

General Secretary Report 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters, it's a real pleasure to handover the Annual Report for the year 2023-24. Because of your contribution, the organization could implement 154 activities during the year. Friends, since last many years we have been dreaming of acquiring an independent place for our organization because an independent and larger space would give us a free hand and mobility space to carry out the activities that are closer to our heart. But many factors were involved including financial constraints, in acquiring such a place for the Organization. But I feel very elated to inform that the year 2023-24 has been a year of dream-come-true because yes this year the organization has purchased 1.5 acre of land in Anjaneri Shivara at Trimbak Road and henceforth stable and permanent activities will be carried out from there. Further, as a President of BWOI I have a dream and desire to start a workshop as well as a Skill Development Centre and an English medium school at this place and I am sure very soon this dream will be realized with cooperation and generous help and patronage of you all.

Coming to the activities carried out by the Organization during the year 2023-24, these can be reviewed as follows.

1. **Dnyaneshwari Parayana:** The blind people should also get a feel of spirituality and the Marathi language should be understood by the blind people so that they can read the precious treasure of our Marathi literature. For this purpose, a three-day Dnyaneshwari Parayana was organized for the visually impaired persons from 5th to 7th May 2023 at Devachi Alandi in association with Alandi Sansthan. Chapters 9, 12, 15, 16, 18 were read in this Parayana. To accomplish this spiritual activity we were blessed with guidance and cooperation of Shri Ganpat Maharaj Jagtap. Just for information, Shri Ganpat Maharaj Jagtap is also visually impaired, but command over his Dnyaneshwari Parayan was so immaculate that he inspired our team of blind brothers and they were proud of his talent and caliber. About 54 visually impaired persons from Maharashtra participated in this three-day Parayana. Each person was given Dnyaneshwari Granth and Bhavartha Haripath free of cost. In addition to Parayana for three days, Kirtan was organized in the evening. The program was inaugurated on 5th May 2023 and concluded on 7th May 2023 in the presence of Shaligram Bhandari, President of Alandi Sansthan Trustee Mr. Yogesh Desai, Mr. Sanjay Bhargave, Dr. Prashant Suru.



On this occasion, Yogesh Desai while expressing his thoughts expressed his satisfaction that BWOI organization gave him an opportunity to do this unique activity. Because the society also

understood that visually impaired people can recite Dnyaneshwari and assured that in future they will try to complete some more chapters of Dnyaneshwari and announced to personally pay Rs.1,00,000/- as a token of appreciation. While Dr. Suru also appreciated the activities and expressed hope that the said activities will be implemented regularly and promised to give one student's amount for the adoptive parents scholarship scheme. Dr. Shaligram Bhandari also expressed his satisfaction that the activities organized by the organization with the purpose of reading Dnyaneshwari by the visually impaired people were truly successful. He assured that the Lions Club will always support the marginalized sections.

Mr. Sanjay Bhargave also said that if such activities are carried out consistently, the knowledge of the visually impaired will increase. In this program, On behalf of Dr. Vijay Vishwanath Hatkar, in memory of his Mother late smt. Shobha Hatkar, Sarth Haripatha's book in Braille was given free of cost to the blind brothers.

Mr. Dyaneshwar Veer, President, General Secretary Datta Patil and Rachel Shirasath worked hard for the success of the program.

- Scholarship Distribution Ceremony:** Scholarships are being given since last 15 years to encourage the needy persons studying on behalf of the organisation. This year 135 students studying in the academic year 2022-23 were given cheques of Rs.1800/- per student. This year, keeping in mind the interests of the students, Scholarship Distribution program was organized on 18th June 2023 in Thane and on 24th June 2023 at Patrakar Bhavan in Pune.

We understand that Rs.1800 is not a huge amount but the organization is of the opinion that this amount can be used for their admission process or for ST Bus pass. We are proud to say that even without any financial help from government this initiative has been going on uninterruptedly for past 18 years on behalf of the Organization.



In the program held in Thane, President of Saudamini Club Mrs. Supriya Sahu, Pradeep Jain of Rotary Club Thane Skyline and entrepreneur Nanjibhai Thakkar were present.

On June 24, 2023, the event in Pune was attended by entrepreneur Krishna Kumar Goyal, Kaka Halwai's Raj Seth Gawde and Dr. Shaligram Bhandari was present.

Mr. Goyal appreciated the students to become highly educated and said that the organisation should carry out such laudable activities and the society is with us and assured to pay the amount of stamp duty for the premises newly acquired by the organisation.

Dr. Bhandari expressed his satisfaction that this activity is being implemented regularly on behalf of the organization without any government grant. Mr. Gawde also assured that he would continually assist the organisation in the future and expressed his surprise that the students are getting such good marks even with such physical limitations. President Arun Bharaskar, Treasurer Vijaya Marathe and Director Bhagwan Pawar worked hard for the success of the program.

3. **Pandhariche Sukh Nahi Tribhuvani** : Special courtesy of The Blind Welfare Organization and Lions Club Corporate celebrating Ashadhi Ekadashi on Thursday. On 29th June 2023 Swarangan presented "Pandhariche Sukh Nai Tribhuvani." This program was held at Parashuram Saikhedkar Theatre. In this program Ms. Vidya Oak, Dattatraya Mane, Jitendra Devare, Vilas Patil and Bhagwan Pawar presented their art.

The color of the concert was increased by presenting more than one abhang. Smt. Ragini Kulkarni also raised the height of the program with her anchoring and the fans also appreciated it. In fact, blind artists exhibited that they also have abilities and enthusiasm and if given right platform, they too can exhibit their talent like others. Also if the society understands their abilities, they will get a chance to present their art at many places and can prove their quality and automatically can adopt it as their livelihood. This was the purpose of this program. In this program Dattu Mane, the visually impaired artist, presented Abhangs Kanada Raja Pandhari and Tuj Saguna ki Nirguna and he received a lot of praise. In this program Ms. Gautami Wagh performed Abhang for which some members of the Lions Club gave her cash as a reward. On this occasion the President of Lions Club Mr. Uday Kothwade, Lion Vinay Birari and honorary president of the organization Mrs. Kalpana Pandey was present.



For the success of the program Treasurer of the organization Mrs. Vijaya Marathe, Joint Secretary Mrs. Megha Pimple, Director Bhagwan Pawar took special efforts.

4. **Distribution of educational materials to children of blind persons:** In association with The Blind Welfare Organization and Lions Club Nashik Star, school materials were distributed to 65 persons by the dignitaries at the office of the Organization at Shalimar, which included notebooks, registers, drawing notebooks, compasses, water bottles etc. On behalf of the Lions Club, the president of the club Mrs. Ashwini Bagh, Abhay Bagh, Teacher Sahebrao Kangune was present.



On this occasion, Mr. Bagh expressed his motivational thoughts to the students and urged them to keep learning. President Lion Ashwini Bagh also said that she was overwhelmed by this program and assured that she would help this organization substantially in future. Mr. Kangone lauded the social works performed by our Organization and admitted that he has been closely monitoring works performed by us for the past 15 years. He assured continued support and also said that whenever the organization needs him, it should just give him a call and tell the hardship it is facing and he would gladly help in whatever way he can.

President Arun Bharaskar, Treasurer Vijaya Dabe Marathe, Director Bhagwan Pawar and Rachel Shirasath worked hard for the success of the program.

5. **Appreciation Ceremony of Meritorious Visually Impaired Students:** For the first time in the academic year 2022-23, an Appreciation Ceremony was organized for the students of class 10th, 12th and Graduation with the aim of encouraging and patting students on their back for their achievements. This ceremony was organized on 12th August 2023 in Nashik in collaboration with Gunj Foundation, Nashik, Jalgaon, Dhule, Ahamadnagar and on 2nd September 2023 in Thane with the initiative of Rotary Club of Hiranandani. Students from Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Thane and Konkan divisions were felicitated in Jai Bhagwan Hall.

On September 9, 2023, the students of Pune, Sangli, Satara, Solapur were felicitated at Jakarta Bhavan in Pune in association with Rotary Club of Nigdi, Pune. In these three programs, the organization tried to encourage approximately 180 students for further education and distributed scholarship applications to students studying in the academic year 2024.



In association with The Blind Welfare Organization and Rotary Club Hiranandani Estate, on Saturday 2nd September 2023 at Jai Bhagwan Hall, Thane, 107 meritorious students of class X, XII, BA, MA who passed out in the academic year 2023 were felicitated by dignitaries.

Actor Ashok Kulkarni, District Governor of Rotary Club Milind Kulkarni, Entrepreneur Nanjibhai Thakkar and President of Rotary Club Hiranandani Shri Sukumaran Nair and their members were present in large numbers on the stage. The honourees were gifted with cash and an enlightening English grammar book in Braille script by these dignitaries.

In the beginning, the students of the college presented a welcome song and after that the background behind why this initiative was taken was narrated by Arun Bharaskar, President of Blind Welfare to the dignitaries present. In his brief speech he debriefed the dignitaries about the activities of the organization towards upliftment of needy visually impaired people and bared his heart about organizing this program in Thane was to help get praise to these marginalized yet meritorious students. District Governor of Rotary Club Milind Kulkarni interacted with the students through questionnaire and appreciated the students while President of Rotary Club Mr. Kumaran Nair said that he will support all the activities of the organization in future also and vouched that Rotary Club is always working and will continue to work for the underprivileged.

Ashok Kulkarni also expressed the hope that these students would continue learning without being overwhelmed by success and quoted some dialogues from the movie "Sri Swami Samarth" to the students. Since it's a Teacher's Day in the month of September, Ms. Swati Avachar, Mrs. Ujwala Narayan Soni, Shri. Namdev Vasantrao Garuda, Shri. Damodar Sargam, Mrs. Rakhi Ramdas Gaikwad, a blind teacher, was felicitated. At this time in the program in Pune the President of Rotary Club Mr. Harvinder Singh Dullat praised the students and said that they should not underestimate themselves and should prove that they too have the potential. He cited example of a blind entrepreneur named Mr. Bhatia who started his business from a candle and then today his company has a turnover of about 100 cores a year. Hence he encouraged them to follow the example of a blind person like Mr. Bhatia to achieve goals in life and ultimately reach a very high position. He emphasized the need of positive attitude in life instead of inferiority complex.

The program ended with a Pasaydana. General Secretary Datta Patil, Director Bhagwan Pawar, Yuvraj Shah of Jain Social Parivar, Mr. Gunj Foundation for the success of the program. Amar Kalantri took special efforts to make this program a success.

6. **Organization of various competitions on the occasion of Ganesh festival:**

As we all know people come together to exchange ideas and such congregation of people solidifies society as a whole. Keeping this very idea in mind, Lokmanya Tilak started social celebration of Ganesh Utsav festival. This is the very reason why our Organization started various activities for the local students of Nashik on the auspicious occasion of Ganapati festival.

On the occasion of this festival Gajanan Stotra was published in Braille on behalf of Gajanan Maharaj Seva Sansthan on the occasion of Rishipanchami and song singing and quiz competitions were also organized.

In this, Janhvi Tribhuvan was ranked first, Harshada Pingle was ranked second and Usha Maule was ranked third. Another thing, most of us regularly sing bhajans in the praise of lord Ganesh at our homes (called Ganapati Aarti in Marathi) but we often mispronounce it because we don't know right words or its correct pronunciation so to make our pronunciation clear Braille Aarti collection was published on behalf of the organization on 27th September 2023 at Shrimant Dagdusheth Halwai Mahaganapati Mandir, Pune and copies of the Aarti collection were distributed free of cost to all blind schools in Maharashtra.



We definitely feel that this book will enlighten visually impaired students. News channels took notice of the said book and gave it publicity. Siddhivinayak Group and Rotary Club of Thane Skyline got special support for the publication of the said book, while Director Bhagwan Pawar, Honorary President Kalpana Pandey worked hard for the success of the program.

7. **Organization of various competitions on the occasion of World White Stick Day:**

15th October is celebrated as the World White Stick Day as declared by UNO. On this day many organizations worldwide organize various programs for the purpose of social awareness in order to create awareness about visually impaired persons. In keeping with this tradition The Blind Welfare Organization also organises various programs. This year also we organized various functions on 15th October 2023 at Lions Club Hall Pandit Colony Nashik in association with Rotary Club Grape City and Lions Club Supreme.



Jayant Khairnar, president of Rotary Club Grape City, his officers and coordinator of Lions Club Supremo Mr. Sham Kedar, J. P Jadhav and Honorary President Kalpana Pandey were present on the stage.

While giving information about the activities of the organization, the president of the organization Arun Bharaskar urged the dignitaries present on the stage to keep a positive attitude towards us. He also said that blindness is not the major problem for us, but our real big problem is to make the society understand us. He quoted examples of many successful blind people in society who made names in various fields and are presently working in various positions and still many in society thinks we can't do any work. He gave the example of Sagar Bodke, a blind youth, to those present in the program. He went to South Africa and climbed Mount Kilimanjaro while working in a bank. In the same program, self-employment Aid cheques were distributed to blind persons namely Mr. Manohar Gadekar, Fayaz Sheikh, Janardhan Ingle, Chandrakant Salve, Dada Panpatil and Mahendra Musale.

Kantilal Kshirsagar won the first place in the singing competition, Vikas Chavan got the second place and Fayaz Shaikh had to settle for the third place and in the same program 128 blind people were distributed white sticks. General Secretary Datta Patil, Treasurer Vijaya Dabe Marathe, Director Raju Vyas, Ms. Rachel Shirasath took special efforts.

8. **Braille Sanskar Bharti Quarterly Diwali Issue Publication**- With the aim of increasing the knowledge of blind persons and creating a new gallery of literature for them, a quarterly issue of Braille Sanskar Bharti has been started from last year and the Diwali issue of 2023 will be published by Shiv Sena Chief and former Chief Minister. Hon. Mr. Uddhav Thakare released Braille Sanskar Bharti on 09 November 2023 at the residence of Matoshree. MP Sanjay Raut, director of the organization Arjun Muddu were also present on this occasion. Mr. Uddhav Thackeray expressed that this Diwali issue will provide a new light of knowledge to the blind brothers. Special support was received from Shantikumar Firodia Trust and Rotary Club of Bombay Queen City for this issue of the book.



9. **Diwali Faral Distribution:** As per Hindu tradition Diwali festival is celebrated in a grand way, as Diwali is known as the queen of the festivals. Because every day of Diwali is important, the Blind Welfare Organization believes that this festival should be sweetened by visually impaired brothers as well as others. That is why for the past few years, activities are being carried out on behalf of the organization on the occasion of Diwali for the needy and blinds.

This year also on the occasion of Dhantrayodashi on Saturday 11th November 2023 the visually impaired brothers were distributed ration kit enough for about 20 to 25 days on the occasion of Diwali along with one kilogram of Sweets and new clothes were given to all at R.P Vidyalaya Panchavati in association with The Blind Welfare Organization and Lions Club Corporate. Rukmini Badsar and Dattu Korale, two visually impaired persons were given a tin shade each of 6' X 6' for permanent rehabilitation.



On this occasion PWD Department Chief Engineer Prashant Auti, Lions Club President Uday Kothavade and other dignitaries were present on the stage. Initially blind artistes performed Marathi songs. Honorary president of the organization Kalpana Tai Pandey welcomed the dignitaries. President Arun Bharaskar gave information about the organization's activities and General Secretary Datta Patil gave a vote of thanks.

The program received special contribution from Samrat Group, Param Anubhuti Foundation, and Director of the organization Mr. Arjun Mudda. For the success of the program the directors of the organization Mrs. Pratibha Holkar and Mr. Dinesh Musale extended special support.

10. **Organization of State Level Cricket Tournament:** With the aim of nurturing the spirit of sportsmanship among blind people and giving scope to their sportsmanship, the organization organized a state level cricket tournament on 25th and 26th December 2023 at Raymond Maidan, Thane. Division-wise 8 teams across Maharashtra participated. Teams from Mumbai, Pune, Solapur, Nashik, Vidarbha, Marathwada, Akola and Thane participated.

The said competition was played on knockout basis. In this tournament, the final match was between Pune and Akola team in which Pune team defeated Akola team to win the title. On this occasion, the winning team was awarded with a cash prize of Rs.11500/- and a trophy. While the cash prize of Rs.7500/- was awarded to Akola team and was honoured with a runners-up trophy. Praveen Karaluke was declared Man of the series. Pune's senior businessman Nanjibhai Thakkar, Singhania school administrator Manish Narvekar and other dignitaries were present as chief guests on this occasion.



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In her speech the guide of Rotary Club and Director of Blind Welfare Mrs. Neha Nimbalkar Rotary Club vouched that their organization will always be the first to promote the sportsmanship of blind athletes. President Arun Bharaskar also expressed hope that MCA and BCCI would take initiative to raise the standard of these competitions.

On this occasion Shri Nanjibhai Thakkar praised the players and expressed his satisfaction that a great game of cricket was played despite players being blind. For

the success of the programme, President Madhavi Ajme, Blind Welfare Organization President Arun Bharaskar, Director Dinesh Musale took special efforts.

11. **Organized National Cricket (Siyaram Cup) Tournaments in Mumbai:** The Blind Welfare Organization organized National Cricket Tournaments for Disabled Players for the twelfth consecutive year from 10th January 2024 to 12th January 2024. The opening ceremony of Siyaram Blind Cricket Cup was concluded at Brabourne Stadium in the presence of dignitaries. The tournament was inaugurated by actor Nilesh Kulkarni and Mumbai Guardian Minister Mangalprabhat Lodha to boost the enthusiasm of the blind. All the matches of the tournament were played on a league basis. All the players saluted the guests to the beat of the opening band, after which the tournament was formally inaugurated by striking the ball. President of the organization Arun Bharaskar said in his introduction speech that the purpose of holding this competition every year was to promote cricket for the blinds and cultivating sportsmanship in them. He also said that many tournaments are held for able persons, but very few for the blinds hence he took initiative for organization of such tournament for blinds. Eight teams from Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab, and Delhi participated in this tournament and the organization's director Arjun Mudda informed that this tournament will be held on a league basis.

Mr. Mangalprabhat Lodha while congratulating the players also guided them to play with sportsmanship and expressed the opinion that this initiative is highly appreciated by the organization and announced that he will provide financial support on behalf of the foundation for educational or medical purposes. On the same occasion, Calander in Braille for the year 2024 was published by the organization by Mr. Rajeev Khandekar, editor of ABP Maza news channel.

On this occasion, he expressed the hope that the players will perform brilliantly and get selected at the national level after seeing their performance in this tournament and he wished all the best for the activities of the organization. While Nilesh Kulkarni also increased the enthusiasm of the players by presenting dialogues from the movie. On this occasion Mrs. Madhumathi Lele of CCI Club, Singhania School Principal Revathi Srinivasan and Rotary Club Bombay Queen City President Anupama Jalan and their office bearers were present in large numbers.



The final match was played on 12 January 2024 at the Islam Gymkhana ground in Mumbai. In this match the team of Maharashtra and Gujarat fought for the winner's trophy. Maharashtra batted well and set a modest target of 73 for eight wickets against Gujarat. However, Gujarat won the match by losing just two wickets and for the thirteenth year in a row, the Gujarat team maintained its dominance in the tournament. Seema Singh, social activist Vipin Anand, president of Islam Gymkhana, Yusuf Abrani, ONGC Shri. Sachin Patel were the dignitaries present to watch the final. On this occasion Mrs. Sima Singh appreciated the work of the BWF organization and offered financial support for other activities of the organization and scholarship schemes.

Pawan Poddar said in his speech that Gujarat team always wins this tournament, which means other teams fall short somewhere in the game. Also there is need of lots of practice to other teams and Maharashtra team and he expressed full support of Siyaram Group. President Islam Gymkhana Yusuf Abrani also praised the players of both teams and assured that he will continue to provide Islam Gymkhana ground. Also he encouraged losing teams to practice without disappointment and think how they can reach the winning position next year. The live telecast of this final match on Doordarshan Channel's DD Sports not only raised the standard of the competition but also created awareness among the society that people with disabilities can also play cricket.

President Arun Bharaskar, Director Arjun Muddu, Hanif Shaikh worked hard for the success of the program.

12. **Trip Organized:** Trip Organized to Energize Blind People: Trip is organized every year by The Blind Welfare Organization to relieve the stress of blind people and also to energise them for coming days. Because the current life has become a very dynamic and stressful life there is a huge amount of stress in the people who work or does business, and the purpose behind this is to reduce this stress and get a new energy to work, so the trip has been organized continuously for the past 14 years.

Various religious places and some sightseeing places are included on this occasion. Since a blind person is not blessed with sight, his family members often ask him what he/she will see when he goes to the pilgrimage site? Well I think this very question dent their moral and create a demoralizing effect, which in turn reduces their ability to function and enjoy the life to fullest. Therefore, with the aim of reducing this tension, the trip was organized on behalf of the organization from 24th to 29th January 2024.



The trip took off from Kailas Math, from there to Akkalkot and from Akkalkot to Pandharpur to Narsobachi Wadi and Kolhapur, then Goa to Panaji on a cruise and they enjoyed themselves to the tune of a DJ. This joy was unforgettable for them. All in all, the blind people were able to enjoy this trip through the organization at a very short cost. On the occasion of this trip, we not only got the pleasure of social gathering and seeing God's abode, but also got to go to a different world.

13. Organization of Haldi Kunku Program: In our Hindu culture Haldi Kunku program is organized for women till Rathasaptami. In fact, sighted women get the opportunity to participate in such programs through various organizations and circles. But with the aim of giving a platform to the visually impaired women also and to exchange their views, a Haldi Kunku program was organized for the local women on February 2024 at the office of the organization and they were given a gift.

Treasurer of the organization Vijaya Marathe Dabe, Honorary President Kalpana Pandey and Joint Secretary Megha Pimpale worked hard for the success of the program.



14. Organization of International Women's Day: 8th March is celebrated as International Women's Day all over the world but due to the examination period, the organization organized Women's Day program on Sunday 17th March 2024 at Roongtha High School in Nashik to encourage blind sisters to participate. On this occasion, a singing competition for blind women was organized and Rukmini Badsar, Savita Gosavi were given financial assistance for their business. Gautami Wagh won the first prize in the singing competition, which was held during the function.

Chandrabhaga Maule secured the second rank. While the third place went to Aarti More, gifts were given to all the blind women sisters present.



A similar program was organized on 23rd March 2024 at Jai Bhagwan Hall in Thane where blind women from Mumbai and Thane area were present in large numbers. In the same program, six women who have done exceptional work were felicitated and aim to encourage others to follow their suit. While in the same program ten blind women entrepreneurs were given cheque for their business.

Treasurer of the organization Vijaya Marathe Dabe, Honorary President Kalpana Pandey and Joint Secretary Megha Pimpale worked hard for the success of the program.



Dear Friends, every year I try to come up with something different for the organization and I am very satisfied when I share those achievements with you because they have the aroma of dream fulfilment, joy, new donors who join every year, organizations, clubs, entrepreneurs and politicians. I consider this as right platform to express our gratitude towards them.

My hard work is behind it but donors play an important role so it is very important to mention all these patrons and credit them. I would like to mention a few here namely Narendra Firodia of Ahmednagar, Prashant Auti, Keshav Varkhedkar, Krishnakumar Goyal, Daluchand Bhai Jain, Siyaram Group, Bharat Petroleum, various corporate banks as well as Rotary Club, Lions Club. They are the pillars of the organization who have contributed to us since the inception of the organization. Also, as the media took notice of the work of the Organization, the organization was able to reach vast majority of the people.

Thanks again to all those known and unknown persons who I might or might not have mentioned in this report, but their faith in me and continued support to BWF has enable us to achieve what we had dreamed of. Apart from this, all the office bearers of the BWF Organization who cooperated with me for organizing these events and who are with me for the past so many years. With their able support I'm able to move towards my cherished goal.

Finally I express gratitude from the bottom of my hearts, and thank you all once again for your generous contribution. I'm sure with supporters like you and with your continued support; we can achieve the goals that we have set for the welfare of needy blinds. Thank you for being an important part of our organization and helping us create a positive change in the world."

Secretary
Dattatray Shankar Patil
The Blind Welfare Organisation (I) Nasik



Translation
Mr. Sanjay Mankoskar