

LIGHT UP



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Vision Rehabilitation Centres

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Centre for Sight Enhancement

&

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for Rehabilitation of
Blind and Visually Impaired

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World Health
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Collaborating Centre for
Prevention of Blindness

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Employment Avenues for the Visually Challenged

*The roots of true achievement lie in the will to become
the best that you can become. – Harold Taylor*

Work is essential for every human being, not only for economic independence, but also because it enhances one's self-esteem and sense of dignity, leading to an abiding joy in life. For people with disabilities, it is even more important as the self-esteem and financial gain can significantly offset the negative attitude of society.

Vocational Rehabilitation

"The term 'Vocational Rehabilitation' means that part of the continuous and coordinated process of rehabilitation which involves the provision of those vocational services, e.g., vocational guidance, vocational training and selective placement, designed to enable a disabled person to secure and retain suitable employment." – International Labour Organization

The Directorate of Social Justice and Empowerment has reserved 1% government jobs for persons with 40% or more visual disability, under the Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

Blindness need not be a barrier to successful employment. By actively participating in their rehabilitation, people with disabilities can achieve greater independence in their work place and living environments. A rehabilitation team includes a rehabilitation counselor, a rehabilitation teacher and/or a mobility specialist. The team can help the visually challenged to develop a goal and get employment.



Avenues of employment

I. Unorganized Sector

The unorganized sector is the most appropriate avenue of employment for the visually impaired, if suitably exploited through

- a coordinated approach,
- need based training, and
- an effective service delivery system.

1. Self-Employment: Self initiated, developed and regulated income-generating opportunities where the individual plays the role of investor, employer and employee. For example, petty shopkeeping, vending stall, public call office, etc.

2. Professional Employment: Open employment or self-placement of qualified and trained individuals in various professions. For example, management consultants, teachers, stenographers, computer programmer, etc.

3. Home Worker: Training with and remunerative work opportunities for eligible disabled persons who cannot — for physical, psychological or geographical reasons — leave their home to travel to and from a place of business. For example, candle making, cane chair work, pickle making, etc.

4. Cooperatives: Common enterprises run along cooperative self-management lines, within the framework of the

national economic plan, which would also satisfy the social needs. For example, agricultural cooperatives, small industrial cooperatives, etc.

5. Community Based Rehabilitation:

Employment through the combined efforts of a group of people with disabilities, their families, the community, and health, education, vocational and social services. For example, local village trades.

II. Organized Sector

In the organized sector some preparation is required to make the visually challenged ready to work among others as well as to convince potential employers to give them suitable employment opportunities.

1. Open employment: This involves the placement of people in an open competitive environment in the organized sector, such as institutions, corporations and companies.

2. Special Employment: Special employment can be classified into three categories:

- **Sheltered Workshops:** Work-oriented rehabilitation facility with a controlled working environment that enables a person to gradually progress towards normal life and a productive vocational status.
- **Transitory Employment Centers:** A work related rehabilitation approach within a controlled working environment with the ultimate objective of open employment.
- **On-the-job Training Centers:** Placement in a simulated industrial setting.



A rehabilitation patient shows the way

He calls himself a “friend of LVPEI” and indeed he is. G Bibu is an inspiration for others in the way he has courageously faced up to the challenges in his life due to his blindness; today he is independent and confident. Technology savvy, he has mastered the various software available for the blind and is now a resource person for L V Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad, for familiarizing others with it.

Bibu became blind when he was two; it was another blow for his parents who had two blind daughters, one of them also mentally handicapped. The blindness in the family is due to a hereditary condition retinitis pigmentosa, caused by the parent’s consanguineous marriage. Bibu and his sister Sindhu went to integrated schools and received a regular education. Using audiocassettes for recording and a scribe for writing exams, Bibu studied law and joined a typewriting institute to learn keyboard operations. Later he bought a computer.

Bibu and Sindhu have been coming to LVPEI’s Rehabilitation Centre for the past several years. Here they learnt daily living skills, including mobility and home management. They continue to come for



transcribing their study and reading material on to audiotapes. Married to a sighted person and looking forward to having a happy family, Bibu works in the government Roads and Buildings Department. So well versed is he with the software that Bibu is now helping other patients and staff members to learn Kurzweil and Jaws.

Bibu’s self-confidence and achievements have made him a role model for other visually handicapped persons and the Rehabilitation Centre continually refers new patients to him for counseling and support.

Unemployment allowances

Unemployment allowance has to be paid to people with disabilities, who have been registered with the Special Employment Exchange for more than two years and who have not been placed in any gainful occupation.

Documents to be produced at the time of registration

- Proof of place of residence
- Proof of age
- Caste certificate, if they belong to reserved communities
- Certificates and marks list to substantiate educational qualifications and/or work experience

The original certificate should be produced at the time of registration.

Criteria for unemployment allowance

- Age 20-35 years
- Two years continuous registration seniority after attaining the age of 18

- SSLC examination certificate
- Annual family income should not exceed Rs 12, 000
- Monthly personal income should not exceed Rs 100
- Physically challenged persons are exempted from professional tax (GO 1063 dated August 2, 2007, issued by the Revenue Department)
- Physically challenged persons in government jobs are eligible for travel allowance of 10% of the basic pay and not exceeding Rs 650 pm. (GO 197, Department of Finance, dated July 6, 2006)
- Under the provisions of Section 80-U, the income tax deduction for a handicapped person has been increased to Rs 40,000 for the annual year 1996-97 and the subsequent years. However, for the annual year 2004-05 the exemption is allowable at Rs 50,000. For severe disability the limit is Rs 75,000.

Enrol now!

Short-term Fellowship Programs in Low Vision Rehabilitation

Duration: 3 months

Program begins on: January 1, April 1, July 1 & October 1

Minimum qualification: Diploma in optometry or master's degree in ophthalmology, preferably institution-based

Registration is limited to two candidates per program.

Registration fee: Indian Rupees 30,000

Low Vision Awareness Program

Duration: 3 days

Program dates: 25-27 April 2008 & 19-21 September 2008

Eligibility: Ophthalmologists, optometrists, rehabilitation professionals, special educators, optometry students, opticians, vision technicians, ophthalmic technicians and administrators working in eye care organizations

Registration fee: Indian Rupees 2,500

CME Programs

Short-term fellowship program

Mr Krishna Kant Yadav, Ayodhya Eye Hospital, Uttar Pradesh and Mr Deepak Chandra Nand, Dhantari Christian Hospital, Chattisgarh, completed the three months short-term fellowship program in low vision rehabilitation, July 1 – September 30, 2007.

Low vision awareness program

The 18th Low Vision Awareness Program was successfully conducted from September 28 - 30, 2007. Thirty-six eye care professionals from all over the country and two eye care professionals from Bangladesh participated in the program. The program was well appreciated.

Low Vision Assessment Kit for sale

The LVPEI Low Vision Assessment Kit for eye care professionals in developing countries has been modified with more devices and a wider range of magnification. It is available for sale at the Vision Rehabilitation Centres, LVPEI.

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Greeting cards based on paintings by children with visual impairment are available for sale. Please contact Vision Rehabilitation Centres, LVPEI.

You can make a difference

Your contribution can help the Vision Rehabilitation Centres in several ways: provision of low vision devices to underprivileged children, training optometrists in detection and rehabilitation of the blind and those with incurable low vision, and conducting community programs for rehabilitation of persons with visual impairment.

Contributions to the Hyderabad Eye Institute and Hyderabad Eye Research Foundation are tax deductible. Donations above Rs 250 are exempt under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act 1961 for Hyderabad Eye Institute and under section 35(i) (ii) for Hyderabad Eye Research Foundation.

For more information please contact

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