Warriors of the Battle of S.S.C. Examination
A Success Story of Mumbai IEP
First Skill Development Training programme was conducted at NAB – J. K. Kapur Skill Development Centre during 28 Mar, 2019 to 29 June, 2019.

Glimpses of Felicitation Programme held on 29 June, 2019.
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The opinions expressed in this magazine are the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Editor.

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Blind Welfare
We are pleased to present this issue of “Blind Welfare” though, rather late. In this issue, the back cover picture depicts the function in which a Braille version of “Charaiveti! Charaiveti!!” a book written by no other than the Honorable Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Shri. Ram Naik was published on 27th June, 2019. The Honorable Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri. Devendra Fadnavis was kind enough to be present at the occasion for publishing the braille version. There is a short write-up about the function ahead.

There are also usual articles/reports in this issue to name a few - Digital Braille by Prathamesh Bendre; article by Capt. H.J.M. Desai entitled “Rehabilitating the Handicapped” appeared in the April, 1969 issue of Blind Welfare; Report on 7th All India NAB State Branches Conference, etc. We are happy to bring to your notice the feedback about Blind Welfare received from Dr. S. K. Srivastava, State Commissioner of Lucknow.

Also there are announcements, (1) regarding ensuing ICEVI Conference scheduled to be held in February 2020 in Nepal, (2) about Perfumery College that is expected to be opened at NAB, India headquarters, and (3) about NAB Rakhi Project. You will be glad to read about the success of 10th standard students under NAB, India's Integrated Education Programme in Mumbai.

There is one article under research & technology by Dr. Milan Dass, on “Braille on Rail for the Visually Challenged Persons”. In this issue also there are items under From Far and Near.

We hope, readers will go through this issue which is of interest. We sincerely solicit readers feedback which would enable us to correct and improve the contents.

A. S. Athalekar
Honorary Secretary, NAB, India
प्रिय दिनेश

आपकी संस्था नेशनल एसोसिएशन फार द ब्लाइन्ड द्वारा प्रकाशित पत्रिका क्लाइन्ड वेलफेयर प्राप्त हुई। पढ़कर मुझे अति प्रसन्नता हुई। आपकी संस्था द्वारा वित्तवांगता के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में कार्यरत वित्तवांगजन को उनके अतुलनीय योगदान हेतु पुरस्कृत किया जाना एक विशेष कार्य है जिसकी में सराहना करता हूँ। आपकी पत्रिका के माध्यम से यह भी ज्ञात हुआ कि आपकी संस्था द्वारा वित्तवांगजन को कार्य, जबलपुर, भोपाल की यात्रा के दौरान उन्हें प्रकृति से जुड़े का अवसर प्राप्त कराया गया।

अन्त में सुश्री सुभानी कुटालकर, नैच, टीसी100वी100एच0 टी10एच0, प्रथम वर्ष द्वारा रचित कविता भारत के हम बच्चों के पढ़ने में अत्यन्त अभिनव हुआ है।

आप द्वारा प्रसिद्ध ब्लाइन्ड वेलफेयर पत्रिका हेतु मैं हद तक के आपका आभार व्यक्त करता हूँ तथा आपकी देश के उज्ज्वल प्रभाव के कामना करता हूँ।

(डाः एस.के. श्रीवास्तव)

राज्य आयुक्त

सेवा में,

श्री सत्य कुमार सिंह
सेक्रेटरी जनरल,
नेशनल एसोसिएशन फार द ब्लाइन्ड, इंडिया,
11, खान अब्दुल गाफर खान रोड, वल्ली सीफिस,
मुम्बई-400030।
मुंबई में राज्यपाल की पुस्तक 'चर्चित्रे | 'चर्चित्रे | 'चर्चित्रे |' के बेल लिपि के हिंदी, अंग्रेज़ी और मराठी संस्करणों का लोकप्रिय हुआ।

प्रयास और उच्चारण के साथ राज्यपाल श्री नाईक

बेल लिपि में पुस्तक दृष्टिभाषा भाई - बहनों के लिए प्रेम फूल का कार्य करने - मुख्यमंत्री महाराज

उत्तर प्रदेश के राज्यपाल श्री राम नाईक की पुस्तक 'चर्चित्रे | 'चर्चित्रे | 'चर्चित्रे |' के बेल लिपि संस्करण हिंदी, अंग्रेज़ी और मराठी भाषा का लोकप्रिय हुआ। मुंबई में मुख्य अधिरक्षक के रूप में उपाध्यक्ष महाराज के मुख्यमंत्री श्री डेपुटी फुलशीला द्वारा किया गया। पुस्तक के बेल लिपि संस्करण का प्रकाशन नेशनल एप्लिकेशन कोर्ट द्वारा किया गया।

इस अवसर पर राज्यपाल श्री राम नाईक शरीर उन्होंने श्रीमती कुंदा नाईक, स्त्रीजिती कृपाल और महाराज सरकार श्री मंत्री अजय शेखर, न्यू इंडिया के अध्यक्ष श्री हेमंत टक्कले, महाराजशाही श्री सत्य कुमार सिंह, साथी श्री. आंतो आंतोर, और बड़ी संख्या में विश्वासन और दृष्टिभाषा नई-बहन उपस्थित थे। श्री नाईक ने मानने कि कार्यक्रम के अध्यक्ष क्रमशः मान्यता मानक और राजनीतिक संस्करण श्री राधराम गैलिता, सत्रह और राजस्थान में नेता होने तथा राजस्थान में आर्थिक विकास के कारण उपस्थित होने हो सकते हैं।

राज्यपाल श्री राम नाईक ने कहा कि इस पुस्तक के लेखक के रूप में मुख्यमंत्री श्री डेपुटी फुलशीला से पहले बोले हैं। राजस्थान ने कहा कि इस बेलीटेक्स लेखक हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि यह सुझून संगठन है कि आज ही हेनेल कर्तर का जन्म दिवस है। नूतन और दृष्टिभाषा हेनेल के पास पत्नी पत्नी श्रीमती बिन्हें ने स्वतंत्र दिन की प्रारंभ की।

उन्होंने शिक्षक और अंतीय लूलीवाला ने उन्होंने शिक्षित किया। जीवन में बाहर की आँखों की होती तो उन्होंने उनके साथ राधाकृष्ण भी प्रारंभ करते हैं। दिवंजन निरंतर न हों, प्रयास और उच्चारण से में से सुलझे हैं। राजस्थान ने अपने जीवन के संस्करण के उल्लेख करते हुए बोला कि उनके के श्री, कानून के लिए पूरी की है। मुंबई में रहने और अभ्यास के लिए उन्होंने मुक्कल परिशिष्टियों का सामना करना पड़ा। आने-जाने के लिए साक्षरता का प्रयोग भी उनके किया।

सामग्री क्षेत्र में कार्य करने वाले बिन्हें ने सीरे बिन्हें और 5 बार सारां भी। तीनों के प्रेम और मंदिर ने उन्हें बहुत कुछ दिया। राजस्थान ने कहा कि उनके जीवन के पूर्व इसी संस्करण का संक्षेप है पुस्तक 'चर्चित्रे | 'चर्चित्रे | 'चर्चित्रे |'।

श्री नाईक ने पुस्तक पर प्रशंसा की और यहां बताया कि उनके दड़ी भाषा संस्करण संगठन 'चर्चित्रे | 'चर्चित्रे | 'चर्चित्रे |' का विवरण महाराज के मुख्यमंत्री श्री डेपुटी फुलशीला द्वारा ही 25 अगस्त, 2016 को मुंबई में किया गया था।

पुस्तक 'चर्चित्रे | 'चर्चित्रे | 'चर्चित्रे |' के हिंदी, अंग्रेज़ी, उर्दू तथा जैसमंत्री संस्करण का लोकप्रिय 11 नवम्बर 2016 को राज्यपाल भाषा नई-दिल्ली में,
Goldenly Old

This column contains the articles as they appeared in the Blind Welfare April, 1969 issue. This will enable the present readers to understand how progress was made in the welfare activities 50 years back. (Ed.)

Editorial
Rehabilitating the Handicapped
By Capt. H.J.M. Desai

One of the most delightful success stories on Rehabilitation was told by the former Vice President of the United States of America – Hubert Humphrey – at the Annual Meeting of the President’s Committee for Employment of the Handicapped. A young lady – very severely disabled – had gone through all the phases of rehabilitation. She had got her first job. While still in receipt of a low wage, she was thrilled to notice income-tax deductions on her pay slip. She was happy that she was no longer a burden to society and was actually a contributor. With increasing skill and efficiency, her pay packet grew larger. Very soon, she was a leader in a campaign for the abolition of what she called “this intolerable burden of income-tax”.

What brings about such successful rehabilitation? What is rehabilitation? How did this global movement originate? What are its objectives?

Rehabilitation is the process of restoration of the handicapped to the fullest physical, mental, vocational, economic and social usefulness of which they are capable.

When this restoration is comprehensive and covers all the above aspects to suit the needs of the individual, success is assured. This interdisciplinary process involves the co-operation of many and varied professions like medicine, psychology, education, vocational training, counseling, guidance, social work and placement services.

It was Mr. Arnold Toynbee who said, “the twentieth century will be chiefly remembered as an age in which human society dared to think of the welfare of the whole human race as a practicable objective.”

Medical Rehabilitation

Remarkable changes in the pattern of services for the handicapped occurred throughout the world in the post world war years. When the war was at its peak, hospitals were flooded with large numbers of very severely disabled persons who required prolonged medical treatment. The physical condition of these patients was such that simultaneously with medical attention, they could be usefully trained and helped in their total rehabilitation. The minimum time required for hospitalization was thus fruitfully utilized in evaluating the patient, assessing his medical and rehabilitation needs and initiating him in training, aimed at his successful rehabilitation. While treatment was continuing, the patient was emotionally adjusted to his disability and assisted to regain normalcy.

Experts like Dr. Howard A. Rusk and Dr. Henry H. Kessler demonstrated that excellent results could be achieved through comprehensive individualized services. They also proved that few men were so disabled that they could not learn to use their remaining capacities in some kind of useful work.

This changing pattern recognized that the basic needs of the disabled as regards food, clothing, shelter, education, health, employment and normal family and social life were the same as those of the able bodied. Since the basic needs do not differ, it was accepted that the disabled should be developed physically, mentally, vocationally and socially to the extent permitted by their disability and encouraged to take their rightful place in society.

Correct Attitudes and Approaches

Thus the negative attitude of society towards the disabled, mainly involving pity, charity and misguided sympathy, gradually gave place to modern rehabilitation techniques. After everything
possible was done to restore the client to normal health, and after he was helped to build up physically, the client was encouraged to adopt correct attitudes and approaches towards his own disability and gradually made to accept the limitations imposed by it. The negative attitudes of the clients were discouraged and they were motivated to develop positive attitudes towards their own training and ultimate rehabilitation.

**Vocational Rehabilitation**

The object of rehabilitation was to restore the shattered confidence of the client and help him to regain normalcy. Emphasis was shifted from the disability of the client to his residual abilities. The rehabilitation and vocational training was aimed at developing the residual abilities of the client and assist him to build up his total personality. Not only was the physical disability treated, but everything possible was done to treat the emotional, mental or social problems, if any. The immediate objective of the rehabilitation process was to assist the client in adjusting to his handicap and relearning or acquiring skills to live with his disability. In this process, he had to relearn techniques of daily living and expertise in self-care. Where necessary, skills in communication, skills in mobility, and vocational skills were also scientifically developed. The client was given the feel of a very wide variety of vocations from which he was encouraged to choose a career. A team of experts assisted him in making this choice.

**Economic Rehabilitation**

It is recognized that disability constitutes a total barrier against entry to many a profession. Since individual abilities and aptitudes differ, it is essential to provide for a diversity of careers. On such selected careers, intensive training has to be imparted so as to ensure normal production and efficiency. Selective placement ensures the matching of the job demands with the client's residual abilities. Only where a disabled client can give full commercial output and efficiency, could the placement be considered successful.

Thus the ultimate objective of the rehabilitation process is to provide congenial and remunerative employment as also to help the client head a normal and happy family and social life.

**Human Dignity**

The changing pattern recognizes the human dignity of the disabled person and strives, through the process of rehabilitation, to assure him his rightful place in society and family. Generalization which was hitherto resorted to in dealing with the disabled, gives place to individualized attention and training. From the referral stage to the final “follow on visits” and successful rehabilitation, all stages are most important to the client, needing sympathetic understanding. After the initial scientific evaluation with representatives of a very wide variety of disciplines and community agencies. This inter-disciplinary process envisages case finding, physical restoration to the extent possible, education, counseling and guidance, training for an occupation, placement in congenial work and social adjustment and family and community participation. Since each client's individual problems and goals are different, it is accepted that every individual is a unique person with a unique problem.

**Social Acceptance**

The goal should not be only economic resettlement but the happy settlement of the client in normal family and social life. With this view in mind, it is very essential to solve the housing and other problems of the client satisfactorily.

The disabled person is not a second class citizen. It is very important that he is accepted in the family and in society as a normal individual in his own right.

**The magnitude of the Problem**

The problem of the handicapped in India is one of colossal magnitude. Based on very rough estimates provided by sample surveys, the Government of India has estimated the handicapped population at about 11 million. We have 4.9 million blind, 1.50 million deaf, 4 million orthopedically handicapped and 1.8 million mentally retarded. In addition to
these categories, we have a large number of persons with intellectual limitations who are educable, with behavioral problems manifested through emotional disturbances, speech problems, impaired hearing or impaired vision, neurological and non-sensory physical impairments, brain-injuries, epileptic tendencies, cured leprosy patients, cardiac patients and the like.

The International Rehabilitation Research Programme of the United States Government has put the whole problem in a nutshell:

"Disability is among the major causes of dependency in most nations. The resulting economic losses are a drain upon the economy of every nation. With prolonged disability, families are often broken up; public welfare and institutional costs agriculture and industry; and purchasing power and tax revenues are reduced. In Human terms the cost is even greater in the loss of pride, dignity and self-respect. Millions of disabled people in the world are not living normal productive lives because of neglected disability."

Should we allow this mass of humanity to remain idle and unproductive? Have any estimates been made of the economic loss to our country?

We must speedily evolve a well knit, co-ordinated and comprehensive set up for the education, vocational training, employment and rehabilitation of all handicapped groups. Since vast numbers of the handicapped live in the rural areas, our services should be extended to such areas. Wherever possible, the normal available services of community resources should be extended to the handicapped. Our endeavor should be at integration of the handicapped and not at segregating them in exclusive institutions. Everything possible must be done to raise the socio-economic status of the handicapped.

The employment of the handicapped is a national investment. In course of time, the economic returns will fully justify the initial expenditure incurred. Apart from economic considerations, the gain in terms of human values are immeasurable. In several advanced countries the handicapped have become tax payers rather than continuing to remain as tax consumers. Society owes a special duty to those whom Nature has denied the gift of a very valuable limb. Shall we fail in that duty?

*****
Report on 7th All India NAB State Branches Conference held on 2nd & 3rd March 2019 at Hotel Savera, Chennai, Tamilnadu.

The 7th All India State Branches conference was organized on 2nd and 3rd March 2019 by National Association for the Blind, India hosted by NAB Tamilnadu State Branch at Hotel Savera Banquet Hall, Chennai. The theme of the conference was “Inclusion - a holistic approach”. 75 delegates from 18 state branches of NAB, India attended the conference and presented their activities of each branch. The Conference was divided into nine business sessions and the speakers of high repute made presentations in these sessions which had an eminent Chairperson to summarize and conclude the session with appropriate questions from delegates and answers from speakers.

On 2nd of March, 2019 the conference was inaugurated by the Special Guest Mrs. Benu Zephin IFS Officer, Guest of Honour Smt. Indira Dutt, the Office Bearers of NAB, India and NAB Tamilnadu State Branch, Mr. Satya Kumar Singh, Honorary Secretary General, Shri. Hemsingh Yadav, Chairman - State Branches Committee and Vice President, NAB, India, Dr. Vimal Kumar Dengla, Honorary Secretary NAB India and Mrs Nina Reddy, President, NAB Tamilnadu State Branch and JMD of Hotel Savera, Mr Ezhil, General Secretary, NAB Tamilnadu State Branch.

Inaugural Session:

Mr. Ezhil welcomed the chief guests for the inaugural function and also the delegates all over India. He also briefed about the activities of NAB Tamilnadu State Branch. He further thanked NAB, India for giving NAB Tamil Nadu the opportunity to host the Conference. Thereafter, Mr. Satya Kumar Singh, Hon. Sec. General, NAB, India briefed the delegates about the activities of NAB, India Mumbai. He also thanked the delegates present from all over India and thanked the host branch, NAB Tamilnadu. Dr. Vimal Kumar Dengla gave a brief idea about the theme of the Conference i.e. “Inclusion- A Holistic Approach”. He further mentioned about the sessions for two days based on the topic inclusion. Eminent speakers have been invited for the sessions and therefore more information on Importance of civil society organizations could be gathered and how it can be included in disabled organizations for better inclusion, he added.

Ms. Benu Zephin mentioned that she was born without vision but her vision is live. She had to face several difficulties to achieve success and become an IFS officer. She assured of her assistance during these two days period of conference and in the future if NAB requires.

Smt. Indira Dutt mentioned in her speech that she is associated with NAB for quite long period and would like to know if she could be of any further assistance. She applauded the presence of delegates from all over India.

Mrs. Usha Uthup a renowned singer mentioned that person’s ability is to be seen rather than disability. She had started her career from Hotel Savera 50 years back. She also sang few songs on the request of Mrs. Nina Reddy and delegates present. She also assured of charity shows for NAB, India and its branches by her. Vote of thanks was given by Ms. Nina Reddy, President NAB Tamilnadu State Branch and JMD of Hotel Savera. She thanked each one on the dais, especially the guests who graced the occasion, Benu, Indira, Usha, the delegates who were present for the State Branches and NAB, India for giving an opportunity to host the Conference. She also mentioned that the Conference is going to be fruitful as there are wide range of topics and the Speakers are also expert in the field. She finally wished all the best for the Conference.

Sessions:

The following Sessions were presented by the respective experts and chaired by eminent experts in the field of disability:-
DAY 1 – 2nd March, 2019
Inclusion in the context of the UNCRPD and RPD Act
Chair Person: Mr. B. Y. Mehta, Immediate Past President, NAB, India
Speakers: Advocate Uday Warunjikar, High Court, Mumbai
          Ms. Smita Sadasivan, Member, Disability Rights Alliance
Inclusion in the manufacturing sector and consumer products i.e. mobile, electronic products user friendly
Chair Person: Mr. Sanjay Sriniwas (Head, Health and Hygiene, Savlon)
Speakers: Mr. Prashant Varma, General Secretary, NAB – Delhi & Accessibility Consultant, DAISY Consortium
          Mr. R. P. Soni, Co-ordinator, Technology Centre for the Blind, BPA, Ahmedabad.
          Mr. R. Pandi, President, Orbit, Chennai
Inclusion – Women Empowerment Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).
Chair Person: Ms. Swati Thakur Desai, Honorary Secretary, NAB, India
Speakers: Ms. Manjula Ghulati, Chair Person, Women Affairs, AICB; Asstt. Professor, Daulatram College, Delhi University
          Adv. Arva Merchant, High-Court, Chennai
Inclusion - Environmental and other Civil Society Organization
Chair Person: Mr. Shailendra Jain, Honorary Secretary, NAB, India
Speakers: Dr. A.K. Sharma, Vice President, NAB, India an Activist Poet & Physician
          Ms. Sujata Padmanabhan, Kalpavriksh, an Environment Group; Special Educator for children with multiple disabilities
          Ms. Rajul Padmanabhan, Retired Director, Vidyasagar
DAY 2 – 3rd March, 2019
Inclusion in Financial Services
Chair Person: Mr. Suhas Karnik, Honorary Secretary, NAB, India
Speaker: Mr. Prashant Naik, Manager, Union Bank of India
         Mr. R. P. Soni, Co-ordinator, Technology Centre for the Blind, BPA, Ahmedabad.
Inclusion of Visually Impaired with Additional Disabilities
Chair Person: Mr. Himanshu Das, Director & Administration, National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities
Speaker: Ms. Dipti Karnad, Principal, The Clarke School for the Deaf and the Mentally Retarded and Sadhana Unit for the Deaf blind
         Ms. Namita Jacob, Program Director, Chetana Trust, Chennai; Director, Enability, a nonprofit company developing assistive technology solutions
Inclusion in Sports and Cultural Organizations
Chair Person: Dr. Vimal Kumar Dengla, Honorary Secretary, NAB, India
Speakers: Mr. Tarak Luhar, Development Manager, NAB, Gujarat
          Mr. Atul Sahay, General Secretary, NAB, Jharkhand
Need of Accessible Environment for Inclusion
Chair Person: Mr. Gopal Agarwal, Vice President, NAB, India
Speakers: Mr. Prashant Verma, General Secretary, NAB – Delhi & Accessibility Consultant, DAISY Consortium
          Mr. Shankar Subbiah S, Assistive Technology and Accessibility Consultant
Presentation of State Branches activities:
Tamilnadu, Odisha, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh
Sikkim, Chandigarh & Punjab, Uttarakhand
Karnataka, Kerala, Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan Delhi, Haryana, Chatisgarh, Himachal Pradesh
Conclusion from the Session;

The above two days sessions were very well presented by the Speakers and summarized by the respective Chairpersons of the Sessions. The delegates also cleared their doubts from the panelists present. They were very informative and interactive Sessions in all. Overall the presentation of all the Speakers was excellent and very informative. The Chairpersons and the Speakers replied to the queries raised by the delegates present in almost all the sessions. The overall inclusion of the civil society organization with the disabled will happen or can be advocated in the following manner—

1. NAB, India and its State Branches should approach the Government authorities for various provisions made in context with UNCRPD and RPD Act. Our focus should be more on the current issues and the rigorous follow up with the Government. Correspondence should be started for accessible voting place, accessible material for disabled voters etc. as there will be general elections in India next month.

2. Information should be shared with all the branches and there should be conferences in state level also.

3. Some of the paper presenters mentioned that blind or disabled persons should show their ability to the civil society rather than waiting for an opportunity.

Relationship of NAB India vis-a-vis and its State Branches: Networking, Coordination, Strengthening and Image Building

Mr. S. K. Singh, Honorary Secretary General, NAB, India
Dr. Vimal Kumar Dengla, Honorary Secretary, NAB, India
Mr. Hemsingh Yadav, Vice President, NAB, India
Ms. Nina Reddy, President, NAB Tamil Nadu State Branch
Mr. P. Chandrashekhar, Honorary Secretary, NAB-Tamilnadu
Ms. Dipti Bhatia, CEO, NAB-Tamilnadu State Branch
Ms. Pallavi Kadam Executive Director, NAB India

There were presentations of Activities of NAB State Branches. Each Branch was given 3 to 5 minutes to speak about their activities. On the second day, the last session was on relationship of NAB, India and its State Branches. This was an open session, wherein the Office Bearers of the Branch were asked to give suggestions on strengthening, networking, coordination and Image Building of NAB, India and its State Branches. There were various suggestions from the Office Bearers present from the State Branches that—

1. NAB, India can have Joint Projects with State Branches. Blind Welfare/Newsletter could be circulated to all NAB District/State Branches. Membership and voting rights should be given to the branches. Branches should be made aware about resources available for financial/other support from NAB, India.

2. There should be inclusion of corporates in our decision making. There should be sighted President, who is an active person in corporate.

3. There should be a knowledge sharing platform of a group. Considering the deterioration of population of the blind, how long NAB can work.

4. During interactions with Executive Director of NAB, India, members emphasized right to vote in NAB Election, visit of office bearers to NAB Goa Branch, organizing state level program with the support of the branch and financial support and felicitation at NAB, India at Head Quarters in Mumbai for district branches.

5. Avoid saying branch but part of the group of national network.

6. NAB is a brand name and utilization of the brand name should be proper. Visit of any office bearer/staff of NAB, India as a mentor should be on regular basis and their expertise to be shared with State branches/district branches.

7. Conferences should be hosted annually by different branches. Kerala and Goa State Branches were ready to host the next Conference.

Summarized Suggestions:

NAB State Branches should be able to send their representatives to Executive Council Meeting of NAB, India, Whatsapp group for NAB State Branches, give and take relation should not be restricted to finance – other resources also can be shared, NAB
State Branches to be included in Sub-Committee and the State Branches should be independent.

**Valedictory Function:**

The valedictory function of the Conference began at 4 pm on 3rd March, 2019. The Chief Guest – Shri. N. Murali, Kasturi & Sons Ltd., graced the occasion. Mrs. AlagaMuthu, Immediate Past President of NAB Tamilnadu State Branch welcomed and introduced the Chief Guest. Dr. Vimal Kumar Dengla, Hon. Secretary summarized the deliberations that took place on 2nd & 3rd March, 2019. Mr. Prashant Verma, General Secretary, of NAB Delhi Branch gave feed-back on behalf of all the delegates that the Sessions planned and the Speakers invited were commendable. All the logistic arrangements were excellent, he added.

The Chief Guest complimented delegates who were present from all State Branches of India. He also mentioned various activities of NAB, India since inception and congratulated for conducting such a Conference in Chennai.

Thereafter, Mrs. Nina Reddy gave the vote of thanks. She thanked the Chief Guest, the Office Bearers of NAB, India, the Chairpersons, the delegates, the Speakers, NAB Tamilnadu State Branch and its staff members for their kind corporation and support in organizing the Conference in an excellent way.

**Conclusion:**

Overall the two days conference organized by NAB, India hosted by NAB Tamilnadu State Branch concluded with excellence. All the delegates, Office Bearers of NAB, India, and Office Bearers of NAB Tamilnadu State Branch appreciated about the logistic arrangements, topics of the Conference, Chairpersons and Speakers of the Conference.

The host had organized musical orchestra of blind artists of Tamilnadu State Branch on 2nd March, 2019 late evening, also dinner was organized by Mr. Ezhilat, Hotel Presidency Club on 1st March, 2019. The President NAB Tamil Nadu state branch and the delegates expressed that the conference should be held annually.

The conference ended with a memorable note of:
- Knowledge sharing and learning experience
- Meet of all the NAB State Branches
- Meet of experts in the field
- Entertainment
- Good Hospitality

*****
Under Mumbai I. E. Programme, in the academic year 2018-19 in all 61 visually impaired students appeared S.S.C. Examination through various modes and we are proud to mention that all the students successfully passed out examination with flying colours. Out of these, 27 students appeared through regular stream of which 25 from Maharashtra S.S.C. Examination Board, 1 from CBSC Board and 1 through ICSC Board. 28 students appeared as an external students by filling up Form No. 17 & 6 students appeared through NIOS.

NAB Education Department in Mumbai serves over 250 students through team of 14 teachers. To facilitate the smooth functioning of the programme, to enhance the special skills and to accelerate overall development of students we have set up 4 centres in Mumbai and its outskirts. Some of these students avail services at the centre.

Tejas Ajay Kumar Rawat was a student of CBSC Board, scored 96% and stood first in his class of 60 students. In Science he scored 95 marks and in Maths 99 out of 100. Along with academics he also likes cycling, singing and swimming.

Our centres at Mulund (set up in collaboration with Maharashtra Seva Sangh) and Vileparle (supported by a team of volunteers in the premises of Gomantak Seva Sangh) are especially started for those students who are dropped out from mainstream education due to some unforeseen reasons. Most of them are from lower social income group and had to leave education in between. These students appear S.S.C. examination externally by filling up Form No. 17 through Maharashtra State Board or through NIOS. Proud to say that with all odds they have come up with good results. Also credit goes to number of unselfish and hard working volunteers.

To mention a few, Kajal is a visually impaired girl from a lower economic background. She also has deformity in both the legs. With the fullest support from her mother and NAB teachers she completed her 10th.

Pramod was away from school education for about
fourteen years but with all his countless efforts he could succeed, passed with good marks and proved that age is not a bar for education and success.

From Vileparle Centre, 15 students appeared externally. Fatima and Maisar are twin sisters. Both multiple disabled but irrespective of their physical restrictions and poor socio-economic condition scored good marks.

Neha Bhanushali is a professional singer. She participates in various singing competitions. She was in top five in the show 'Voice of India'.

Aayushi is a Piano player and practice on it rigorously every day. Deven sonar is good instrumental player, singer and poet.

Preeti is a winner of 'Gloria Radio-an International Singing Competition' and a Gold Medalist in Olympiad General Knowledge competition. She scored 86%.

Aaditya Chavan, a visually and physically disabled student, using wheel chair, a state level winner of elocution competition. Out of 100 he acquired 84 marks in Science and 94 marks in Maths and in aggregate scored 89.40%.

Abraham, an orchestra singer, also has his own album of songs, scored 86%.

Nirbhay is a fruit vendor, appeared exam through NIOS and passed with good marks.

The present success of our students is a fruit of collective efforts of students, their parents, school teachers, and last but not the least volunteers, i.e. social workers who always eager to help visually impaired children.

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Akshar Picture Project

Swati Thakurdesai
Honorary Secretary
NAB, India

Inner wheel Club of Bombay Midtown initiated an 'Akshar Picture Project' in the year of their 50th Anniversary in association with National Association for the Blind, India. To celebrate this event they organised an essay competition on the World Women's Day. The uniqueness of this competition is that it was an inclusive competition where sighted lady members of Inner Wheel Club participated in this competition along with visually impaired ladies from all over India. The topic was also common to both 'My Town'. In all 32 visually impaired girls participated. The winners and all the participants were honoured by Inner Wheel Club of Bombay Midtown by gifts and certificates in a special programme organised on the occasion of World Women's Day.

Smt. Rajul Shah, ISO, IWC, Smt. Meeta Seth, ISO, IWC and Smt. Asha Singh, President, IWC and all the members of IWC were whole heatedly and dedicatedly involved in this 'Akshar Picture Project'. They published an 'Akshar Picture Album' of selected essays from all the participants. They were keen on bringing this album in Braille, as well, so as to make it available for visually impaired readers. It's indeed commendable.

It was our pleasure to join hands with Inner Wheel Club of Bombay Midtown in this project. We extend our sincere gratitude towards the IWC of Bombay Midtown and looking forward to the continued association with them.

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NEW VENTURE AT NAB, INDIA - NAB PERFUMERY COLLEGE

Rita Rego

National Association For the Blind, India in collaboration with CPL Aromas is in the process of initiating a Diploma Course in Fragrance for visually challenged persons.

This course will serve as a holistic training with a module featuring sessions from the Fragrance Industry and students will be trained from basic identification of fragrances to advanced perfumery by qualified faculty.

On successful completion of the Diploma Course, eligible students will be assisted in getting suitable placements.

Only those candidates who qualify in an interview round will be enrolled in this Diploma Course.

Eligibility:

1. Students who can communicate well, have a keen sense of smell, determined to learn, and the zeal to work hard will be selected.

2. Age - 16 to 35yrs

3. College Timing - 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm / Monday to Friday (5 Days)

4. On successfully completing this course, certified students will be assisted in getting jobs in suitable role in fragrance industry.

Venue: NAB, Worli - Head Office

Interested students please contact at
Tel: 24935370 Ext.220/242/244

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ANNOUNCEMENT

ICEVI Sense West Asia Conference in Kathmandu

The International Council for the Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) West Asia is known for organizing National and West Asia level conferences. The ICEVI WA and Sense India shall organize the next West Asia conference in Kathmandu during 16th -18th February, 2020. The Conference shall be hosted by Action on Disability Rights and Development (ADRAD), Nepal and ICEVI, Nepal. The venue of the conference is Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC), Lalitpur. The theme of the conference is “Inclusive Education – Leaving No One Behind”. The complete details of the Conference are available on the website www.iceviwestasia.in. The contact details of Secretariat, key personnel, members of Program Committee and Host Committee and list of hotels are available on in the First Announcement which has uploaded on this website.

This conference shall be ideal opportunity for the Special Educators and Education Administrators in the field of education of children with visual impairment, deaf blindness and multiple disabilities to participate and to understand latest approaches in the field of education, child preparatory services, advocacy and legislation for ensuring that every such child has access to education.

The registration for this conference is now open on the site www.iceviwestasia.in/registration. The international agencies operating in West Asia are most welcome to sponsor participants to this conference. As this is a green conference, all details shall be shared on website, through email iceviwestasia@gmail.com

*****
!! OUR ARMY IS OUR PRIDE! LET'S PAY TRIBUTE TO THEM! JOIN HANDS WITH US !!

Department of Women’s Empowerment of National Association for the Blind, India, sending one lakh rakhis to jawans on the border since last 18 yrs. The uniqueness of these rakhis, is they are made in TRI-COLOURS of our TIRANGA and made by visually impaired ladies. It's a source of income for these ladies. Approximately 75 visually impaired ladies are involved in this project. We pay them for every rakhi made by them. Cost per rakhi is Rs. 5/-

YOUR CONTRIBUTION:

1. Deposit with us the amount of rakhis you wish to send. (Mini. 20 rakhis = Rs. 100/-)

2. If you deposit amount for 1000 rakhis and above, we will send those rakhis with your name written on it.

Please send your cheque on NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND. You will get 80 G certificate (Income Tax Exemption Certificate) along with the official receipt from NAB.

For details please contact:

NAB DWE, REAY ROAD, MUMBAI
93 72 76 63 10/ 98 19 43 45 59/ 99 87 17 54 92

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झिंग झिंग झिंगाट कार्यक्रम में नेब की लड़कियों की सहभागिता
प्रश्न उपाध्ये
संचालक, महिला सशक्तीकरण विभाग

रे रोड स्थित नेब महिला सशक्तीकरण विभाग में हम दृष्टिबाधित महिलाओं को तीन साल का व्यवसाय प्रशिक्षण देते है। महिलाएं इस प्रशिक्षण द्वारा आलमनिभर हो और स्वयं रोजगार या व्यवसाय के माध्यम से अर्जित कर सकती हैं और अपने लिए अपने परिवार के विवाह का विकास कर सकते हैं जब यह प्रशिक्षण दे रहे हैं। हमारे प्रशिक्षण केंद्र में हम समय कुल 13 प्रशिक्षणाधीन महिलाएं हैं।

इस प्रशिक्षण दरम्यान हम ने केवल महिलाओं को व्यवसाय का प्रशिक्षण देते हैं लेकिन उनके मीटर के चुपे हुए कलागुणों को भी विकसित करने का प्रयास करते हैं, जिससे उनका व्यक्तित्व उम्मकर सामने आए और वह आत्मविश्वासपूर्वक जिंदगी जी सके। इसी कलागुणों को अधिक महिला मिले यह सीखकर हमारे विभाग में झिंग झिंग झिंगाट मराठी अंतर्क्षण कार्यक्रम में समिलित होने के लिए प्रयास शुरू किया। हमारे इस कार्यक्रम के अंत में दिखाई देनेवाले फोन नंबर पर मार्च महिने में कांप किया और लगातार उनसे संबंध बनाये रखा। उसके बाद हैं की उल्लेख की ओर से श्रीमती निष्कम पुनर्जीवि को हमारे पत्र तथा महिला विभाग का जानकारी प्रदान कर। उनके आदेशानुसार हमने लड़कियों के गाने का एक छोटा विडियो बनाया और उन्हें पॉर्टल जीर पर भेज दिया। इस विडियो में 5 सेंटर ट्रेनिंग तथा हमारे एक हूम वर्कर ने सहभागिता की।

3 अप्रैल, 2019 को निष्कम जी ने हमारे ऑफिस में कांप किया और 4 अप्रैल, 2019 को हमारी 5 लड़कियां विविध, मलिन, मातृभूमि, कृपणा और विशेष का साथ लेकर 4 स्टूडिओ में अनलॉक चित्रकृत कैडम श्लोक है उल्लेख के लिए पहुंचे। साथ में हमारे रे रोड संग्रह की बाकी लड़कियां तथा लड़के भी शूटिंग में वर्ष के तीन प्रयास हुए थे। कुल मिलकर 27 जोग दे रोड ऑफिस से समिलित हुए थे। उसी दिन शूटिंग हुआ और 8 मई, 2019 को विशेष एंटरटेनमेंट के साथ दो दूसरे मराठी चेनल के झिंग झिंग झिंगाट इस मराठी अंतर्क्षण कार्यक्रम में प्रसारित किया गया। कुल तीन टीम थी और हर एक टीम में पॉर्टल दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुतीकरण थे। हमारी लड़कियों ने कार्यक्रम प्रस्तुति दरम्यान नेब महिला सशक्तीकरण विभाग की अंतर्जिह्येंट के बाये में दर्शकों को जानकारी दी। हमारी लड़कियों की टीम दुसरे स्थान पर रही। इस तरह से सभी ने खुश मजा किया।

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Digital Braille

Prathamesh Bendre

Digital Braille, the thing of Contemporary world - When around 15 million people live in complete darkness and India is home for the maximum of these visually impaired individuals, tech persons are bound to come forward with new technology solutions for various daily challenges. Mobile applications are being developed to tackle different visual limitations, websites are being made accessible to meet the requirements of screen reading softwares and the copyright act is amended to make the publishers legally binding to make the soft-copies available in accessible format.

Though these technological and legal steps are positive, there was also the emerging need to help the traditional means of access to sustain and develop. One of the oldest and widely popular means of accessing information among the visually impaired individuals across world is the tactile script of Braille. Started around eighteen hundred, Braille opened doors of information for the visually impaired through textbooks, magazines and other leisure reading material. The writing tools like the Braille slate and later the Braille typewriters enabled the visually impaired persons to express their thoughts on paper. But with the evolving times, the traditional Braille writing and reading methods became confined because of their inherent shortcomings. The Braille books became very bulky and expensive, writing with the stylus by manually punching dots was physically taxing, and the content written in Braille on paper was not accessible to the sighted world, making it limited in its scope. Digital Braille In order to remove the shortcomings of the traditional Braille, there came up the digital Braille devices called refreshable Braille displays.

These devices had the technological capabilities to get rid of some of the hassles, but on contrary, they remained way beyond reach because of their extravagant cost. However, these devices showed to the world that digital Braille is possible, Braille can be typed and read effortlessly in digital format, and modern digital devices like computers and smart phones can also be accessed in Braille. Braille Me, the way forward if technology is available, but is not able to impact lives due to its high price, then such technology is not really of any practical use. Till about 5 years ago, visually impaired students and working professionals were getting to see the high-cost affluent Braille displays in different technology exhibitions and events, having a starting price range of around 2 lakh rupees, and going up to 8 lakh rupees depending on different features. They were happy with the utilities that such devices had to offer, like digitally carrying Braille books in SD card, typing in Braille with Braille keypad, accessing data on computer in Braille etc. But the price made them feel hopeless. On this background, a tech duo and IIT Bombay graduates, Surabhi Sriwastava and Shyam Shah came up with a low-cost digital solution Braille Me, worlds most affordable digital Braille device.. May it be school examinations, office notes or leisure reading, Braille Me is the one stop solution for the content needs of visually impaired students as well as working professionals. Started In 2015, Innovision is trying to solve the problems related to literacy and access to information through Braille Me.

What all Braille Me has to offer? Braille Me is a 20-cell braille display with 6 Braille keys for typing in Braille. It comes at a size of a diary, making it extremely portable and easy to carry. In Indian context, where we have multiple languages, access to Braille content in regional languages becomes very crucial. Keeping in mind this need, Braille Me supports around 40 different languages, including major Indian languages and some of the popular international languages. It is completely digital, making it paperless Braille. All the files that the user creates are saved on the memory card inside the device.

Now, instead of carrying bulky Braille books, one only has to download a soft-copy of the book, it can be in any language. Just copy the book on to the SD card, and start reading it instantly in Braille. Braille Me’s software automatically converts the sighted text in Braille and vice versa. In other words, how the soft copy book in sighted text automatically gets converted in Braille, similarly, if one writes anything in Braille on Braille Me, saves it and shares that file with any sighted person, he or she will be able to read that same text as sighted text.

This Braille to sighted text and vice versa conversion is the truly a game-changer in to days world, when
the visually impaired students depend on scribes to write their exams. Now, if the question paper is provided in soft copy on the SD card, the student can read the question paper on Braille Me, write the answers in Braille, and submit the SD card. When the examiner opens that file, regardless of being Braille-literate, he or she will be able to read the answers in sighted text. Similarly, assignments, homework and other academic tasks become very simple and effortless. Besides the stand-alone mode, Braille Me can also connect with smart phones via Bluetooth and computers via USB. Now your messages, E-mails and everything can be accessed and read in Braille on Braille Me. And working professionals can actually do a power point presentation in office independently in Braille by accessing the computer through Braille Me. With all such inclusive utilities at an affordable price, Braille Me has gained a lot of attention globally in a very short span. Besides India, Braille Me has made an integral place for itself in the daily lives of visually impaired Individuals in 27 geographies with different linguistic backgrounds. At just INR30000, Braille Me presents itself as a note-taker, reader and a digital Braille tablet with access to computers and smart phones. To procure a Braille Me of your own, you can contact NAB India, or can visit the Innovisions website at Http://www.innovisiontech.co. NAB India takes pride for taking Braille Me in the hands of visually impaired individuals in the capacity of an esteemed distributor. Innovision and NAB India are working together towards a day when disability will not stand in the way of independent living of a visually impaired individual. Through Braille Me, we can see a hope that this centuries old tactile script of Braille will not die a silent death where there is audio books and screen readers making buzz everyday.

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Introduction

Our focus is more on social responsibility, inclusiveness and reaching out to the privileged and underprivileged. We do have to respect and value their ability for their meaningful life in our society. Our challenge is to develop 'Accessible Safety Based Sustainable Cost Effective Devices' that improves ability and mobility of the Visually Challenged. This can be achieved only through search, research, design, develop by synchronising our-self with the PWD persons. As of we know that Visually Challenged do have accessing very limited information in public places/buildings. They do not get much informations instantly about their surroundings or premises like normal persons since because of their visual limitations.

The inventions proved that they are second to none in meeting their requirement and ensured their Barrier free Mobility, accessibility, Social Justice and Empowerment. We are committed converting their dreams in to reality in 'Barrier free Mobility and accessibility',

OUR DREAM

I have just one dream to help disabled persons become confident enough so that they too can chase their dreams. These persons are immensely talented. We should refrain from being over sympathetic towards them, as it demotivating and distances them from us. Instead, we should converse with them the way we do with other persons so that they can feel they are no different'

Existing practice: For normal and general public facilities are available to access required informations by way of print labels/posters. When it is for the 'Visually Disabled' accessing of/for such information they have to depend. Though in some places 'Brailed' labels are pasted to access information by the VH these pasted labels are not easily accessed by the VH unless otherwise someone guided or informed?

As of all we know that most of the public buildings/Government building having 'RAILS' to support or guide people at entrance. Most of them never forget to place their hands on 'RAIL'. Normally the 'Rails' are being provided to support and discipline the people while entering in to the premises.

Proposed idea

Taking advantage of this Rail in most of the buildings entrances we introduce braille script on rails to provide any meaningful informations those can be useful and required for the VH to understand where is where and what is what in the building at the entrance itself. Similar brailling system can also be introduced on the rails of the gardens to explain about the plants etc. It is practised whenever public/disabled persons step in may try to place their hands automatically on rail those are available at entrances. The braille strips/brailed on rollers i.e in steel/aluminium/plastic etc pasted/inserted on rails would help them for easy reading and access information.

Two types of braillings are prepared, one is permanent in nature and second one replaceable. Permanent braille strips are used where there is no need of replacement required like 'WAY TO TOILET' ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE, so on. The temporary in
nature of strips are nothing but replaceable like day to day/ current informations and so on.

**Why this design has been preferred?**

The existing railings should not be damaged for the want of any additional special arrangements for visually handicapped barrier free mobility and to access information /messages. Even this is damaged by any anti-social elements it doesn’t cost much and damage to the railings. The brailed fixtures/ strips to be fixed without damaging the existing structure those can be damaged by drilling, screwing etc for want of fixing. Some places may require permanent fixing braille strips, whereas some places like educational institutions require replaceable system of braille strips those are realised. The fixture designed by us is replaceable, cost effective, maintenance free and do not damage the railings at any cost. These fixtures have the facility to replace the braille strips and as when required.

**To Whom it should be and why it should be?**

It is said that ‘Great ideas’ are not enough and it goes in vain when it is not judiciously executed. Hence execution a must for the needful persons use at right time and at right place.

In the recent past it was discussed and study report revealed that most of the electronic devices are disabled (VH) users friendly and they do have easy access to them. However these facilities are having its own limitations.

The information required by them at desired places in and around public buildings, places should be known to them through easy accessing designs and set up.

It has become our moral responsibility and duty to attend such problems. One should be educated, motivated and inspire them to be part of our able society.

'It is said that we have to judiciously use Technology as a mean to ‘Empower Disabled and privileged people’ to bridge gap between ‘Hope and Opportunity’.

‘One should not forget that any inventions may be an incident but its journey and end should be an exciting and interesting in creating history’

**How this idea has come?**

We noticed the several public buildings and disabled organisation are having facility of 'Hand Rails' those are to be used either to support them physically or to guide them. Any one enters in to the premises first they place their hands on railings. Taking advantage of this practice we realised that this may be the ideal and standard place to have instruction in braille to facilitate/communicate visually handicapped about in and around of the premises. The rail can be the standard locations where the visually handicapped to get any information those they may require without others help. 'Rail means there may be information in Braille’

**Objective of DESIGN.**

In general This may be the first attempt considering their limitations in accessibility. Designing of such facility for the visually disabled persons is essential.

**Objectives/Special Merits**

- Removes feeling of discrimination.

- Ensured Social Justice and Empowerment in Mobility and accessing information of public facilities of their own.

- Inclusive Technology for Inclusive growth and decision making.

- Accessible, Cost effective, maintenance free and ensures safety.

- Simplified for the Visually Challenged Persons.

- It is a cost effective design developed for the cause with locally available sources.

- It is a sustainable design.

- Can standardize that the rails in public buildings should have facility of braille to access information by the visually handicapped.

- We are committed to convert their dreams in to reality for independent living style.
Safety precautions.

Since this design doesn't require any man/machine power, maintenance, etc, it can be easily adapted for implementation at any public places. Considered their limitations and possible any injuries we had taken care of all the parameters to design for the convenience of the disabled.

Where you can get this product?

You can get it from either from NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF VISUAL DISABILITY (NIEPVD) earlier it was NIVH, DEHRADUN or you can get it from Dr. Milan Dass, cell no 09493977016 or email: milandass@yahoo.com. The cost of the each piece is Rs: 100/- (including all cost). The braille writing on braille paper can be done as you like and insert it in to the piece as shown in the picture or video in “YOUTUBE” enter ‘Braille on Rail by Milan Dass’.

Conclusion

Making use of such unique product judiciously would support the visually challenged person in developing their ability/mobility and independent. This may be the first attempt to provide meaningful facility for the 'Barrier free Mobility or accessing information independently by the Visually Challenged Persons.' One should not forget that any inventions may be an incident but its journey and end should be an exciting and interesting in creating history'

About the inventor

The product was designed and developed by Dr. Milan Dass, (who is retired Sr.Research Officer (Technology) from NIEPVD, Dehradun and had won 7 National Awards for his inventions) and his Co-investigators

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Cricket Players Association to include para cricketers, gets thumbs up for inclusion

Over the years, para sports has been sidelined and marginalized in India. Things are changing for the better but we still have a long way to go. Our para sportsmen, who are exceptionally talented and skilled, are struggling to make ends meet. It is high time that our government steps up for inclusive sports. 

A newly formed committee by a Committee of Administrators (CoA) Cricket Players Association (CPA) will be a part of CPA. Even disabled cricketers will be included. This is truly a great step towards inclusion.

CPA will be formed in Mumbai in a couple of weeks, and works are currently undergoing to register it. CPA will be funded by the Board of Cricket Control of India (BCCI). Details of the funding have not been revealed. But the CoA will decide upon how much the BCCI will have to spend for CPA. The board management has already been contacted for the same. Para cricket players across India have given thumbs up for this initiative which will help promote para sports in the country.

Shiv Prasad S, Vice-Captain of Indian wheelchair cricket team says that it is high-time that such a step is taken towards promoting talents in the country.

This is indeed a great step towards inclusion. BCCI has been ignoring differently abled sportsmen for a long time in spite of repeated requests to help us. Formation of CPA is going to encourage more talents to come forward and play for our country. Talks regarding inclusion of para sportmen into mainstream are often discussed. But nothing concrete has been done. Hope this doesn't end up like that Shiv Prasad S, Vice-Captain, Indian Wheelchair Cricket Team.

The Lodha Committee has clearly recommended BCCI to fund for CPA. Members of the Cricket Association for the Blind in India and Physically Challenged will also be part of the association. Pioneers of cricket including Kapil Dev, Anshuman Gaekwad, Bharat Reddy and Shantha Rangaswamy are all part of CPA.

“This is great news. For the last twenty years, we have been knocking on BCCI’s doors. Now they have finally agreed to support visually impaired and disabled cricketers. We have almost 25,000 blind cricketers in India and many other cricketers with different kinds of disabilities. We have won many titles for our country as well. So it is high time something like this to promote us is introduced”, says Shekhar Naik, Former Vice-Captain, Indian Blind Cricket Team.
**Lego to launch braille bricks soon**

Lego the small plastic bricks are a favorite of people across the world irrespective of their age. Lego toys are considered to be one of the most educative toys that incite people to use their imagination and dexterity.

From children to adults, most people love playing with the Lego bricks and creating structures by connecting the pieces.

Lego is a toy company based in Denmark and is known for coming up with new Lego concepts every now and then. Lego was founded in 1932 and continues to remain one of the most popular toy brands in the world. Legos not only encourage players to think innovatively, they also help in improving fine motor skills and concentration.

The company is bringing a new product that can be used to teach braille to children with visual impairments.

The 'LEGO braille bricks' will carry different braille letters, numbers and blind children will be able to feel them and learn through play. The new braille bricks will also have the letters and numbers written on them as printed characters and sighted people would be able to read them. The bricks have been designed to remain compatible with other Lego bricks as well.

The Lego Company shared the news on social media and tweeted, “We’re super excited to introduce LEGO Braille Bricks – a new product from The Lego Foundation that will help blind and visually impaired children learn Braille in a playful and inclusive way!”

The ‘LEGO braille bricks' set will contain around 250 pieces with the complete braille alphabet, as well as some numbers and math symbols. The set will also have ‘inspiration for teaching and interactive games.' The bricks are expected to be launched in the market by 2020.

Siddhant Shah is a Heritage Architect, Access Consultant and founder of Access for All. He shared his thoughts about the LEGO initiative. It is a great thing that this is happening now although I feel that it's a bit too late. LEGO is already making bricks with a system of dots and they could have made the braille bricks earlier. None the less, it is a great movement as the literacy towards braille is going away, lot of visually impaired people are being drawn towards audio books and other technology. What I have learned from teachers and professionals working with the visually impaired children is that learning braille is vital for their education. Braille helps them understand the basic of language, grammar.

He added, "At the same time, through Lego, awareness about braille can be spread among others and people can be encouraged to learn braille the same way they learn other languages like Spanish, mandarin."

Lego was given this wonderful idea to make braille bricks a few years ago by a few associations working for the blind and they were also later consulted in the designing of the new toys. Padma Shastry is the founder-Director of Samam Vidya, an organisation dedicated to educational needs of children with disabilities. Padma Shastry is a strong believer of using play as an effective teaching tool.

'I am very excited that Lego toys will now be used to educate children with visual impairments. It is important to involve the children in the learning process and use different methods to build their interest and curiosity," she says.

‘LEGO braille bricks' have been made in Danish, Norwegian, English and Portuguese language. The prototypes of the bricks are currently being tested in Denmark, Brazil, UK, and Norway.

Sushmitha Bubna, Founder Voice Vision also shared her thoughts about accessible toys for blind children. “It is a wonderful idea and will definitely make learning braille more fun for blind children. Simple yet effective ideas like Braille on Lego bricks can go a long way in making the world inclusive and barrier free,” she said.

*Source: Newz Hook Weekly Newsletter*
Trained blind women to help early detection of breast cancer

These women may be visually challenged, but they are trained to conduct a certain kind of touch that will help early detection of breast cancer. Life science company Bayer is conducting an awareness session for its women employees; the session is called 'Discovering Hands' wherein blind women will use their highly developed sense of touch for early detection of abnormalities, which could be indicative of breast cancer.

Such an exercise is being organized by Bayer at its Thane office on May 24, Bayer has joined hands with the National Association for the Blind NAB, India Centre for Blind Women to train blind women.

Prerna Dharni, the programme manager said, “Tactile breast examination is an innovative technique developed by renowned German gynecologists Dr Frank Hoffiman. It uses the highly developed sensory skills of trained visually impaired women to detect the smallest abnormality in the breast. They are called medical tactical examiners (MTE). Six girls from the first batch and another six girls from the second batch are currently doing their internship.” She informed that the training is conducted by the NAB, India Centre for Blind Women, New Delhi, in collaboration with Discovering Hands, Germany. The programme is supported by Bayer Crop Science in India.

The Bayer India spokes-person said, over a span of three years, the company proposes to reach 45,000 women and train 21 MTE and it will be subsequently extended to other cities in India. The blind examiner can find lumps significantly smaller than physicians due to their tactile sense.

Bayer South Asia head (corporate social responsibility) said the company supports the initiative to encourage impact investment that can help empower women. “Discovering Hands is a fine example of supporting innovation for a social cause,” he noted.

The impaired women undergo a nine-month-long training, after which they are certified as MTEs. Through the Discovering Hands initiative, perceived disability is leveraged as a talent and a completely new field of meaningful employment is created.

According to the Union Health Ministry, breast cancer ranks as the most common form of cancer among Indian women with the rate of occurrence as high as 25.8 per 100,000 women and mortality of 12.7 per 100,000 women.

Source: DNA Newspaper
7th All India State Branches Conference 2019
A Braille version of “Charaiveti! Charaiveti!!” a book written by the Honorable Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Shri. Ram Naik

Book released by Mr. Devendra Fadnavis
Honorable Chief Minister, Maharashtra