

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



THE BLIND RELIEF ASSOCIATION, DELHI

President's Note



2020 has been a year that none of us anticipated it to be. The COVID-19 pandemic has been merciless towards humankind all over the world, while we can only imagine what it really meant for the vulnerable. Among the ones most affected, the disabled community occupies a significant space. When the sense of touch is so integral in the lives of the visually impaired, inevitable protocols such as social distancing and self-isolation have added to the many difficulties that they already face.

The team at the Blind Relief Association has done a remarkable job in quickly equipping themselves to teach, train, and work on a digital medium when the campus had to be shut due to the lockdowns imposed by the Government to combat the spread of the deadly virus. The pandemic not only provided an opportunity to adapt to technology on a larger scale but also helped derive innovative ways to ensure that the visually impaired are not devoid of their education/training amidst the unprecedented crisis.

While the Association was committed to continuing serving the visually impaired students and trainees by switching to virtual mode, which in the first place was a tough row to hoe, the Association also came forward to help and support the poor, vulnerable, disabled and COVID patients in Delhi NCR by joining hands with other like-minded organizations.

Despite the odds of the 'pandemic year', the students and trainees of the Association were able to excel in their education/ training, and successfully completed their respective courses. As a tangible encouragement to the sincere efforts of the organization to serve the visually impaired, the Blind Relief Association was also conferred with the 'Mahatma Award for Social Good' for 2020. We are grateful to the Jury for recognizing the efforts of the Association.

In addition, we are thankful to all our supporters, who in the form of donors and volunteers had our backs through the tough seasons, even particularly by lending aid in our endeavor of undertaking COVID relief works. Without their compassion and generosity braving a year such as this would have been unthinkable.

I invite you to review this year's annual report which will give you a detailed overview of how the pandemic affected the visually impaired and the initiatives undertaken by the Blind Relief Association to ensure they are not denied of their basic rights and needs..

We look forward to your continued support in helping us serve the visually impaired, to ensure equality and opportunity for them, while creating a culture of inclusion at work, and in our communities.

With my best wishes.

Sincerely,
Arun Bharat Ram



The dawn of unusual times caused by the pandemic COVID-19 posed several challenges for the human race and demanded reorientation for survival in the new normal. The Blind Relief Association was not an exception to all the additional challenges that the Disability Sector had to encounter. Nevertheless, the Association was determined to not cease its services through the lockdown period and managed to run its programmes online for the visually impaired, besides also having majorly involved in the COVID relief work. A journey through the year, that was never seen before, and expected to not see again, is recorded in this report.

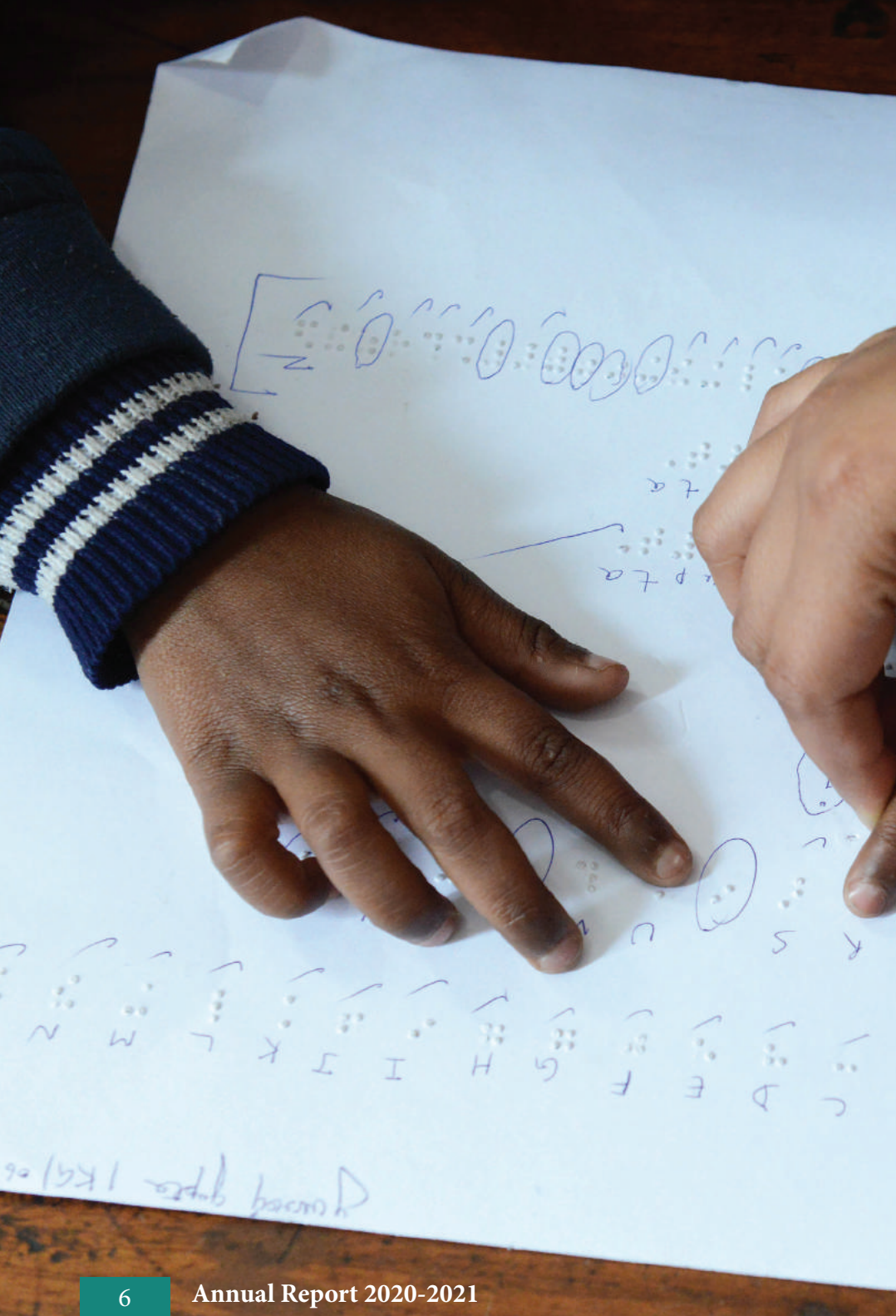
On 26 February 2021, the Blind Relief Association, Delhi, completed 77 years of its existence and service. With a humble beginning in 1946, the Association started as an Industrial Home and School for the Blind in a rented premises at Lal Kuan, Badarpur with just two students, Daya Ram and Murli Dhar. Along with the beneficiaries, the services also multiplied over the years. The Association now serves nearly 400 visually challenged children and adults at its own sprawling campus in the heart of New Delhi. With most of its programmes being residential, the Association's multi-faceted activities encompass school-education including special care programmes for visually impaired children with learning disabilities, teacher-training, computer education, vocational training, placement services, production of resource materials in Braille, audio formats and E-books, orientation and mobility training, consultancy and awareness creation.





Highlights

- The Blind Relief Association, Delhi was awarded the Mahatma Award for Social Good for the year 2020.
- Sri K. C. Pande, Hony. Executive Secretary of the Blind Relief Association was conferred the Decoration of the Order of the Sacred Treasurer, Gold and Silver Rays by the Government of Japan.
- All Class XII students of JPM Senior Secondary School passed with first division in the CBSE examination and Ajay Gupta topped at 92.8 percent. The school also had 80 subject distinctions.
- JPM School produced 100 percent results in the Class X CBSE examinations. The school had 67 subject distinctions, with two students, Vishal Saini and Tushar Jindal topping the school at 93.6 percent.
- 4 and 12 vocational trainees cleared Class XII and Class X exams respectively as private candidates.
- 28 teacher trainees (2019-21) of Durgabai Deshmukh College completed I year, and 23 (2018-20) completed the II year successfully to be awarded B.Ed. (Spl. Education) degree.
- 12 trainees of the VI Batch (2020-21) completed Diploma in Computer Education (V.I.)
- 5 trainees of the III Batch (2020) completed Basic Computer and Office Operations Course.
- 26 vocational trainees completed their training programmes.



JPM SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Jormal Periwal Memorial (JPM) Senior Secondary School for the Blind is a special residential school for visually impaired boys, established and administered by the Blind Relief Association, Delhi.

The school has been recognized and aided by the Directorate of Education, Government of NCT Delhi since 1969 and affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) since 1974. JPM is widely renowned in the country for nurturing and grooming the visually impaired children to be optimistic and ambitious citizens excelling in academics, sports and co-curricular activities. The school offers free education, boarding, lodging, assistive devices, books and other services to visually impaired boys from Nursery to Class XII.

PANDEMIC

On the onset of the pandemic, the Delhi Govt. ordered for the closure of schools on 19 March 2020 and a national lockdown was announced on 21 March 2020. The School immediately sent the boarders to their native towns and villages located in different states of the country.

Realizing the gravity of the pandemic, the teaching community created online staff groups and student groups class wise. They soon began to work out strategies to begin classes on online mode, expecting the lockdown to be extended further. The dedication and team work among the school staff, school management and support of the IT department resulted in the shift to online education, which was very challenging for the visually impaired children.

The staff compiled the Annual Results for 2019-20 from home and the results were declared successfully on 31 March 2020.

Enrolment: The School reopened virtually on 1 April 2020 with 186 students. Five students forwarded by the Directorate of Education from Andh Mahavidyalaya, Panchkuian Road joined Class IX and one in Class III. Thus, there were 192 students in the academic year 2020-21. Although many students initially did not show keen interest in online classes, the School Counselor continued to persuade them. In the month of April 2020, 143 students appeared for online classes and by the end of the year almost all the students attended the classes regularly.

Special Care: The students from the Special Care Unit were integrated with the mainstream students in the online classes. In the 2020-21 academic session, a total of 18 students were placed in the Special Care Unit: 3 in Functional Academic Group and 15 in Remedial Teaching Group. The Special Care Unit's teachers were involved in helping with online sessions of other classes as well.

ONLINE EDUCATION

In order to suddenly shift to online teaching, the school had to look for digital options to reach out to students from rural and urban areas. For a smooth transition to online classes, the following strategies were adopted:

1. Teaching faculty were given requisite training.
2. Class groups were created on WhatsApp.
3. The school mostly used Zoom or Google Meet for live online teaching.
4. Teachers shared information on Happy Learning App specially designed for the visually impaired students.
5. Teachers also used NCERT E-pathshala app that provide access to e-text books for all classes, access to graded learning materials, audios, videos, maps and question banks.
6. Tutorial videos on how to operate the online platforms were shared with the students and their parents.
7. The School Management organized training sessions for the teachers





for competence in the use of Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, One Drive and Kibo.

8. MP3 pen-drives with audio study materials were given to students from Class VIII to XII.
9. Needy students of board classes were provided with smart phones. Internet charges for all students of board classes was paid by the School Management.
10. Braille text and other assistive devices such as Braille slates, Taylor frames, etc. were provided to students.

Website: The School launched a website in August 2020, designed and managed by Bluebyte Pty Ltd. Australia. On the site, class-wise IDs were created for students to access the audio class sessions posted by their teachers. Other related study material available online was also shared for the benefit of students. The salient features of the website are as follows:

- Disabled- friendly powered with screen reader.
- Complete information of School as per DoE and CBSE guidelines.
- Important links relevant to students of all classes including audio books by NCERT
- Complete study material in audio/video/mp3/pdf/doc format available class wise.
- Database managed on OneDrive facilitated by Microsoft.
- Study material regularly updated by the teachers as per guidelines issued by the Directorate of Education Govt. Of NCT of Delhi from time to time.

Website address: <http://www.jpmschool.com/>

Students actively participated in the online classes, at times with help from parents, peers as well as teachers who facilitated overcoming day to day challenges.

- The students posted their home work in audio/video/pdf/doc as well as in Braille format submitted as image files.

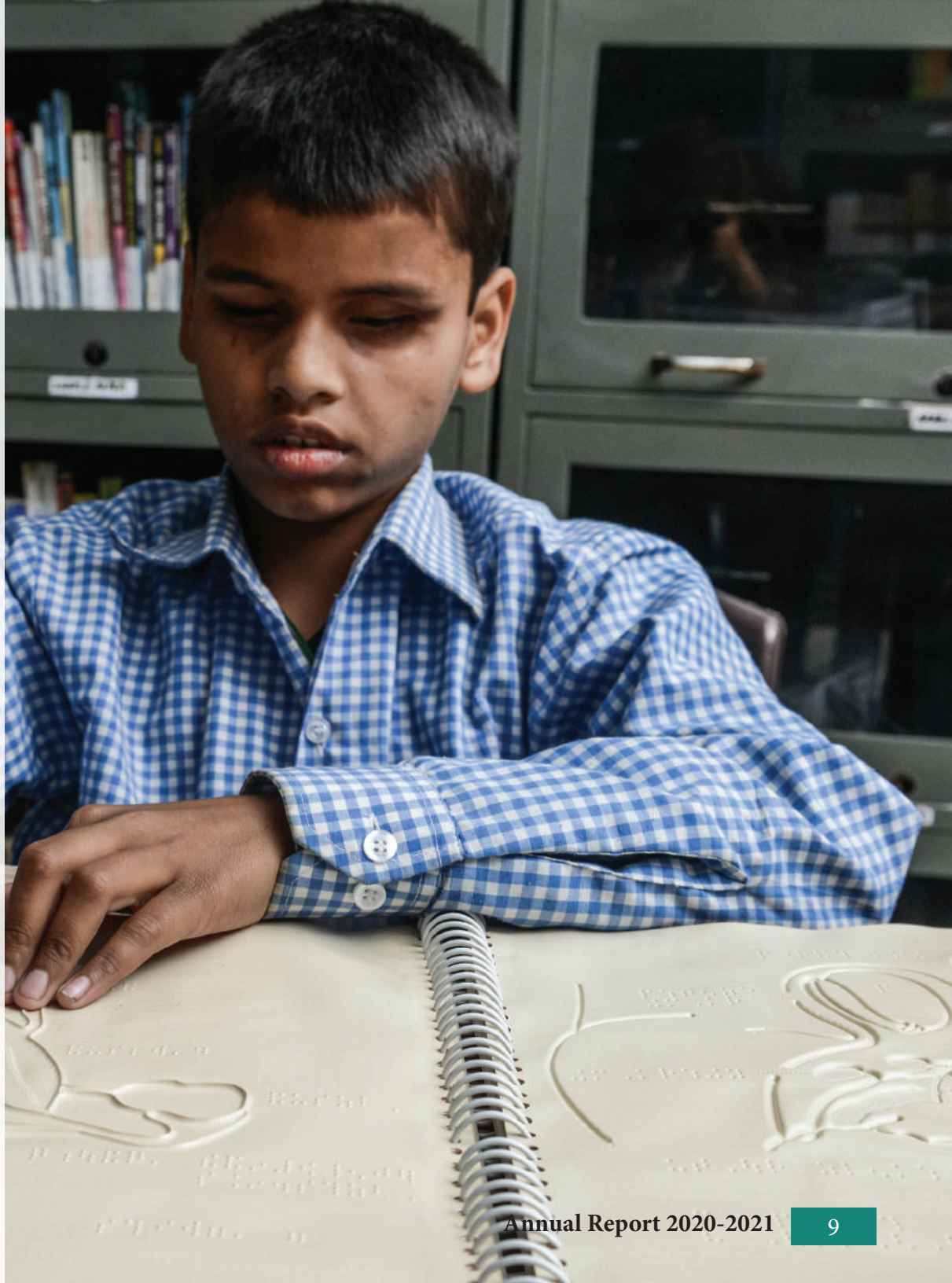
- Parents of students of Delhi/NCR region came to the school to collect study materials whenever the situation was conducive.
- Landline calls were made to the students who were unable to attend online classes due to non-availability of smart phones.
- Teachers dealing with subjects like mathematics faced great difficulty in teaching concepts and took the assistance of the parents in tutoring the student.

Presentation on Journey of JPM school through the pandemic: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fdCXs_tB_Q

Activities with FIT INDIA: The school registered with FIT INDIA movement, an initiative of the Central Government. In spite of the fact that boys did not have access to a playground in their localities, they used whatever little spaces they could find at home or rooftops and participated in all the activities initiated by FIT INDIA. Emphasis was given to focus on Yogasanas as students could do it easily and safely at home. The FIT INDIA Freedom Run was organized from 15 August - 2 October 2020.

The following activities were conducted as a part of the FIT INDIA School Week in December 2020

- Free hand exercises, aerobics, dance forms, rope skipping, hopscotch, zig zag and shuttle running etc.
- Yoga
- Debates, symposium, lectures on mental fitness, diet & nutrition for students, staff and parents.
- Brain games to improve problem solving capacity
- Essay/poem writing competition



- Podcast/movie making on mental and physical health
- Online quiz on fitness and sports
- Virtual challenges for students, staff/ teachers such as squats challenge, step-up challenge, spot jogging, rope skipping, ball dribbling etc.,
- Activities for fitness sessions at home involving students and family members and creatively using home-based equipment for sports and fitness.

Children made videos and posted them online in their respective class groups.

Link: https://blindrelief-my.sharepoint.com/personal/moolchand_blindrelief_onmicrosoft_com/_layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?id=%2Fpersonal%2Fmoolchand%5Fblindrelief%5Fonmicrosoft%5Fcom%2FDocuments%2Ffit%20in-dia&originalPath=aHR0cHM6Ly9ibGluZHZJbGllZi1teS5zaG-FyZXBvaW50LmNvbS86ZjovZy9wZXJzb25hbC9tb29sY2h-hbmRfYmRyZWxpZWZfb25taWNyb3NvZnRfY29tL-0VuU2JSeVdvNHBGRXBVZk3enlDTmRJQkx2eTN1N2pIR0d-DYXliZlZ4NlVGaFE_cnRpbWU9UkQwV2xFNXMyVWc

Art Education: As stipulated by CBSE and the Directorate of Education – Delhi, the School implemented Art- Education and Art-Integrated Learning May 2020 onwards. In this new initiative, schools of every state were paired with another state and were directed to teach different subjects such as English, mathematics, science etc. with respect to the assigned state. The state assigned to the Delhi schools was Sikkim. Topics such as population, topography, culture, and language of Sikkim were discussed and taught by the teachers under various subjects.

Teaching Practice: Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education (V.I.) carried out the teaching practice of its trainees through online mode in JPM Senior Secondary



School for the Blind where online teaching was done for all classes and subjects on a regular basis. The school also extended help by allowing the trainees to observe the online classes conducted by the regular school teachers.

Staff Achievements: Sri. Manoj Kumar (Assistant Teacher) of J.P.M. Senior Secondary School was awarded Ph.D. degree in Hindi from Mewar University, Rajasthan.

DURGABAI DESHMUKH COLLEGE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION (V.I.)

Established in 2006, the Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education completed 15 years of glorious existence in 2021. The former trainees are well placed and many are working as special teachers in various Govt. schools and Govt. aided schools in Delhi and other states of the country.

Frequent lockdowns, closure of educational institutes and organizations due to COVID 19 created an unprecedented situation. The resident visually impaired trainees of the College had to return to their homes, many without their study material. In place of normal physical classes online mode of teaching had to be adopted, which neither the teachers nor the students were accustomed to. The University examination was also conducted online. The directives issued from time to time by the University and the UGC on Open Book online examination was challenging for the students' community. There were several practical issues like poor internet

connectivity at the students' native places, non-availability of books and study material at home. For the visually impaired students the situation was more serious because most study material was not available to them in accessible formats. The College made all efforts and continued to provide online support to its trainees, whatever mode they could manage to avail or were comfortable with.

The declaration of pandemic resulting in lockdown and suspension of academic activities came towards closing of the academic session, with exams approaching and some final classes yet to be conducted. The preparations for new admissions also had to start. Under such disruptive circumstances the normal calendar of the college got derailed and all activities got delayed by months. Classroom teaching was suspended from end of March 2020 and online classes continued till April 2020.



Batch 2018-20: An online Open Book Examination (OBE) for the final year students of 2018-20 batch was conducted in two phases. The first phase was from 14 - 26 August 2020 and the second phase from 14 - 25 September 2020.

Batch 2019-21: The new session (for II year students) started on 20 July 2020 and continued till the end of April 2021. The entire session was on online mode apart from some practical classes.

- First year examination 2019-2021: No Annual examination was conducted by the University for I year students in 2020 due to the pandemic situation. The students were promoted to the second year on the basis of their internal assessment.
- Final examination 2019-2021: Online Open Book Examination for final year B. Ed. Special Education (Visual Impairment) was conducted by the University from 10-21 June, 2021. All students appeared in the examination.

New Admissions 2020-22: Online admissions were done under a centralized admission process of the University of Delhi in coordination with the College faculty and staff. With the entire process delaying, the first list was announced on 18 November 2020 and the last/ 7th List on 28 December 2020. The online classes began on 8 December, 2020. A total of 33 students were admitted,

which included 6 visually impaired persons, all being female candidates.

Teaching Practice: COVID 19 and the national lockdown instantaneously disrupted regular activities of the schools and institutions of higher education in many ways. As for the B.Ed. colleges, the most important component of providing school teaching practice experiences to the trainees suffered the most, as schools across the country suspended their offline classes. Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education (V.I.) carried out the teaching practice of its trainees through online mode in JPM Senior Secondary School for the Blind where online teaching was done for all classes and subjects on a regular basis. The second year B.Ed. trainees were allotted individual classes as per their pedagogy courses, and all college faculty members were provided access for supervision. The trainees also observed the online classes taught by the regular school teachers.

Webinars/ Online Events:

1. Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education (V.I.) and The Blind Relief Association, Delhi in collaboration with Saksham, Delhi organized a webinar on "The latest IT Solution for learners with Visual Impairment" on 1 October, 2020.
2. The College and The Blind Relief Association, Delhi organized





a webinar on “Inspirations from Gandhi” on 8 October, 2020 in commemorating the 151st anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Sri Akash Anand, a disciple of well-known Sarod player Sri Bishwajit Roy Choudhary was invited to pay musical tribute on Sarod to Gandhiji.

3. The College and The Blind Relief Association, Delhi organized a webinar on “White Cane –My Independence, My Identity” on the White Cane Day - 15 October, 2020.

4. World Braille Day: Remembering Louis Braille on the World Braille Day, the Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education (V.I.), along with the Blind Relief Association organized a webinar on 4 January 2021. The webinar was attended by around 70 persons.

The programme included initial welcome remarks by Mr. K. C. Pande, Executive Secretary of the Blind Relief Association; address by retired Principal Mr. Sansari Lal Sharma, an alumnus of the JPM School and Training Center for the Teachers of the Visually Handicapped (TCTVH) who spoke about the life of Louis Braille and his invaluable contribution to the world; presentation by Mr. Rajpal, an alumnus of JPM School and Supervisor, Computer Training Centre who highlighted the significant role of emerging technology and its contribution to Braille through various new software and devices. Mr. Yaswant Jadhav, an alumnus of Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education anchored and conducted the webinar most admirably. It is noteworthy to mention that the anchor and both the Resource Persons of the webinar were fully visually challenged. The webinar concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Swati Sanyal, Course Director, Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education.

Link to recording of the webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jX-pyOqNPW1U>

LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

The Learning Resource Centre (library) of the College has a rich and fine collection of books and reference material on special education and general education available in print, Braille and other accessible formats.

Total Number of Books (Print + Braille)	4523
Total Number of Titles (Print + Braille)	2302
Total Number of Books added during 2020-2021	50
Total Number of Talking Books	85
Print Journals on Special Education and General Education	20

The library can be accessed online through www.lrcddcse.wordpress.com

The faculty members of the College, besides doing regular teaching also offered their services as script writers, contributed research articles, acted as resource persons and delivered offline and online lectures at various avenues such as National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD), CRC Sunder Nagar, Rehabilitation Society of the Visually Impaired, Sight Savers, Gujarat National Law University, Army Welfare Education Society, State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) etc.

COMPUTER TRAINING CENTRE

The Association is among the pioneering institutions in the country to introduce computer literacy programmes for the visually challenged. Launched in 1996 to cater to the needs of educated adult blind, the Computer Training Centre has been conducting short-term computer literacy courses since then. The Centre also supports the computer-related curricular needs of the JPM School. Additionally, the Centre manages the IT-related requirements of the Association.

Due to the onset of the pandemic, the training went online via platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Several webinars and online trainings were organized for trainees and the staff to keep abreast with the latest technologies.

Diploma in Computer Education (V.I.)

The Centre runs a 10-month academic duration course - Diploma in Computer Education (Visual Impairment) aiming to prepare a cadre of personnel

specially equipped to train the visually impaired on computer and related devices and services. Designed by the Association and started in 2014-15 as a pilot project, the course was regularized in 2016 and enlisted among the recognized courses by the Rehabilitation Council of India. The trainees are encouraged to keep abreast with the technological advancements in the IT and Communication sectors.

Of the 14 trainees of the VI Batch (2020-21), 12 passed the final examination held in November 2020. (There was 1 dropout and 1 could not appear due to COVID). Ankur Kumar was the topper of VI Batch. 17 trainees were admitted to VII Batch (2021-22), of which nine are visually impaired.

Computer Training and Office Operations Course

Launched in July 2019, this six-month training-cum-work experience programme prepares trainees to be able to work on computers and perform diverse office tasks including tele-calling. To familiarize them with



diverse office operations, the trainees are given hands-on experience in the Association's offices and units. They are also taught about and given practical tasks like conducting surveys and organizing events.

Five trainees, out of nine admitted in January 2020 successfully completed the course. For the fourth batch with six trainees, the classes started in January 2021.

Online Course - Computer Skills & IT Literacy for Visually Impaired

To provide online short-term training during the pandemic period, a one-month course on Computer Skills & IT Literacy for Visually Impaired was introduced. The course covered MS Word, Excel, Email, Internet and exposure to various online platforms. In the first batch there were 18 trainees who availed the training from 23 July - 22 August 2020. The second batch had 6 trainees and the training was held from 1 - 30 September 2020. On completion of the course, the trainees were awarded digital certificates.

Since the dependence on internet became too heavy, the speed and download capacity of existing internet subscription was enhanced to ensure smooth functioning of all training programs and services.



Workshops & Training Sessions:

The Computer Training Centre organized/conducted the following workshops & training sessions during 2020-21

- Microsoft through Juana Technologies conducted an online training for the staff and teachers of the Association on 28 April 2020.
- Features and Usage of Orbit Reader was conducted on 20 May 2020 by the Computer Training Centre for the students and trainees of the Association.
- Features and Usage of KIBO Device was conducted on 30 May 2020 by the Centre for the students and trainees of the Association.
- A webinar on Microsoft OneDrive was conducted on 6 June 2020 for the teachers and staff of the Association.
- A demonstration of 'MyEye 2.0' an assistive device was organized on 18 December 2020. It was attended by teachers of JPM School, DD College and Computer Center. MyEye 2.0 has been designed for blind and visually impaired people by Orcam Technologies, Israel. It can read the text (any printed or digital text in English), recognize faces (also identifies products, barcodes, currency notes) without internet connection.

Virtual Training on Microsoft

The Association organized a virtual training on Microsoft programs for its students, trainees and interested outsiders with the help of Navika Chhanda, a Gold Microsoft Student Ambassador in November 2020. The 15-day program covered topics such as Microsoft Seeing AI app, MS Office 365 tools such as MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, MS Word, MS Outlook, MS OneNote and OneDrive.

Out of the class of 12 students, three students - Parmeet Singh, Vishal Saini, and Pawan successfully completed Microsoft Azure's (Cloud Computing Service) Learning Path and bagged the MTC vouchers which enabled them to take Microsoft Azure examination. By being certified in Microsoft Azure they acquire noteworthy credentials to their resume.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

Multi-Skill Training Program

Introduced in 2014, this one-year holistic skill training programme is open to both male and female adult blind, even if they have some additional disability. With no minimum educational qualification restrictions, even those who have either missed out on school education or marginally educated are admitted. The variety of skills included in the training seeks to prepare the trainees to be able to work in diverse workplaces, or become self-employed. The one-year programme is flexible enough to adjust the training schedule to suit the capacity, interest and capability of the trainee.

The range of vocational skills taught includes book-binding and paper-craft, chair-caning, candle-making, working on light machines, packaging, sewing, papier-mâché crafts, basic massage, soap-making, bakery etc. The training curriculum followed by the Sewing Unit is designed and evaluated by USHA Silai School. An important aspect of the training programme is the equal emphasis given to soft-skills and activities such as orientation and mobility, daily life skills, English conversation, personality development, basic computer, Braille, and music. While they are getting trained in vocational skills, the trainees are encouraged and helped in completing school education as private candidates under open school system.

Owing to the declaration of national lockdown in March 2020 because of COVID-19 pandemic, most of the vocational trainees except a few went back to their villages/ native places. The remaining trainees were involved in aiding COVID relief activities, until more trainees joined them in July 2020.

For the trainees of Batches 13 and 14, online classes in English Communication and Basic Computers began on 1 April 2020 and continued up to 25 January 2021. The classes were taken for five days a week.

Due to the pandemic, the computer classes for the vocational trainees too had to be conducted online which was a challenge in itself, as learning computers requires regular practice. Theory - based classes were conducted over conference calls on different topics and the classes were made engaging



with group discussions. Some of the topics covered include basic computer knowledge, E-Governance services, digital payments, mobile phone talkback software such as Google Assistant. Communication classes covered spoken English, general awareness (COVID related & other news) and interpersonal skills.

The trainees faced various challenges such as network issues, unavailability of resources (phone, recharge & electricity), low attention span, etc. To overcome these challenges, sessions were conducted in smaller batches, topics were provided which trainees could explore themselves, and the trainees were encouraged to seek help from their family and friends for the unavailable resources.

Being home, the trainees would pitch in for household chores and family work/ business and therefore ended up missing few classes. To ensure that the trainees would not miss out on learning, recaps of various topics were sent in the form of audio notes on WhatsApp and the trainees were encouraged to practice and share their homeworks in the class group.

The regular academic admission and graduation got delayed due to the lockdown. The training of the 13th Batch (with 18 trainees) extended until August 2020 to cover the missed classes. The next batch of 11 trainees who began classes in January 2020 were able to complete the course only by June 2021 due to several breaks in-between. The 15th batch comprising 15 trainees began classes on 17 January 2021.

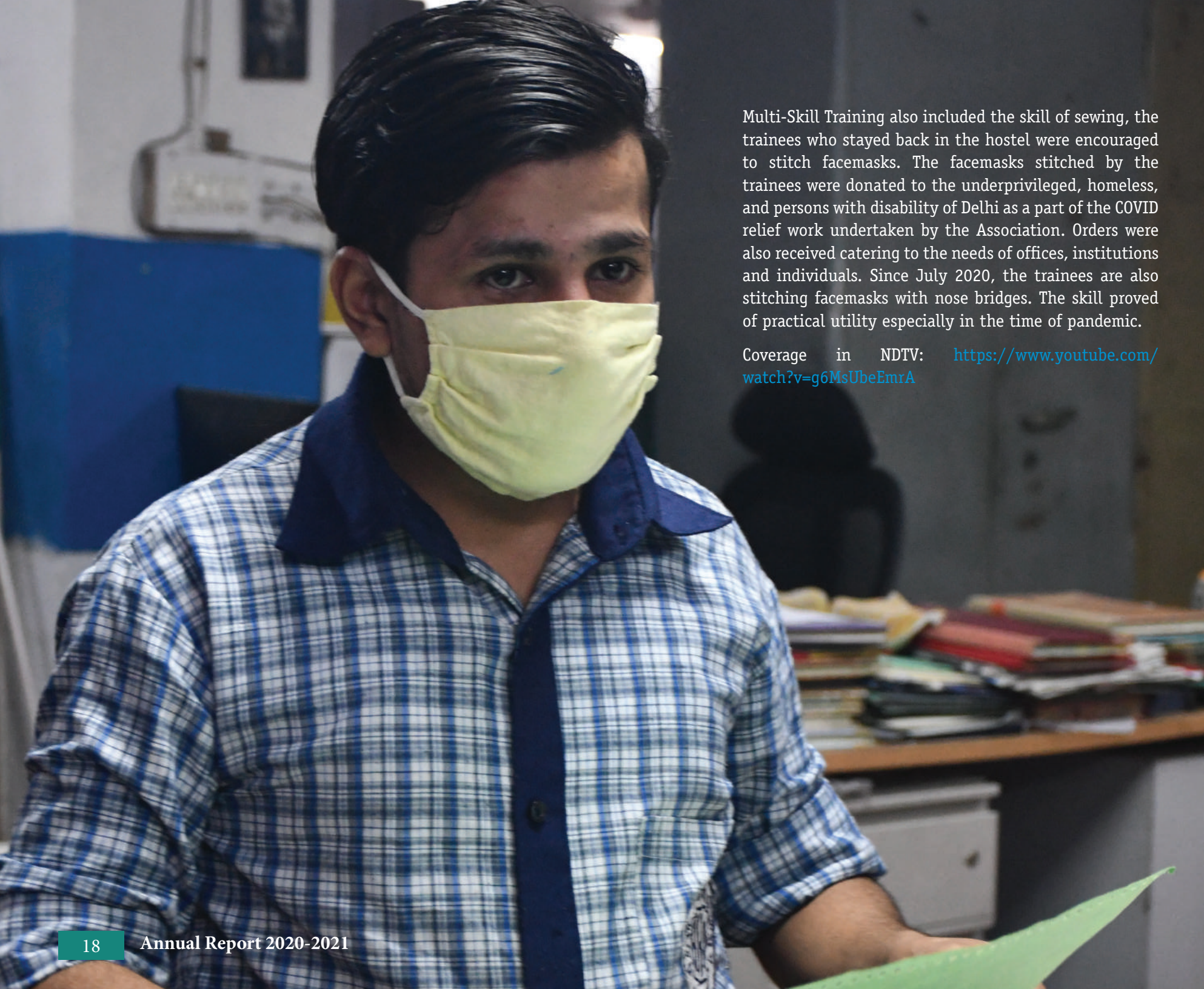
Chair caning and papier-mâché classes resumed in November 2020 and February 2021 respectively. The trainees also underwent theatre classes conducted by Sri. Gyan Deep, a theatre artist from the National School of Drama (NSD) who rendered his services on voluntary basis.

Production of Facemasks

Facemasks had become an important component of life due to the pandemic. Since the

Statistical highlights:				
	New Admissions	Graduations	Dropouts	In-Training
As on 1 April 2020	-	-	-	29
July/August 2020	-	18	3	8
January 2021	15	-	2	21
As on 31 March 2021	-	-	-	21





Multi-Skill Training also included the skill of sewing, the trainees who stayed back in the hostel were encouraged to stitch facemasks. The facemasks stitched by the trainees were donated to the underprivileged, homeless, and persons with disability of Delhi as a part of the COVID relief work undertaken by the Association. Orders were also received catering to the needs of offices, institutions and individuals. Since July 2020, the trainees are also stitching facemasks with nose bridges. The skill proved of practical utility especially in the time of pandemic.

Coverage in NDTV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6MsUbeEmrA>

Giriraj's Story

When Giriraj Kishore came to the Blind Relief Association in 2019 to join the Multi-Skill Training programme, neither he nor his trainers had any idea of the entrepreneurial endeavors he was about to undertake.

Hailing from a small village called Baarahsani (District - Badaun) in Uttar Pradesh, as one of the four siblings with no parents and being the only visually challenged person in the family, Giriraj had undergone no formal education/ training before he came to the Blind Relief Association. Thankfully, by choosing to be a Multi-Skill trainee, Giriraj learnt many skills and was also able to complete his Class X as a private candidate through the coaching sessions provided by the Association.

Of all the skills he picked up in the course, the one that interested him the most was Candle-Making. After graduating in 2020, amidst the pandemic and the national lockdown, Giriraj was not ready to while away his time by sitting idle. He put his mind and hands to work by setting up a small-scale unit right at his home. As a one-man army, he began making candles, packing and selling them in his village. He also gifted some of his products to his teachers and mentors at the Blind Relief Association. "Rarely when I need help at work, I ask my neighbor kids to help, but otherwise I can manage things myself", Giriraj says. Not to mention that Giriraj stays alone in his house at Baarahsani and cooks his own food.



Online Training for the Association's Staff:

Mercer India Pvt. Ltd supports the Multi-Skill Training programme, and the staff team regularly involve in volunteering activities by way of helping in candle making, diya painting, papier-mâché products painting, stitching

bags, wall painting etc. During the lockdown period, since the Mercer staff were working from home, the team came forward to help equip the staff of the Association in office communication and office tools such as MS Excel through online training sessions. The training was conducted during the months of September, October and December 2020. The following staff members attended the sessions:

S. No	Name	Designation
1.	Mr. Ravi Consul	Instructor (Multi Skill Training)
2.	Mrs. Neelu Sethi	Instructor (Sewing)
3.	Mr. Vijay Prakash	Asst. Instructor (Multi Skill Training)
4.	Mr. Shyam Kishore	Asst. Massage Instructor
5.	Mr. Tejender Singh Bisht	Asst. Employment Officer
6.	Mrs. Manju Budhiraja	Typist
7.	Mr. Davender Singh	Store Keeper
8.	Mr. Roshan Lal	Asst. Store Keeper

Relaxation Massage Training

Introduced by the Association in 2003, Massage Training has been a consistently successful program benefitting a large number of visually challenged persons. This full-time six-month training admits visually challenged adults having minimum education of Class VIII. The core training includes Thai, Swedish, Japanese, aroma, head and face massages. Additionally, the trainees learn human anatomy and physiology, techniques of pain management by applying foot reflexology and Sujok therapy. With this, meridian acupressure points and the use of hydrotherapy in pain management are also taught. Such value add-on skills and knowledge additionally benefit the trainees in improving their professional profile. Communication skills, mobility training and personality grooming are integral to the training programme.



To upgrade the skills of passed out trainees, a four-month part-time Ayurvedic Massage Training programme is also being conducted in the Association by Shahnaz Husain International Beauty Academy. The Academy provides free services of a trainer and makes available all the required consumables. Successful trainees are awarded certificates by Shahnaz Husain International Beauty Academy and the Blind Relief Association.

The current as well as former trainees are provided opportunities to demonstrate their skills at public events, however, due to the pandemic these opportunities were limited in the recorded year.

Statistical highlights:				
	New Admissions	Graduations	Dropouts	In-Training
As on 1 April 2020	-	-	-	10
July/August 2020	-	-	2	8
January/February 2021	10	8	2	8
As on 31 March 2021	-	-	-	8

Usually, new trainees are admitted in the months of July and January for the six-month course. However, this year due to the pandemic, only one batch was admitted. Batch 36 which began in January 2020 had to break due to the pandemic and return home in March 2020.

Online classes began on 10 April 2020 and went on up to August 2020. Theoretical portions on anatomy, physiology, general massage guidelines were completed during the online classes and once the trainees returned to campus in August, the practical portions were taught. With two trainees dropping out, 8 trainees successfully completed the course in December 2020.

The next batch was inducted in January/ February 2021. Due to the second wave of the pandemic, the classes switched to online mode again April 2021 onwards. The batch is headed to complete the course in September 2021.



Pran Nathji Candle Making Unit

The Candle Unit produces a large variety of candles in different shapes and sizes around the year. These candles are available for sale throughout the year as well at the Association's office as well as the online store. The trainees and many volunteers join hands in the production work, diya painting, and packing. The Unit helps other NGOs working for the needy sections of society by providing training and logistic support in setting up such programmes in candle making.

Product Sales

Since the regular Diwali Bazar could not be held the Association began exploring other avenues to sell candles, paper and cloth products made by its trainees. E-catalogue was prepared and circulated on demand and also uploaded on the Association's website. Sale began on 4 August 2020 and orders began coming through email and phone calls. The in-house counters opened on 17 October 2020. On 1 November 2020 an e-commerce site was launched. The Association took the services of Shiprocket as its logistic partner. The new initiative substantively helped in increasing the sales while buyers enjoyed the facility of receiving the items delivered to them at home. By purchasing, the customers also immensely supported the Association through the pandemic year.

PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUTH4JOBS FOUNDATION

The Blind Relief Association is in its fifth year of partnership with Youth4Jobs Foundation in equipping visually impaired trainees in computer skills, digital literacy, entrepreneurial skills besides helping them complete school education and prepare for Government recruitment exams.

Over the years, the training mechanism has been refined with the focus on experiential learning rather than class room teaching. The trainees have shown tremendous participation and have improved their learning ability.

With the announcement of the national lockdown due to the pandemic, the training had to break from classroom sessions on 23 March 2020. However, very swiftly the training shifted to virtual platforms on 15 April 2020. Transforming the teaching mechanism was a totally new experience for the trainers as well as the trainees.

Communication Skills

All the Multi-skill and Relaxation Massage trainees were put through an online/ offline training schedule depending on the pandemic situation. In online classes, with the help of YouTube and recorded audio messages, communication skills were taught along with soft skills and life skills to help them build resilience to overcome the pandemic outcomes. Since the trainees were home, the classes were limited to an hour each so that they could plan their home chores and be fully available for the sessions. The focus was on introducing various experiences to enable easy assimilation and practice.



Digital Literacy

The pandemic gave a great fillip to enabling students to be digitally literate as it brought in new dimensions of adapting to technologies for attending sessions and exploring huge possibilities of a networked world. The trainers had to go through a lot of self-learning to ensure seamless conduct among the trainees despite the usual technological obstacles of bad network, poor-recharging and excessive consumption of bandwidth resulting in poor attendance and the trainees having to incur additional costs. The shortcomings were addressed by holding extended classes to ensure students caught up with the missed sessions. Besides basic computer skills, other topics such as online shopping, debit/ credit card, net banking, mobile banking, booking train tickets online, booking an appointment in a hospital, etc. were introduced and discussed.

PEHEL - Continuing Education (Open School Exams for Class X & XII)

This year (2020- 21), 16 students were prepared to appear for the open Class X and XII CBSE exam. 12 (11 Multi-Skill and 1 Relaxation Massage Trainee) cleared Class X and 4 trainees (3 Multi-Skill and 1 Relaxation Massage Trainee) cleared Class XII.

Specialized Training for Government Jobs

The Government of India has identified a number of entry level jobs for persons with disabilities. Looking at the need of intensive coaching for the visually impaired candidates, Y4J piloted an online coaching program in April 2020 with 4 students. Two of them - Garv Sabharwal cleared Tier 1 of the IBPS Exam and Priyanka Kumari was selected for employment as AAO at Air Force HQ, Delhi. The program was very well received and the current strength is 25 with students from across India.

S. No.	Name of training	No. of Trainees on 1.04.20	No. of New Admissions
1.	Relaxation Massage Training	10	10
2.	Multi – Skill Training	29	15
3.	Pehel 4.0		16
4.	Saarathi 3.0		45

Saarathi: Mentor4Inclusion

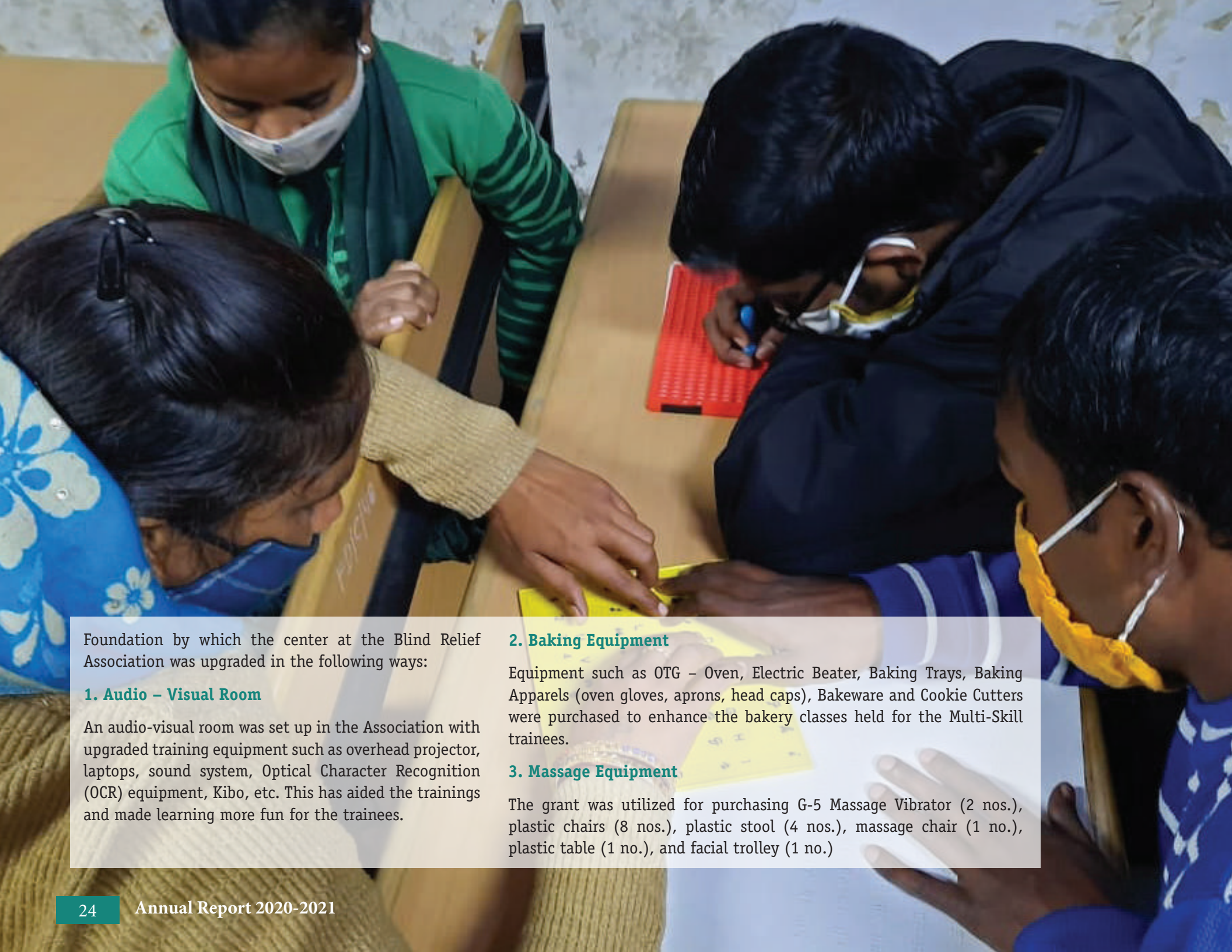
The HSBC Mentorship Program which is a yearly feature continued virtually this year without any hindrance. HSBC nominated 45 mentors to mentor 45 mentees as early as 30 May 2020 for a period of three months. A framework for this engagement including sensitization of the mentors and the objectives of the program was finalized, keeping in mind the aspirational needs of the mentees as well as facilitating mental resilience to combat the new challenges posed by the pandemic. Fortnightly meetings were held amongst the HSBC mentors, Y4J team and the Association to discuss and seek solutions for their mentees' requirements and queries.

The trainees who attended classes during the period under review

Grant from British High Commission

The British High Commission gave a grant of Rs. 4,00,000 to the Youth4Jobs





Foundation by which the center at the Blind Relief Association was upgraded in the following ways:

1. Audio – Visual Room

An audio-visual room was set up in the Association with upgraded training equipment such as overhead projector, laptops, sound system, Optical Character Recognition (OCR) equipment, Kibo, etc. This has aided the trainings and made learning more fun for the trainees.

2. Baking Equipment

Equipment such as OTG – Oven, Electric Beater, Baking Trays, Baking Apparels (oven gloves, aprons, head caps), Bakeware and Cookie Cutters were purchased to enhance the bakery classes held for the Multi-Skill trainees.

3. Massage Equipment

The grant was utilized for purchasing G-5 Massage Vibrator (2 nos.), plastic chairs (8 nos.), plastic stool (4 nos.), massage chair (1 no.), plastic table (1 no.), and facial trolley (1 no.)



SERVICES

PLACEMENT

The national lockdown imposed by the Government of India and the state governments to stop the spread of COVID-19 pandemic badly impacted and brought to standstill the manufacturing and service industries. This led many companies to shut down and lay off their employees. As a result, the opportunity for placements got affected, and added to it, the concept of social distancing made the placement of persons with visual impairment virtually impossible, as they are primarily dependent on physical touch for all their activities.

Four Relaxation Massage trainees found employment during the year in private and public sectors and one trainee is self-employed.

Realizing this reduced scope for employment in the market for the next two-years, special efforts were made by the Association to encourage the visually impaired towards self-employment and micro-business/ entrepreneurship.

Livelihood Project

In the wake of the disastrous second wave of the COVID pandemic, though

the trainees were able to continue their education/ training as much as possible through online classes, finding employment remained a challenge. Most of the multi-skill trainees at the Blind Relief Association are from a low-income rural background, and often find it hard to find a job in a city like Delhi. Additionally, few of the female trainees are also married and have children. In this context, it is challenging to be employed in the metro cities with a sustainable income. Owing to such reasons in order to promote entrepreneurial spirit in the vocational trainees, the Association initiated Livelihood Projects to encourage and support self-employment/ small-scale businesses that can be set up in the trainees' native place.

Three livelihood options/ small scale businesses covered in the Project are:

1. Sewing Machine – Stitching masks, bags, hair scarfs
2. Relaxation Massage – Itinerary masseurs
3. Dairy Farming – Cow milking and manure making

The team at the Blind Relief Association will interview and recommend the trainees for the Livelihood Project, who are already enrolled/ completed the training at the Association's Vocational Training Centre and are waiting for employment. The shortlisted trainees will be assigned a mentor each. The mentors will provide handholding to the trainees for six months by way

of personal visits or on call. Depending on the opportunity, the mentors will guide the trainees with strategies and options of earning better. The Association has approached HSBC Bank to volunteer as mentors for the project. Efforts are made to raise funds exclusively for the Livelihood Project to initially support ten trainees.

Online Livelihood Training Programme (In collaboration with Udhya Learning Foundation)

Under the pandemic-conditions, while many educational programmes of the Blind Relief Association were re-designed and went online, the vocational-skill programmes had to face huge challenges. As the trainees were away at home, only soft skills, relaxation massage and computers were taught through virtual platforms. Under the guidance of Smt. Radhika Bharat Ram, Joint Secretary of the Association, the Vocational Training Centre in partnership with Udhya Learning Foundation initiated an online livelihood program.

Designed through a pre-program assessment by trainers from Udhya Learning Foundation, Youth4Jobs Foundation, and The Blind Relief Association Delhi, a one-month program was conducted for 30 trainees divided in 6 batches. The program aimed to motivate and encourage the trainees to become self-reliant individuals and set up small-scale businesses in their own towns/ villages. As a part of the program, motivational interactions with already established visually impaired entrepreneurs were arranged.

Webinar on Livelihood Opportunities for Persons with Visual Impairment

To share diverse experiences and explore various and new opportunities the Association organized a webinar on “Livelihood Opportunities for Persons with Visual Impairment” on 12 August 2020. Among the speakers were Professor Vikram Dutt, Advisor, All India Confederation for the Blind; Sri. K. C. Pande, Blind Relief Association; Ms. Tilakam Rajendran, ATPAR; Ms. Sheetal, Udhya Learning Foundation; Sri. Aditya Bose and Sri. Samanth Choudhary, ProBano and Sri. Ramdas Shivhare, State Bank of India. Prof Dutt in his presentation shared the experience of community-based rehabilitation initiatives, such as livelihood project in poultry and organic farming run by persons with disabilities. The speakers discussed the various governmental schemes like MNREGA, and bank loan schemes available for small businesses run by persons with disabilities.

Wildcraft Training

With the help of Udhya Learning Foundation, the Blind Relief Association collaborated with LabourNet and Wildcraft to prepare trainees to become sales agents. A three-day training on Marketing & Sales was held in September 2020 by the Sales team of Wildcraft. In addition to training at the Association’s campus, ten vocational trainees were also provided hands-on training at the Wildcraft’s Store at Connaught Place. Post-training, the trainees ventured into areas like Connaught Place, Khan Market, etc. in Delhi to sell facemasks.



AWARENESS PROGRAMS

Session on Banking and Financial awareness

A session on Banking and Financial Awareness was held by Sri. Ramdas Shivhare, Assistant Manager State Bank of India for the vocational trainees on 13 March 2021. In the session, he detailed basic banking operations, digital banking and the provisions and rights of person with visual impairment in availing banking services. Sri Shivhare is an alumnus of the Association's JPM School.

Session with NHFDC

To further encourage entrepreneurship, the Association's Placement Unit organized a session with National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC), the public sector agency, working for financial assistance of persons with disabilities. It provides loan for developing and supporting entrepreneurship among persons with disabilities. Held on 20 March 2021, the session was addressed by Sri. Rakesh Kumar Agarwal, Chief Manager (Project) who provided details of NHFDC's various financing schemes, rate of interests and loan benefit for the persons with disabilities.

Employment Registration Camp

An employment registration camp by the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for Handicapped, Ministry of Labor, Government of India was hosted by the Association in its premises on 17 March 2021 for the enrollment of vocational trainees. The aim of the camp was to register the trainees in the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre database and to enable the trainees avail employment related services offered at the governmental level. A total of 31 trainees of the Association were registered.





BRAILLE PRODUCTION

The Association is among the pioneering institutions in the country to introduce computerized Braille printing facility as far back as in 1990. The Braille production unit has a modest Braille printing capacity, which is primarily utilized to meet the educational and other Braille material requirements of all the units of the Association. It also caters to specific requests from outside. From time to time the Unit brings out reading material of general interest such as poetry, fiction and miscellaneous articles. During the year a total of 32 titles in Hindi, English, and Japanese running into 606 volumes were produced.

AUDIO RECORDING

The facility for recording audiobooks was established in 1982 to make study material available to students and trainees. Devoted volunteers render their services free of cost to read out material for recording. Since its inception, the Association's studio has produced a total of 883 titles in Hindi, English, and Sanskrit languages. These comprise school textbooks, university-level books, fiction, non-fiction, competitive exam material, books related to personality development and current affairs. Apart from the Association's own students and trainees, a large number of college-going and other

students from Delhi and outside are provided recorded study material on request in digital MP3 and Daisy formats. Some of the recordings are shared on online accessible libraries like Sugamya Pustakalaya.

During the year 2020-21, 9 new titles: 6 in Hindi and 3 in English were recorded. A total of 469 GB of data were copied and supplied to students and trainees.

Like other units of the Association, the Braille & audio recording services were also affected due to the pandemic. The services of volunteers could not be availed as done regularly. The Braille Production Unit and Recording Studio began functioning on a modest scale after the few initial months of the national lockdown. In the meantime, with the help of Saksham, training sessions were held for volunteers to record audiobooks from home. With the situation having improved after August 2020, the studio was reopened to volunteers. However, continued pandemic situation deterred most of the volunteers to visit.

A new facility added to the Recording Studio is the production of E-text using KIBO. It is a convenient technological device that can scan, convert and speak out printed and handwritten text in several Indian Languages. The converted e-text can be voice-read by on computers, tabs, and mobile phones, as well converted into Braille.

HEALTH CARE: The Association has arrangements to monitor and provide primary medical and health care to the students and trainees. The health care team comprising a visiting physician, a round-the-clock male nurse, a female nurse, and an assistant form the core of services. Regular medical check-ups are conducted and free medicines provided. There are arrangements with reputed hospitals and health centers such as Dr. Shroff Charitable Eye Hospital and Sai Bhakta Samaj Polyclinic for specialized diagnostic assistance and treatment.

Dr. R. K. Baijal, the visiting physician who rendered voluntary services with the Association since August 1995 retired due to the pandemic.

Dental Clinic: A well-equipped Dental Care Unit set up by Sri Govind Tricentenary Dental College (now SGT University) Gurugram provides dental care services to the Association's school children, trainees, and staff.

Pandemic Preparedness: During the pandemic period, the medical team undertook the responsibility of ensuring that the Association campus was well protected against the virus infection. Arrangements of screening of staff or the visitors at the gate was strictly carried out with thermal screening and checking oxygens levels. A quarantine area was created to observe and provide required preventive medicines to staff or trainees reporting back for duties/training.

BOARDING AND LODGING: The Association runs a large hostel in its premises, which provides free boarding and lodging facilities to around 300 visually challenged children and adults.



They include students of the school, teacher trainees, vocational trainees and visually impaired workers of the Association. The Association has a large dining hall and a well-equipped and hygienic kitchen serving three wholesome meals (breakfast/ lunch/dinner) and afternoon tea. Visually impaired visitors are also provided accommodation and food at subsidized rates.

During the COVID-19 lockdown period from March to June 2020, responding to the situation the Association activated and geared the kitchen facilities and the staff to prepare meals to be distributed to stranded itinerant labours and the poor living in bastis in the vicinity and around hospitals. In this massive operation, cooked food, ration and daily necessity items were distributed to the needy, through partnering with other NGOs like Uday Foundation, SAKSHAM SEWA, and the Delhi Police.

AWARENESS AND CONSULTANCY: Spreading awareness in the society on inclusion, equality of rights, capabilities and potentials of persons with physical/sensory disability, especially visual impairment, is an important mandate of the Association. The Association's school students and the vocational trainees participate in different events and present their talents on equal footing with their counterparts. Even under the pandemic situation such talents and potential continue to be demonstrated by way of online events and through the sales of diverse products made by the trainees in the Association.

The Association liberally shares its expertise with other institutions and organizations seeking guidance on establishing disability services, and also provides training to the trainers from such institutions. The faculty members from the Association's JPM School and Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education, as well as the vocational trainers are frequently invited as

experts in consultative groups and as panelists in webinars and media programmes concerning disabilities.

INTERNSHIP: A number of students pursuing courses in Social Work in Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, Department of Social work - University of Delhi, IGNOU, Jamia Millia Islamia University and other institutions are placed with the Association to do their practical field training. They find a good opportunity to study the different aspects of vocational training for persons with visual impairment. They also work side by side with the trainees and gain insight into the capabilities of persons with disabilities.

VOLUNTEERING: The Association is fortunate to have a large number of individuals rendering regular voluntary services. They lend services to perform different tasks in the recording studio, dining hall, vocational training workshops, school, medical unit, teacher training college, and the Association's offices. Due to the pandemic, for most of the year, volunteers worked virtually, and corporates like Mercer conducted online sessions/ webinars for the staff.





New Building Block

The construction work of the New Building has been substantially completed. The civil works including electrical, flooring, windows, staircase are finished, whereas the interiors, air conditioning and installation of lifts are underway. The building has a water-recycling system which has been installed and awaits to be operationalized. For the external area rainwater harvesting system comprising three interconnected wells has been constructed and is functioning. The landscaping plan is ready to be taken up. Efforts are being made to complete the building project (including external landscaping, drainage, roads etc.) by the end of November 2021.

Online Diwali Sale

The Association's popular Annual Diwali Bazar offers the opportunity for mass sale of candles, paper and other products made by the trainees and staff. The Bazar also hosts a range of vendors from outside. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 pandemic, the Association could not hold this prime sales & fundraising event in 2020. This caused severe impact on the financial resources of the Association. Therefore, for the sale of its products, the Association decided to explore online platforms. An e-commerce website was developed for the Association voluntarily by a father-son duo - Mr. Gautam and Mr. Divij Kapoor. A comprehensive system of publicity, marketing, and logistics was developed which with some initial hiccups functioned well in tandem with physical sales and achieved fair success. The site continues to be live throughout the year and the products are delivered pan India.

Link: <https://shop.blindrelief.org/>





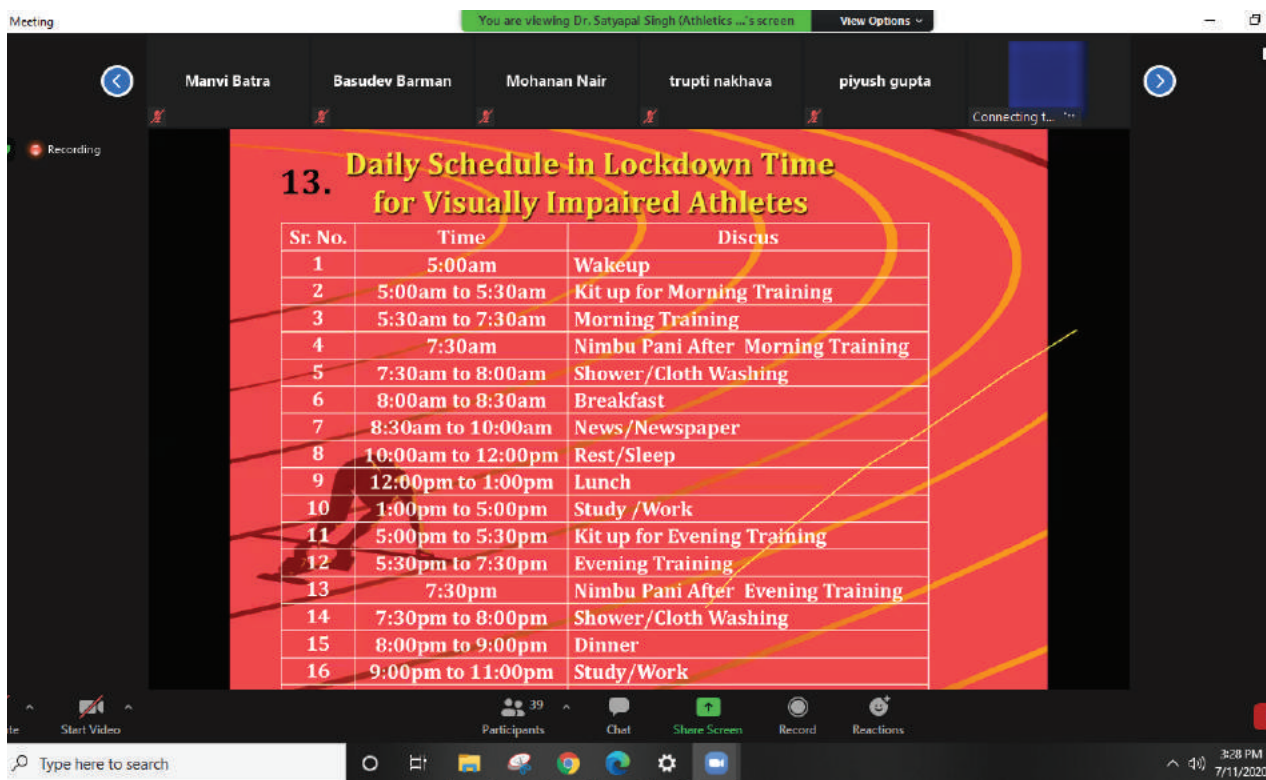
Farewell

Under the pandemic condition and frequent lockouts the Association was not able to formally bid adieu to a few of its staff who parted company either on superannuation or resignation or transfer during the lockdown period. As soon as the situation eased, a formal get-together was held on 26 February 2021 to honour them for their long dedicated services to the Association. The staff who left are:

1. Smt. Alice Mathew, Nurse (07 January 1981 - 30 April 2020)
2. Sri Ramashray Ram Vishwakarma, Orientation and Mobility Instructor (03 July 1981 - 31 March 2020)
3. Sri Chander Bhan Mishra, Resident Warden (01 March 1995 - 30 June 2020)
4. Sri Ek Bahadur, Head Cook (22 December 1978 - 31 March 2020)
5. Sri Abdul, Mali (01 April 1983 - 30 September 2020)

6. Sri Rampal Singh, Massage Instructor (01 December 2003 - 31 March 2020)
7. Sri Bachu Singh, Safai Karmachari (02 September 1983 - 27 January 2020) - Resigned
8. Sri Prem Chand, Mali (18 June 1982 - 31 January 2021)
9. Sri Davender Singh, Store In-charge (11 April 1994 - 31 January 2021)
10. Sri Keshav Kumar Sampath, Vice Principal, JPM School (06 November 1987 - 31 December 2019)
11. Sri Arun Kumar Mishra, PGT, JPM School (08 January 1992 - 30 April 2020)
12. Sri Ravinder Partap, PGT Music, JPM School (17 July 1996 - 31 December 2019) – Transferred

To honour them the Association presented them a plaque and a gift hamper each. Also, the staff of the Association collectively presented gifts as an expression of affection towards their outgoing colleagues.



Indian Blind Sports Association

The Association is proud of having played the key role in the establishment of the Indian Blind Sports Association (IBSA), a national level body for the promotion of sports for the blind in 1986 and in consistently supporting its activities. With 241 institutions and organizations from 27 states as its members, IBSA is one of the oldest, largest and most active disability sports organizations in the country. It represents India in the International Blind Sports Federation, the apex blind-sports body, and is affiliated with the Paralympic Committee of India. With support from the Blind Relief Association, IBSA organizes national-level sports meets and coaching camps in athletics, powerlifting, football, kabaddi, and chess, besides identifying and sending talented athletes to participate in international sports events.

The onset of COVID-19 pandemic in the country and the national lockdowns clamped subsequently brought to a halt the events, camps and competitions

planned by the IBSA for the year. However, with the available opportunities, the Association and its affiliate organizations conducted innovative online and offline events.

COVID-19 Webinar Series

The new normal under pandemic conditions proved extremely challenging, demanding strict physical distancing and massive adjustment in the lifestyle. For the visually impaired, this situation was especially dire in terms of the fact that sense of touch and feel are amongst the main sensory receptors for day-to-day functioning. Keeping this in mind, the Indian Blind Sports Association collaborated with the Blind Relief Association in organizing webinar series on topics which provided understanding about the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting ways the visually impaired sportspersons may tackle it as well as maintain their physical and mental fitness. The webinars were held on Zoom and also live-streamed on YouTube to reach wider audience.

1. Webinar on Lockdown Home Workout for Visually Impaired Athletes

Date: 12 July 2020

Speaker: Dr. Satyapal Singh (Dronacharya Awardee, Chief Coach of IBSA)

The webinar dealt with the problems being faced by para-athletes especially the blind athletes, daily schedule to be followed during the lockdown, appropriate routine for the visually impaired athletes along with a diet plan. Well known visually challenged athlete and Arjuna Awardee Ankur Dhama shared his personal experience on the same lines.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyHlhrZInn8>

2. Webinar on Myths and Misconceptions about Sports Nutrition



Date: 28 July, 2020

Speaker: Dr. Vikram Singh (Senior Physical Educator - Jawaharlal Nehru University)

The presentation highlighted the importance of a healthy body and mind, and dealt with the myths and misconception about sports nutrition. Dr. Vikram Singh emphasized the importance of balanced diet, importance of exercise, knowledge of hormones and weight loss. Sharing research analyses and surveys, he spoke on how following proper regime can bring about a concrete positive change in not just the life of athletes but also among general population.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpkR8eMA-K3A>

3. Webinar on the Lives of Blind Sportspersons

Date: 2 August 2020

The webinar was organized by the Blind Bankers of India in collaboration with Indian Blind Sports Association. The Blind Bankers of India is an empowering group of chosen visually impaired bankers. The webinar answered the basic questions about how blind persons can get into sports, if a person can pursue sports as a full-fledged career, the national and international sports for the blind, provisions of government for PwD sportsmen. The panel for the discussion included Sri K. C. Pande, Ex-Vice Chair, IBSA; Sri. A. David, Hony. General Secretary, IBSA; Dr. Satyapal Singh, Chief Coach, IBSA; leading blind athletes - Sri. Ramkaran Singh, Sri. Ankur Dhama, Sri. Avnil Kumar, Ms Nidhi Mishra, Sri. Ramanjee, Sri Amit Malik.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqH211Y-DBc>

COVID Outreach

The global pandemic and the imposed national lockdown immensely affected the day-to-day lives of people, especially the poor and underprivileged. As a responsible non-governmental organization and an earnest member of the civil society, the Blind Relief Association in this hour of need rose to the occasion and going beyond its mandated services to the visually impaired, decided to reach out to provide relief to the vulnerable population around.

The Association activated its facilities and staff to cook and distribute meals to homeless and poor people affected by the lockdown. Forming partnership with Uday Foundation it started the relief services on 29 March 2020. To expand its outreach to the visually disabled community and other persons with disability, the Association in April 2020 added Saksham Sewa, an NGO serving persons with disabilities in this partnership. Meals for 800-850 people were prepared every day in the Association's kitchen by its own staff until the end of May 2020. A special word of thanks is due to the Delhi Police especially the Lodhi Road Police Station in helping coordinate distribution to the needy in the area.

Apart from cooked food, the Association also distributed ration, fruits, biscuits, soaps, hand sanitizers, and masks. The masks were produced in the Association's Sewing Unit by vocational trainees who stayed behind during lockdown, together with some staff of the Association.

Focusing on the need of the wider disabled community, the Association worked with cross-disability organizations in providing dry ration and items of daily use to individuals and families, hostels for the visually impaired located in various parts of Delhi and NCR.

In collaboration with Roti Sewa, chapatis were prepared and distributed to people in seven slums in Gurgaon. Migrant workers returning home and passing through Faridabad- Badarpur border were provided packed lunch every day.

An overview of relief provided is given below:

- 51,000 MEALS - Prepared and distributed to the homeless laborers and less privileged persons and families in Lodhi Colony area, under Safdarjung flyover, AIIMS patients and their caretakers staying in Dharamshala

- 1800 FACEMASKS – 500 masks stitched and donated to the underprivileged and persons with disability. 1300 masks sold to corporates, offices, and individuals
- 900 RATION KITS – Prepared by the Association and distributed in different parts of Delhi in partnership with other NGOs. Distribution areas include Dwarka, Uttam Nagar, Palam, Nathu Pura, Sultanpuri, Karala, Pooth Kalan, Rohini, Rani Khera, Samaipur Badli, Rana Pratap Bagh, Bhalswa, J.J.Colony.
- 1880 CHAPATIS – Provided to the migrant & daily wagers living in seven slums of Gurgaon.
- 3600 PERSONS WITH DISABILITY – Residing in different parts of Delhi provided with dry ration, fruits, and facemasks
- 300 MIGRANT WORKERS / DAY – Prepared and distributed lunch packets to migrant workers at Faridabad – Badarpur border

Partners

Distribution: Delhi Police, Uday Foundation, SAKSHAM SEWA (Samadrishti Kshamata Vikas Evam Anusandhan Mandal), Hoonar Foundation, Action for Autism, Family of Disabled, Roti Sewa

Fundraising: Theatre for a Cause

In-kind Donation: KRBL Limited – India Gate Rice





Another Feather in the Cap

The Blind Relief Association, Delhi was awarded the Mahatma Award for Social Good for the year 2020. The award was received by Sri. C. P. Mohanan, Deputy Executive Secretary and Sri. Rajpal, Senior Computer Instructor at the ceremony held on 30 January 2021 at the India International Centre. The Chief Guest of the event was Sri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister - Delhi and the Guests of Honour (joining online) were Smt. Rajashree Birla, Chairperson, Aditya Birla Group, and Smt. Radhika Bharat Ram Jt. Vice Chairperson, The Shri Ram Schools.

Mahatma Award hosted by the Liveweek Group and supported by Aditya Birla Group & Eternal Gandhi Initiative recognizes and celebrates impact leaders and change-makers across the globe, who are making a social impact and leading the way to a sustainable future.

Imperial Honour for Mr. Pande

Sri K. C. Pande, Hony. Executive Secretary of the Blind Relief Association was conferred the Decoration of the Order of the Sacred Treasurer, Gold and Silver Ray's by the Government of Japan.

This Imperial honour was awarded in recognizing Sri Pande's long and significant years of service and devotion to duty, and his efficient and consistent management of the Japanese language course offered at the Japan Information Center, Embassy of Japan.



ONLINE EVENTS

Celebrating Helen Keller Day

As a part of their course curricula, the trainees of Basic Computer & Office Operations Training organized a virtual celebration of the 140th birth anniversary of Helen Keller on 27 June, 2020.

Sri Chandrasekhar Kulkarni, retired Braille Stenography Instructor, National Association for the Blind – Mumbai graced the occasion as the chief guest. The trainees planned the program and also took up individual roles of anchoring, welcoming, and delivering the vote of thanks.

Special invitee Ms Mini Mary, an alumna of BRA's Diploma in Computer Education program, presently working in State Bank of India, Bihar presented the invocation song. An audiovisual presentation and talks on the courageous and inspiring life of Helen Keller were given by the trainees. The address by Chief Guest Sri Kulkarni who joined the meeting from Mumbai mentioned about the global impact of Helen Keller in sensitizing the society and inspiring the persons with disabilities.

Members of the Association, staff, friends, and well-wishers joined the online event and lauded the trainees for successfully putting together the event.

Teachers' Day Celebration

The Teachers' Day on 5 September 2020 was celebrated with fervor by the Basic Computer & Office Operations course trainees. They took over the role of teachers for a day and each one taught a topic each in the virtual classroom. The teachers of JPM School had a joyful afternoon with the special online programme presented by the school students with music, poetry, and wishes. The student-turned-teachers for the day included Shashank Gupta as the Principal and Shivam Kakkar as the Vice-Principal.

Link: [https://blindrelief-my.sharepoint.com/personal/c_b_dubey_blindrelief_onmicrosoft_com/_layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?id=%2Fpersonal%2Fc%5Fb%5Fdubey%5Fblindrelief%5Fonmicrosoft%5Fcom%2FDocuments%2FC%20B%20Dubey%2FInShot%5F20200905%5F002900185%2Emp4&par-](https://blindrelief-my.sharepoint.com/personal/c_b_dubey_blindrelief_onmicrosoft_com/_layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?id=%2Fpersonal%2Fc%5Fb%5Fdubey%5Fblindrelief%5Fonmicrosoft%5Fcom%2FDocuments%2FC%20B%20Dubey%2FInShot%5F20200905%5F002900185%2Emp4&par-ent=%2Fpersonal%2Fc%5Fb%5Fdubey%5Fblindrelief%5Fonmicrosoft%5Fcom%2FDocuments%2FC%20B%20Dubey&original-Path=aHR0cHM6Ly9ibGluZHZJbGllZi1teS5zaGFyZXBvaW50LmNvbS86d-jovZy9wZXJzb25hbC9jX2JfZHVhZlYmXpYmRyZWxpZWZfb25taW-Nyb3NvZnRfY29tL0VZQ1g1SEVBbFRoQ21Pck9YUklyUG1vQktGS1V4MzZQcE-kzamsxeWhURy1qc1E%5FcNRPbWU9dlpWaDJFNXM yVWc)

ent=%2Fpersonal%2Fc%5Fb%5Fdubey%5Fblindrelief%5Fonmicrosoft%5Fcom%2FDocuments%2FC%20B%20Dubey&original-Path=aHR0cHM6Ly9ibGluZHZJbGllZi1teS5zaGFyZXBvaW50LmNvbS86d-jovZy9wZXJzb25hbC9jX2JfZHVhZlYmXpYmRyZWxpZWZfb25taW-Nyb3NvZnRfY29tL0VZQ1g1SEVBbFRoQ21Pck9YUklyUG1vQktGS1V4MzZQcE-kzamsxeWhURy1qc1E%5FcNRPbWU9dlpWaDJFNXM yVWc

Virtual or non-virtual, love for the Japanese language remains the same!

The COVID-19 pandemic taught the world to adopt new modes to educate, work, shop, and entertain that were quite foreign before. Nevertheless, though cities and countries may have to undergo lockdowns, passions and interests certainly didn't.

With a persevering fascination for the Japanese language, both the current as well as passed out students of JPM school continued attending language classes in the Sawaru Nihongo (Touch Japanese) Group held at the Association over the weekend, until mid-March 2020 when the Association had to close and send back the students home. However, with the unswerving support of the committed volunteers, classes continued in the online mode, particularly to help the ones who had applied to appear for the global Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) scheduled in July 2020. With the worsening of the pandemic situation, the July Test was postponed to December 2020, which has been further deferred.

Notwithstanding, the team of volunteers continued to teach in virtual classrooms using audio materials. Unfortunately, the students who require text in Braille have not had the access to it since hard copies of Braille text printed and distributed internally by the Association could not be prepared and sent to the students who moved to their remote native places. Even with the online classes, issues like connectivity in rural areas continued to pose challenges. Still five of them (including JPM School alumni) were preparing for JLPT.

The commitment and dedication of the volunteer teachers Mrs. Naomi Furampu, Ms. Himani, Ms. Anupreet Kaur, Mr. Yogesh Dayal (based in the USA), and Mr. Kazuma Oura (student in the British School) is sincerely appreciated.



Seminar on Financial Literacy

As a part of the Financial Literacy Week celebrated by the RBI every year to promote financial inclusion and education, a seminar was organized by RBI at The Blind Relief Association on 9 February 2021. The seminar was addressed by a team of senior officers from RBI and other bank officials and attended by the students, trainees, and staff of the Association. Followed by the opening remarks by Sri. M. K. Gupta, Head (F&A), the following five different topics were taken by the bank officials:

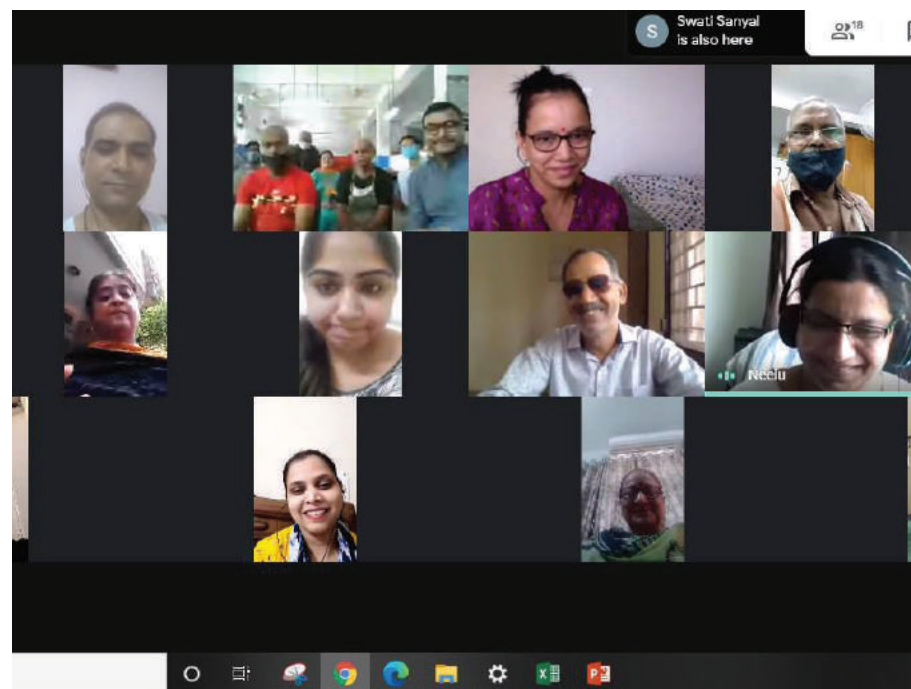
1. Financial Literacy & Financial Competencies; Credit Discipline - Sri. Sada Shiv, Financial Inclusion & Development Department
2. Digital Banking - Sri. Ateek-ur Rahman, Canara Bank & Smt. Sunil Tanwar, Dept. of Payment & Settlement Systems, RBI. It is noteworthy to mention that Sri. Rahman is an alumnus of JPM Senior Secondary School.
3. Features of Banknotes - Sri. Jan Tapa, Issue Dept., RBI
4. Initiatives for MSME's - Sri. M R Shri Kanth, Financial Inclusion & Development Department
5. PMSSS for Divyang Participants - Smt. Anita Rehlan, Financial Literacy Counselor

ONLINE WORKSHOPS/ MEETS

1. Virtual workshop on self-awareness for the staff of the Blind Relief Association was conducted by Col. Hari Varma, Consultant - Youth4Jobs Foundation on 8 August 2020.
2. A virtual remembrance meeting was held for Sri K N Nayar, former Executive Secretary on 9 September, his 102nd birth anniversary.
3. The 10th CII Education Summit on 'NEP for A New Education Paradigm Towards Greater Industry – Institute Collaborations' was held virtually on 10-11 December 2020. Smt. Radhika Bharat Ram, Jt. Secretary and Mr. K.C. Pande, Executive Secretary participated as the panelists.

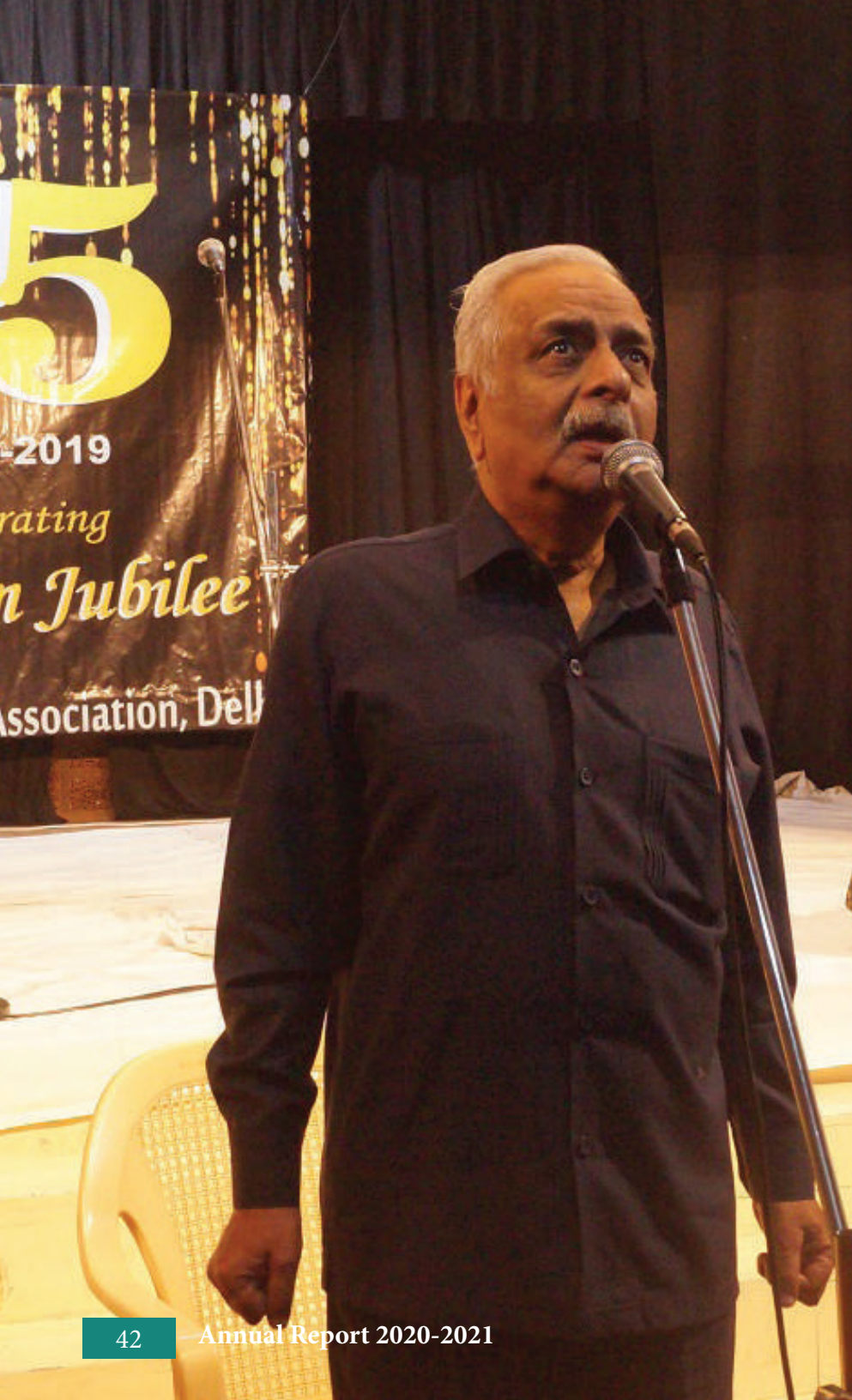
Media Mentions

1. Reader's Digest - On Its 75th Year, Blind Relief Association Has Its Eye Towards The Future - <https://www.readersdigest.in/features/story-on-its-75th-year-blind-relief-association-has-its-eye-towards-to-the-future-125604?fbclid=IwAR0gwDVvxV4TdUb45US06AsFM-Wn-nGaomSRcHblj8QiDkL8q9fPD5J38GRc>
2. SocioStory - Even without Sight, there is still Vision- Blind Relief Association paves the way in transforming lives of visually impaired people - https://sociostory.org/impact-stories/even-without-sight-there-is-still-vision-blind-relief-association-paves-the-way-in-transforming-lives-of-visually-impaired-people?fbclid=IwAR3KsWA1_6vnK4LpPBd-3nnwolmJy8yKRV2_v8NicwYERvXh3JZVlMLdxWEk
3. NDTV - Face masks produced by the Blind Relief Association to fight COVID-19 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6MsUbeEmrA>
4. YourStory - This Theatre Group is feeding thousands of needy families - <https://yourstory.com/socialstory/2020/05/theatre-for-a-cause-awareness-help-food-coronavirus/amp>
5. The New Indian Express - TFAC Challenge: Perform and raise funds - <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2020/may/18/perform-and-raise-funds-2144765.html>



Videos

1. A recollection of Khushi Ek Ehsaas - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvbn_gmXwV4
2. The Blind Relief Association's response to COVID-19 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF02SkNqq5k>
3. Lend a hand, lend your saree - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zsenv-vu8Mo>
4. Reusable cotton facemasks made by the trainees of the Association - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mw3ApXwCJ6g>
5. The Blind Relief Association needs your support today - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9HHRa4SXWg>
6. Stay home, Stay safe, Stay helpful, Stay hopeful - <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=677669796409198>
7. Blind students & online classes <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=324171708941710&ref=sharing>
8. JPM School - Teachers' Day - <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=761787784389658&ref=sharing>



OBITUARIES

Sri. Ajay Kumar Mittal

Managing Committee Member, The Blind Relief Association, Delhi; Vice Chairperson, JPM Senior Secondary School for the Blind.

Sri. Ajay Kumar Mittal, a well-known educationist, and crusader for equality in the field of visual impairment passed away on 22 September 2020 due to COVID-19.

With over 45 years of experience in the field of disability and rehabilitation, particularly in visual impairment, Sri. Mittal was a highly respected leader in the field of education for the visually impaired and a crusader for the rights of persons with disabilities and inclusion in the society. He remained active all through his life working and associated with national and international organizations like World Blind Union WBU, of which he was the Secretary General; International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI); All India Confederation of the Blind (AICB). As stalwart in the field, he was one of the most sought out experts by the government, institutions and organizations for his deep insight and wide knowledge. He was also one of the most outstanding promoters of Braille and Training of Special Educators. Being a perfectionist, Sri. Mittal's accuracy and acumen have left his peers in awe on numerous occasions.

Certainly, many have been blessed by his tremendous contribution to the field of education. The Blind Relief Association has had the honor and privilege of being his first Karmabhoomi or the place of work where he joined in 1970 as the Principal of JPM School and Director of Training Centre for the Teachers of the Blind (TCTB). The leadership and guidance provided for many years contributed to the JPM School getting recognition as an aided school by the Government of Delhi and affiliation with Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Many innovative programmes and co-curricular activities were introduced resulting in JPM School emerging as a leading special school and the Blind Relief Association a highly respected organization in the country.



As a great lover of sports, Sri. Mittal took special interest in the promotion of sports among the visually impaired. He played a key role in the formation of Indian Blind Sports Association and its affiliation with International Blind Sports Federation to represent India in the apex international blind sports body.

He was actively involved in planning and organizing the first National Sports Meet for the Blind hosted by the Blind Relief Association, Delhi in 1982 and subsequently, after the formation of IBSA in 1986 in organizing IBSA National Sports Meets for the Blind. In 1998, he led the Indian contingent to the First World Championships and Games for the Blind held in Madrid, Spain under the aegis of International Blind Sports Federation. Having served as Vice Chairman and in other capacities in the Executive Committee, he made a very major contribution to the promotion of sports among the blind in the country.

His demise is an irreparable loss to the entire family of visually challenged people nationally and internationally, to the field of education, and immensely to the Blind Relief Association.

The Association organized a memorial service on 30 September 2020 and livestreamed it on YouTube. Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kwb0LftLU6E>

Krishna Madan

Krishna Madan, Class X student of JPM School most unexpectedly passed away on 10 August 2020.

Krishna's face was so common on the Association's social media platforms, and there was not an in-house music event without his song. Krishna was one of the most promising and talented boys in the school. He participated in all musical events with great enthusiasm and won almost all of them. He was also one of the most sincere and disciplined students, so much so that, he never missed a single online class during the lockdown until the day of his death.

In his great love for music, Krishna also had a YouTube channel of his own - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-xpZM7-tCJmY7qImhLHkTQ>

He was a spirited boy with great ambitions for the future. A life so short, yet so joyfully lived.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

An account of the Blind Relief Association's happenings will remain incomplete without acknowledging the debt of gratitude the Association owes to a large number of individuals and organizations - from home and abroad, for their invaluable cooperation and cordial assistance extended throughout the year. The Association could not possibly have accomplished whatever it has but for the unstinting support from these generous benefactors.

GOVERNMENT:

- Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India.
- Department of Education, Government of NCT of Delhi
- Department of Social Welfare, Government of NCT of Delhi
- New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC)
- National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (Divyangjan), Dehradun
- University Grants Commission (UGC)
- National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFD)

Corporate Supporters:

- SRF Foundation for the generous support of Rs. 3.20 Crores towards the New Building Project – Phase II.
- NDTV's associate company NDTV Convergence Limited

for supporting the New Building with Rs 31 lakhs.

- Hope Trust for donating Rs. 21.2 lakhs to the COVID relief work undertaken by the Association.
- Mercer Consulting (India) Pvt. Ltd. for supporting the Multi-Skill training programme.

PARTNERS & WELL-WISHERS:

- Military Order of the Collar Charitable Foundation, Switzerland for the sustained support to the Association's varied activities, namely Special Care Unit, Braille Production Centre and Recording Studio.
- MOC Terra Nordica, Sweden for the financial support to the Placement Project.
- Smt. Kamla Devi Charitable Trust run by INOX Group for re-equipping the Computer Lab, and supporting the salary of a Computer Instructor.
- Shahnaz Husain International Beauty Academy for fully supporting Ayurvedic Massage training with the free services of a trainer and required consumables, and also providing a female trainer for the Multi-Skill trainees.
- Sri Gautam Kapoor and Sri Divij Kapoor for designing and building the online store for the sale of the Association's products.
- Bluebyte Pty Ltd. Australia for creating and managing a new accessible website for JPM School, enabling it to successfully run online teaching.
- Japanese language volunteer teachers Mrs. Naomi Furampu, Ms. Himani, Ms. Anupreet Kaur, Mr. Yogesh Dayal (based in the USA), and Mr. Kazuma Oura (student in the British School) for continuing classes online during the lockdown.
- SRF Foundation for supporting English proficiency classes for JPM school students.
- USHA International for providing electric sewing machines for the Multi-Skill training programme.
- Microsoft for providing A1 licenses, i.e Office 365 with 1 TB one drive at no cost.
- Index Braille, Sweden for donation of an Index Everest-D V5 Braille Embosser.
- Microsoft and Make My Trip for donation of 5 and 2 laptops respectively in supporting the education/ training of the visually challenged persons at the Blind Relief Association.

- Dr. Gupta from UK for having donated 20 smartphones for the online training of visually impaired trainees.
- P. Arora & Associates, an architectural firm for taking up the completion of Phase II of the Association's new building.
- Ekta Khanna Design Studio for helping in designing the interiors of the New Building.

The Association is sincerely thankful to all the donors who stood by through this unprecedented challenging year and helped the Association continue its services to the visually impaired without disruption. The Association is grateful for every good thing and appreciates the love and support it has received from every well-wisher, particularly in this year.

A large number of self-effacing ladies and gentlemen have given their time and energy in a totally voluntary capacity to provide useful services such as reading and recording textbooks, helping in Braille book preparation, tutoring, lending a hand in adding value to the candles and paper products, cloth bags and other items made by the visually challenged, in sharing their knowledge and expertise through online mentorship sessions and webinars for improving and enriching our various programmes and services. A dearth of space does not permit us to acknowledge the contributions of each one of them by name. However, the Association expresses its deepest gratitude to all of them.

The Association also thanks the statutory auditors M/s. Thakur, Vaidyanath Aiyar & Co., for having conducted the periodical and annual audit work on time.

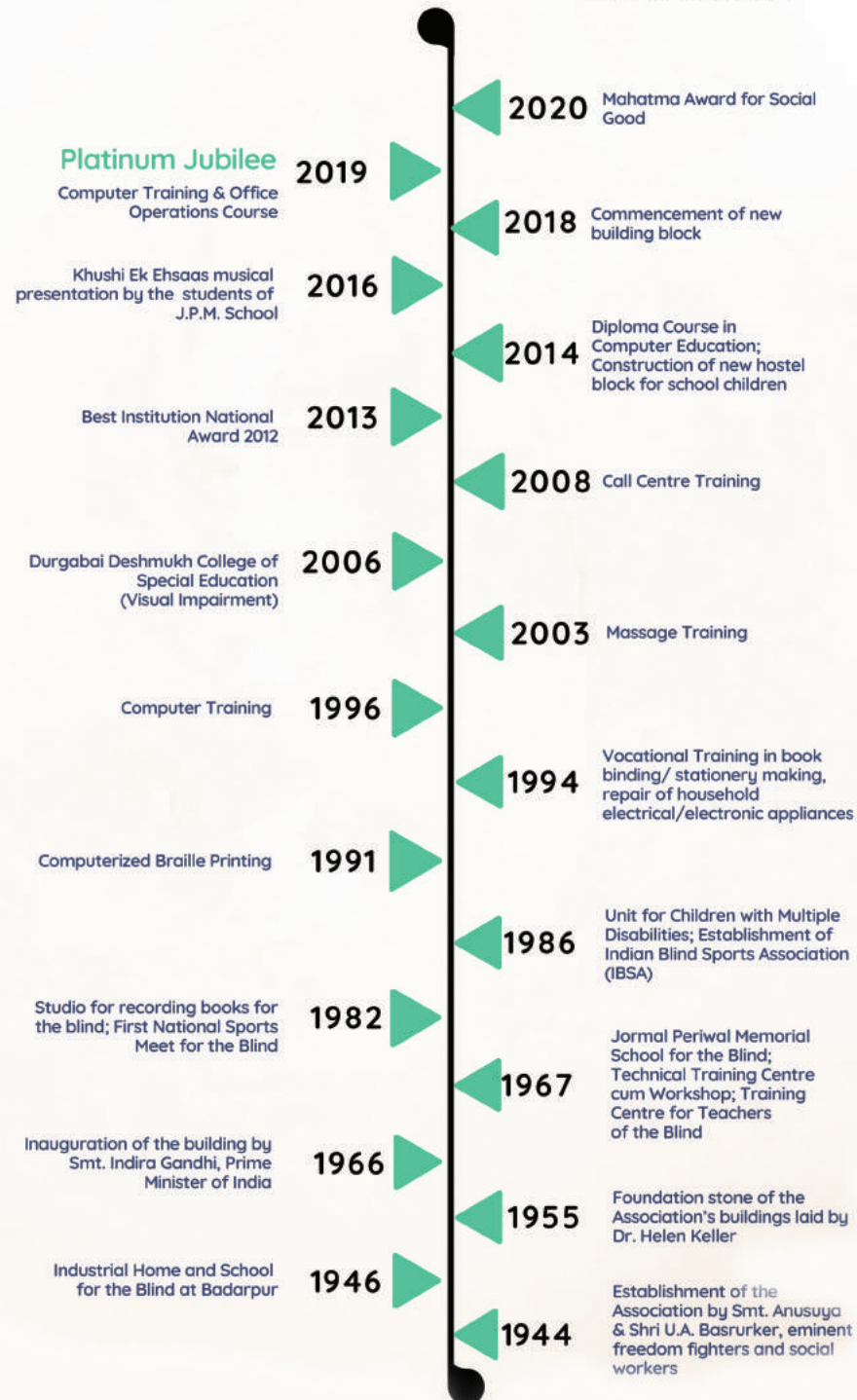
Last but not the least the Association wishes to record its deep sense of appreciation to all the employees who managed to strive through the odds of a pandemic year and carried out their duties with commendable commitment and devotion. With the satisfaction of having evolved stronger, we look forward to a year with better things in store.



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Arun Bharat Ram	Chairman & Life Trustee	
Ranjit Puri	Life Trustee	
	Life Trustee	
Benu Nath	Life Trustee	
Radhika Bharat Ram	Life Trustee	
S.K. Misra	Elected Trustee	
Sanjeev Anand	Elected Trustee	
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NAME	DESIGNATION	OCCUPATION
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Ranjit Puri	Vice President	Company Chairman
Lalit Nirula	Vice President	Social Worker
Benu Nath	Hony. General Secretary	Social Worker

S.K. Misra	Hony. Treasurer	Social Worker
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Amitav Virmani	Member	Educationist
Abhishek Thakur	Member	Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Delhi

TIMELINE





The Blind Relief Association, Delhi

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