



# *All India Confederation of the Blind*

*Alliutid to Wort Blind Union*



**25** YEARS  
DEDICATION



# ALL INDIA CONFEDERATION OF THE BLIND

## A SILVER LINING ON INDIA'S BLIND SCENE



As All India Confederation of the Blind (AICB) completes 25 years of its establishment, it is time for us to look back, take stock, and move on.

The genesis of AICB can be traced back to very small, even humble beginning. It started its work in September 1980 in a small, shanty room in the residence of one of its founders. The Confederation had a budget of just a few hundred rupees contributed by a founding member, and by way of staff could engage only a part-time clerk.

However, it is rightly said 'what is once brief is ever-building', and so, the Confederation continued on

undeterred by seemingly insuperable odds and challenges. For, it had the invaluable capital of the invincible spirit and resolve of its founders, the vision for enhanced opportunities for persons with visual impairment and abiding faith in their capabilities, and the goodwill of the community.

The outcome: the Confederation today has a building of its own at a prime location in north-west Delhi, three buildings in the village of Behrampur, District Gurgaon, Haryana State, a budget running into about Rs twenty million, a complement of about 100 social workers/rehabilitation professionals, an edifice of impressive services for blind and low vision persons across the country, and thousands of beneficiaries, supporters and well-wishers in India and overseas.



### VISION STATEMENT

We strive towards empowering people with visual impairment, generating awareness of their needs within the family and communities, and together, work towards their genuine inclusion in the society. Our ultimate dream is to create an environment, which allows every visually impaired individual to grow together, realizing the similarities respecting the differences. Our primary mission is to open up and widen the range of opportunities for blind and low vision persons in every possible sphere of activity, enabling them to function as equal, contributing and dignified members of the society.

We wish to be recognized as an organisation with a

'difference'. The difference lies in the fact:

Our programmes are planned and shaped by visually impaired persons themselves.

Yet, we are not apochial or exclusionist in our firmly believe in inclusion and

partnership

Our main thrust is reaching out to the hitherto unreached segments of the blind population.

Our methodology and strategy is, to deliver services to those who need it most across a wide spectrum of the blind population.

Our challenge is to create new and innovative training and rehabilitation opportunities for blind and low vision persons.

## STRUCTURE

We are an organisation bringing together under one-fold **state and grass-root associations/groups** of the blind, called **Affiliates/Branches**. We have **20** such **Affiliates** across the country.

**We have excellent relations at the national and international levels. We are widely appreciated and recognized by the Government of India and other State Governments. We are represented on a number of Government Advisory/Consultative**

**Bodies/Committees on disability matters.**

**We are affiliated to the World Blind Union, the apex international body of the blind having consultative status with the UN. We house the Secretariat of the Asian Blind Union. Our Secretary-General is also the elected Secretary-General of the Asian Blind Union; the Chairperson of our Women's Forum is the Chair of the Asian Blind Union's Women's Committee.**

## RANGE OF SERVICES

We are engaged in waging a relentless war on the conditions of deprivation, denial and destitution faced by blind persons -- **educa** old, urban or rural.

encompass a kaleidoscopic range and variety for blind children and adults across the country. We provide:

- o Meaningful pre-school and school education.
- o Accelerated access to information.
- o Appropriate-technology application.
- o **Innovative vocational training**
- o **Securing gainful 40 challenging employment;**

- o **Need \_Aged rural rehabilitation.**
- o **Self e vloyment athrities in rural craft.**
- o **Services for the geriabic greuP-**
- o **Womenempowerment.**
- o Capacity-building.
- o Lobbying and Advocacy.
- o Judicial Activism.

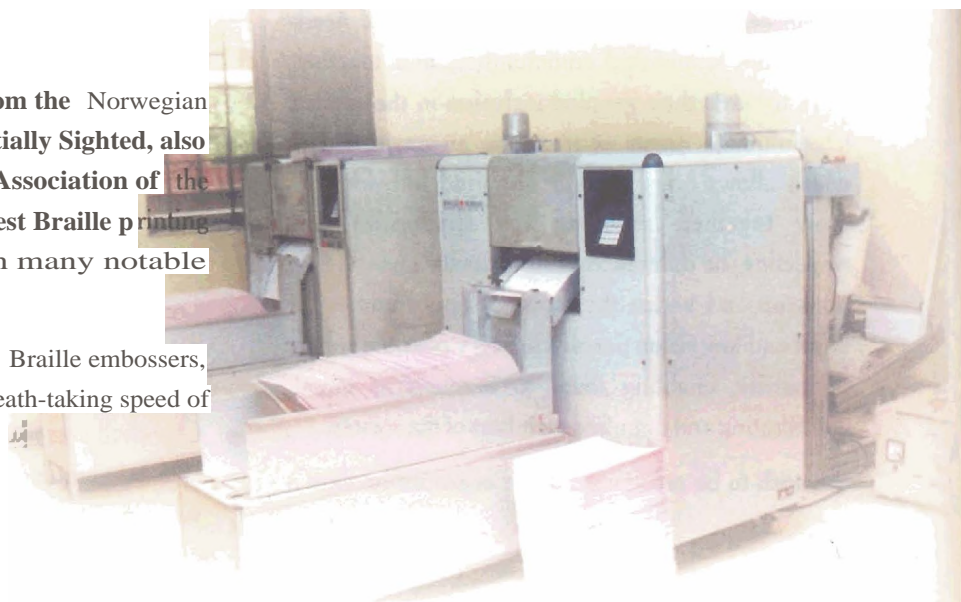
All our services are **provided free or at nominal contribution, in view of the exb-emely vulnerabk socio-economic status of find persons in the country.**

## EDUCATION

### **AIWIAICB Braille Press**

**Set up in 1997 with assistance from the Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted, also assisted by the Swiss Umbrella Association of the Blind, the Press today is the largest Braille printing house in the country with many notable accomplishments to its credit:**

- o **Equipped with two high-speed Braille embossers, each producing Braille at a breath-taking speed of 400 characters a second.**



- Produced 928 Braille titles "tuning ina 218186 volumes and 20768590 pages.

Provided school textbooks in Braille at the cost of print baoks, to students in States of Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, with support from Amway Opportunity Foundation, a social wing of Amway India=Enterprises.

- Made accessible to the blind, National Book Trust Publications in Braille in various languages at a price less than that of their print editions.
- Beginning July 2004, undertaken a new Project of providing blind readers about 100 titles in English and Hindi under the sponsorship of SEN, a Holland based donor agency, at one-fifth Braille production cost.
- Brings out two bi-monthly Journals in Hindi and English (Jigyasa and Braille Digest) articles from popular print magazines.

### NCB Recording Studio

- Seeks to meet the requirements of reading material for blind students pursuing higher education.
- Produced till date more than 500 titles on audio cassettes.
- Making available to readers on request, recorded books obtained from other libraries. in India and

outside under the Library-Loan Scheme.

- Brings out a monthly audio-journal 'Shravanika' in Hindi which has wide circulation.

### Braille Equipment Bank

Located at its main office in Delhi and in the cities of Chennai, Hyderabad, Patna, Bhubaneswar, Indore, Aimer. Malerkotla and Baroda, these Banks supply various Forms of educational and other basic assistive devices to blind persons. These devices relate to Braille writing, computing, mobility, remation, household work etc., and are provided at costs even less than those charged by the manufacturers. Devices worth

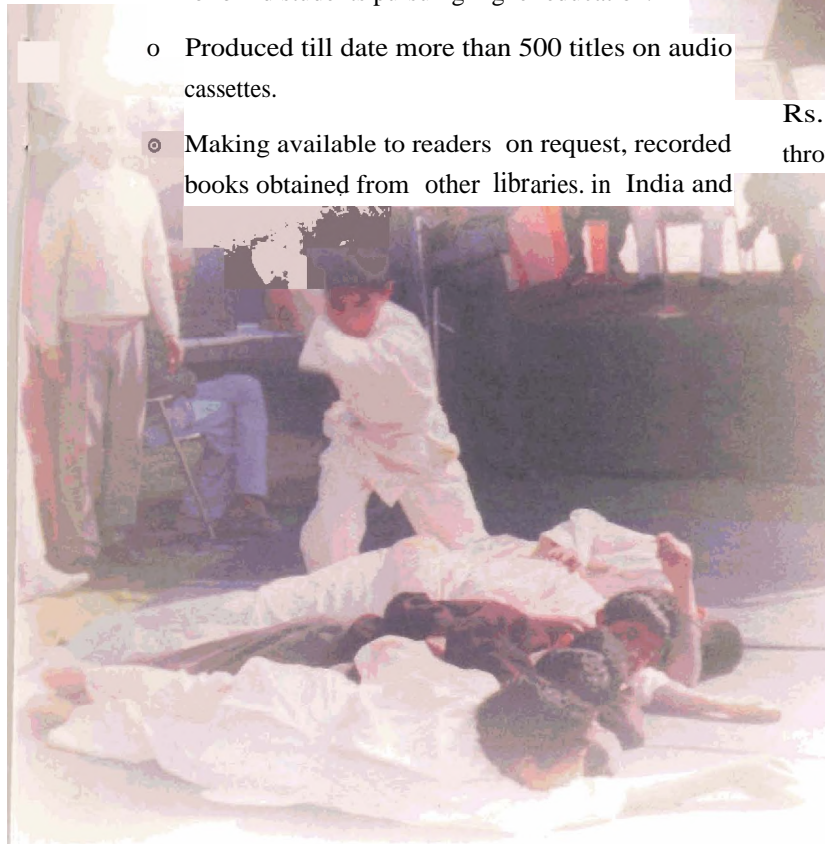


Rs. 1659002 have been sold to 35300 users throughout the country during the last five years.

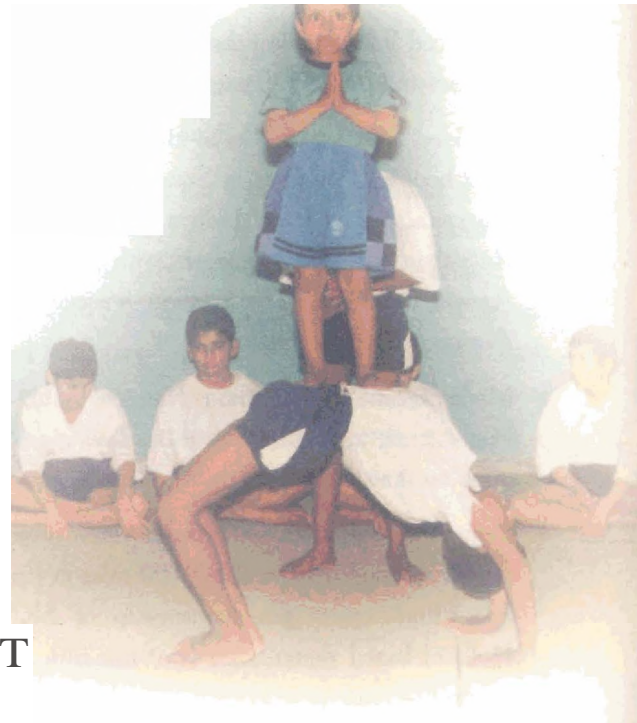
### AICB Captain Chandan Lal Special School for the Blind

The unique feature of this residential school is that it is located in a typically rural environment in village Behrampur, district Gurgaon, Haryana, and has been set up with support from the local community and Union Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. This model school provides a programme of multifaceted educational activities:

- Education to about 100 blind boys and girls from the preschool stage to class 8.



- e Continuing interaction with the local community.
- e Participation of its children with notable success in co-curricular activities in competition with students from regular schools.
- e A museum of stuffed birds, animals and tactile models for concept enrichment.
- ® A unique Resource Centre assembling together a wide range of adapted devices for Science, Mathematics and Geography prepared by teachers as also procured from overseas.
- ® Training in Yoga, Judo and Calisthenics. Music, Dance and Dramatics.



## TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

AICB has played a pioneering role in opening up challenging and innovative training opportunities for visually impaired:



### *Training in Stenography*

In early eighties, we were the first in the NCO sector to take up training in Braille shorthand and typewriting, in both Hindi and English. This has helped in creating a totally new employment possibility for persons with visual impairment, for whom such an avenue was viewed as inaccessible in the country, when we took up this activity in 1982. 103 visually impaired boys and girls have received training in this field, during the last 5 years.

### *Computer Training*

To enable visually impaired youngsters to keep pace with rapid changes in technologies and job-market requirements, AICB also provides training in the use of computers. Speech synthesizers and special softwares which convert text to speech are used for this purpose. The programme has gained so much in popularity in recent years that many of our former stenography trainees, on referral from their employers, have come back to us to receive training in the area. 91 men and women with vision impairment have been provided training in this challenging sphere during the last 5 years.



## *Crisis Management*



The Confederation also actively seeks to provide support to persons losing sight later in life--either during young adulthood or during employment. Called 'Crisis-Management', the service has two important components -- stress counseling to help

clients overcome the shock of onset of disability and training in skills like daily living activities, Braille, communication skills, orientation and mobility etc. The major thrust of the programme is to enable the recently blinded individuals to return to their earlier place of work, or become independent if not yet in employment. The Unit has provided support to 208 visually impaired men and women so far.

## *Orientation and Mobility*

Restriction in the ability to move around is viewed as a major limitation of visual disability. AICB strives to help its clients overcome this limiting condition as well.

For this purpose, need-based training inside the premises as also outside using the white cane, is an integral component of all our training activities. Additionally, services of trained instructors are made available to our Affiliates also from time to time and



visually impaired clients are imparted such training, if required at their own homes/work places/institutions as well.

## *Employment*



AICB is committed to the principle that training in itself is not enough and must result in placement in remunerative work-opportunities. Thus, the major focus of our placement services is to secure meaningful jobs for our trainees, commensurate with their qualifications and at par with their sighted counterparts in respect of salaries and work conditions. Accordingly, we are happy to report that about 895 trained blind men and women have, so far, been helped by us to secure jobs as stenographers/typists/receptionists/clerks in state and central government departments, nationalized banks and public sector undertakings. 12 of our former trainees have also been honoured with National Awards as Best Visually Impaired Employees by the President of India, till now.



## RURAL REHABILITATION

The Confederation is conscious of the fact that very limited and sporadic services are currently available for blind persons, a large majority of whom reside in rural areas. Therefore, we strive to take services to blind persons in the villages at their own homes through the community-based rehabilitation (CBR) approach. The major features of our programmes in rural areas are:

- The programme is of a national character, covering places like Gurgaon, Haryana; Patna, Vaishali



and Muzaffarpur in Bihar; Alwar in Rajasthan; Banda and Chitrakoot in Uttar Pradesh; Nalgunda in Andhra Pradesh.

- Our field workers have provided training in basic skills and income-generating activities, such as rural craft, animal husbandry, small shop-management and agricultural work to about 3000 blind persons during the last five years.

We also provide interest-free loans to trained persons to take up these activities. A sum of Rs. 5047500 has been made available for the purpose during the last five years, benefiting 843 persons.

- We also reach out to elderly blind persons, who constitute an overwhelming majority of the blind population in the country and for whom very little has been done so far. Thus, we run what we call



'Golden Age Centres', where elderly blind persons are brought together for half a day, twice a week, through our own transport and are provided necessary recreation and medical care. We also offer monthly pensions to the needy and destitute visually impaired old persons and have distributed an amount of Rs. 5466753 during the last 10 years with the help of Help the Aged International/Helpage India.

- Prevention of blindness and eye-health activities form an important component of our community outreach services. We take up :
  - 4 Vision screening of children in regular schools in villages and towns.
  - o Prescribe and provide corrective glasses.
  - Arrange cataract surgeries in cooperation with nearby reputed hospitals.
  - Run a low vision clinic at the head office in Delhi.
  - A total of 269508 persons have benefited from eye-screening, 5588 from IOL operations and 54 have received free eyeglasses under the

11/11/11 female during the first five years.



## SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

The Confederation is convinced that empowerment of visually impaired women and strengthening the existing grass-root organisations/associations must receive the highest priority, if we have to reach out to the largest number of our blind population. AICB, in respect of visually impaired women:

- Has constituted a **National Forum of Blind Women**, one of the very few groupings of its kind in the-country

Runs a special hostel at its premises in Delhi for college-going girl students, providing them boarding, lodging and reading material.

- ® Offers Merit Scholarships of substantial amount to blind women students for pursuing professional and career-oriented courses of study.

Conducted a number of leadership training and personality-development programmes.

- o Convened through its Women's Forum four National and International Conferences of blind women in New Delhi.
- Takes special care to include blind women in all its training and rehabilitation programmes.

The Confederation also strives continuously to provide



trained leadership and improved Affiliates and other organisations of the blind nationally and internationally. It has:

1. Convened a number of seminars for providing training in leadership to representatives from state and local organisations/associations.
2. Conducted training courses in Office Management to update the skills of employees/office bearers of associations of the blind from India as also from countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Indonesia and Uganda.
3. Brought out a Manual in Office Management in English and Hindi.
4. Helped its Affiliates secure assistance from funding agencies for various projects.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### *Social Activism*

We at AICB are committed to a discrimination-free and rights-based society for persons with visual impairment. Thus, AICB has :

- (i) Set up a Special Cell to take up with the concerned authorities, grievances of visually impaired persons relating to denial of opportunities
- (ii) Filed petitions in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of



India and the office of the Chief Commissioner (Disabilities) leading to significant decisions in favour

of the visually impaired. These include:

**Grant of 3% reservation in teaching jobs to the blind and physically handicapped at college and university levels.**

- o Allowing extra time at Civil Services and **UGC NET** examinations.
- o 5% relaxation in the eligibility requirement for **NET**.
- o Facilitating internal promotions for the visually impaired.
- o Provision of textbooks in Braille.

AICB also works actively to generate necessary awareness about the potential of visually impaired persons. It has taken up this awareness campaign on a large scale in schools for sighted children in the capital and through other avenues.

## ***Adaptive Technology***

AICB has been working in close collaboration with apex technology institutions and the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, for the development of need-based equipment for the blind. It has conducted exhibitions of modern aids and appliances and two international conferences on the subject.

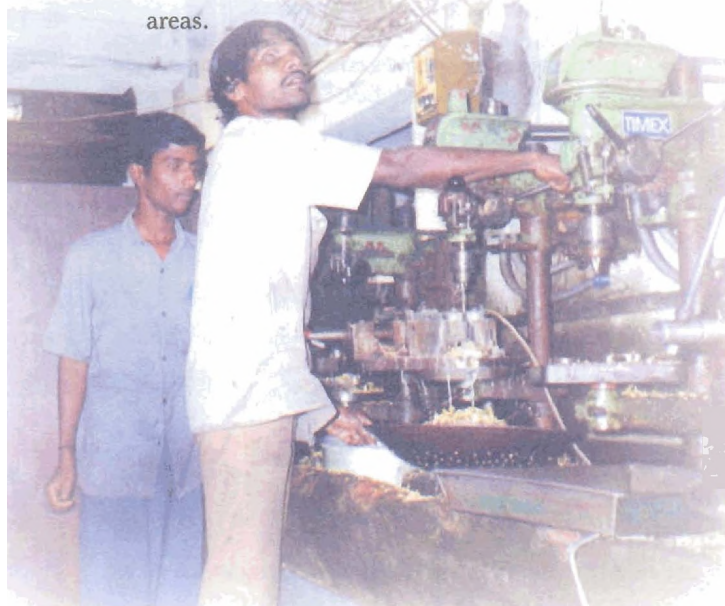
## ***Research and Development:***

AICB is convinced that research activities hold the key to opening up new vistas of opportunities for visually impaired children and adults. Accordingly, it has, so far, completed a number of need-based research projects resulting in:

**Identification of computer-based jobs for the blind in different spheres.**

- o **Development of a suitable computer-training course.**
- o **Delineation of the status of blind women in India and some other countries and suggesting remedial**

- o **Locating jobs for the blind in electronics and related areas.**





## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We owe a debt of gratitude to all those generous individual and institutional organisations in India and abroad who have reposed faith in us and extended to us their valuable financial, material and other kinds of support. Our successes in helping our visually impaired members actively have been possible without such invaluable help. Much as we would have liked to record our gratitude to each one of our benefactors by name,

limitations of space do not permit us to do so. We, nevertheless, greet and salute all of our supporting partners. We would like to assure them that every penny they contribute to us is, and will continue to be duly acknowledged by us and utilized fully for the purpose for which it is intended — enabling blind persons to lead a life of dignity and contributory citizenship.



ऑल इंडिया कन्फेडरेशन ऑफ दी  
ब्लाइंड की ओर से लुई ब्रेल की 188 वीं  
वर्षगांठ पर आपका स्वागत



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