
**RESPONSE TO THE INVITATION
OF VIEWS FOR CHANGES IN THE
COPYRIGHT ACT OF INDIA,
1957 WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO PROPOSED
CLAUSE 52(za) FOCUSING ON
THE VISUALLY CHALLENGED
AND THE PRINT DISABLED**

THE PUBLICATION ACCESS COORDINATION COMMITTEE
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THE PUBLICATION ACCESS COORDINATION COMMITTEE

This application related to suggesting an amendment to the Copyright Act of India is being jointly made by the following parties (as listed below) collectively known as *The Publication Access Coordination Committee*. A detailed profile of each of the applicants is attached in Annexure 1.

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THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Access to the printed word is taken for granted by those with sight. In the case of the visually challenged, however such access is oftentimes very difficult, to say the least. An attempt has been made to overcome these obstacles with the advancement of technology where new software and hardware have made it possible for the visually challenged to access the printed word.

However in India, one important barrier that remains by way of accessibility for the print disabled is the Indian Copyright Act. Across the globe, individual rights have been enshrined under the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights and individual national legislation. Following from this, internationally, copyright laws have been amended to keep in mind the special interests of the print disabled within the set norms of agreed international copyright frameworks (e.g. Copyright exceptions within copyright laws in the United States, United Kingdom and European Union among others).

The following paper details proposed amendments to the copyright act with reference to the visually challenged and other print disabled which would conform to the Berne Convention's three-step process of providing exceptions in national copyright laws thereby also safeguarding the needs and requirements of the print disabled community¹. Given India's unique socio-economic, cultural and linguistic mix, it is imperative that enabling clauses safeguarding the interests of the visually challenged and print disabled persons be legislated upon. These clauses would be unique to India on account of the previously mentioned diversity

What we therefore recommend is that the law be amended to include the ability to access the printed word by the print disabled. Thus the clause/s among others, should include the following:

2.1 A non-restrictive clause with regards to special format allowing the print disabled to use the most appropriate format for them. Suggested Clause could read as follows (In lieu of the present suggested clause 52 ZA):

The adaptation, reproduction or issue of copies, or communication to the public of any work in any format, including sign language, specially designed or not, but intended exclusively for the use of persons suffering from a visual, aural or any other disability that prevents the perusal or understanding or comprehension or enhanced enjoyment of such work in their normal form.

¹ Such an amendment would also help India bring its copyright law on par with international norms outlined in the WIPO Copyright Treaty, 1996 (WCT) even though as a nation we are yet to sign the WCT.

- 2.2 A clause that publishers make available an alternative accessible format (preferably an e copy) to meet the special needs of the print disabled. Such a copy could be made available to central repositories or provided on demand to the print disabled and organizations working for them.

The Constitution of India's commitment to human rights duly enshrined therein reflects India's commitment to create an equitable and just environment for the disabled community as outlined in the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006 as well as The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995. It is therefore, only most appropriate that the copyright law in the country be also reflect this commitment.

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1.0 THE COPYRIGHT CHALLENGE

One of the most pertinent issues facing the visually challenged community is their lack of access to the written word. In the quest for information and books, they have encountered the problem of copyright protection.

Technological developments have gone well ahead of the legal framework. Thanks to major strides in the computing and digital fields we are able to open many a window of opportunity to the visually challenged and other print disabled persons that previously did not exist. They can, for instance, listen to a synthesized voice read out from an eBook either on the computer or in fact in an MP3 or WAV format on a CD. What is more, low vision persons can, with the assistance of screen magnifiers, read previously inaccessible material. This is over and above the traditional way of reading a book that a visually challenged person previously could hypothetically employ e.g. through Braille, the book being read out to them, or even a cassette recording of the same.

The number of visually challenged persons who are graduates and subsequently professionally qualified is on the increase. Such individuals seek to pursue careers in diverse fields, which may range from management to law, from academics to the civil services and even banking, IT, social work and journalism to name just a few. The traditional stereotypical occupations (cane weaving, candle making or telephone booth operating) are no longer seen as the only avenues of earning one's livelihood. Today's visually challenged youth, are intent on making a mark for themselves in their chosen vocation.

This dream however remains a distant one unless the visually challenged youth enjoy full access to knowledge and the written word. The barrier of being unable to read the hard copy of a printed book by virtue of the disability we feel, is the fundamental obstacle in their quest for self-actualization. At present, the only form of electronic access of the written word is limited to books which are out of copyright², or some books which have been generously made available to us. Unfortunately, the large numbers of titles needed are just not available in eFormat on account of copyright restrictions. This results in unfair deprivation.

2.0 THE NEED – THE LEGAL & MORAL CASE

The United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) has enshrined within it the basic rights to all human beings barring any discrimination guaranteeing that '*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights*' (United Nations, 1948: Art.1). This has in turn provided the platform for all individuals including persons with disability to have equal rights.

² This refers to books that have fulfilled the Berne Convention's requirement of 50 years after the author's (copyright holder's) death and the Copyright Law of India, 1957 requirement of 60 years after the author's (copyright holder's) death.

The UDHR further guarantees the *'right to freedom of opinion and expression and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers'* (United Nations, 1948: Art. 19) and ensure everyone's right to *'freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits'* (United Nations, 1948: Art. 27)

In light of the above and noting that India is a signatory to the UDHR, it is clear that persons with disability cannot be discriminated against in their ability to access written material by the virtue of the fact that their disability prevents them access to the printed word.

Having said this, it is also important to highlight that the Constitution of India has guaranteed the right to equality, freedom, justice and dignity to all without discrimination as part of its fundamental rights. The preamble to the constitution highlights *'equality of status and opportunity'* to all (Government of India, 1950). This reflects that all individuals should have equal opportunities to access information and knowledge. Further, Article 19(i)(a) provides for *'freedom of speech and expression'*. Such a freedom can be best exercised only when the individual has successful access to information. Conditions wherein a visually challenged person is made dependent on others to access relevant information actually impede the full realization of this freedom.

In light of this the Government of India has made efforts towards making an equitable environment possible for persons with disability in the country through its various programmes, policies and acts. The Honourable HRD Minister in the Rajya Sabha in March 2005 made a statement related to a Comprehensive Action Plan on the Inclusion in Education of Children and Youth with disability. (Government of India, Department of Secondary and Higher Education: 2005) The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 and the more recent National Policy for Persons with Disability, 2006 has reiterated India's commitment towards creating an equal opportunities environment for persons with disability.

The National Policy for Persons with Disability, 2006 recognizes *'that Persons with Disabilities are valuable human resources for the country and seeks to create an environment that provides them equal opportunities, protection of their rights and full participation in society.'* (Government of India, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2006: Sec. 8)

The policy also through its section on Principle areas of Intervention has highlighted creating a Barrier Free environment and working towards inclusive education as key areas of work. The policy in potential areas of work has outlined amongst many others the following:

- A. Making Teaching/learning tools and aids such as educational toys, Braille/talking books, appropriate software etc. available and to provide incentives to expand facilities for setting up of general libraries, e-libraries, Braille-libraries and talking books libraries, resource rooms etc. (Government

of India, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2006: Part IV, Sec. 48 (iv))

- B. Taking Proactive steps to ensure disability-friendly IT environment in the country. (Government of India, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2006: Part VI Sec 51(viii))

Given all of this, it is clear that India has documented its commitment to increasing the accessibility of persons with Disability.

As per the Census 2001, over 5 lakhs persons in India suffer from 'seeing disability'. Amongst them 49.85% are literate. These persons need and deserve an equal access to printed material as those with sight. Currently this access is not available to the print disabled under the Indian Copyright Act, 1957. In order that this barrier is eliminated and that the Indian Copyright Act can come in line with the rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution as well as the provisions of the National Policy for Persons with Disability, 2006 we recommend a comprehensive clause or set of clauses that would bridge this gap by allowing such persons the freedom to create, access, use, communicate and transform copyrighted material from a traditional format into one most conducive to the access needs of that person. This, we believe will bring India on par with enlightened countries in the international arena both in terms of legal and human rights criteria³.

The World Blind Union which has members from over 150 countries and is recognised by the United Nations as a major NGO also enjoys observer status with WIPO. It has detailed recommendations concerning what an appropriate legislation to the copyright act should contain⁴.

3.0 THE TECHNOLOGICAL WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Unlike the past, the visually challenged today need not be fully dependent on sighted persons to read out aloud their choice of material. Technological advances have made it possible to do the following:

- 3.1 **Talking Book:** A book can be recorded and played back at one's leisure. This recording may be in analog or digital format. It usually requires almost twice as much time to record as to playback. Advances in text-to-speech⁵ software widely available can be used to make recordings to be played back on portable devices
- 3.2 **Screen Reading Software:** E.g. Job Access with Speech (JAWS) can read out whatever material is displayed on the computer monitor through a synthesized voice. However, certain documents which are not authored keeping

³ To name only a few, enabling legislation to this effect has already been passed in the US, the UK, Ireland, Australia, Japan, and certain Latin American Countries like Brazil

⁴ For further details, see Mann 2003 as referenced below.

⁵ For example Microsoft's inbuilt text-to-speech tool for greater accessibility in its popular operating system, Windows XP

accessibility in mind can however create problems for the screen-reader (e.g. badly authored PDF files)

- 3.3 **Optical Character Recognition Software (OCR):** Today OCR software can convert an image of a book with the help of a scanner into readable text. However, this method is very laborious and requires varying degrees of proof-reading. In addition to widely available OCRs, some special OCRs with speech output have also been developed e.g. Kurzweil 1000 and OpenBook.
- 3.4 **Reading Machines:** Standby-themselves reading machines can scan and read out printed material. The more recent versions have the capacity to read from a compact disc format (CD) thus eliminating the scanning process altogether.
- 3.5 **Refreshable Braille Displays:** These can display a few lines of braille material at a time from a computer source. They are indispensable for deafblind persons as the tactile feel is the most vital for them. These displays could draw on e-Texts and thus avoid bulky braille.
- 3.6 **Screen Magnifiers / Large Print:** Low vision persons can read large fonts from a computer monitor with the help of screen magnifying software. What is more, an eBook can also be printed out in large print thus helping their reading process.

4.0 BRINGING COPYRIGHT IN INDIA INTO THE DIGITAL AGE

4.1. Analog to Digital Reality

India is considered the hub of the world's technological innovations especially in the field of computers. This "internet age" opens up the publishing industry to myriad possibilities of transferring the printed word from copyright holder to the person purchasing the copy. Thus far the "exclusive right to reproduce their work has been the backbone of the international protection of authors. It has secured the traditional process of manufacturing physical copies and distributing them through various sale steps" (Kemper, 2006).

The internet's challenge to the publishing/copyright industry comes from the ease of digitization of the printed word with almost no loss of quality and the ease of access to these formats by all those with access to a computer and the internet. Examples of some of the concerns are listed below⁶:

- 4.1.1. In the transmission from seller (copyright holder) to buyer (reader), an electronic copy is transferred either via download / CD or email. With the concerns of security in hacking computer and email systems, what guarantees are there that the only the rightful buyer of the material will receive this and the digital copy will not be "hacked" and copied?

⁶ For an exhaustive look at this issue please see Knights, 2001 and Dmytrenko and Dempsey 2004

- 4.1.2. In the case of libraries seeking to provide material to the public in digital form, are there guarantees that the digital copy stays with the person for whom it was meant (the library member) and not freely distributed?
- 4.1.3. Private copying of phonograms or videos is permitted under exceptions in analog form. However in the case of the computer programmes for the visually challenged which access the digital word to transfer material into audio format, is this access a violation of copyright?

The ultimate questions remain - *Will existing provisions and/or exceptions remain appropriate in the digital environment? Or will these provisions need to be restricted in some way for the digital environment?*

4.2. Alternative formats (Digital), the Visually Challenged and the Print Disabled and Copyright

- 4.2.1 In the case of the visually challenged, printed format of material needs to be converted into what is termed as accessible format e.g. large print, Braille print, braille displays⁷ or even audio format for successful access.
- 4.2.2 In most cases, this is the only way the visually challenged can access written/printed material.
- 4.2.3 However, in the absence of any exception or limitation, permission from copyright holders needs to be exclusively sought **every time** the visually challenged person requires access.
- 4.2.4 In certain cases copyright holders not familiar with the reasons why these permissions are being sought have been known to refuse access.
- 4.2.5 In most cases, the number of people sensitive to the needs of the visually challenged in the publishing/copyright industry, for whatever reason, are very low.
- 4.2.6 These reasons culminate in making the actual number of digital copies available to the general visually challenged public in India very low. Most of the access that exists is often a result of individual effort.
- 4.2.7 There is a need for this issue of accessibility to the printed word to be addressed at the national level. It is therefore imperative that the Copyright Act of India include exceptions for such persons in its forthcoming amendment

4.3. The Berne Convention's "Three Step Test" for copyright exceptions

⁷ Refreshable Braille Displays can be very useful not only to persons who are visually challenged but more so to persons who may be deafblind. They can benefit immensely from eBooks being displayed to them on a refreshable braille panel.

It shall be a matter for legislation in the countries of the Union to permit the reproduction of such works in certain special cases, provided that such reproduction does not conflict with a normal exploitation of the work and does not unreasonably prejudice the legitimate interests of the author.

(Berne Convention, 1979: Article 9(2); our emphasis)

As mentioned above, the Berne Convention, to which India is a signatory, details a three step test for the creation of copyright exceptions and limitations:

- 4.3.1 “Certain Special Cases”: In the case of the visually challenged and the print disabled, the only non-digital forms of access are audio and Braille. These formats, in the traditional sense of the term, are time-consuming to produce and in addition, Braille presses/embossing services are naturally limited in scope and access because of the cost associated with acquiring them. What is more, not all visually challenged persons are familiar with Braille by virtue of the fact that a number of the visually challenged are either late blind⁸ or low vision. For the visually challenged, digital copies mean greater accessibility and less dependence on others. Forcing the visually challenged to continue this analog access under existing copyright provisions when other formats exist, is actively disabling and a violation of their human rights and dignity (as detailed in previous sections).
- 4.3.2 “Does not conflict with a normal exploitation of the work”: A digital copy of the work/material will be available as an alternative format to the existing analog copy. This format could possibly be converted into Braille (tactile print), audio⁹ or large font for the visually challenged and print disabled. This is simply a different format of the existing work for the access of the print disabled and can be justified as “fair dealing” and NOT exploitation for illegal reproduction and distribution.
- 4.3.3 “Does not unreasonably prejudice the legitimate interests of the author”: The author’s or copyright holder’s rights are not being questioned. Indeed these rights must be upheld and protected in the light of new digital formats now available. Compensation to the copyright holder remains a viable option.

5.0 COSTS AND BENEFITS

The visually challenged community in India would undoubtedly welcome an enlightened clause being inserted in the copyright act. As a consequence, our

⁸ This refers to people who lose their sight later on in life and are not blind from birth

⁹ Traditional methods of making audio recording of books take a lot of time. Normally it would take almost twice as much time to record as it would to have the book read out. Modern text to speech engines can convert eTexts into audio output which can be heard on portable audio devices. Although the tonal quality may not be ideal, it is still extremely useful for the visually challenged.

society and India as a nation, would, we believe, be able to harness a segment of its human resources which previously has its potential wasted.

The publishing lobby could have a few apprehensions with regards such a clause. They could, for instance, fear that such material could be misused by unscrupulous elements and they could fear monetary losses as a consequence. The piracy of copyrighted material is something we do not condone. But it is our contention that the insertion of an enabling clause would not add to copyright piracy in any significant degree. We base our contention on the following:

- 5.1 Those elements who wish to pirate a book can do so very easily. Advances in technology and ease of software availability, in terms of both supply and cost, have seen the mushrooming of desktop publishing firms (DTP) all over the world servicing the burgeoning publishing/printing needs. At the negative end, this has resulted in its misuse and piracy. This piracy, however, is not a function of the possibility of electronic copies being made available to the print disabled. The trade is carried on regardless of this community's access issues.
- 5.2 In India, it costs far less to photocopy a book from a hard copy than reproduce the same in printed format from an eCopy e.g. photocopying a page would cost approximately Rs. 0.25 in bulk, while printing a page would cost Rs. 1 or more. This is based on the presumption that the individual(s) in question would have regular access to a computer and printer to *print/pirate* entire books. Once again, this form of print/photocopy violation is carried on and will carry on regardless of electronic access given to the print disabled
- 5.3 Very few sighted persons would prefer to read an eBook on a computer monitor and would definitely opt for the actual book. An eBook would therefore serve as a **special format** meeting the real needs of the print disabled persons.
- 5.4 It would not be an additional cost to a publisher to make eCopies available to the specified target population as they already have the said format prior to going in for printing.
- 5.5 Even if a publisher makes an eCopy available at next to no cost, and such copies are shared only among the visually challenged, the said publisher would not monetarily lose much as the actual number of such persons would be very small. Hence the total sales loss would be negligible and therefore, insignificant.
- 5.6 Although, optical character recognition (OCR) software is available to convert an image into an eFormat, and subsequent to that into voice, it is a slow, tedious, and laborious process and would result in endless use of time, money and energy. We would therefore urge that publishers make available their eCopies on demand in a time bound manner.

- 5.7 Just because a book can be wrongly duplicated, is no reason for not publishing it (as demonstrated earlier, it is very easy to photocopy a book). So also, just because there may be a few leakages from such material is no reason to block its availability to those who rightfully deserve it.

The print disabled, therefore represent a new market to the publishing industry in India. While the needs vary from the norm, the possibilities are endless, the least of which will be essential service to society. In taking a consolidated step with the Government of India via law amendments, the publishing industry in India will be credited with pioneering work in its field.

6.0 TEXT OF THE CLAUSE 52(ZA) AS PART OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE COPYRIGHT ACT¹⁰ AND OUR COMMENTS ON THE SAME

The reproduction, issue of copies or communication to the public of any work in a format, including sign language, specially designed only for the use of persons suffering from a visual, aural or other disability that prevents the enjoyment of such works in their normal format. (Proposed Clause 52 (za))

This clause is well intentioned but in order that misinterpretation and consequent problems are minimized, we need clarity on the following:

- 6.1 The term 'reproduction' - does it mean bringing out identical copies both in form and substance (electronic to electronic, photocopying) or can it also mean the same substance but different form e.g. from a hard copy into electronic and vice versa. If the latter, the term is appropriate. If not, we need something that would be all-encompassing.
- 6.2 The clarity of the phrase "format....specially designed": Braille very easily meets this requirement. However, what about standard formats which are easily accessible such as a book being read out on a cassette (this is not a special format restricted to the visually challenged only); or the use of standard scanners and OCR to generate eBooks in Microsoft Word, which are also not special formats but rightfully accessible also to the visually challenged. Large print for low vision persons may not meet the criteria of a special format but is accessible by such persons all the same. Restricting the term to special format, can we believe, be very limiting as the cherished goal of an inclusive society would then not be attainable. The clause therefore, needs to provide

¹⁰ For the full text of these proposed amendments to the Copyright Act, please see *Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development – Copyright Office, 2006* as referenced below

the freedom of choice of format to such persons only and not limit them to formats which actually create more complications in their lives.

What is more there is every possibility that a special format may come into wider usage or may become redundant in the face of new technological innovation; in either case the visually challenged actually stand to loose. The clause could thus highlight the fact that such material has to be used only by the previously defined groups

- 6.3 Does the word "communication" imply in addition to other things, the freedom of importation of copyrighted material in accessible formats? If not, such a provision needs to be incorporated as we would be denying the visually challenged in India access to the outside world.

7.0 OUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AMENDMENT OF THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF INDIA

Although India is not 'yet' a signatory to the WCT 1996, these *amendments* will bring us on par with their requirements, at least partially.

- 7.1 A definition of print disability should be provided for in the copyright act to include a person without sight, or a person whose sight is severely impaired or a person unable to hold or manipulate books or focus or move his/her eyes or a person with a perceptual disability.
- 7.2 There should also be included a definition of institutions, organisations, individuals, and those working in the field of disability, specifically the print disabled that meets the requirements of the Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.
- 7.3 Reproduction and usage exceptions should therefore be allowed for persons that fall under the definition of print disabled and institutions/organisations/individuals and others working in the field to provide such copies to the visually challenged and other print disabled.
- 7.4 These exceptions should be clearly defined under the exceptions/fair dealing clauses of the Copyright Act.
- 7.5 Formats allowed under this exception could be defined as material "fully accessible" for the person with the disability in the most convenient format such that the print disabled access the material as comfortably as someone not print disabled. The text and spirit of the exception should also allow for any further technological innovations in the field to allow the print disabled access to such material. Given India's socio-economic, cultural and linguistic reality, restricting or limiting the format to "special" formats would prove counter productive.
- 7.6 The exception should mandate copyright holders to make available to the print disabled digital or electronic copies of their material. For most copyright

- holders in today's digital world, electronic/digital copies exist at the time of production of publication and can be made available at no extra cost to them.
- 7.7 Under this exception, compensation to the copyright holder should remain as per the rest of the law with a provision that the cost could be less than or equal to the existing physical printed material but no more considering that the cost of physically printing, binding and distributing these eCopies is virtually nil.
- 7.8 Technological protection that exists to prevent non-visual access of digital material should be allowed in the case of the print disabled most of whom use screen reading software to access such material. (e.g. PDF or even websites like books.google.com where copies of each page of the book are visually available to the sighted community but completely inaccessible to screen reading software and therefore the print disabled).
- 7.9 The legislation should allow for the importation of accessible formats of copyrighted material. We live in a globalised world and restricting the scope of the amendment to material produced only in India would be counterproductive.

We would therefore propose the following clause replace the suggested clause 52(za) mentioned above:

The adaptation, reproduction or issue of copies, or communication to the public of any work in any format, including sign language, specially designed or not, but intended exclusively for the use of persons suffering from a visual, aural or any other disability that prevents the perusal or understanding or comprehension or enhanced enjoyment of such work in their normal form.

While only a proposed draft, the above clause, does, we believe represent a variety of interests in the print disabled community with the express intention of granting due access while allowing for the significant possibility of technological innovation in the future.

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A1 - ANNEXURE 1: CONTACT DETAILS & PROFILES OF SIGNATORIES AND THE ORGANISATIONS UNDER THE PUBLICATION ACCESS COORDINATION COMMITTEE

A1.1. THE BLIND GRADUATES' FORUM OF INDIA (BGFI)

ORGANISATION PROFILE

The Blind Graduates' Forum was established in 1985 in Mumbai by the blind graduates who feel that the problems relating to the educated blind need to be addressed urgently.

The Forum has involved itself in several innovative activities. It has organized awareness programmes such as the "Walk to Win" event from Poona to Bombay in 1986 to create awareness about the potentialities of the blind people. It has also been instrumental in starting mountaineering training programme in conjunction with the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Darjeeling that culminated in the first ever Expedition to the Himalayan wherein blind people were involved.

The organization has also been active in areas of working with the BMC to improve the condition of roads in the city of Mumbai. The Forum was the first ever organization to have started the computer training programme in Bombay.

The Forum has thus been known to have taken the initiative in many unique ventures in the area of working for the visually challenged and continues to do so.

SINGATORY PROFILE: MR. KETAN KOTHARI

Mr Ketan Kothari was born blind and has studied till M.A. in Political Science wherein he was the winner of the Gold Medal. He has been working with the National Association for the Blind (India) in various capacities for the past 12 years. He is also active in blindness related organizations.

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A1.2. BLIND PERSONS' (MENS') ASSOCIATION, MUMBAI

ORGANISATION PROFILE

Blind Persons' (Mens') Association Mumbai was established in 1947 by a few like-minded blind people who wanted to work for the welfare of their brethren and later expanded with separate units at Poona and Ahmedabad. Today, the organisation has grown to over 700 members in and around Mumbai.

The Association mainly concentrates on activities for the blind at the grassroots levels. It provides scholarships to blind students pursuing college/professional education. It is probably the only organization that provides educational assistance to the sighted children of blind parents. It also offers educational assistance in kind to sighted children of at the primary school level.

Another of its activities is a monthly pension to ageing blind of extremely poor background, which helps them to lead a dignified life. The Association offers financial assistance to the blind people to start self-employment activities. It also provides financial assistance to them to meet unforeseen needs.

The Association also organizes several get-togethers of blind people wherein it invites prominent personalities from diverse fields to address the blind persons. It also organizes annual picnics for its members and their immediate families.

The Association fills a void and gives an opportunity to the blind person at the grassroots level to get involved in social life and make his/her contribution.

SINGATORY PROFILE: MR. PRAVIN C. DANDIA

Mr Pravin Chunilal Dandia, currently the President of the Blind Persons' (Men's) Association, Mumbai has in the past been the Honorary Secretary with National Association for the Blind, India and Retired as Executive Director of National Association for the Blind, India. He lost his sight at the age of five because of small pox.

He has done his Masters the University of Bombay with entire History in the year 1969 and also a Diploma in Teaching the Blind from the Training Institute for the Teachers of the Blind conducted by the Government of India at the Victoria Memorial School for the Blind, Mumbai, in the year 1968.

In his professional career he has worked as a home teacher as well as Home Visitor-cum-Social Case Worker with the Blind Men's Association, Mumbai He continued this job till June 1975. During this time, catered to the needs of more than 200 persons and assisted them in various capacities. In 1975 he was appointed as Development Officer of the NAB, then promoted as Chief Development Coordinator, and later to the Director (Client Services). In July 2001, promoted as Executive Director, NAB (I) and this post was relinquished in January 2002 on reaching 60 years of age.

He has attended and organized several national and international seminars and conferences and publishes several journal articles and papers through his lifetime. He has also been the recipient of several awards.

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A1.3. DR. K. M. SHAH SELF VISION CENTRE,
RAMNARAIN RUIA COLLEGE, MUMBAI

ORGANISATION PROFILE

Ramnarain Ruia College is one of the most reputed educational institutions in Mumbai established in 1937. Ramnarain Ruia College has always offered assistance to students who are disabled by admitting them in the college to the course of their choice and providing them further help during their studentship in the institute. One among such help offered to the visually challenged students is the Self-Vision Centre.

In the year 2001-2002 a special computer lab for the visually challenged students was established to provide them with computer education to add to their educational qualification. The numbers of the visually challenged students in the college has been on the increase since the setting up of this lab. This computer lab consists of two separate air-conditioned sections; the major section is 315 sq. ft. in size and the other is 150 sq. ft.

The major section is equipped with five computer terminals, two close circuit televisions (C.C.T.V.) and two illuminated Magnifier Reading Glasses. The computer terminals are installed with the latest screen reading and monitor magnifying software's (JAWS & MAGIC MAGNIFIER) specially designed for the visually challenged in windows operating systems. The two close circuit televisions (C.C.T.V.) serve the partial vision students for reading purposes and two illuminated Magnifier Reading Glasses (stand base) for suiting their reading and writing needs.

The second section has a main server for the lab, a Braille embosser and a Mountbatten machine. This computer lab undertakes computer training and Mountbatten training courses for the visually challenged students free of cost. And it also provides Braille notes to the students from the college as well as from the other colleges.

At present there are 69 visually challenged students studying in different classes in Arts faculty.

SINGATORY PROFILE: DR. K. V. MANGAONKAR

Dr. Mangaonkar is Vice Principal, Reader in Chemistry and Coordinator of the Centre for Visually Challenged Students at the Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai. He Holds a Masters degree in Inorganic Chemistry and a PhD. in Chemistry, both from the University of Mumbai. He has also completed his Post Graduate Diploma in Management of Education in 2003 in College Administration from the University of Mumbai with a 1st Rank.

He has over 20 years of teaching experience in courses as varied as BSc., MSc. and Diploma in Industrial and Analytical Chemistry at the Ramnarain Ruia College. He is

a recognised research guide for Research MSc. and PhD. students at the University of Mumbai.

Among others, his research interests include:

1. Drug analysis
2. Standardization of herbal or medicinal plants
3. Studies on complexing behaviour of different Schiff's bases with metal ions and studying their anti-microbial activities

As coordinator of the Centre for the Visually Challenged Students, Dr. Mangaonkar has been instrumental in the running of the facilities for close to 70 visually challenged students.

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A1.4. THE HELEN KELLER INSTITUTE FOR THE DEAF AND DEAFBLIND (HKI)

ORGANISATION PROFILE:

It was with the very idea to serve the severest handicap groups of Deaf children with/without an additional disability, which the Institute was established in July, 1977 by the founder member and Director and her 2 visionary teachers. In 2000, the Helen Keller institute expanded their facilities from their premises at Byculla to Mahape in Navi Mumbai. Some of our activities include: -

1. Early Intervention
2. Classroom Curriculum
3. Diagnostic Center: Diagnostic Center to assess scientifically functional Hearing and Vision with follow up of medical treatment wherever necessary. A team of doctors and experts assess the vision, hearing and communication & physical level of functioning of Deafblind children and plan appropriate interventions to increase their learning and independence. This is a pioneering project in India & it is gaining recognition & momentum. This project is funded by Hilton Perkins International – Boston, U.S.A.
4. Counselling Center
5. Hostel facility (for children residing outside Mumbai)
6. Vocational Training Unit for young low functioning Deafblind adults, where they learn to make candles, semi precious jewelry (necklaces etc) & plant nursery. This is also an income-generating unit to pay for stipend to the students.
7. Discovery Room
8. Science Laboratory
9. Audiometry Room for Speech & Testing
10. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT: including a diploma course in Deafblind education and hostel facilities for teacher trainees

Rangoonwala Foundation-UK jointly with Helen Keller Institute established the first ever-pioneering project for the Deafblind, M. A. Rangoonwala Computerised Mini Braille Press in January 2002 at Byculla.

High functioning Deafblind students have been introduced to this area of education where Braille Skills, Computer Skills and Use of various Advanced Technological Equipment such as the Power Brailier, Braille Embosser, Tiger Advantage, Mountbatten Brailier & PIAF are taught.

Through these equipments our Deafblind persons produce Tactile / Graphic Materials such as greeting cards All time calendar of quotations & various educational materials such as science experiments cards & Human Anatomy Atlas and various books in Braille & Print as part of the Braille library.

SIGNATORY PROFILE: MRS. BEROZ N. VACHA

Mrs. Beroz N. Vacha is currently the Director of the Helen Keller Institute and one of its founder members. Beroz Vacha's career spans a little over 30 years starting from a humble beginning of a trainee teacher to a teacher, a Principal and then a Director.

She is also on the Board of the central Government, Ministry of Welfare and Human Resource Development for work for the Deafblind and Multiply Handicapped. She has held numerous prestigious positions including Principal of the Helen Keller Institute for Deaf & Deafblind, Hon. Director & Consultant for NASEOH projects, Member of the Executive Board of the International Association for the Education of the deaf and Deafblind and as the first official educational consultant for Sense International Development programmes for the Deafblind multiply Handicapped.

Mrs. Vacha's work has been recognised through a number of organisations as is evident from the awards she has received.

- I. January 1990 – In recognition of the outstanding services to the cause of the Deafblind as a professional worker, The NAB, India the prestigious "Rustom Merwanji Alpaiwala Memorial Award".
- II. March 1991 – Woman of the year award by International Zonta Club of Bombay III for being the first Indian woman to pioneer the education of the Deafblind.
- III. August 1991 – At a ceremony in Sweden the International award "the Ann Sullivan Medal" was presented for her achievements, contribution and efforts in pioneering the work for the Deafblind in India.
- IV. Three meritorious Rotary awards for public services in the field of the handicapped from 1991 to 1995
- V. In 1992 – Zoroastrian Anjuman Award for the first Indian Zoroastrian woman to pioneer the services for the Deafblind severely multiply handicapped

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A1.5. INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED (IAVH)

ORGANISATION PROFILE

The IAVH is a registered non profit charitable institution established since 1994 working for the welfare of the blind and visually handicapped in India.

The main objective of IAVH is to upgrade the blind student community by providing the facilities of access to reading of text books with the use of text reading machines as well as computer training to the blind, visually challenged and persons having low vision and those having learning disabilities like Dyslexia so that they can also keep pace with the present environment which has become highly competitive with the introduction of computers and the internet.

The same is easily accessible to the sighted and therefore they are at a definite advantage over the blind. As it is the blind students have to strive hard to cover their curriculum but find that they are far behind their sighted counter parts on account of the existing IT scenario. To overcome this disability IAVH now give the visually challenged an opportunity to learn and train themselves in computers also, so that they can have access to the ocean of knowledge available on the internet as well as acquire the training to use the same for employment opportunities after graduation.

IAVH has already set up 6 such centers since its inception. These centers exist across the country, in Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Trivandrum and Lucknow equipped with text reading machines talking computers and braille printers to provide the services of access to the printed books, braille books and the internet.

SINGATORY PROFILE: MR. RAM AGARWAL

Mr. Ram Agarwal is a commerce graduate lost his vision at 38 years due to macula degeneration. On account of late blindness did not learn braille He overcame his trauma of not being able to read anymore written or printed materials and attributes his entire success as an adaptive technologist to the text to speech, OCR and computer screen reader technologies.

He is the founder president of the NGO INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED and with other affected people like him established this institution to provide the service of text reading with the use of electronic reading machines, computer education and access to E books and information on the Internet to the blind student community countrywide in this niche area of rehabilitation which was not being provided by any other NGO.

He also holds the position as Technical Advisor with the Helen Keller Institute of the deaf and deafblind and is the pioneer in India to provide the computer education to the deaf blind at HKIDDB, Mumbai, where the deaf blind can now read scanned printed materials as well as electronic text with the use of screen reader software and refreshable braille displays.

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A1.6. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND, INDIA (NAB)

ORGANISATION PROFILE

National Association for the Blind, India was founded on January 19 1952 at the First All India Conference of the Blind held in Bombay. Presently it is the largest organization working for single disability in India. It offers cradle to grave services to the blind ranging from nursery education, rehabilitation, employment and placement to care of the ageing blind. It has 22 State Branches and 65 District Branches spread throughout India. NAB has the largest Braille and Audio Production units in this country servicing the needs of the visually challenged community.

NAB established its Braille Press in 1958 in a small garage in a suburb of Mumbai. It was the first Press of its kind in the nongovernmental sector. This press was designated as Regional Braille Press for the western region by the Government of India. Presently this press is one of the largest presses in the country with three computerized embossers and two hand-operated presses. It produces approximately two million pages per year in a variety of languages—English, Gujarati, Hindi, and Marathi of both textual and general nature.

The Talking Book Centre of the NAB was established in 1963 in Mumbai. This centre is one of the largest of its kind and records books in nine languages—Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kanada, Marathi, Punjabi, Tamil, Urdu. These include both textual literature as well as recreational and technical books. Presently almost 5,000 individuals/institutions use this service throughout India. As part of modernization it is planning to record books in digital format.

NAB also runs a well-equipped Department of Education. It promotes education of blind children in the school for the sighted children. The NAB also offers scholarships to students studying in Junior Colleges.

It was NAB, which started the nation's first Employment and Placement Bureau for the blind way back in 1954. Till date it has placed more than 5,000 adults in Government and Public sector. However, with changing times and more and more competition, due to paucity of literature in accessible format, it becomes difficult for the blind people to compete on equal terms with their sighted counterparts.

Thus, it is obvious that NAB is involved in a big way in every aspect of blind welfare activity, which takes place in this country and the contribution of NAB in the field of education and production of literature in accessible formats can hardly be overemphasized.

SINGATORY PROFILE: DR. RAJENDRA T. VYAS

M. A., LL.B., Ph.D., Advocate, Bombay High Court, Founder Asia Office and Former Asia Director, Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, President Maharashtra Society for the Donation of Eyes; Trustee, Eye Bank Co-ordination & Research

Centre, Former Chairman of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, South East Asia, Former Hon. Treasurer, Asian Blind Union; Honorary Secretary General, National Association for the Blind, United Nation's Fellow, Honorary Life Member of World Blind Union, National Delegate on World Blind Union, Honorary Governor World Braille Foundation, Past President of Rotary Club of Bombay West, Paul Harris Fellow sponsored by the District Governors of the Rotary Clubs of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and India for his contribution in the field of Prevention of Blindness and District Chairman for various Rotary Committees for over 15 years.

Dr. Vyas is also the Trustee of the Aravind Eye Hospital, Trustee Eye Bank Co-ordination & Research Centre, Member of the Central Co-ordination Committee and the State Co-ordination Committee formed by the Central & State Governments for the implementation of the Persons with Disability Act 1995. He was given a lifetime achievement award by the Blind Foundation for India, USA for his lifelong outstanding services to the blind people in India. He was awarded the scroll of Honour by the Mayor of Bombay in 1982. He is the recipient of the prestigious Rustom Merwanji Alpaiwala Award for his outstanding work in the field of prevention of blindness. He is the Founder Hon. Secretary of the National Association for the Blind since 1952 and is at present its Honorary Secretary General.

There is no major representative organization concerned with the Education, Rehabilitation and Employment of the blind and the Prevention and Cure of blindness, both at National and International levels on which Dr. Vyas has not figured in an executive capacity.

Born in 1930, Dr. Vyas became blind at the age of eleven years due to bilateral iritis. He passed school and college with resounding success. Along with others he founded the Blind Men's Association in 1947, National Association for the Blind in 1952 and is responsible in setting up India's first and largest multilingual Talking Book Project and computerized Braille Production Centre at Bombay.

Rotarian for last 36 years, he has served the Rotary District as Chairman of various District Committees for almost 17 years. In this capacity he established Rotary to Rotary linkage programme through which Rotary Clubs in UK USA and Australia supported hundreds of Eye Camps in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh restoring Eye Sight to over 3 million blind people both in urban and rural areas.

He is widely travelled. He has observed Blind Welfare work in Switzerland, Germany, Indonesia, Australia, USA, UK, Japan, China, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Canada. He has also visited Soviet Union and Yugoslavia as also countries in Africa.

He was awarded the Padmashree, a National Award for his contribution in blind welfare work by the President of India and Takeo Iwahashi Award from Japan and recently the A. E. Baker medal of Canada. On Wednesday June 19, 2002 Dr. Rajendra Vyas was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Rotary Club of Bombay West.

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1.7 XAVIER'S RESOURCE CENTRE FOR THE VISUALLY CHALLENGED
(XRCVC)
ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE, MUMBAI

ORGANISATION PROFILE

The St Xavier's College, Mumbai has been an academic institute of excellence since its inception in 1869. Through these years, the college has made its mark not only in academics but also other walks of life through its high standard and commitment towards overall growth of its students who have gone on to make a mark in society. The college has been accredited with a 5 star rating by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).

The college over the years as part of its recognition toward social responsibility has always taken an active interest in social causes, the most recent step taken in this direction being the Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged (XRCVC).

The XRCVC believes in providing holistic education to such students involving inter alia, technical training, academic assistance, personality development and vocational guidance. The XRCVC has, therefore since its inception as far as possible, followed a policy of providing its facilities free of cost. The Centre's facilities are open to other college students as well

Instituted in September 2003, the XRCVC is now located in a 425 sq ft room on the ground floor of the St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. Divided into three units the XRCVC provides state-of-the-art facilities as follows. The first section offers six computers, a reading machine and low vision equipment. The middle section serves as a reading cum writing room where students can read and listen to their own study material and type Braille notes. The final section serves as an office room housing the 4X4 PRO Braille Embosser.

These facilities combined with other back-up support aim to help visually challenged students and other visually challenged persons to be educationally, psychologically and socially enriched so that they are better equipped to face the challenges of life.

SINGATORY PROFILE: DR. SAM TARAPOREVALA

Dr. Taraporevala did his bachelor's degree from St. Xavier's College, University of Bombay in Sociology and Psychology. He was awarded The India Open Merit Scholarship three years in a row (1978-1981), The J. B. Petit Golden Jubilee Scholarship in 1978-79 for third place in the first year BA University Examination, The Curimbhoy Ebrahim Scholarship, 1978-79, for the second highest aggregate from the College at the university's first and second year BA examinations, Government of India National Scholarship two years in a row (1981-1982) for standing eleventh in the University of Bombay's BA Examination.

At the post-graduate level, Dr. Taraporevala was awarded a number of scholarships like the K. M. Kapadia Prize in 1983 for ranking first in the university at the

master's level as well as the Patrick Geddes Prize and the N. A. Toothi Prize in the same year for Urban Sociology and Social Research Methodology respectively.

He completed his PhD in Sociology from the University of Bombay with a fellowship from the University Grants Commission.

Dr. Taraporevala also completed a Diploma in Human Resource Management from Indira Gandhi National Open University, Delhi in 1991, and in 2002 was awarded the Shri Lalji Mehrotra Foundation Award for Excellence by the National Society for Equal Opportunities for the Handicapped, India.

Dr. Taraporevala is currently a Reader in the Department of Sociology, St. Xavier's College. As study director for research projects at the department, he has directed a number of projects on themes as diverse as evaluating the success of a malaria control programme, the social networks within the Indian diamond industry, and the evaluation of the satisfaction levels of importers and exporters. These projects were commissioned by the Impact India Foundation, The Department of Economics, Brown University, USA, and Research and Information Services for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi.

As Honour's programme Coordinator for the Department of Sociology, Dr. Taraporevala organised subject related inter-disciplinary workshops, lecture series, study groups and seminars. He was on a sub-committee of the board of studies, Sociology to draft the final year BA Sociology syllabi for the new courses being offered and in 2005 was co-opted on to this Board. In addition he has served on various special committees including the Staff Council, InfoTech Committee and Internal Quality Assurance Cell of St. Xavier's College.

Dr. Taraporevala has been instrumental in setting up the Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged, St. Xavier's College with a view towards inclusive education at the undergraduate level. He is currently Director, Project Access of the XRCVC focusing on national-level accessibility issues for the visually challenged in India.

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