

Moving tribute to Mr. D.K. Patel

In the funeral hall in Hong Kong, I could see people of various nationalities seated quietly to pay homage to the great soul, Mr. D.K. Patel. Even the coronavirus scare did not stop many from paying their respects to the great soul. I attended it with the impression that it would be like any other funeral, placing flowers with the chanting of mantras in the background. But it turned out to be different. People were also invited to pay homage through short speeches.

I knew that hundreds of visually impaired students in Tamil Nadu obtained university education with support from Help The Blind Foundation (HTBF), the brainchild of Patelji. But the information impact on me was so high that after listening to few speeches during the funeral, my hand instinctively took a paper and pen and I started writing an eulogy to the departed soul on behalf of those benefited in Tamil Nadu. I was moved by the fact that although Patelji was born in Gujarat, his services reached the people of Tamil Nadu, the state I came from. All the three schools/ hostels built through his support are in Tamil Nadu.

I could not resist the urge to talk about my emotions on behalf of Tamil community but hesitated to approach the podium as few others were speaking on behalf of HTBF. I did not rise to read that note but was restless. I felt fulfilled only when I placed it in his coffin as I could not throw away the instantaneous note of thanks written by me. I casually narrated this episode to Mr. Ramani. He encouraged me to reproduce that note for publishing in the HTBF newsletter. I have tried to recapture those very words of the note and here they are:

Dear friends,

My prayers to the departed soul. I am Chitra and I am here because some of my friends were volunteering for Help The Blind Foundation in Hong Kong. I regularly get many updates on services rendered by the FOUNDATION in Tamil Nadu.

I met Patelji during my maiden attempt to present the need for an Indian School in Hong Kong at Indian Chamber of Commerce in 2008. I still remember his encouraging words about the project during the session. After that I met him at a few events, but heard a lot about his services to visually impaired students through Help the Blind Foundation.

Everyone will have their own stories to tell regarding Patelji as he was such a nice person. I am here today to thank Patelji on behalf of all the beneficiaries of Tamil Nadu, the state I come from. Though he was born in Gujarat, Tamil community, least considered community in particular, the blind community was lucky to be chosen by Patelji to initiate its service activity in Tamil Nadu. Yes, HTBF India was born in 2010 in Chennai. The educational service rendered by HTBF to hundreds of needy would have surely uplifted the students and their family as education is going to take them a long way through their life.

I once again, would like to extend our gratitude to Patelji, his family and his team on behalf of all the beneficiaries of Tamil Nadu. May his soul rest in peace.

“Do not think he is gone; he lives in the lives of many. He lives in the hearts of many, with his valiant support. To the least considered community, the blind of India. He will live forever, through services in the years to come.”

By Chitra Shivakumar,
Director, Aham Solutions HK Ltd., Hong Kong



Change of guard at HTBF

As part of the reshuffle in the Board of Trustees, Mr. N. Sivaji Rao has been nominated as the new Managing Trustee by HTBF with effect from 1st of July 2020. Mr. J.V. Ramani will continue to be a Trustee and will direct the critical area of resource raising for the Foundation.

HTBF is happy to record its stellar performance under Mr. Ramani's Trusteeship in 2019-20:

Number of students benefited during 2019-20	2400
Amount disbursed (Rs. Crores)	2.79
Number of colleges covered	190
Number of states covered	13
Number of students in EMET program	500
Number of colleges covered by EMET program	17

Moving stories during COVID lockdown - Meet BSA's COVID warrior: Harshad Chakradhare, HTBF Beneficiary



pay off rent and other utility bills.

During the nationwide lockdown, Eyeway helpline has been receiving numerous calls from visually impaired people across India for help with delivery of food, medicines and other essentials. Some have even asked for financial help to

We've been trying to meet their requests with coordinated effort from NGOs and volunteers. In response to our call for help in Wardha district of Maharashtra, a visually-impaired college student, Harshad Chakradhare, took it upon himself to find solutions.

He was lucky to get back home from Mumbai, just days before the lockdown. In a short span, Harshad reached out to local NGOs, some individual donors, including a few friends and ensured delivery of ration kits to many families in Wardha. He has contacted the district administration for meeting the needs of larger groups. In fact, his enthusiasm and resourcefulness has helped

many Eyeway callers in and around Mumbai too. Reaching his native place and taking the entire responsibility in his hands he proved that blindness is never a barrier when you have selflessness and empathy for the needy. He also went out of the way to check if the essential commodities were delivered properly.

We witnessed his dedication and timeless efforts. With the help of well-wishers & selfless citizens of our country, we were able to provide help to all the callers within 24 hours. Our biggest achievement is getting a phone call after the essential goods are been delivered. The joy and happiness we feel after listening to their happy & satisfied voices gives out the hope that we all need.

We on behalf of Blind Sports Association (BSA) would like to thank Harshad Chakradhare for his incredibly phenomenal work. At a time when most of our fellow citizens are locked inside their houses, Harshad went out of the way without actually leaving home. This goes to show that if you have the will to do something good, nothing may act as a barrier for your good deeds.

We would also like to thank all of our well-wishers, the heroes of this nation who helped our fellow citizens. These well-wishers are the reason why we were able to do this work with actually getting much of political support. We are very grateful to all of them (keeping their identity as anonymous as per their will).

Sachin Andurlekar, President, BSA & Charles Rao, Secretary, BSA

Meet Umar Khan, HTBF Beneficiary, making masks in his village

NSS volunteers join hands with BMC

College students working at health centres, community kitchens and as support staff

Rahi Gaiwad
@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @MumbaiMirror

The BMC has requested National Service Scheme (NSS) college student volunteers to join the Covid-19 battle. While 40 students with NSS training have already signed up to assist the civic body, non-NSS students from colleges like St. Xavier's are also showing interest. The NSS is a government-sponsored national service and development programme conducted by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. There are 16,000 NSS volunteers in the city.

A week ago, Municipal Commissioner Praveen Pardeshi had asked for a list of NSS programme officers and volunteers willing to work with the civic body at health centres, community kitchens and food supply chain services, or as medical support staff and contact-tracers at quarantine centres. Mumbai University had then sent out requests to colleges, seeking volunteers.

Commerce student Shweta Saroj, 18, and three of her friends from Guru Nanak College – Rushiket Patil, Anu Mishra and Rohit Kajare – have already joined the civic drive. Shweta said, "My parents were not ready at first, but I appealed to their sense of civic duty. I told them I had a chance to do something. We did the paper work in college and joined four days ago."

The BMC has given the students ID cards, protective gear and sanitizers. They were given lists of numbers to call and collect data on those in home-quarantine and those quarantined in guest houses. A resident of St. Shweta said they underwent a day-long training and have been working from 11 am to 6 pm every day.

"It's an experience of a lifetime. While our peers are sitting at home,



Umar Khan has made 25 face masks so far

we are sitting in a BMC office and working at a computer," said Shweta, adding that the civic body, with a few extra pairs of hands, can finish three days of work in one. Shweta and her friends, who walk to the ward office from Dhurovi and Prateeksha Nagar where they live, have training in disaster management. "What's the point if we cannot put that to use at such a critical time?" she reasoned.

Guru Nanak College principal Pushpinder Bhatia said she asked the students to come to college to confirm that they were prepared for this role. "The BMC assured us that students would be given desk jobs," she said.

NSS Director and professor at Mumbai University, Sudhir Patankar said NSS volunteers have led a range of efforts across the city. These days, they are vastly engaged in spreading awareness on social media and have also made around 33,000 face masks. They are running community kitchens that deliver over one lakh meals daily. They are also running a food helpline and helping with the distribution of provisions.

Gopal Raithatha, a student and NSS volunteer from Dahisar, started a food distribution drive that has now spread across Mumbai. "At the time of janata curfew, I shelved my plan of a gaming vacation and thought of giving ration kits to migrants and slum residents in Dahisar and Borivali with the help of an NGO, My Green Society," said Gopal, who was taken back by the scale of the problem.

My parents were not ready at first, but I appealed to their sense of civic duty. I told them I had a chance to do something

Guru Nanak College's Shweta Saroj

He recounts how people had no food. He said, "Many migrants who stayed at their workplace did not have kitchens. They were waiting for someone to give them food," said Gopal, adding how a two-week plan has expanded into a large network of community kitchens run through 19 NGOs. "We have a huge population to serve. We have the opportunity and the means. Why waste it?" said Gopal.

In Jalgaon, Umar Khan, a visually impaired student of RA Podar College, has been making masks for villagers. "I learnt needle work at a school for the visually disabled. NSS gave us mask-making as an activity and I have been able to make and distribute 24 masks so far," Umar said. Some from St. Xavier's College, which has a social service league run by students, have also come forward. "We are working on a draft of the consent form. Once ready, we will give it to interested students," principal Dr Rajendra Shirde said.

This is a newspaper report in Indore regarding HTBF's online training being conducted by our EMET trainers.

The visually-impaired girls in Indore are becoming smarter these days. Technology has made it possible for them. Help The Blind Foundation, Chennai and Enable India Bengaluru are the organizations that provide online training on computers, spoken English and Personality development during the lockdown. These girls are getting connected from their homes in villages.

Computer Training is given by Ghanshyam Parmar and spoken English is being taught by Ms. Avani Bhatnagar. Students attend the class regularly. EMET programme was started through the efforts of Ms. Bela Sachdeva and Mr. Ratanlal Maheshwari at Jijabai college Indore on 19th of July 2019. Indore is one among the seven cities where E-MET training is being conducted.

Impact of COVID & lockdown on the visually-impaired

Many of our beneficiaries have been deeply impacted by the lockdown. What is of greater concern is that several of these problems will probably never go away, given the social distancing and hygiene norms that are going to become a way of life.

Visually impaired people thrive on the tactile sense to get about their daily lives, and this is about to be affected in a very profound way. Here are some of the issues they will face:

Going to public places – this will be difficult if they need assistance from their sighted brethren. With the necessity to protect themselves, how many people will come forward to courageously assist the visually-impaired? Additionally, how can the visually-impaired protect themselves from a possible infection from others?

Maintaining social distancing – Visually-impaired have to rely more and more on their own instincts to keep a distance, and they might even need training in accomplishing this in markets, shops, and public spaces.

In Jalgaon, Umar Khan, HTBF Beneficiary from R.A. Poddar College, Mumbai, was making masks. Umar had learnt needlework at a school for the visually-impaired, and was putting that to good use through NSS. He had made 25 masks himself as reported in the news.

Indore girls benefit from E-MET

दृष्टिबाधित छात्राएं ऑनलाइन प्राप्त कर रही शिक्षा

इंदौर। दृष्टिबाधित छात्राएं भी अब पढ़ाई में स्मार्ट बन रही हैं। तकनीकों का इतना अच्छा विकास हो गया है कि दृष्टिबाधित छात्राएं मोबाइल एप के माध्यम से अध्ययन करने में सक्षम हो गई हैं। ऐसी छात्राएं जो भले ही आंखों से देख नहीं सकती हैं लेकिन तकनीक की सहायता से अपने आप को मजबूत बना रही हैं। शहर का माता जीजाबाई शा.स्ना. कन्या महाविद्यालय प्रदेश का एकमात्र कन्या महाविद्यालय है जहां सर्वाधिक दृष्टिहीन छात्राएं सामान्य छात्राओं के साथ पढ़ रही हैं। इसी को दृष्टिगत रखते हुए हेल्प द ब्लाईंड फाउंडेशन चेन्नई और इनेबल इंडिया बैंगलोर की ओर से दो वर्ष का प्रशिक्षण जिसके अंतर्गत स्पोकन इंग्लिश, कम्प्यूटर शिक्षा, व्यक्तित्व विकास का प्रशिक्षण दिया जा रहा है।

इंग्लिश, कम्प्यूटर का दे रहे प्रशिक्षण: देश के सात शहरों में से एक इंदौर को इस प्रशिक्षण देने हेतु चुना गया है जो कि 19 जुलाई 2019 से शुरू हुआ है लेकिन वर्तमान में लोकडाउन के कारण और कॉलेज बंद होने के कारण यह प्रशिक्षण ऑनलाइन अपने घरों और गांव में ही प्राप्त कर रही हैं। प्रशिक्षण घनश्याम जो कि गुजरात के हैं और अवंनी भटनागर स्पोकन इंग्लिश पढ़ा रही हैं।

कॉलेज भले ही बंद हो लेकिन इनकी कक्षा प्रतिदिन होती है। एप की मदद से या प्रतिदिन पासवर्ड के माध्यम से समस्त छात्राएं कनेक्ट होकर शिक्षा प्राप्त कर रही हैं जिसमें कम्प्यूटर का सैद्धांतिक पक्ष, इंग्लिश ग्रामर, प्रतिदिन टैस सिखाए जा रहे हैं। इसमें छात्राएं बखूबी सीख भी रही हैं। दृष्टिबाधित सहायता प्रकोष्ठ प्रभारी प्रो. बेला सचदेवा और रतनलाल महेस्वरी के विशेष प्रयास से इसे शुरू किया गया है।

देश के सात शहरों में से एक इंदौर को चुना गया, कम्प्यूटर का सैद्धांतिक पक्ष, इंग्लिश ग्रामर, प्रतिदिन टैस सिखाए जा रहे छात्राओं को

उ
म
रि
उ
उ
उ
र
रि
उ
म
प्र
र
मे
इ
ब
र
र
रि
उ
र

Hygiene – While sighted brethren can view product details in supermarkets and shops, the visually-impaired have to rely on their tactile sense to figure out the products they are buying. This places them at risk in a potential infection-prone area.

Purchases – Visually-impaired have to adapt to home deliveries for most of their needs, if they want to avoid the general public. This places an extra burden on them, and deters them from being independent.

Reliance on mobile/internet: Given that most business will be transacted online, this will entail immediate and urgent education on online e-commerce. Not many sites in India are accessible.

Getting healthcare – Given the healthcare situation in India, visually-impaired brethren face a daunting task in getting to healthcare facilities if they face COVID symptoms. This also places their primary caregivers at risk.

Funding shortfall – Businesses are taking the brunt of the economic effects of COVID, and there is a looming potential of downscaled funding for social projects. The effects of this may become apparent in the months to come.

Lack of electronic devices such as laptops/desktops - while online education is filling up the gaps in knowledge acquisition in the lock down period, unfortunately, the visually-impaired students, by and large, do not have access to a key educational aid so critical to their attending and following lessons and preparing for the examinations. A very large number of our visually-impaired students have very limited access to computers and mostly none at all during the lock down period when the online classes are going on.

Limited access to assistive devices: Other assistive devices like smart canes and smartphones which are so essential for their mobility and daily living are also not available with these students. Quite a few of these students have just a feature phone which do not help their mobility and other daily needs of maps, directions, shopping, hygiene and health requirements. It is very essential that these basic requirements of smartphones and laptops

are met at the earliest so that their lives are put on a same level as that of their sighted brethren

During the lockdown period, several visually-impaired have faced hardships in getting daily necessities, healthcare and education. Luckily, education has moved online, and many organizations are providing assistance in this area. One female beneficiary was alone in hostel in Varanasi, being assisted by hostel authorities. Another past beneficiary lost his life when he could not get timely care during the lockdown.

It is still uncertain what role the government plans to play in helping people with disabilities in the post-COVID era. However, it is clear that a paradigm shift has happened, and all organizations, philanthropists and donors working with the visually-impaired have to be proactive in finding creative, compassionate and courageous ways to deal with this new situation.

E-MET Update

COVID 19 outbreak in a way made us explore new possibilities of training and finally we have started Online training from March last week.

By large majority of E-MET students have mobiles phones so we quickly started intimating all the students on starting Online classes by not only messaging but also calling them personally meanwhile we also started looking for audio conferencing platform because it allows even a student without smartphone also to participate in online training.

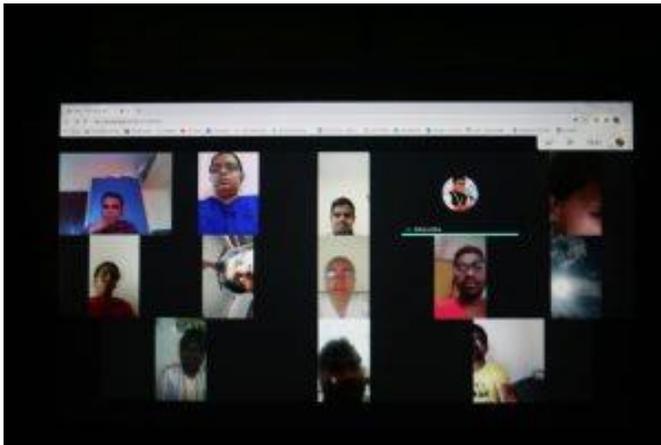


EMET in progress at QMC, Chennai

How EMET online training works

Virtual classrooms in general are still a faraway dream to even the sighted. We have to take a moment to appreciate ourselves in making it a reality for a person with vision impairment, thanks to current technology that has enabled all, including our passionate trainers, adapt to new challenging environments and their students also to quickly adapt. Thanks to our funders for making sure the project runs smoothly even in current hard times.

Audio conferencing ID's have been purchased from Tata Telecom & Airtel which allow multiple participants to join the class one at a time. Five ID's have been purchased by which we can conduct 5 classrooms simultaneously. Trainers can also monitor the whole class by a tool using which they will get to know how many students are on call, the identity of the speaker, along with options to mute all, mute particular students (if noisy), dismiss someone from class etc.



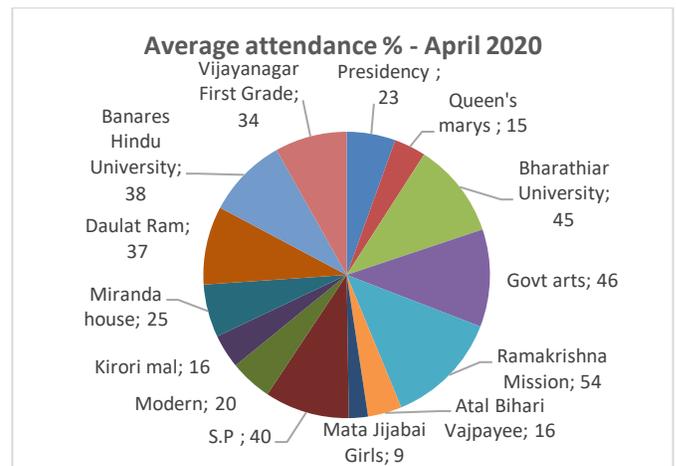
Online training in progress

Similar to the traditional classroom, a particular time is fixed for all E-MET centers (after consultation with trainers & students) and one of the conferencing rooms is allotted for an hour & half. Trainers host the call & all the students join the call using the unique passcode shared with them and training begins. Unlike traditional method, this model of training cannot be in a one-way lecture mode. It is rather a very interactive classroom where after each and every explanation on topic, all the students are asked if they understood the topic, questions on the topic are asked in general, and

discussed, the less-expressive students are encouraged to make sure all the students are involved and at the same time to check if all are in total understanding of the topic under discussion.

New guidelines for online training model

- If the session needs to be interactive, we are making sure not more than 15 to 20 students are in a classroom for a session.
- Standard one hour of training & some assignments related to same session are given on daily basis.
- Along with primary facilitator, co-trainer is present in all sessions to support whole session.
- Training timings & specific conference ID's are fixed to make it a habit and to avoid clash with other classrooms.
- Regular follow-up is made with students who are irregular to make them join the online sessions daily.



In the month of April 2020, an average of 108 students were attending classes every day, and 15 classes were being conducted every day.

English training

As we focus more on communicative English, this model seems to be working well and we are able to deliver quality training like in regular classes. We observed that the regular students are showing interest in the new model and are actively participating. There are also students who weren't

regular at college sessions, but have started attending the online classes regularly. All our English trainers are building up an interactive syllabus and making sure that it can be comprehended easily without much peer support. A regular weekly review system has been developed to increase the effectiveness of online training.

Computer training

A large majority of our students doesn't own a laptop or desktop; so, we had to think of some alternative method to train the students. Initially, the theoretical part of computer topics was covered. Later, with the guidance of our knowledge partner Enable India, we were making sure that the trainer operates the computer based on the syllabus where all the students on the call can listen to the screen-reader and trainer keeps explaining/narrating step-by-step so that the students can visualize it. Though practice on computer is not possible, this method seems to add value and at the same time covers a portion of the syllabus to an extent. Later, when colleges start functioning normally, it will be easy to expedite the learning process because students wouldn't have forgotten the teachings so far.

Highlights

- As it's an online training we are also encouraging trainers from all the regions to observe & give feedback on other training centers. It's a good opportunity for junior trainers to learn from experienced trainers.
- Delhi centers have doubled their training hours in a week (previously training three days in a week).
- Centers like Chennai are showing a good improvement in attendance.
- 9 EMET centres have also started computer sessions along with English training.
- Students with 75% & above attendance have received their telephone bill reimbursement as a reward. This will continue until the end of the online training sessions.
- Coimbatore centre had three guest lectures as a part of "Employability".

Challenges

- Mobile network issues
- Computer practical cannot be conducted for students without laptop or desktop (large majority)
- Students need to also prepare for their semester exams.

Upcoming plans

- Evaluation system is being designed specifically for online class syllabus.
- We are planning to start online training for upcoming new EMET centres in Ahmedabad, Pune and Indore and resource identification for it.

Feedback on E-MET

Students have shown enthusiastic support for the program, given the isolation and extra time available during the lockdown. Some of the difficulties expressed were lack of laptops, disturbance during the course, and poor connectivity at times. One of the students suggested that a recording of the class be posted in the Whatsapp group, so that students could recap the learning when they had more time.

HTBF has been keenly assessing the impact of EMET and seeking feedback from participants, knowledge partners and educators. We are delighted to note that the programme has not come a moment too soon, and has been given the green thumb by our beneficiaries across the colleges where we are operating the programme. It is also heartening to note that beneficiaries are willing to recommend the EMET to their peers. Here is a sampling of the feedback received:

"I find the EMET classes very interesting. In fact, I like everything about the EMET. I can't think of any suggestions on how to improve the same." *Fathima, Student, Chennai*

"My dream and goal is to join the IAS or work for IT companies, and I feel that both the computer training as well as the English training I receive via the EMET will prove very useful in helping me achieve my goal

and become successful.” *Shreeharan, Student, Presidency College, Chennai*

“Speaking of the impact of the EMET program, some people who didn’t even touch computers learned much about computers. Most girls are from rural/interior regions and there’s a good improvement in both knowledge of Computers as well as English in 60-70% of the girls.” *Bila, Professor, EMET, Indore region*

“I dream of educating lakhs of visually impaired students in the future. The EMET, I’m confident, will help me achieve this goal.” *Varalakshmi, Student, Government First Grade College, Vijayanagar, Bangalore*

“Today, more and more companies are coming forward to hire Persons with Disability. The challenge is to supply persons with disability who are job-ready, and this is where the significance of the EMET comes in.” *Moses Gorrepathi, Program Director, Enable India*

“The training that EMET provides in Mobility, Computer Knowledge, Soft Skills and Communicative English, is the need of the hour. As a result of the training, the students are empowered and becoming confident.” *Dr. Lalithamba, Coordinator, Government First Grade, College, Bangalore*

“My dream and goal for the future is to become a Professor, and I feel that the Computer training I receive via EMET will help me in this regard. I appreciate the fact that the teachers impart knowledge that can benefit us, even if the same is outside of the scope of the syllabus.” *Nazneen, Student, BHU*

“The EMET teachers are very kind, friendly, and answer doubts as many times as we want. The teaching is clear and easy to understand.” *Shaktivel, Government Arts College, Coimbatore*

“The teaching is clear and easy to understand; examples are provided. Jagan sir gives demonstrations, which are an easy way to learn. The computer training has improved my typing speed. I can presently type 25-30 words a minute. Mobile Apps like Be My Eyes, Google Text, Envision, etc. have really helped” *Shivachandran, Ramakrishna College, Coimbatore*

“Yes, I do believe that the EMET can help me successfully adjust in the world of sighted people; Computer software like JAWS and NVDA help the Visually Impaired to work on Computers like sighted people,” *Rakhi, Student, Mata Jijabhai College, Indore*

“I have really enjoyed the EMET classes. It’s been wonderful. We started things right from scratch. The English lessons too, began from the basics, but by now, people can have a simple conversation in English, while they may have had poor prior knowledge of the subject earlier,” *Poorva, Student, Miranda House, Delhi*

“The classes are never boring. We joke and enjoy our classes. We don’t know how the hour passes. The subjects taught are useful; for e.g., today there isn’t much you can do without computer knowledge. I’d recommend the EMET to others. I’d tell them that government jobs are difficult, and the EMET training will help fetch jobs in the private sector. If your English and Computer Skills are good, it will fetch you a job,” *Shoukat Gavandi, Student, SP College, Pune*

Press coverage of EMET

The country’s prestigious newspaper, The Hindu, covered our training on 7th April 2020, commending us for our support of visually-impaired students during the lockdown. “During the lockdown, 200 undergraduate students from various Indian cities are picking up employability skills through an online initiative; Help the Blind Foundation framed the curriculum and runs the programme”, wrote Liffy Thomas in The Hindu.

You can read the original article here: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/covid-19-students-with-vision-impairment-shift-to-new-platform/article31276355.ece>

For more information, videos, and photo gallery covering the EMET programme, please click on the following link: <https://helptheblind.in/emet-program-details>

Coaching Classes for competitive exams

HTBF has been helping thousands of visually impaired college students for their college fees/ hostel fees/ day scholar expenses etc. every year throughout India by way of sponsorships. Given their low employment rates, it was HTBF considered doing something to improve their employment as well. Hence it was decided to start training classes for these students for appearing in the various competitive examinations such as IBPS, SBI, RRB, SSC etc. Since bank jobs are more suitable for the visually-impaired students, and a certain percentage of bank vacancies are earmarked for these students, it was decided initially to start training these students for the banking competitive examinations, i.e., I.B.P.S. which is a competitive examination conducted for the vacancies in 18 nationalized banks. It was decided to give training first for the bank clerical examinations.

For selecting the students for the training programme, preference was given to HTBF beneficiaries who had availed of our sponsorships for their graduation/ post-graduate studies.

Arrangements were made to get external trainers/ teachers who had already been teaching other students for a number of years. Classes were held for English, current affairs, general knowledge and banking awareness. The classes were held every Saturday from 10.00 hrs. to 17.00 hrs. including lunch and snacks. Fifteen students started participating regularly in the classes. The teachers were teaching visually-impaired students for the first time. They were very happy with the eagerness shown by our students even though quite a few of them were slow learners. Mathematics / numerical ability classes were also held. In between the regular classes, HTBF's programme coordinator and some volunteers were also taking classes for the students. The coordinator and volunteers were attending the classes throughout the day to monitor and watch the progress of the students. After the mathematics classes, "Test of reasoning" classes were held by an expert teacher from outside. Using the experience gained from these classes, some of our

students also appeared for SBI clerical and



probationary officers' examinations.

Even though the outcome of this training cannot be termed a success, we in HTBF gained tremendous experience from this year's training programme. We also spoke to some of the students who participated in the training and received their feedback. We are planning to expand our activity next year on a larger scale. The programme was funded partly from HTBF's funds and partly from HDFC Bank. We hope to get continued support from our donors in the years to come.

Appeal

With the COVID situation, online learning has become the norm for all visually-impaired students. However, many of them do not have access to laptops or smartphones, which are essential for full and active participation in the online learning sessions.

We earnestly appeal to all our supporters to donate laptops and smartphones to enable their online learning. Your donation would throw a lifeline to needy students. Please come forward to donate your old laptops/ smartphones.

Please contact sivaji@helptheblind.in for more details. Or contact us at info@helptheblind.in or call us at +91 90033 30197

Comments, Questions?

Please write to sivaji@helptheblind.in with "newsletter feedback" in the subject line.