



GARDEN OF HOPE



THE STORY OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

GOA STATE BRANCH





FOREWORD

I am overwhelmed with nostalgic memories of NAB Goa for over 27 years and the journey we have travelled through in our endeavour to make this an Institute of repute. There have been good and trying times along the way.

This is the 10th council of National Association for the Blind, Goa State Branch. In the last 10 years, we have seen a quantum jump in the progress of education, which has become accessible to our visually impaired students, especially the new digital technology.

The idea of publishing a book germinated in one of our council meetings a couple of years back. It was decided that we would document our presence since the inception of NAB in 1983.

Our Vice President, Mrs. Poornima Priyolkar took upon herself this mammoth task of compiling the data and presenting it in a fascinating 'Coffee Book' style and aptly naming it 'Garden of Hope'. I congratulate her and the council members who also pitched in their bit.

It is a proud moment for us that our NAB family tree has borne this fruit and I am sure this book will go a long way in inspiring the visually impaired persons and the organisations who serve them.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rozendo Mendonsa'.

Rozendo Mendonsa
President, NAB, Goa



Message from the Governor of Goa



P S Sreedharan Pillai
Governor of Goa



Raj Bhavan
Goa-403004

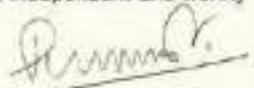
MESSAGE

I am happy to know that the National Association for the Blind (NAB), Goa State Branch is publishing its first Coffee Table Book which is aptly titled "Garden of Hope".

2. I am aware that the members, staff and volunteers of NAB, Goa have been working whole-heartedly and dedicatedly for the empowerment of the visually challenged children and adults of Goa since its inception on 10th February, 1983.

3. NAB, Goa follows the integrated approach to education whereby children with visual impairment attend mainstream schools and colleges and receive all the required support from NAB which enables them to perform on par with the other students and sometimes even outshine them. NAB also encourages their various talents in music, art and sports. Adults are supported through vocational programmes and employment to integrate well in mainstream society. I would like to urge the Goa Government and the philanthropists of the Goan society to render their support and assistance to all the endeavours of NAB.


4. I congratulate NAB, Goa on the release of this Coffee Table Book which I sincerely hope will bring greater awareness and support to their laudable efforts in making the visually challenged independent and worthy members of Goan society.


(P.S. Sreedharan Pillai)
Governor of Goa

November 23, 2022

**Message from the
Chief Minister of Goa**




DR. PRAMOD SAWANT
CHIEF MINISTER, GOA

13th October, 2022

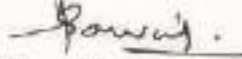
MESSAGE

Pleased to know that National Association for the Blind (NAB) Goa State Branch is coming up with a coffee table book called 'Garden Of Hope'.

The National Association for the Blind has been working for the upliftment of the visually impaired with Integrated Education Program, School with Lodging-Boarding facilities and other programs.

It is heartening to note that NAB has adopted Education with Digital Literacy post COVID-19 pandemic and collaborated with the Book-share of Benetech, USA for technical training of teachers and students.

My best wishes to the NAB for relentless work.



(Dr. Pramod Sawant)
Chief Minister, Goa

MINISTERS BLOCK, SECRETARIAT COMPLEX, PORVORA, GOA, 403 021, INDIA.
TEL: 0832-241941-42. FAX: 0832-241844-46. EMAIL: cm.goa@govt.goa



**Message from the Minister
for Social Welfare, Goa**




Subhash Phal Dessai
Minister for Social Welfare, River Navigation,
Archives & Archaeology
Government of Goa

301, Ministers Block, Third Floor, Secretariat, Porvora-Goa-403021
Tel. No.: 0832 2419536 Fax: _____

No. MIN/SW/2022-23/01 Date: 18/10/2022

MESSAGE


It is heartening to note that the National Association for the Blind, Goa State Branch is coming out with a Coffee Table Book titled "Garden of Hope".

I have personally visited the NAB Centre at Santacruz, Goa and I am aware of the whole-hearted dedication from the council members and staff or the empowerment of the visually impaired children and adults of Goa since its inception on 10th February, 1983.

I am also happy that they have taken steps to implement digital education for their visually impaired students in a big way and I extend my whole-hearted support for their mission.

Congratulations to the NAB team for releasing this book which will go a long way in creating awareness in our society.

I wish them all the best in achieving their vision for the future of the visually impaired students and adult blinds in Goa.


(Subhash Phal Dessai)



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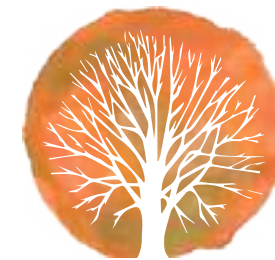
1
BEGINNING



THE SEED



THE ROOTS



THE BRANCH

The Saga of NAB begins here...



Sowing the dream and nurturing it....



THE SEED

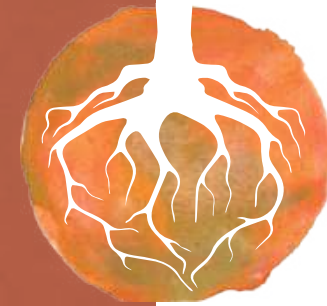
In the peaceful little State of Goa in the days gone by, people lived in harmony amidst sand, sea and greenery. Truly contented people with moderate ambitions.

In those days, disabilities or abnormalities at birth or later in life were accepted as God's will or destiny. Such individuals received the basic comforts from the family but their minds were often denied the oxygen of education, learning and 'living' due to ignorance, lack of awareness as well as social stigma.

The saga of NAB begins there! The idea was to bring forth visually challenged individuals into the mainstream society, rather than hiding them and denying their existence.

NAB, Goa, is a voluntary organisation formed on 10 February 1983, primarily to look after the welfare of the Blind and Visually Impaired in the State. The aim of the Association is to equip these individuals with skills and social confidence through personal grooming, mobility and awareness of the world, in order to enable their smooth integration, physically and economically, into mainstream society. This in turn would enable them to be productive and creative members of the community and would help them gain the dignity and purpose that is so important towards living a meaningful life. The ultimate vision was to see the Blind find gainful employment, with a focus on self-dependence and not remain a burden on their families or state. It has been a challenging journey, as you will read, but every individual who has put a drop in the ocean of NAB, Goa, as it stands today, needs to be applauded!

This cosy institution, National Association for the Blind, Goa State Branch, does not boast of a huge infrastructure but is a comfortable haven, where the Blind stay happily as a family and learn and thrive under the watchful eyes of responsible members of society.



THE ROOTS

National Association for the Blind (India) has been in the field of Blind welfare since 1952. On 21 March 1982, the first committee was elected to the Council of Goa, Daman and Diu, Branch of NAB.

The first task was to locate like-minded people who would voluntarily give their time and inputs for this cause. With a lot of organised and combined effort, regular meetings in the homes of these individuals, small financial contributions by some and big dreams in the hearts of all, they set out on a journey full of challenges. Without any premises for co-ordinating this noble activity, the members decided to work from their places and visit the villages, where the bulk of the Blind resided.

Council of the Goa, Daman and Diu Branch of N.A.B

President
Vice- President
Secretary
Jt. Secretary
Treasurer
Jt. Treasurer
Members

Mrs. Marion D'Souza
Mrs. Juliana Cordeiro
Brig. K. F. D' Lima
Mrs. Maria Louisa Barreto
Mr. Julius Nazareth
Mr. Patrick D' Mello
Mr. Angelo D'Souza
Mr. Valerio D' Mello
Brig. N. E. Barreto.
Mr. F Cordeiro
Mrs. Sophia Monteiro



Homage to the first President Mrs. Marion D'Souza



Helping the Blind to live a life of dignity



The focus then was mainly on Rehabilitation of Adult Blind through Vocational Training by holding camps. (e.g, making of rope bags, cane chairs, chinks, baskets and candles and pottery etc.) The aim was to encourage the Blind towards self-employment. Support for marketing their products was provided by the committee. Vincent Monteiro, a Visually Impaired teacher played a crucial role in the upliftment of the Blind.

For locating the younger blind, the Anganwadi workers were identified and utilised for outreach. As the children were dependent and home bound, a few itinerant teachers were employed to reach out to them even in the remote villages. When they visited the homes of blind children, they found some of them in pitiable conditions. Tara, a fourteen-year-old blind girl, was sleeping on a wooden plank with a milk bottle by her side. She was not given solid food because she had no teeth. They visited Rahul's village, a hamlet of ten to twelve huts. Rahul was sitting in a corner. He had almost forgotten to walk. The parents worked in the fields and had instructed him to sit in the corner lest he ventured near the cooking fire. This teaching model brought its own challenges and some teachers were sent to Bombay for training to learn effective teaching techniques in orientation, braille, personal grooming and vocational training.

NAB (Goa State Branch) as it stands today was formed in 1983 to serve the Blind and Visually Impaired in Goa.

For 7 years the Association functioned from Caritas Centre for the handicapped in Old Goa, but in 1990 the need for specific premises was felt and NAB had to relocate. So, for two years both teachers and field workers maintained visits to homes and schools.

In 1992- 93 a new horizon opened for the Blind and Visually Impaired. In April 1992, the first 10-day residential camp was held at St. Anthony's High School, Monte De Guirim. The Blind from different parts of Goa met for the first time, made friends and understood the concept of community living. They were taught physical training, dance, drama, braille, bag making etc. bringing smiles to their faces. This successful camp, a step towards hope for the Blind, was also thanks to the generosity of the Principal of Monte de Guirim school. More such camps followed in the years to come, teaching pottery, papier mache, basket making and yoga.



Rehabilitation of adult blind through vocational training like making paper bags, chair caning, bag weaving etc.



In April 1993, the then Deputy Chief Minister Dr. Wilfred de Souza, facilitated the acquisition of the resource centre in Mapusa. Interestingly the room to house the centre was purchased with the help of 'NAQUAB', a theatre group which raised the funds through three presentations, 'Miracle Worker', 'Amchi Chuk', and 'Ali Baba'. The play 'Amchi Chuk' was written by a blind boy, Julio da Cunha, who also composed the music for the play! It was for the first time in the history of the blind rehabilitation in India that a play was written, enacted and performed by the blind for the general public.

The Centre was equipped with teaching aids like Braille Slates, Stylus, ABACUS, Tylor frames, tapes and tape recorder, magnifying glasses, white canes and had a sewing machine. Centre conducted monthly workshops for training the Blind



THE BRANCH

In May 1995 NAB took possession of an unused Government primary school premises at Santa Cruz on a long lease from the Government.

Rotary Club, Devon, England and Rotary Club of Mapusa, Goa contributed equally, a total sum of Rs. 4.5 Lakhs towards initial infrastructure to the Centre. Kamat Construction contributed generously towards renovation.

Since the primary aim of NAB is to integrate the Blind in mainstream society, it was vital to admit them in regular schools, but there were multiple obstacles. Hesitancy of schools to accept and teach the Blind in the absence of knowhow, lack of resource teachers and school teachers objecting to the restlessness of these children, admitting them was a great challenge.

NAB Goa started a multi-handicapped training project in June 2004, dealing with Visually Impaired children with other disabilities. This was a tough job and two teachers were trained for this purpose. They would visit their homes and impart basic skills to the children, to begin with, and more importantly orient their parents towards handling this challenge.

With an eye on Integrated Education and with the realisation that the children could not travel daily to school from their



'Matching Grant' project no.TRF 8837 Project by Rotary Devon, England and Mapusa Goa Clubs



Silver Jubilee Celebrations of NAB, Goa



Our student Sumera Khan in conversation with Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.



remote locations, the idea of a hostel facility was mooted in 2005, by Mrs. Usha Kamat. Initially only 6 to 7 students were housed and a cook and warden were employed.

Later, as the number of students increased, there was shortage of space. So, further renovation of NAB Centre at Santa Cruz was undertaken in 2014. Over the years, the Branch grew stronger and sturdier and landmark events were undertaken.

On 12 February 2007, the year long celebrations of silver jubilee of NAB, Goa, began. These saw the presence of the then Chief Minister and Governor who promised help and support to NAB, Goa.

Our Special Achievements

- NAB has received the Goa State Award at the hands of the then Chief minister Manohar Parrikar on the occasion of Liberation Day on 19th December, 2007
- Under the leadership of Rozendo Mendonsa NAB, Goa received the 'Best Institution Award' by Mandovi Parivar in 2014 on the occasion of Independence Day.
- Award at Kalotsav -2015
- Kids for Tigers Award by The Sanctuary Tiger Programme-2015-2016 & 2016-2017.
- RDX Goa awarded NAB, Goa with 'Adarsh Goenkar' award in 2016.
- TCS Maitree Talent contest, All Goa Talent show- 2019.
- Run Away Inspiration- Unique fashion show- 2019
- Best NGO Award, Government and Directorate of Social Welfare, awarded for service to persons with disabilities on the occasion of Goa Liberation Day celebration on 19 December, 2020.
- University of West London -Distinction in Music performance.
- Disability Rights Association of Goa Award for services rendered to persons with disabilities.



NAB - 'Then'



NAB - 'Now'

2

NURTURING



GARDENERS NURTURING THE TREE OF NAB

President And Others
(Pillars Of Nab)

Committee Members
(Guardian Parents)

Benefactors And Wellwishers
(Angels Of Nab)



NURTURING THE BLOSSOM

Teachers, Staff And Support Staff



NURTURING THE BODY AND SOUL

Incredible Food Factor
(Fertile Nourishment)

Straight From The Heart
(A Typical Day)

PRESIDENTS AND OTHERS



PILLARS OF NAB

Any non-profit institution of learning is a partnership among students, faculty, administrative and support staff, management, sincere volunteers and philanthropic souls in society.

But there are some individuals who lead from the front leaving their footprints of selfless service in the Sands of Time. They are the guiding and motivating force that keeps the momentum and quality of social service going.

We have had three Presidents since its inception, namely Marion D'souza, Grace D'souza and Rozendo Mendonsa. Supporting all three over the years, with their practicality and insight, have been Sr. Vice Presidents Usha Kamat and Gaurapriya Pai Kane.

A brief glimpse into their kind of commitment to serve, which will inspire the future generation who will receive the baton in the years to come.

MARION D'SOUZA



National Association for the Blind movement first sowed its seed in Goa on 10 February, 1983 under the valuable guidance of Marion D'souza, the first president of NAB, Goa State Branch. She started her dream of establishing NAB in Goa from her own office.

Marion D'souza collected like-minded people in Goa and worked against all odds to establish NAB, Goa, successfully.

Till 1994, NAB did not even have premises of its own, but in 1995 the struggle came to an end when NAB Goa got the premises of St Cruz Government primary school on lease. The school was in a dilapidated condition and under her guidance it was restored and made habitable. She worked as the President of NAB for thirteen years.

GRACE D'SOUZA



In the year 1996, Grace D'Souza became the President of NAB and took up the mantle of leadership and responsibility for three years.

During her tenure she held a number of vocational camps where students learnt a lot of handicrafts. The students and teachers stayed at the NAB premises during these camps. These camps were a great idea in outreach and many Blind came to the Centre and intermingled, for the first time.

ROZENDO MENDONSA



The first camp for the blind was during the Bi-Centenary year of St. Anthony High School at Monte De Guirim. This was Rozendo's first introduction to the 'World of Blind' and towards this cause he is passionately dedicated over the years. He then became a member of NAB. When the suggestion was made, for premises regarding the Government Primary School, St. Cruz, which was in a dilapidated condition, Rozendo under the leadership of Marion and Grace D'Souza took up the challenge and collected money from various sources and built the Centre there, piece by piece. As the reconstruction took a long time Rozendo fixed a date for moving in against all odds as he believes that "Unless you have a goal there is no success" and the move happened!

Since 1999 the responsibility of leading NAB has been upheld by Rozendo Mendonsa. He has truly dedicated his life to serving the Blind. He tends to the needs of the Blind and nurtures their well-being just like the plants in his nursery! His vision for the future is, to empower every Blind person through personal visits and adoption if required. He also has a dream of extending the current infrastructure to house the elderly, needy Blind.

USHA KAMAT



Usha Kamat connected with the NAB movement in 1992. A career teacher, she has put the education system in place at NAB. She advises the teachers, counsels the students, keeps an eye on the nutrition in daily meals, besides teaching the students when the need arises. She is another pillar of the NAB family and gives direction to move ahead with her minute attention to details. Her life time devotion to and involvement in the welfare of the Blind is one of the reasons why NAB is where it is today.

GAURAPRIYA PAI KANE



A lady of action, Gaurapriya has been an important player in the success of NAB as it stands today. She connected with the cause in 1997. Her strong social connects and networking has enabled NAB to progress on many fronts. She rightly says that NAB is her extended family and therein she remains involved with perseverance and positivity.

Together with the stalwarts there were a lot of committed employees connected with the movement. Some made it their life's mission and worked for NAB for years together and supported the cause through thick and thin.

LEENA PRABHU (1958 -2022)



Leena Prabhu was the 'face' of NAB for more than twenty years. She joined NAB, Goa in 2001 and was the Centre Head and Mentor till date. She was associated with NAB (Bombay) initially. NAB, Goa was a second home to Leena and she was a 'Mother' to the children at NAB. She was loving, caring and genuinely dedicated to the cause of the Blind. The students remained connected with her long after they left NAB. She has penned a book 'Light Towards Independence' – (tips to trainers of Visually Impaired) in Orientation and White Cane Mobility techniques.

PERPETUA BRANDAO



Perpet, as she is lovingly called, had been a permanent feature of NAB office for almost four decades till her retirement. With an ever-ready smile and her efficient ways, her bustling presence at NAB was a given. The ease of organizing events, reference to past happenings, trips to the banks were possible thanks to her. The various committees leaned on her for administrative requirements which she fulfilled admirably.

GUARDIAN PARENTS



Governing Council 2019-2023

Carrying forward the baton of service from previous worthy committees the present council is a perfect blend of shared responsibilities



DEDICATED COMMITTEE MEMBERS

All Committee members at NAB, Goa, till date, have enriched the lives of the Visually Impaired by putting in drops of selfless service in their own ways. It may be in the form of collecting funds, overseeing administration, education, counselling, finances, health of the children, acquiring provisions, employing and guiding staff and support staff, maintaining cleanliness etc. The integrity of their service is the fuel on which NAB has successfully functioned for the last four decades. The current committee is an enviable balance of shared responsibility, perfect understanding and mutual bonding working towards the cause of the Blind which is their special calling.



Carrying forward the baton of service from the previous worthy committees, is the current committee:

1. PRESIDENT

Rozendo Mendonsa

2. Sr. VICEPRESIDENT

Usha Kamat
Gaurapriya Pai Kane

3. VICE PRESIDENT

Lorraine D'Souza
Poornima Priyolkar
Joe Noronha

4. SECRETARY

Richard Pinto

5. Jt. SECRETARY

Angad Singh
Bilochpura

6. TREASURER

Deepak Prabhudesai

7. EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

- a. Taha Haaziq (V. I.)
- b. Mahadev Sawant (V. I.)
- c. Joseph Pereira (V. I.)
- d. Vasant Kabadi (V. I.)
- e. R. Ashok
- f. Tallulah D' Silva

BENEFACTORS AND WELL WISHERS



ANGELS OF NAB

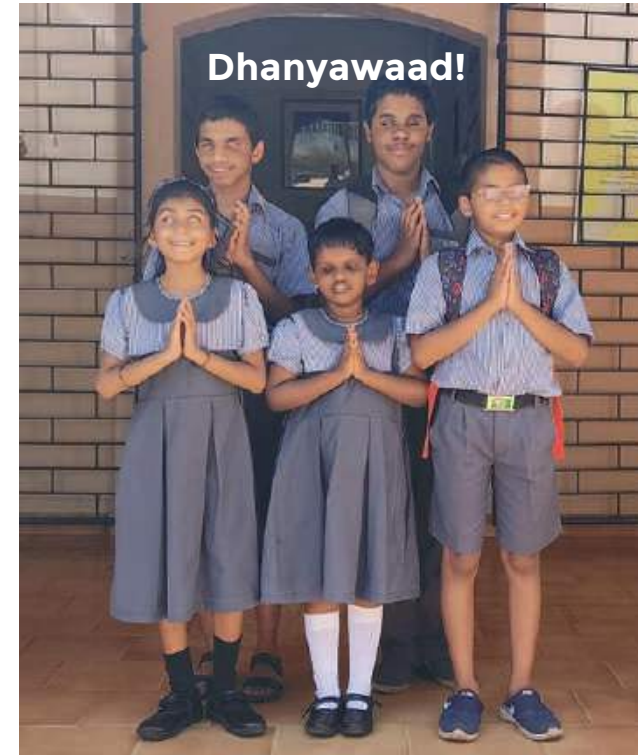
The successful journey of NAB, Goa, so far, has been possible due to the 'GIFT OF GIVING' by sensitised members of the society. This has been in the form of time, energy, commitment and above all funds. If NAB, Goa has grown into a robust tree today from the tiny seeds sowed in 1983 it is because of the overwhelming nurturing with funds by NGO's and philanthropic individuals in India and abroad. After hearing about the transparent and effective utilisation of donated funds for the betterment of the Blind, our donors happily extend their helping hands, time and again to give an opportunity to the Blind to live a life of dignity.

Our benefactors are lovingly invited to the NAB premises on occasions where the children sing and perform for them happily though missing out on the misty-eyed applause from the benevolent souls. At NAB, any little or big donation is immediately acknowledged with an official receipt and a personalised letter of gratitude. As long as these Angels of Society keep shining their light, this tree of NAB, Goa will thrive!

The list of benefactors over the years is long and we are unable to acknowledge each one here. But whether we name you or not, our hearts are touched by your gestures and we always pray for happiness and peace for you and your family!

GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

1. Kamat Construction and Resort Pvt. Ltd
2. Estrela do Mar Beach Resort
3. Vijay Ranganath Kamat
4. Geno Pharmaceutical
5. Ajay Super Market
6. Acron Developers
7. Sanjeev Sachar
8. Kinenco Kaman Composites Pvt. Ltd.
9. Blue Cross
10. Apex Packing Products Pvt Ltd
11. Juhi Prasad
12. Royal Food
13. Olmar Gas Agency
14. Eco Clean and System
15. Ralph D'Souza
16. Nana Bandekar
17. Francis Veigas
18. Anju Timblo
19. Ninil D' Souza
20. Pradeep Joshi
21. Ramasubramaniam Ashok
22. Hari Ghanshyam Kamat
23. Rent A Tent



Thanks to those angels of NAB who have bestowed time, energy, money and commitment over the years to put smiles on the faces of Visually Impaired.

We at NAB are eternally grateful to the continued help we get from the various NGO's in Goa, especially

1. Rotary Club of Panaji Reveira
2. Rotary Club of Panaji Mid Town
3. Rotary Club of Miramar
4. Rotary Club of Panaji
5. Rotary Club of Mapuca
6. Inner Wheel Club of Panjim

Besides the cash donations there are others who have tended to this tree of NAB with their expertise and time voluntarily. We cannot thank them enough but their selfless service deserves a heartfelt applause.

VOLUNTEERS

Whenever teaching support is required during emergencies or examination times or even otherwise there are always some individuals who have come forward to help with the teaching, voluntarily. Such angels have helped out at different times and their dependability in spite of the short-term commitment is noteworthy.

Besides, there have been a number of individuals and groups who have lent their expertise to make the lives of Visually Impaired more wholesome. This may be in the form of teaching dramatics, dancing, singing, yoga, craftwork, knitting, baking etc.

SCRIBES

Over the years examination time has been very challenging. With the requirement for a scribe for every student the arrangement is uphill. Again, we have had people of different ages and from different walks of life making time to help our students.

Keeping transparency in finances is of foremost sanctity to the NAB committee and helping them over long periods of time are those good Samaritans who have given their time and energy unconditionally towards this cause.

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

1. Walter D'Costa
2. Ashish Prabhu Verlekar
3. Pawar & Son

We are blessed to have such angels in society and are eternally grateful to each one. There have been so many and our inability to mention each one by name is regretted. But dear friends, your help truly makes their lives a bit easier and their success stories will warm your hearts.



NURTURING THE BLOSSOM



The team of teachers & administrative staff who help the students surmount tears and fears besides imparting formal education and moral values. From L to R: Josephine D'Souza, Sweta Naik, Tanuja Zalmi, Pooja Paryenkar, Alfiya Shaikh, Sejal Parab, Bharti Giri, Babaji Raut, Mahadev Sawant, Rama Parsekar, Pradip Gawade, Purjut Jha



TEACHERS, STAFF AND SUPPORT STAFF

TEACHERS AND STAFF



Our teachers fills colours with love in different ways to brighten the lives of the students, everyday.

The backbone of our institution has been our team of dedicated teachers who joined NAB for employment, no doubt, but made it their second home. Their job is mainly to teach and counsel the students but over the years their job description has not had any boundaries. There have been no cases of a teacher or any member of staff leaving the service due to dissatisfaction on any front. Their problems, requirements, suggestions are looked into by the committee. If there are any employees who have left it is either for better prospects (for which they are encouraged) or because they have reached retirement.

SUPPORT STAFF

Support staff plays a very important role at NAB. The cleanliness maintained, whether it is in the kitchen, washrooms, entire Centre or outside premises is of primary importance. The neatness of the dormitories, cupboards is vital. This also instills good values in the children who are encouraged towards the same. Any cutting of corners invites reprimand from the committee.



From L to R: Anil Naik, Pushpa Chodankar, Sughandha Naik, Pratima Adkonkar, Deepiksha Gauns

Needless to say, all persons involved in NAB are one Big Happy Family – **THE NAB FAMILY**

NURTURING THE BODY AND SOUL



FOOD FACTOR... FERTILE NOURISHMENT

THE INCREDIBLE FOOD FACTOR AT NAB

It is said that 'the way to a person's heart is through the stomach'. This is so true at our Institution! Nourishment of body and mind of every student and staff member through nutritious as well as tasty food is an incredible highlight here.

Over the years, NAB has seen changes in the structuring of the kitchen. It started with a small room with basic amenities and has now evolved into a full-fledged kitchen with a store room and a separate dining room. The steel furniture is easy to maintain and easy to maneuver around for the Blind. There have been a lot of changes in terms of kitchen equipment, washing areas for dishes etc. The only factor that hasn't changed much is the quality and variety of food cooked by the amazing cooks who have worked for the Centre over the years.

Our current cook, Tai as we call her and her delicacies are loved by all. If the kitchen is the heart of food at NAB then Tai is the soul. The only common ingredient in all her preparation is 'Love'.

A normal day at NAB starts with a hearty breakfast for the students before they leave for school. College students who need to leave at 10:30 am or 11:00 am are served a full meal for their long day schedule. Those who prefer to carry a packed lunch are provided with the same.

Cooking with love while maintaining cleanliness and hygiene meticulously





Children encouraged to keep up the 'No food wastage' policy, at NAB



'Smells good, right?'

At 1:30 pm a post school, hungry gang of school children descend upon the dining room after washing up while guessing the menu for the day using their keen sense of smell.

The partially sighted are encouraged and taught to serve themselves. The totally blind generally need help in serving and the teachers step in to be their mothers of sorts. The teachers then explain what is on the plate by referring to clock hand positions of 3 o'clock, 6 o'clock, 9 o'clock for better understanding. They encourage them to follow the table manners and feeding etiquette. In the absence of sight and therefore observation of others, the children need to learn the correct skill of picking up food and eating with minimum mess in a fairly presentable way. Use of spoons is more challenging but learn they must! NAB has a 'No Wastage of Food' policy which they follow and finish off the sumptuous lunch by washing of their plate or cups at the kitchen sink, a step towards self-dependence and usefulness.

A delightful tea session with a hot snack takes place at 5:00 pm when teachers and students take a break from the study sessions. The snacks range from poha, upma, Idlis and bhajias, batatawadadas once in a while.

The raw material required to feed four meals to 25-30 odd people is considerable but NAB is blessed with 'Annapurna' like angels who donate fish, eggs, milk, vegetables, provisions from time to time in cash or kind.



The position of the items on the plate are described corresponding to the hands of a clock. This enables good dining etiquette in the Blind.



Another factor worth mentioning about food here is not just the quality or variety but also about timeliness and cleanliness. At NAB, very rarely, is there delay in serving food and the kitchen and dining areas are spotlessly clean with active inputs from teachers and committee members. In conclusion, the management of the Incredible Food Factor at NAB can actually be 'Food for Thought' for many other Institutions to emulate.

*The best and most beautiful things in the
World cannot be seen or even touched.*

They must be felt with the heart.



Helen Keller



STRAIGHT FROM THE CORE... HEART

This very sentiment is voiced by kids at NAB when asked about their life at NAB.

MUSINGS OF A NAB BOARDER

A typical week in the life of a NAB boarder

It is day break! We (the totally blind) open our eyes to 'daylight' which is not much different for us. But the sounds of morning; friends stirring and warden Tai calling, make us ready to welcome the new day! We get off our bunk beds, feel our way deftly to our lockers for toothbrush, toothpaste and napkin and wait for our washroom turn. A normal day at NAB starts with a quick session of prayers and physical exercises. We have no idea of the time as no mobiles are allowed on the premises till we complete 10th Std. The only audio aid, our warden, is Tai who feeds us sumptuous breakfast and goads us into keeping the deadline! The scramble to locate our own uniforms, socks, feeling the books for filling in the bags is noisy! Finally, we locate our own shoes on the rack outside and open our white canes to walk confidently to the bus stop with the warden leading. We hear the bus and board it. We overhear people exclaiming about a new shop or the Diwali lanterns or a fancy car passing by and wonder about the wondrous world of the sighted!

Stumbling and hustling up the stairs we reach our classrooms, full of confidence to tackle the uphill task of competing with the sighted students. The soothing sound of some teachers, the firm monotone of others are meaningful till the blackboard teaching begins. This is when most of us switch off, the blanks to be filled in at NAB by our NAB teachers.

The peers at school are reasonably decent, some even helpful. But at times we face ragging and being ridiculed by the nasty ones. We bare the wounds to our NAB teachers for their soothing words of comfort!

Our school teachers are very caring and understanding too. We often feel like touching their hands for personal bonding and recognition but the same hands have to guide so many students in their academic pursuits and constant individual attention is understandably impossible!

At lunch time our procession of stumbling feet is back at NAB premises under the warden's supervision. We are welcomed by the friendly voices of the NAB teachers who have arrived at the centre at 9am in our absence and have been busy preparing big font notes for the visually impaired and audio aids for us. Under their watchful eyes we wash up, change without delay, as this is the pre-requisite for entering the dining hall. Our Tai is a great cook and serves tasty, nutritious food. We have fish and chicken four times a week. Sometimes we get dessert too!



Close friendship bonds develop at NAB on a shared situational platform



Kids say, "for us NAB is a Haven of comfort, security & smiles."



After some rest, at sharp 3pm our study sessions begin. One of the teachers updates us about the important current news in India as well as outside. If you happen to visit us at this time you will find us in small groups, being instructed as per the timetable. Some learn braille, some learn with tactile aids, some are taught what they missed in school.

We break up for tea at 5pm. We sit in the dining hall for tea and a snack, together with our teachers and enjoy 'NAB family time' discussing, joking, teasing etc.

We say good bye to the teachers at 6.00 pm and we are off to the football field, across the road, for physical activities like walking, jogging or playing under the supervision of the warden.

By 7pm we are back for a hot bath, prayer assembly and dinner. Then the girls and boys disperse to their respective dormitories for an hour of self-study before the lights are turned off which is not relevant to some of us.

On Wednesdays, we look forward to the visit of our Guardian parents! The committee members, who keep NAB going, meet every Wednesday at 4pm. They are given the weekly feedback by the teachers. We are sometimes praised or reprimanded but always the value of righteousness and self-worth is stressed upon.

On Saturdays we have activities organized by teachers. Craft, music, baking, yoga, computers, board games besides narration of inspirational stories. The preparation for various cultural stage events for festivals and other important occasions is organized.

Sundays are for rest. Some parents drop by to meet their children with prior appointment. Occasionally we have an evening outing organised by well-wishers, which we look forward to.

With the help from benefactors and the gift of time and commitment from the Managing Committee, our ship of NAB, Goa, was sailing smoothly till the pandemic hit! Initially we were happy to be sent home to a 'no study, no school' routine. But soon we got homesick and started missing our second home, NAB! Although teachers continued to instruct us distantly, we were praying to get back to our warm nest of comfort soon....

The pandemic, COVID 19, hit the world hard and long....but our teachers with the support of the Committee rose to the occasion. Teaching via mobiles on a regular basis began. Though it was nowhere close to regular learning, there was not a day when we missed out on studies. The teachers innovated and improvised to keep us focussed and we all rewarded them by passing our school exams satisfactorily.

This major setback catapulted the leap in technology and learning experience at NAB since then has become easier and more enjoyable and meaningful. Now there is no looking back as Technology is the only effective way ahead for the Blind.

3
HAPPENINGS



**EDUCATION TOWARDS
EMPOWERMENT**

Nab Goes Digital



**ACTIVITIES
AND EVENTS**



**INSPIRATIONAL
SUCCESSS STORIES**



For supplementing 'inclusive education' NAB teachers reinforce the studies further by teaching in small groups in blind friendly ways



EDUCATION TOWARDS EMPOWERMENT

Though Literacy is the primary goal at NAB it is definitely not the only one.

Where academics is concerned, the St. Cruz High School and Dhempe College, Miramar, shine like beacons for these visually impaired children, rising to the challenges of Integrated Education. Their understanding and support is one of the reasons the children advance step by step towards completing schooling and graduation. Kudos to the professors, whose sensitive support has helped our senior NAB children achieve graduation confidently.

Certificates of educational achievements are definitely important in the empowerment of the visually impaired. But equally important is basic life skills, social etiquette, confidence in mobility, leading to independence and dignity. The system of inclusive education has taught the Blind to live together in society with the sighted, on an equal footing and not as a separate, secluded section with a label, cut off from mainstream society.

Our students with multiple disabilities require different kind of teaching methodology. For a person with visual impairment and mental retardation, irrespective of chronological age, the teacher teaches daily living skills like self-feeding, buttoning of shirt, wiping tables tops, together with few stimulating activities like paper folding, beading, pairing, sorting etc. In cases where such students cannot be brought to the Centre regularly our specially trained teacher visits their houses and we hear that these students look forward to the happy experience

Educating the parents of visually impaired is yet another sensitive area which is undertaken by conducting meetings and workshops, to understand and guide their children. This is vital, in the absence of any other support groups available and negative social norms existing especially in the underdeveloped sections of society. The cooperation of parents goes a long way in securing the future of these children.



Tactile learning goes a long way in understanding concepts in the absence of visual stimulus



Braille Teaching



It is very important to sensitise parents of visually impaired children for understanding their challenges and guiding them appropriately.



Council members sometimes conduct personal visits for checking on the wellbeing of these children and for offering the much needed emotional support to their parents.



Multihandicapped children cannot be brought to the centre easily so the teacher conducts home visits to teach basic skills.

NAB GOES DIGITAL

Children normally learn by using all their five senses. In the absence of one vital sense, vision, and therefore in the absence of learning through observation and visual inputs a whole new set of challenges like the basic formative concepts of colours, shapes, number value, shapes and of numbers and letters, animals, birds, to the secondary concepts in geography, science and mathematics, surface.

The tactile teaching aids like Braille slates, ABACUS, Tyler's frame, magnifying glasses, various objects and toys with different textures and forms help them understand the basic concepts at the primary level.

Then followed the additional use of audio inputs. Recording stories, notes by teachers (Plex Talk Audio Recorder) helped towards better self-learning and revising.

Soon it was time to move from tactile to technology with the invention of mobile phones. The recording and usage of audio inputs became easier as the students were in control of the pace of learning.

In the meantime, computers took the world by storm and the saga of technology, a boon to the Blind began, giving them a better opportunity to compete with the sighted. The Computer Technology keeps evolving over the years. Digital literacy is the ability to read and write through navigating, evaluating and communicating on-line or in a digital format.

Initially, a paid screen reading software JAWS (Job Access with Speech) was used. This enabled the blind to use audio commands and get audio feedback to understand and navigate around computer technology thereby facilitating effective learning. Later, Open-Source software, NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access) was introduced. Also, the mobile app, Dolphin Easy Reader, has come to the aid of the Blind. This enables reading of textbooks and word documents in audio and text format.

Thanks to the above mentioned technology, the teaching and learning processes improved during the pandemic. Our grateful students have voiced this when the rays of hope for the future had dimmed further due to unknown uncertainty of the pandemic.

The teachers made conference calls, sent videos and links of the related topics to the students through accessible PDF files on KIBO app. The moment the students open it, it gets converted into readable format and gets saved. The students can make notes, read books by downloading from the internet, refer to text books on their own, conduct research for projects, make bookmarks and edit, facilitating self-study. The students are in control of their own studying schedule and comfort level by using navigating options like speed of speech, accent of the speaker etc.

Besides, physical mobility of the Blind is enhanced by apps



like Nearby Explorer and Google maps. Also, independence to shop online, pay bills, book train, air, bus tickets, book gas cylinder, is possible through Android phone.

One of the objectives close to our hearts was to enable the Blind to answer their examinations independently, without the help of scribes. For years together it was customary to see a flurry of activity at NAB Centre as exams loomed close, for finding scribes for the blind students. The whole exercise of locating volunteers and working out the logistics of time, date, place was time consuming and exhausting. This rattled the students too. At times the lack of rapport and understanding between the scribes and examinee led to haphazard outcome. However, the Committee always felt uncomfortable about the human factor involved. The scribes' support of writing what was unsaid or implicated while translating into print and undue credit being given to the Blind, was often heard in social circles.

With the dawn of computers and technology together with its availability at NAB Centre, the dream towards independent study and evaluation modes now seems possible in conjunction with the Authorities in Education Boards.

NAB, Goa, now marches towards further independence with

the help of Dr. Homiyar Mobedji (Disability Expert, Accessibility Consultant- Asia and Africa at Benetech USA) who is himself totally blind, and his team leading from the front. The 'Book share' accessible library has further widened their horizon through accessible books. The students now use mobiles with keyboard in school which enables them to take notes and answer their exams. NAB Goa, has engaged services of an external agency to control misuse of mobiles through Device Management Services.

The utility of technology has been made a reality at NAB, Goa, by the tireless pursuance of funds for the cause, from philanthropic institutions and individuals in society. The cost of computers, software, other gadgets, mobiles are very high and without the help from the NGO's or individuals who donate in cash or kind, the dreams of education through self-dependence, for the blind, cannot be realized.

To make this a reality, the effort towards sensitization and dialogue with the community, the committee members work tirelessly and transparently!



OUR COMPUTER LAB, OUR PRIDE!

Computer is an eye for the Visually Impaired.

The following aids and appliances are made available to the students at NAB Goa.

1. Computers with **NVDA screen reader** software. NVDA stand for Non Visual Desktop Access.
2. Laptops, **Smart Vision Spectacles**, Talking Calculator
3. **JAWS**: It stands for Job Access with Speech. It is also a screen reader software.
4. **Focus 40** is a Braille display machine which can be used by totally Blind persons and also the Deaf and Blind to learn computers and read a document in Braille.
5. **LEX**: LEX is a machine which scans printed document that can be converted into Word document and MP3 format.
6. **Tactile Maker**: Tactile Maker is a machine which is used to emboss the image or any diagram, e.g., Bar graph, Pie chart etc, so that the Visually Impaired can touch and form the exact image in their mind.
7. **Reading Aid Mouse**, which is used to read any document on the screen by increasing the font size of a text. This is useful for partially sighted persons.
8. **Plex Talk Vachak**, is a machine used to read Daisy books, audio books and also for recording and listening to FM radio.
9. **Braille Embosser**: Braille embosser which is used to convert word document to Braille like a printer.
10. **Home Theatre** speaker which is used to play music and conduct discussions while teaching computer.
11. **Smart Canes** which enable the Visually Impaired to move around independently with more confidence with the help of inbuilt assistive technology.
12. **Audio Described Movies** which describe all action in the movies through audio description.
13. Different types of **magnifying glasses** like torch magnifiers, stand magnifiers, bar magnifiers and telescopes.

- 14. **Lookout app:** Identifies currency, describes pictures.
- 15. **Sonic Labeller:** Reads medicine labels or any other label and converts in audio format.
- 16. **Eye Tool:** Eye tool is a tool which students can use to solve different exercises on the computer on their own. It has both learning mode and test mode.
- 17. Enable India **Spelling Tool:** Spelling tool is a handy programme to improve the English spelling. It offers you two modes, one to learn spellings called learning mode and the other to test your spelling skills called test mode. In learning mode, your incorrect attempts will be tracked in revision exercise category to be practiced later. Both modes display a final result based on your attempts which includes score and the total time taken to complete the exercise. The words available in the tool are organised into various categories and sub categories [called exercises]. There is a built-in speech mechanism which dictates words to the person using this.

Under the able guidance of three computer trainers at NAB over the years; Taha Haaziq, Mahadev Sawant and now Rama Parsekar, all the above-mentioned equipment is being optimally utilised by our students.



Focus 40



Talking Calculator



Magnifying Glass



Water Level Indicator



Smart Vision Spectacles



Smart Cane



Magnifying reader



Tactile Maker



Reading aid mouse



URead



Braille Embosser



Sonic Labeller



LEX



The utility of technology has been made a reality at NAB, thanks to the philanthropic institutions and individuals in our society.



ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY

The three A's, in the life of the Visually Impaired are Accept, Adjust and Achieve.

Acceptance of visual impairment or blindness is the starting point of Rehabilitation. Orientation and Mobility are the foundation of Rehabilitation.

ORIENTATION: Orientation is the ability, through training, to use the remaining senses, in the absence of vision, to establish one's position in space in relation to the other objects and people in the immediate surroundings. Orientation is the starting point of mobility. The Blind are trained to use their senses, so that they develop and sharpen their residual senses.

MOBILITY: This is the ability of the individual to move from one place to another safely, independently and as gracefully as possible. Training in sighted guide technique and how to seek the help from the sighted, during independent travel, is also important.

Helen Keller has rightly said, **'More than visual impairment the heaviest burden for the blind is 'Idleness'**. So, to aid independent mobility, the Blind must be trained to use the White Cane, which is considered their faithful friend. After imparting techniques of pre- cane skills, the training which begins in familiar spaces, is extended to crowded and semi crowded places, like public transport, markets etc. The only way to success is repetitive practice and training. This begins at the age of twelve.



Sighted guide technique is taught to seek help from the sighted during independent travel.

Teaching the techniques of using White Cane to facilitate the independent movement safely and gracefully.

WORLD WHITE CANE DAY OVER THE YEARS



The National Federation of Blind celebrates White Cane Awareness Day every year on October 15. The white cane is an essential tool for the blind to achieve a full and independent life.



NAB, Goa accentuates awareness about Visual Impairment and the importance of the White Cane as a symbol and tool of Independence for Visually Impaired persons on 15 October every year. The Visually Impaired, together with the sighted, hold a 'march' or 'walk' on the streets, using canes to encourage people, especially motorists to take extra care when they see a Visually Impaired person trying to cross the road.





BASIC LIFE SKILLS (DAILY LIVING SKILLS)

Training in daily living skills is imparted to the Visually Impaired. Day to day skills, which the sighted perform easily, cannot be expected perfectly from the Visually Impaired. Personal grooming like brushing teeth, bathing, dressing, toilet training, hygiene, table manners etc, are taught step by step to inculcate independent functioning for a better quality of life.

Social etiquette: Whereas sighted children learn through observation and imitation, the Visually Impaired are taught gestures of shaking hands or folding hands as a greeting and waving as a good bye gesture or 'yes' and 'no' related nodding of the head etc.

In the absence of visual learning the daily life skills like brushing, buttoning, eating with a spoon, washing plates need to be taught



Brushing



Buttoning



Using a spoon



Washing plates



Putting footwear in place

Simple, common hand gestures as a mode of communication also need to be 'taught'



Tactile Learning

At NAB, together with the academic schedule, a system of cocurricular training through activities is designed.

CREATIVE ART

Through creative art like drawing, colouring, painting, sculpting or clay modelling, making artificial flowers or making objects from waste material these children are able to represent experiences that they cannot visualise nor verbalise. The reason these children draw pictures which are too big or small or exaggerated is due to the mental picture they have formed by touching real objects and the verbal instructions they receive. Though the proportions are haywire, it allows these children to express themselves in different ways where words cannot.

Creative activity creates the mood, boosts self-esteem, improves cognitive functions, reduces stress and anxiety; as here they are in charge of decision making.

For painting activity, elevated outline of objects is made, using a thick thread and they fill paint inside. Whether they can differentiate between colours or not, verbal cues or names of colours are given for general knowledge.



Sculpting - Clay Modelling



Paper Folding



Origami



Painting



Paper Rolling



Weaving



Children having fun baking cakes, under supervision, as they learn about ingredients and process.

BAKING AND KNITTING

The skill of baking simple cakes is imparted to the Visually Impaired children and under some supervision they are able to achieve this. Knitting activity is also therapeutic as they create something that they touch and can draw satisfaction from their progress step by step.

After the exposure to various creative forms, the interests and skills of every child are gauged for advanced training so that, some can pursue it at a later stage, and even make a living through it by setting up small business ventures.



Knitting activity is therapeutic and some Visually Impaired persons master it.



Every member of NAB family; Committee members, staff and support staff or children have small birthday celebrations, whenever possible, by cutting a cake proudly baked at NAB.



PERFORMING ARTS

MUSIC

Music, vocal or instrumental, is a big stress buster for the Visually Impaired. Most have a sharpened sense of rhythm and notes as they have keen hearing perception.

Music teachers and sometimes, volunteers, train them in Indian classical and Western vocal music and they participate happily in carol singing, bhajan singing, singing patriotic and welcome songs in groups or solo. Those who display a special talent are groomed further. Some, in turn, become music teachers in the future.

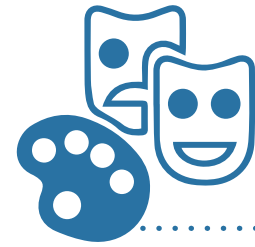
Besides, various instruments like harmonium, tabla, cymbals, flute, mouth organ are introduced. Some of our children have won prizes at Inclusive Competitions.

DANCING

With an inbuilt rhythm our Visually Impaired children perform impressively at dancing during every celebration. Events like Diwali, Christmas, Eid, Teachers' Day see our children dancing on the stage with abandon and some of them are good choreographers, too. The totally blind hold back a



Together with vocal music, different kinds of musical instruments are introduced to the blind students.



bit though, as free and complicated movements are a further challenge. They, however, practice hard and with carefully calculated moves have performed brilliantly at some 'fashion shows' they participated in.

THEATRE
(Dramatics, stand-up comedy, skits, compering shows)

Some of our senior children show great potential in acting, narrating and public speaking. To boost this further, workshops and training sessions in acting are organised. Besides, NAB teachers pitch in with inputs. Some of our students have been admitted to the 'Toast Masters' forum, an international platform promoting public speaking skills and have emerged successful.

Our children were trained to perform a play named 'One on One'. This was staged at Kala Academy on 19th August 2011 and received a lot of appreciation and praises from the audience and newspaper publicity too.



The students learn dancing with enthusiasm and perform on special occasions.



Some of the students display a flair for dramatics and stand-up comedy and are encouraged to perform in front of an audience.

OBJECTIVES OF ACTIVITIES

The objective of co-curricular activities is to focus on building of personal and social confidence in the Visually Impaired, by honing the inherent creative and cognitive skills.

Activities held at NAB, where they often showcase their talent, can be roughly divided into:

- A)** Awareness Orientation Activities for sensitising society about helping and serving the Blind. e.g., World White Cane Day, World Disability Day.
- B)** Celebration of Festivals for inculcating knowledge, significance and culture of festivals of all religions.
- C)** Accentuating important days like Children's Day, Teachers' Day, Independence Day, Republic Day, Goa Liberation Day.
- D)** Birthday celebration of every member of NAB family by cutting a cake, often baked at the centre itself, with the children's help. This brings about camaraderie and special bonding in kids, who are away from their homes.
- E)** Visits of NGO's or individuals who support the cause, while interacting with appropriate social and communication skills.

Besides, picnics, outings, fests, fund raisers are looked forward to. At NAB, every event is celebrated with equal aplomb, the atmosphere of festivity precedes the event, with decorations, practices for cultural shows, invitations, hospitality, snacks and above all love and joy. The staff, students and committee members are equal shareholders in the excitement. Appropriate costumes for the events are painstakingly designed by the teachers and the staff members, using whatever material is available at the Centre without incurring extra cost. The above activities keep the children occupied through the year.



Our children successfully participated in some fashion shows and performed brilliantly.



Various outings and picnics are organised where the children enjoy heartily.



Children's Day Celebrations



Teachers' Day Celebrations



Republic Day



Independence Day



Diwali Celebrations



Christmas Celebrations



Eid Celebrations



Ganesh Chaturthi Celebrations

Stressing on the important days and festivals is a highlight at NAB.





Accessible environment facilitates outdoor and sports activities.

HEALTH THROUGH SPORTS

To monitor the eye health and general health of the children, they are regularly taken to the Goa Medical College Hospital where the Ophthalmology Department doctors assess the status of their vision. We are ever grateful to Dr. Dipti Srivastav, particularly, who takes a personal interest in the wellbeing of these children.

To maintain good health in children, workshops in yoga and meditation are conducted. We also conduct health check-ups and awareness programs.

For safeguarding the mental and physical health of the Visually Impaired, a very important aspect is Sports! Indoor and outdoor activities with accessible tools facilitate the games and sporting activities. This aids in boosting their confidence in mobility, physical fitness and inculcates sportsman spirit too.

CHESS BOARD

Chess Board used by the Visually Impaired is the same one which the sighted people use. The difference is the board which Visually Impaired use has raised boxes. White colour boxes are lowered and black colour boxes are raised ones. Each of the squares on the Board has a hole in the centre so that the pieces can be fixed in these holes. To identify the black and white pieces, all the black pieces have a pin fixed on their heads helping the player distinguish between a white and a black piece.

The players therefore, by feeling the raised or the lowered squares can figure out whether the piece is on a black or a white square. By feeling the shape of the piece, they can determine whether the piece is a Pawn, Rook, Bishop, Knight, Queen or King. The touch of the pin on the pieces helps the player from distinguishing a white piece from a black one. The player is therefore able to have a clear picture in his mind of the position of the pieces on the Board. After making every move, the visually impaired person is required to announce the move aloud, so that his opponent comes to know of the move. Instead of writing the moves on a score sheet, the visually impaired player writes the moves in Braille or records the moves on a tape recorder. All the pieces are placed in the same order as the sighted person places while playing chess and no change in rules are required.



Normal Chessboards with a few alterations are used by the visually impaired.



Children being trained in Judo art.



JUDO

Judo is a martial art and an Olympic sport. A trainer was appointed to train and detect those displaying potential in this sport. Some of our students participated at National Level Judo Competition held at Delhi and Bangalore.

YOGA

Yoga sessions help our children to improve concentration, sharpen memory and minimise stress by releasing toxins from the body, together with negative thoughts. Done on a regular basis it calms the children who are undergoing all kinds of challenges on day-to-day basis.



Yoga is practiced daily for keeping up positivity of the body and mind.

SWIMMING

Our children were trained to swim at the swimming classes at Campal Indoor Stadium, Panaji- Goa. Besides enjoying the freedom of unobstructed movement in the safety of the water body, they had the satisfaction of achievement, when they finally learnt to swim independently.



Swimming activity appeals to the Blind as it allows freedom of unobstructed movement in the safety of a water body.



Three of our students won awards at a cricket match organised by the Blind Cricket Association.

BLIND CRICKET

Some of our boys have participated in the Blind Cricket Association of Goa. Although they do not have coaches to train them, they have bagged trophies at Friendship Trophy Matches played in different states. They have participated in the Nagesh Trophy at the National level for the last 4 years representing team Goa. Blind cricket is to be played by the blind and partially sighted athletes. Teams are composed of players from up to five different sight categories; B1, low partial, B2, B3 and B4. B1 is totally blind and the sight categories then move upwards in levels of sight. Each sight category is subject to different rules and compensations in order to make the playing field as level as possible.

The pitch is made of concrete and measures the same length and width as used in sighted cricket. The boundaries are measured 40 meters in a circle around the pitch and indicated by a white line with flags set at intervals.

In terms of playing equipment, the major adaptation is the cricket ball, which is significantly larger than a standard cricket ball and filled with ball bearings. The size allows partially sighted players to see the ball and the contents allow blind players to hear it. The wicket (stumps) is also larger, to allow partially sighted players to see and blind players to touch it, in order to correctly orient themselves when batting or bowling.

Verbal signals are widely used both by umpires and players, the bowler must shout 'Play' as he releases the ball. The bowler is required to pitch the delivery at least twice when bowled to a completely blind batsman or once when bowled to a partially sighted batsman, but must not be rolling. Totally blind batsmen cannot be declared out stumped, and must be found to be LBW twice before going out. Totally blind fielders are allowed to take a catch on the bounce.



Basic football skills taught at NAB premises where the sound made by small metal balls placed inside the football are a cue.



FOOTBALL

A coach for training in football was arranged since many of our boys are passionate about this Sport. Their dream of playing matches may come true, post pandemic.

Blind football is played by wearing a blindfold by the totally blind as well as partially blind. All players on the pitch must wear the blindfold because blindness is a spectrum. Each team has five players on the pitch at any time, four outfield players who are visually impaired, and a goalkeeper. Each team also has five substitutes.

The goalkeeper can be sighted or visually impaired. He must stay in their penalty area throughout the game. Each team has two sighted coaches who orally direct the players, positioned on the halfway line and behind the goal that their team is attacking. In general, the coach behind the attacking goal directs the forward players, the coach on the side-line instructs the midfield players, and the goalkeeper will help to organize the defence.

The ball is adapted with the metal balls stitched inside so the players can HEAR where the ball is when the players are playing, even when spinning through the air.



The NAB Committee is ever vigilant to the sports need of the students and leaves no stones unturned to make funds available for training the children. At times volunteers help out too.



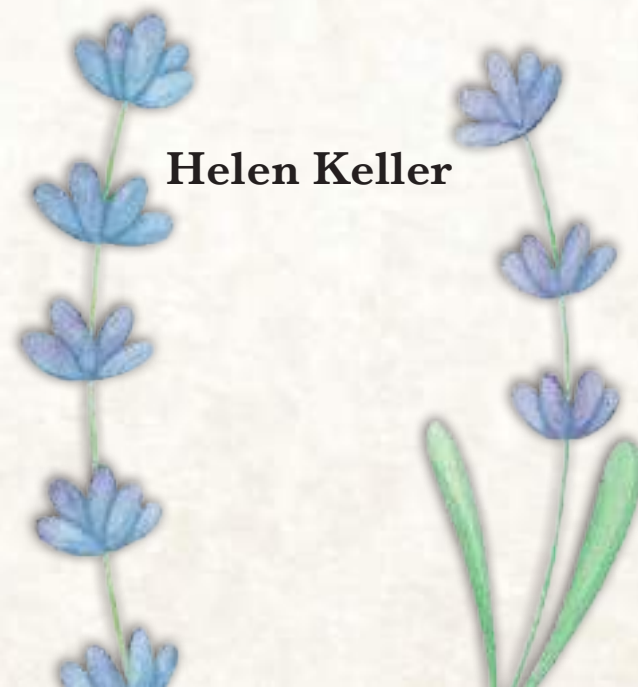
FEATHERS IN OUR CAP

- 1) State level sports competitions for the special schools at SAG Athletics stadium, Bambolim, NAB students won 5 medals in 100 m, 200 m races, shot put and long jump.
- 2) 'Saksham' sports events for the differently abled. NAB students won a total of 42 Medals in individual events like shotput, basketing the ball, hitting the wickets, tug of war, chess etc. The winner's trophy was bagged by NAB.
- 3) Participated in Goa Marathon and Parasmal Championship Trophy for Visually Impaired.
- 4) In 2019, our students participated in the sports event organised by the Rotary Club of Bicholim. Our students participated and competed enthusiastically with those from other special schools. The winner trophy was NAB's as students won 21 gold, 13 silver and 7 bronze Medals.

Proud Winners of various sports activities. They are an inspiration for the younger ones.



Yesterday, is not ours to recover, but tomorrow, is ours to win or lose.



Helen Keller

A GLIMPSE INTO ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN 2018-2019

Here are some of the activities our children happily participated in, in 2018-2019.

A fashion show 'Raising Light' at Bottlebay Baga, Audio Described movies at INOX during IFFI 2018 and Beauty Contest 'Runway Inspiration'.

Fests like Muzzgachem Fest, Madachem Fest, Ekvottachem Fest, Air Travel to Mumbai 'Flight of Inspiration', Goa Carnival 2019 float organised by Disability Rights Association of Goa, a visit to Nashville, Daan Utsav, Sangeet sanz, a talent show, Santa's Day Programme etc. besides a number of outings, picnics all organised by well-meaning patrons of NAB.

Importantly they all believe what we at NAB always voice. **THEIR ABILITY IS STRONGER THAN THEIR DISABILITY.**

Besides participating and displaying talent in the various events organised by well-wishers, there is pure excitement and satisfaction in the annual events organised at the NAB Centre, to celebrate festivals, special days and visits, where every NAB member participates in the success of the event.

Visually Impaired children impressing the mainstream school children with their knowledge and skills.





INSPIRATIONAL SUCCESS STORIES



THE SWEET FRUITS

After narrating so much about the origin of NAB, Goa, and how it works, you may wonder what happened to the blind students associated with NAB, over the years.

Helen Keller has rightly said, **“When one door of happiness closes, another opens but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.”**

With inputs in Education, moral and social values, vocational and personal grooming our children primarily become good human beings and citizens of society. Besides, many of them have continued their own successful journey of being gainfully employed even after moving out of the sheltered environment of NAB.

While empowering the Visually Impaired towards gainful employment, NAB also encourages them towards a balanced adult life. Finding life partners for the Visually Impaired is not at all easy. Among multiple concerns is the worry about the genetic implication in the progeny in case of marriage of two Visually Impaired individuals. NAB counsels them about the realities and gives perspective

on the marital adjustment. Once all the concerns are sorted, financial assistance is provided.

Shamsunder Wadji, a totally blind person and now a Senior Citizen was helped in finding a life partner by NAB members. In the absence of family his wedding ceremony was organised by Rozendo Mendonsa of NAB with the help of friends from Lions Club and other Ladies Club. This was during the Presidentship of Grace D’ Souza.

Our happily married Visually Impaired recently are Tessy Gomes (who had walked the ramp for Wendell Rodrigues) and Shahida Shaikh, both graduates. Our very own Taha Haaziq, Joesph Pereira, Vasant Kabadi and Vincent Monteriro lead the way in being happily married family men!

We narrate success stories of a few of them and revel in reflected glory of their achievements but definitely do not take away from their skills, focus and hard work!! Kudos to those who saw the open door and are now gainfully employed in mainstream society on their own merit!



TAHA HAAZIQ

I was born in 1984. When I was 2 years old, doctors detected vision issues and I was diagnosed with Retinal Pigmentosa. In spite of having low vision, I completed my Std X and XII exams. I lost total vision thereafter but went on to complete graduation in Indian Classical music from Goa music school. I then

completed Teacher's training course for Visually Impaired from Bangalore in 2006. In 2009 I joined NAB, GOA as a Computer Trainer. It was my first professional appointment where I learnt a lot too. In 2011, I got married to a girl who is also Visually Impaired with Retinal Pigmentosa. In 2012 I moved to Pune where I joined the Blind Man's Association as Studio and Library in-charge. Here we recorded many navigable audio books and sent them all over the country. In 2014 I got an opportunity in Goa and became in-charge of the Resource Centre at the Central Library. In 2015 there was an opening in Goa Civil services and I became the first Visually Impaired officer in the State Civil Service. As a master trainer I conducted a lot of workshops in usage of assistive technology and career counselling. Recently I have been appointed as Secretary, Commission for Persons with Disability, Goa.

My journey up to now has seen many challenges but I firmly believe, "The more I perform, the more I build trust" Acceptance, Performance, Confidence are the keys to a dignified life for Visually Impaired persons.



RAMA PARSEKAR

I was not visually impaired since birth. At the age of 3 due to a serious illness, I lost complete vision in my right eye and 70% vision in my left eye. With my family's support I managed to complete my XII Std exams. As I was pursuing graduation, I had retinal detachment in the left eye and in spite of two surgeries I

lost total vision. The following years were a total nightmare. I was gradually slipping into depression, had no direction and felt lost until I connected with NAB Goa.

After undergoing mobility training for independent commuting at NAB, I took training in computers and attended a few vocational training camps. In 2017 I joined 'Enable India' Bangalore, for their Career Centric Computer Training programme as a student and eventually joined as a computer teacher. All this wouldn't have been possible without NAB Goa.

From a dependent, disabled man sitting idle at home, to an independent, confident man contributing to society, I couldn't be more proud of myself and the fulfilling journey I have had so far.

I currently work for Enable India, as a Senior Computer Trainer and will be working as a computer teacher at NAB, Goa.



JOSEPH PEREIRA

At the tender age of eleven, while studying in Std V, in St. Pious school Corlim, I started having issues with my eyesight. At the age of twelve, I went totally blind. From light to sudden darkness is a painful situation. After a year of meaningless, idle existence, a year of physical pain of banging into objects, I met Fremuel one of the

oldest members of the NAB movement. I got admitted to the NAB centre in Old Goa and learnt Braille from Fremuel and Volly D'Mello. The facilities for education then were nowhere as evolved as they are today. So, I began learning handicrafts with other differently abled in a small room. There I learnt chair caning, but would it provide livelihood in the future was uppermost in my mind.

When I was nineteen, I went to Poona Blind Man's School to learn chalk making. But the chalk moulds were expensive and chalk powder not easily available. In 1993, at the camp in Guirim, I got support from the then NAB President Marion D'souza and Rozendo Mendonsa for acquiring raw material and later for selling the product. I supplied chalk to many, many schools then.

I was very eager to study further but with advanced age this seemed improbable. Then with NAB's help in seeking information and getting admission I completed Std X exams in 1999 through Open schooling.



Then I went into paper bag making. As awareness of hazardous plastic bags began, good regular business started. I have employed two blind people and employ more when demand is high. I also provide them with accommodation and food when required.

I got married in 2005. My children are studying in Std IX and Std X. Now I am leading a comfortable, complete life with my hard work and perseverance.

I have received the twelfth Piloo Dorab Khambata Memorial Award for outstanding, self-employed, blind entrepreneur in 2005, from the Goa Government.



JOSEPHINE D'SOUZA

Mine is a case of late blindness. Before losing my eye sight, I completed my schooling from an English medium convent school in Indore and graduation in Arts from Devi Ahilya University, Madhya Pradesh. After graduation I worked as an assistant librarian in the same school. At this time, I had a problem with my retina and became totally blind.

After two years of torturous depression. I finally accepted my fate and contacted NAB (Goa). Here I learnt braille. Reading braille books and listening to audio books gave me a new confidence. Thereafter, I attended the basic Rehabilitation Course for late blind in Mumbai, need based Rehabilitation Course in Vocational Trades at NAB, Mumbai. I joined the technical training Institute for the Blind in Pune and performed with flying colours.

After this I worked in Surendra Nagar, Gujarat at a special school for visually impaired girls, teaching English for two years. I have been employed as a Braille teacher at NAB, Goa, since the last twelve years.

Prior to vision impairment I had a passion for knitting which unfortunately stopped. But with the encouragement at NAB I have begun knitting again! I feel if we accept our disability and try to find ways to move on, 'nothing is impossible.' We need to be self-confident and have faith in God.



MAHADEV SAWANT

I had low vision but did not speak about it during early school days. This affected my academic performance. From 2000 to 2009 I had no direction and was lonely in my blindness as the future life looked bleak. With a friend's help I got a job at a bookstore in Valpoi and managed the work using big font letters.

In 2010 I came to NAB and learnt computer basics from Taha Sir. In 2012 I was appointed as computer teacher at NAB Goa. I also incorporated the technological advancements in education and due to this I learnt to write with the help of computers and read with a screen reader software such as JAWS and NVDA. I, in turn, passed on this knowledge to many visually impaired students at NAB. One such example is the usage of inbuilt feature in Android phones called 'Talkback'. Talkback is an accessibility service that helps the Blind and Vision impaired to interact with their devices with spoken, audible and vibration feedback to the device.

I currently work at the Goa Medical College and have big dreams for making a difference in the lives of the Blind. I am also a member of NAB committee now.



AMITA GOANKAR

I am Amita Arjun Goankar, and I live in Canacona. When I was five years old my anganwadi teacher told my parents about NAB. I was very young then to understand about my visual impairment (60%). NAB then did not have hostel facility but teachers from NAB came to my house to teach me. But this was not enough and I failed my Std X board exams.

For two to three years after this I only did housework and even forgot what I had learnt at school. I cried day and night praying to God to give me one opportunity. And God heard my prayers. One day Madam Leena Prabhu called and asked me whether I could be a 'writer' for one of the younger NAB students. That was the turning point in my life. I saw that some students at NAB were preparing for Std X exams through Open Schooling. I too decided to stay at NAB and make another attempt at Std X. I passed my exam with the support of Pradeep sir, and other teachers at NAB. Now there was no looking back. NAB procured admission for me at Dhempe college, Miramar for graduation in Arts stream.

With my sole aim of becoming a professor, I successfully completed B.A. then M.A.(Hindi) from Goa University, B.Ed. from GVM's college at Ponda, and also cleared NET and SET exams.

At present I am working as an Assistant Professor of Hindi in

Government College of Arts, Science and Commerce, (GCQ) Quepem, Goa and this year (2022) I was felicitated in my village for being the first girl to acquire higher education. This success I dedicate proudly to NAB, Goa.



SAMPADA NAIK

I was born blind and struggled to fit in the school scenario till Std V. In Std VI I, left school and the following 7 years were the darkest of my life. Thereafter during an eye check- up, I met the lady-in-charge of NAB, Leena Prabhu. After a lot of adjustments on my part and encouragement and guidance from NAB family, I completed Std X, and then graduated from Dhempe College, Miramar. NAB trained me in computer technology and today I work as a computer instructor and live a life of self-dependence and dignity.



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AKSHAY NAIK

I have been visually impaired since birth, but was not even aware of this challenge in childhood. But I remember my mother would scold me for not being able to recognize objects or people till she realised and accepted that I had vision problems.

Thereafter, followed visits to many doctors with the hope of rectifying this issue. My family and neighbours were very concerned. I was then admitted to the Government Primary School and in spite of low vision, with my teacher's help, I could cope with the studies and managed to move alone in the familiar environment of the school. This made my mother suspicious about my impairment. She thought I was faking it to avoid studies and writing notes. But in reality, I had problems reading from textbooks and blackboard and the story of my life carried on with reprimands and beatings. Finally with my mother's support I managed to clear Std IV.

One day during a routine check-up at Goa Medical College, Dr. Deepti concluded that I would never be able to see again due to scars on my retina and surgery probably would not rectify this problem. Dr. Deepti advised my parents to take me to NAB Centre, Santa Cruz.

NAB kick started my journey of success. Not knowing a word of English till Std IV, I began the uphill task of education. I would like to say here that Madam Leena was the game changer in

my life. This was a transition stage where every staff member and teacher from NAB, took all-round care of us. I would love to say, that my success today is all thanks to NAB.



AKSHAY BHANGLE

I was lost in my dark world of blindness and was blessed to find NAB in 2003. After an uphill journey till then, I needed support and direction for my future. With my parents' support I took the decision, to step away from my protected family environment and became a boarder at NAB.

Here I took academics and mobility seriously. My teachers at NAB, and Committee members were instrumental in motivating me to commute independently with the help of the White Cane. After completing high school, I took a leap forward by enrolling in Dhempe college, Miramar for the graduation course. The professors there and my NAB family including support staff totally contributed to my success in big and small ways. After completing BA with 78.3%, I have now moved on to post graduation.

Besides academics I have been exposed to other confidence boosting activities like compering shows, public speaking and independent travel and also boosted my singing talent, thanks to NAB. My self- image and confidence get a further boost when I am invited as a motivational speaker to youngsters and also when I meet celebrities.



SUMERA KHAN

I was the first born in a family with dotting parents and was named Sumera, meaning Princess. But destiny had planned something else for me and my family. At six months my mother noticed that I was unable to judge a thrown ball and catch it. She took me to an Ophthalmologist. I was diagnosed with Retina Pigmentosa.

After consulting many doctors my parents accepted that I will never be able to see.

Then I joined NAB and was able to attend a regular school from Std I to Std X. I used Braille notes and recorded notes and excelled in BA(Humanities) from Dhempe College.

Throughout my educational journey I got incredible support from my parents, teacher guides, my mentor Leena Prabhu and the entire team of NAB committee headed by President Rozendo Mendonsa.



KUDOS TO THOSE WHO ARE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED IN MAINSTREAM SOCIETY

1. **Taha Haaziq:** Secretary to the Commission for the Persons with Disabilities.
2. **Joseph Pereira:** Candles and Paper bag making enterprise
3. **Josephine D' Souza:** Braille Teacher at NAB Goa.
4. **Mahadev Sawant:** Goa Medical College
5. **Amita Gaonkar:** Assistant Professor at Government College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Quepem,
6. **Sampada Naik:** Computer Instructor at Lok Vishwas
7. **Dhananjay Savar:** Govt employee
8. **Peter Dias:** Employed at Hospicio Margao
9. **Louisa D'Mello:** Bag weaving enterprise.
10. **Julio D'Cunha:** DJ at Margao
11. **Aniket Naik:** Criminal Lawyer
12. **Yeshwant Gosavi:** LIC Agent
13. **Privtiraj :** Greeting cards and plastic flower making business
14. **Reshma Naik:** Bank employee
15. **Martha Dourado:** Bank employee
16. **Abhishek Naik:** Physiotherapist
17. **Abhinav Naik:** Physiotherapist
18. **Resha Vernekar:** Conducts music classes for children
19. **Mira Joshi:** Worked at a Hotel
20. **Sumitra Martins:** Manages a Water Kiosk at Miramar.
21. **Vinod Phanderphale:** Employed in a Vasco firm.
22. **Akshay Naik:** Reservation Executive at a Hotel in Calangute.
23. **Dhanajay Chari:** Employed in an Optical store.
24. **Rama Parsekar :** Computer Instructor at Enable India.
25. **Prasad Phanderphale :** Supervisor in a Hotel.
26. **Shahid Shaikh:** Employed in a construction firm.
27. **Ashweta Naik:** Professor at Khandola College
28. **Tanvi Kaushik :** Music teacher at NAB, Goa.
29. **Akshay Kurade:** Making footwear enterprise.
30. **Purjut Jha :** Yoga Instructor at NAB, Goa



JOURNEY TOWARDS CONQUERING MILESTONES

Akshay Bhangle: 78% in T. Y.B.A and completed M.A in English.

Sumera Khan: 86% in S.S.C, 68% in H. S. S.C and 87% in T. Y.B.A Now pursuing M.A. in English.

Saish Salkar: 80% in T. Y.B.A Now pursuing M.A. in English

Nympha Fernandes: 73.3% in S.S.C. Now studying for the Std XII exams.

Chetana Shahapurkar: 72% in S.S.C. Now studying for the Std XII exams.

Francis Clemente: 64% in S.S.C. Now studying for the Std XII exams.

Akanksha Chopedekar: 76% in S.S.C & 73% in H. S. S.C. She is Visually Impaired and is pursuing BA course in Dhempe College, Miramar. She is multi- talented in dancing, singing and compering.

Purjut Jha: After completing XII with 66% from National Open School, he went on to do a Yoga Certification course, Teacher training course, Advance teacher training course , Yoga diploma course and now, conducts Yoga Classes.

Javed Mattihalli: 64 % in H. S. S. C, currently pursuing BA course at Dhempe College, Miramar.

Amit Birje: Pursuing L.L.B course in Salgoankars Law College



4

ENVISIONING



VISION FOR NAB OF TOMORROW

ENVISIONING

After leaving successful footprints in the service of the Blind since its inception in 1983, National Association for the Blind, Goa State Branch is now taking steps towards utilizing smart technology, which will be a game changer, for the Visually Impaired. Technology is already playing a vital role in tearing down barriers and Artificial Intelligence is making real inroads into improving accessibility and thereby life quality.

From the oldest assistive device, the White Cane, onwards to the smart cane, smart glasses, Bluetooth beacon and soundscape, the scientists are now working on a brain implant!

Electrodes are inserted into the Visual Cortex of the brain. The implant translates camera images into electrical shocks that stimulate brain cells in the visual cortex. This creates points of light that allow blind people to discern shapes. Although this cannot be compared with normal vision, it provides enough information to differentiate between different objects.

Once the possibility of Artificial Intelligence crystallises; NAB, Goa, will be right there facilitating procurement of and training for this new miracle of technology!

Till the dawn of this day sometime in the future, we envision



Representative sketch by Nikhita Prabhudesai Jeena

step by step upgradation of our current modest infrastructure at Santa Cruz in order to serve more Visually Impaired of all ages.

We envision a piece of land with a 4-way structure amidst well maintained greenery catering to school & College students.

1. Students pursuing their studies and being tutored while staying in dormitories. A hall with cubicles for standard - wise teaching, a hall with a small stage for activities and events, and a state- of -the art computer lab, and a kitchen with a store room, and a dining area.

2. Two rooms for middle aged Blind for Vocational purpose. Here they can pursue their craft creations and store them for display.

3. Thirdly, a blind friendly dormitory for the elderly blind who

need to be looked after in their old age with a dining area and washroom.

4. A small administrative section with a front office and accounts department and a conference room.

We envision a day when

After entering through the gate, you see a neatly kept lawn, before you enter NAB premises. The front office and accounts secretaries welcome you with a smile. You will see bookcases with neatly arranged teaching material including educational toys.

By the side will be a smart conference room.

Mornings will be bustling with activity as usual till the children leave for school. Evenings will see the students studying in the cubicles with the Teachers or working on computers in the Lab.

The vocational area will see the middle aged Visually Impaired busy with different activities like weaving bags, making paper bags, flowers, knitting, candle making etc.

The next room will be artistically arranged to display their handicrafts for sale.

We envision the senior's section, with neatly made beds with residents and seniors sitting in the dining hall awaiting meals which are simple and nutritious for their age. Morning schedule of stretching and laughter yoga, then bath, followed by breakfast. Evenings, on the lawns sitting and chatting, reminiscing about childhood or listening to audio music. Some who can, will stroll around the lawns.

With the shadow of age lengthening the shadows of ill health lengthen too. Doctors' visits will be arranged.

These seniors will interact with younger children and get a feel of grandparenting by narrating stories to them and instilling values.

To make our dream a reality we appeal to the philanthropists in society to lend a helping hand to fill a bit of colour in the otherwise grey existence of the blind of different ages.

To sum up our VISION, Hellen Keller rightly articulated **“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence”**

With hope and faith in the society and confidence in our VISION, we will optimize every drop of resource endowed, towards a better place for our very own Visually Impaired.

Together we will ACHIEVE!!





A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

The compelling journey of the birth and growth of National Association for the Blind, Goa State Branch (NAB), Goa, needed to be told. The year long research involving digging out records, photographs and interviewing people was an uphill but an extremely fulfilling task.

The uphill journey was possible because of the sincere and dedicated efforts of many.

Thank you:

Sweta Naik, (NAB office Assistant) for being my right hand, patiently typing, formatting and editing at every step.

Deepak Prabhudesai for inputs in the technical details, writing letters, suggesting ideas through out the journey of the making of the book.

Sanjana Nanodkar for managing the frequent changes deftly and designing the book on time.

Rajat Kumar for the photo sessions.

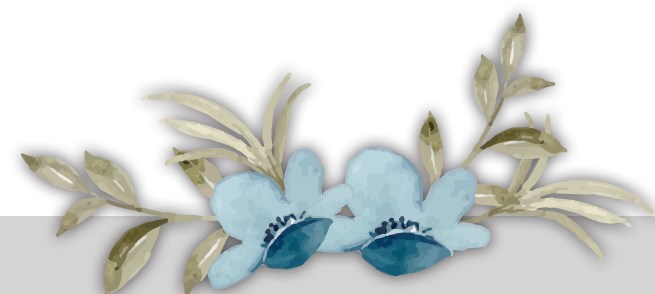
All the NAB, Goa, teachers specially Babaji Raut and Alfiya Shaikh for rising to challenges promptly.

Guiding, motivating and keeping my spirits up was my NAB, Goa, family, the Council members! Richard Pinto and Lorraine D'Souza thank you for all the help and Usha Kamat, for unwavering moral support Nurturing our 'Garden of Hope' is our journey together.

Thankyou Pai-Kane group for sponsoring the book.

A big thankyou to my family member for helping me in fine tuning the contents of 'Garden of Hope'

Poornima Priyolkar
Vice President, NAB, Goa



Contact Details

National Association for the Blind (NAB), Goa
A: Segundo Bairo, Santa Cruz, Tiswadi-Goa. 403005
T: 9420017022
E: nabgoa@gmail.com
W: www.nabgoa.org

“NAB- Our Temple for the Eyes”

They could see not but just nod,
And NAB they saw through the eyes of God.
1983 came the revelation,
NAB was born for their re-creation.

40 years down the line,
Each member / child declared NAB is mine.
They came to this Temple at different ages,
Rose to heights at different life's stages.

NAB stands today, so high,
Selflessly each one working without a pie,
We are Proud of our institution,
Our Body, Soul & Heart in total contribution.

Composer:
Richard Pinto





www.nabgoa.org



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