**All India Confederation of the Blind**

**Quadrennial Progress Report**

2019-2023

During the period under report, the Confederation has ceaselessly striven towards protecting and promoting rights of the visually impaired in various sectors.

Salient features of our work during the last four years are presented below:

**HONORS AND AWARDS**

We take pleasure in reporting that some of the AICB office bearers have been conferred notable distinctions and awards for their meritorious work during the period that has helped create enhanced recognition for the organisation through their work.

* Late Shri A. K. Mittal, Former President of AICB was posthumously conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award, for his dedicated work for persons with disabilities , on 3rd December, 2020 by NIEPVD, Dehradun
* Prof. Anil K. Aneja—President of the Confederation was conferred the “Best individual working in the field of social work” Award by the Government of NCT of Delhi. He also received the “Rustom Merwanji Alpaiwalla Memorial Award (2020)” in the Voluntary Category for outstanding achievements in the Blind Welfare field, by the National Association for the Blind (India), Sarojini Trilok Nath National Award 2020 in the Best Individual category and NCPEDP-LTIMindtree Helen Keller Award 2022 in the category Role Model for Persons with Disabilities**.**
* Mrs. M. Muthu Selvi—Vice President received “Saadhana Award” from the Inner Wheel Club and “Lions Achiever Award” by the Lions Club of Anna Nagar, Chennai.

**AICB CAPT. CHANDANLAL SPL. SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND, GURUGRAM**

AICB has been running Captain Chandanlal Special School for the Blind in Gurugram since 1994. Located in a rural setting in Berhampur, Gurugram, Haryana State, the school has continued to make headway with its unique combination of special educational facilities such as:

• A Geography room

• A Computer section

• A Science lab

• A Touch-and-Tell Museum

• A Braille library

• A Dispensary

Key highlights:

* 76 new students admitted in past four years
* 46 students (Male: 30, Female: 16) successfully passed the 8th Standard
* 40 prizes including 19 first prizes won by students in various competitions—educational, Braille, sports and cultural activities
* Silver Jubilee celebrations of the School were held during 2019-20

A number of corporate entities and philanthropically minded individuals/organizations have come forward with valuable contributions to further expand the school’s activities and enrich its infrastructure. AICB is deeply grateful to each one of these valued supporters.

Mitsubishi Electric Automotive India Pvt. Ltd. (MEAI), Manesar was on the top by donating a sum of Rs. 1,42,14,949/- to meet some expenses towards hostel, salaries of teaching staff and repair and maintenance expenses of the school.

**BRAILLE PRESS**

During the last four years, as many as, 770 Braille titles, consisting of 1,55,741 Braille volumes and running into 1,33,44,906 Braille Pages were produced by the AICB Braille Press. These titles included school text books, college books, General reading material, NBT Publications, Braille editions of 3 children’s magazines, 2 women’s magazines (one in Hindi and one in Tamil) and 2 Digest form magazines (one in English and one in Hindi).

Out of these, the National Book Trust, India sponsored 233 titles for Braille production in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Gujarati, Marathi, Hindi and English languages.

M/s Mitsubishi Electric Automotive India Pvt. Ltd., helped to purchase one paper cutting and one binding machine to upgrade services of the Braille press.

**TRAINING AND PLACEMENT**

The Confederation continued to run a wide range of in-house training Programmes for the benefit of the visually impaired including the late blind. AICB vocational training activities consist of Hindi Braille Stenography, one year course in computer application, communication skills and computer-induction courses of shorter duration.

* 90 visually impaired persons trained in Hindi Braille Stenography and Computer Application courses of one-year duration
* 199 visually impaired persons completed Basic Computer course
* 93 late blind persons trained in adjustment and rehabilitation skills (crisis management)
* 111 visually impaired AICB ex-trainees found jobs in Government and recognized private companies during the period of four years.

**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

It is AICB’s firm conviction that no talk of empowering the visually impaired can be meaningful without adequately addressing the needs and interests of girls/women. This is only possible by enabling visually impaired women to become active participants in AICB’s common quest for genuine empowerment.

Key highlights:

* 665 merit-based scholarships amounting to INR 70,14,608 were granted during the period for higher studies
* 53 visually impaired girls from 9 states attended intensive training workshops
* 33 outstanding visually impaired girls were awarded laptops for their outstanding performance
* 231 college-going girls and women vocational trainees were provided hostel facilities free of charge during the period.
* The women's Committee also celebrated International Women’s Day on 8th March almost every year and also conducted a research on “Challenges of Covid-19: Mental Health and well-being among the visually impaired”
* Self-defence skill workshops for one month each were conducted for 109 blind ladies in Bihar, Lucknow, Delhi and Thanjore
* In addition, workshops on Higher education, reproductive health, gender, disability and sexuality and personality development were also organized for 140 participants.

**YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Organization started a new scheme called “Youth Empowerment Scholarship Scheme” from 2021-22 and has covered South Indian States, Maharashtra, Goa, Daman and Diu as well as other states for blind youth. Under this Scheme, all applicants willing to receive scholarships from the Confederation were considered. So far we have granted 154 scholarships amounting to Rs. 15,07,356 during the period.

**ADVOCACY INITIATIVES**

One of AICB’s fundamental commitments is to ensure non-discrimination and enjoyment of rights for visually impaired persons across the country. Around 45 issues have been taken up during the last four years based on our key strategies ofJudicial Activism, Capacity Building, Lobbying and Networking, Making policy-specific representations, Community Sensitization, Accessibility, Research and Need-Based Individual Guidance.

During the period in reference, AICB has filed/responded to 17 High Court Cases – 5 in Delhi High Court, 6 in Lucknow bench of Allahabad High Court, 5 in Madras High Court and 1 in Rajasthan High Court. In addition, 4 matters have been taken up filling petitions in the office of the Chief Commissioner/Commissioner, Disabilities and 3 issues have been pursued through lobbying. In 5 cases, legal notices have been served and 3 matters have been taken up through RTI. In addition, the Confederation has made 14 representations with respect to various government policies and accessibility issues.

Some of the important issues taken up by AICB through the above strategies are:

* The accessibility of currency notes and coins.
* The equivalence of Special B.Ed with General B.Ed.
* Non-implementation of various provisions in various states/organisations.
* Identification of jobs for government employment.
* Free FasTag for the visually impaired.
* Reservation in aided schools and colleges.
* The issue of disability pension after retirement.
* Covid-19-related policies and matters.
* Accessibility of monuments.
* Accessibility of public spaces such as railway stations.

The President, AICB has been a member of 4 government committees and has also participated in national-level government consultations. In addition, he has been invited to deliver lectures on advocacy issues by a number of organisations. The Vice President, AICB, Ms. Muthu Selvi has made a number of advocacy-related presentations. Further, the Confederation has conducted two advocacy workshops for AICB affiliates and has also organised an impact workshop for senior officials of the Government of NCT of Delhi on disability, in collaboration with the Office of the State Commissioner for Disabilities, GNCTD, Delhi. We have also completed a Research Study on the identification of jobs for the visually impaired in key corporate sectors. Another Research Study related to inclusive education is near completion. Guidance concerning rights-based issues to both individuals and organisations has continued to be provided.

**COMMUNITY-BASED REHABILITATION (CBR)**

Consistent with the Confederation's proclaimed policy of reaching out to the neglected visually impaired rural population, AICB endeavors to address their urgent needs. For this purpose, AICB adopts the single disability-specific CBR model. During the period under report, the confederation took up the CBR work in two Districts of Uttar Pradesh—Jalaun and Pratapgarh through support from the Danish Association of the Blind (DAB). Under this programme:

* 964 persons were provided training in skills like orientation and mobility, independent living and income-generating activities
* 553 persons were helped to undertake income-generating activities through rehabilitation grant
* Rehabilitation grant amounting to INR 82,01,226 provided to visually impaired persons for their Income generating activities. In addition, interest-free loans of Rs. 15,85,000 were provided to visually impaired persons for expanding their small businesses.
* 12 family counseling workshops, 16 networking workshops, 10 government officers workshops were also organized.

**PENSIONS TO ELDERLY BLIND PERSONS**

During the period under report, 75 blind persons were supported by providing pension of Rs. 6000 per head per year.

**LOUIS BRAILLE CELEBRATIONS**

Every year the Confederation celebrates Louis Braille birth anniversary on 4th January at its Rohini campus. On this occasion, the Confederation organizes Braille reading and writing competitions to promote Braille efficiency and to reward excellence in Braille.

Other features include:

* Madanlal Khandelwal Memorial Braille Essay writing competition
* Prestigious awards like Krishna Kumari Varma Memorial Award, Krishnawanti Manohar Lal Memorial Award, Aket Kansil Memorial Award etc. were given away to V.I. students obtaining high ranks in Master’s, M.Phil or CBSE 12th examinations.

**WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS, MEETINGS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

Bearing testimony to its continuing credibility and recognition, the Confederation represented at various important Committees/Groups dealing with issues relating to the disability sector at the national as well as international levels. AICB representatives participated in more than 40 such important events.

**ASSISTANCE TO COVID AFFECTED BLIND PERSONS**

In spite of our limited resources, we could assist 422 blind persons during the Covid period who were working as Hawkers, Jagaran and/or orchestra artists to the tune of Rs. 7,88,000. This was our humble contribution to our blind brothers and sisters during their hour of difficulty.

**ASSISTANCE TO AFFILIATES**

During the period of four years, we have been able to support our affiliated organizations by providing a sum of Rs. 23,54,500 for various important projects. Some of these projects are: orientation and mobility training, computer training, advocacy work and so on.

**CONCLUSION:**

In conclusion, AICB would like to acknowledge the varied and valuable contributions and support extended towards diversifying the Confederation’s activities by all AICB’s colleagues and affiliated members.

The Confederation’s achievements have indeed been the outcome of coordinated teamwork by all. The Confederation would like to acknowledge the valuable support provided all along, by international friends and well-wishers and also all benefactors and donors from within the country.