# Evaluation of Causes of Visual Impairment in Students of Blind Schools in Kathmandu Valley

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**Background**

Nepal has recently launched the global initiative of Vision 2020: The Right to Sight. Childhood blindness and low vision have been given utmost importance in the global initiative. But not a single study on visual status of blind students and very few studies on childhood illness have emerged from Nepal. In this context, this study is conducted to determine the causes of visual impairment and the visual status of students of blind schools.

**Methods**

A total of 39 blind students from three integrated schools for the blind in Kathmandu valley were included in the study. A thorough history followed by visual acuity assessment, refraction, ocular examination and visual field assessment was conducted for each blind student and recorded separately in a special pro-forma especially designed for that particular purpose.

**Results**

Corneal opacity (35.90%) was the commonest cause of visual impairment. On the basis of World Health Organization classification of visual impairment, 89.7% were blind and the remaining 10.3% visually impaired. Approximately 31% of the blind students had been visually impaired due to acquired causes. It was estimated that 17.9% of the subjects would have been benefited from low vision devices if intervention had been done at the proper time.

**Conclusions**

Most of the causes of visual impairment were due to infections. Early detection and management of the cause of visual impairment would have prevented the severity of visual impairment for those individuals.

**Keywords:** blindness; blind students; childhood blindness; visual impairment.