word.

However, for the titles of special school for the visually impaired according to the region, 10 special schools for the visually impaired except Hanbit School for the Blind and Eungwang School included the name of the region before the title of special school for the visually impaired.

Third, there was no difference in the titles of special school for the visually impaired according to the period of establishment. Both Seoul School for the Blind (1913), the first special school for the visually impaired, and Hanbit School for the Blind (1971), recently established, used the blind for their titles. In summary, the use of ‘the blind’ for the title of special school for the visually impaired was not associated with the period or the region of establishment. While national and public special schools for the visually

Table 3.2. Changes of the title of special school for the visually impaired by (1) the subject of establishment, (2) the region of establishment, and (3) the period of establishment

No	Subject	Region	Period of Establishment(YYYY.MM.DD)				
			Present Title	Title in the Opening	1 st Change	2 nd Change	3 rd Change
1	National	Seoul	Seoul School for the Blind (2015.03.01)	Jesaengwon for the Blind (1913.04.01)	National School for the Blind (1945.10.01)	Seoul School for the Blind ((1952.06.01)	Seoul School for the Blind (1959.04.01.): Separation into the blind and the deaf
2	Public	Busan	Busan School for the Blind (2015.03.01)	Seoul National School for the Blind Busan School (1953.09.05)	Busan Public School for the Blind (1955.09.19)	Separated into Busan School for the Blind and Busan School for the Deaf (1974.12.26)	Busan School for the Blind (1975.03.01)
3	Public	Daejeon	Daejeon School for the Blind (2015.03.01)	Chungnam Academy for the Blind (1953.04.13)	Daejeon Public School for the Blind (1969.10.20).	Daejeon Daemyeong School (1987.06.01)	Daejeon School for the Blind (1995.03.01)
4	Public	Cheongju	Cheongju School for the Blind (2015.03.01)	Cheongju Academy for the Blind (1954.07.15)	Cheongju School for the Blind (196703.08)		
5	Private	Seoul	Hanbit School for the Blind (2015.03.01)	Emmanuel Yeomyeong School (1971.03.06)	Hanbit School for the Blind (1976.10.23)		
6	Private	Incheon	Incheon Hyegwang School (2015.03.01)	Christian Academy for the Blind (1958.08.19)	Gyeonggi School for the Blind (1961.04.03)	Incheon Hyegwang School (1982.05.14)	
7	Private	Daegu	Daegu Gwangmyeong School (2015.03.01)	Daegu Academy for the Blind (1947.04.09)	Daegu School for the Blind (1955.04.16)	Daegu Gwangmyeong School (1959.03.09)	
8	Private	Gwangju	Gwangju Segwang School (2015.03.01)	Jeonnam School for the Blind (1961.04.06)	Gwangju Segwang School (1990.03.01)		
9	Private	Chungju	Chungju St. Mary School (2015.03.01)	Chungju St. Mary School for the Blind (1961.12.08)	Chungju St. Mary School (1987.05.01)		
10	Private	Gangwon	Gangwon Myeongjin School (2015.03.01)	Chuncheon Academy for the Blind (1956.02.03)	Gangwon School for the Blind (1962.12.11)	Gangwon Myeongjin School (1988.08.26).	
11	Private	Jeonbuk	Jeonbuk Chungju St. Mary School for the Blind (2015.03.01)	Jeonbuk School for the Blind (1953.06.18)			
12	Private	Jeonnam	Eungwang School (2015.03.01)	Mokpo Academy for the Blind 1951.03)	Eungwang School (1986.0102)		

impaired preferred to include a word of the blind, private special schools for the visually impaired did not use the word.

4. Discussion and Summary

4.1 Discussion on the Title of Visual Impairments from the View of Special Education

Title changes of “visual impairments” in special education-related laws in Korea are as follows. First, when “the Act on the Promotion of Education for the Handicapped” was enacted on December 31, 1977, the visually impaired (sigakjangaeja, 視覺障礙者) was used. Since its amendment of the full text on January 7, 1994, the title of “visual impairments” has been used. In other words, the visually impaired (sigakjangaeja, 視覺障礙者) was changed to “visual impairments. It is believed that the title change originated from the full amendment of “Act on Welfare of the Physically and Mentally Disabled” on December 30, 1989. The law title was also changed into “Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities. In the title of law the disabled (jangaeja, 障礙者) was changed to “persons with disabilities (jangaein, 障礙人).

Second, a title change about visual impairments was made in “Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities. “The visually impaired (sigakjangaeja, 視覺障礙者)” which was used in “Act on Welfare of the Physically and Mentally Disabled”(enacted on June 5, 1981 under Law No. 3452) was changed to “visually impaired persons (sigakjangaein, 視覺障礙人)” in “Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities” which was fully amended on December 30, 1989 (Law No. 4179). The change was made because it was felt that the title of “the visually impaired (sigakjangaeja, 視覺障礙者)” had a more negative nuance than that of “visually impaired persons (sigakjangaein, 視覺障礙人)” in Korean. Although both “the visually impaired (sigakjangaeja, 視覺障礙者)” and “visually impaired persons (sigakjangaein, 視覺障礙人)” meant “people who have visual impairments”, the last words, Ja(者) and In(人) which indicated a person had some difference in nuance in Korean. In other words, it was acknowledged that Ja(者) contained more discriminatory nuance than In(人).

The terms of disability vary with times and their meanings are various. Moreover, the dignity and rights of the person are sensitively reflected according to the terms.

A general view on persons with disabilities was negative and unfavorable in history¹⁵. However, Park, J. S.(1997)’s study suggested that Korean’s views on visually impaired persons have a dual position of negative and positive attitudes¹⁶. In other words, in narrative literature, visually impaired persons engage in various jobs including a fortuneteller, a teacher, a massager, a fisherman, or a farmer who are economically independent. The views on the job reflect that people believed their special ability such as the supernatural and foreknowledge. Moreover, using the title of sogyeong(少卿), bongsa (奉事), or chambong (參奉) that originated from government position for visually impaired persons shows more respect for them compared with other persons with disabilities.

Like this, an image of visually impaired persons was not negative compared with other persons with disabilities probably because of increased knowledge on visual impairments due to a practice of putting the government above the people or their active social activity and increased role expectation by people’s frequent contact with them¹⁷.

Fortunetelling training began in Seungwan in 1445, the 27th year of King Sejong in Joseon for visually impaired persons. It was the only case which persons with disabilities had a job. In Korea, a fortuneteller was a major job for visually impaired persons for 650 years from the late 13th century to 1913. At that time, most people believed that visually impaired persons could not see the world of things but could see the spiritual world. Thus, fortunetelling that needs such ability seemed appropriate for them. Since 1913, acupuncture, massage, and moxibustion have become their major jobs. As they have excellent ability to distinguish and handle by tactility, people think that they are eligible for the jobs¹⁸.

Oh, C. G. (1988) argued that it was possible to educate the blind since educational thought for the blind did not look down upon visually impaired persons and considered that they had ability as priest, prophet, curer, and entertainer¹⁹). Education for the blind in the Joseon Dynasty was a government school that definite rules and system was already established in 1445. Furthermore, an institutional system was prepared for them to be appointed government official by state or special examination and show their functions. Therefore, education for the blind was not only functional system but also guaranteed their rights of education. Nevertheless, it was only for a extremely few visually impaired persons and the position was limited to a blind official, which implies

some discrimination. Also, they were treated only as people with the ability of a priest, a prophet, a curer, and an entertainer. As there were no educational systems for general people with visual impairments, their life could not be guaranteed. The doctrine of Heaven's mandate in Joseon had two flows of accepting one's disability and overcoming reality and seeking one's fortune. Education for the blind may focus on the former aspect²⁰.

4.2 Discussion on the Title of Special Schools for the Visually Impaired from the View of Special Education

The situation of changing the titles of 12 special schools for the visually impaired was analyzed in Korea. Four-time changes were found in 2 schools; three-time changes, in 3 schools; and two-time changes, in 5 schools. In average, 12 special schools for the visually impaired changed their names 2.25 times. 4 special schools for the visually impaired which accepted the Ministry of Education's opinion in changing their names used brightness (明) or light (光) to mean lightness. For example, Gangwon School for the Blind was changed to Gangwon Myeongjin (明進) School; Jeonnam School for the Blind, to Segwang (世光) School; Mokpo Academy for the Blind, to Eungwang (恩光) School; and Gyeong School for the Blind, to Hyegwang (惠光) School. Given that foreign institutions for visual impairments often use 'lighthouse,' it reflects a desire for lightness. On the other hand, visual impairments groups related to Seoul National School for the Blind, Busan Public School for the Blind, and Daejeon Public School for the Blind expressed rejection for the use of brightness () or light(光)²¹.

Their reasons were first, the title for the blind did not give hate. Second, when the school name of school for the blind was changed, school for the blind was not simply distinguished from general special school. Third, rather, common people could accept the title of the blind more easily.

There was controversy concerning the title of visual impairments was in the United States in early 1970s. Some people argued that because 'the blind' gave a negative image, 'the visually impaired' should be used. In other words, they suggested the title of 'the blind' was often associated with blind beggars and implied a bad image for long time and institutions for the blind should use 'the visually impaired' instead of 'the blind'. However, the National Federation of the Blind decided to continuously

use the title of 'the blind'. Their reasons included first, the title of 'the blind' was much easier to convey the meaning of a blind person. Second, if the blind's social and economic status was not improved, a great title could be also changed to a bad meaning again over times. Third, the blind should overcome psychologically whatever titles may be used²¹. The blind in the United States could overcome controversy on the title psychologically by accepting the title of 'the blind' through campaigns and using it as their representative title with a great proud. It is very suggestive to us.

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