

Digital books spell convenience

Books are a treasure house of knowledge. However the blind cannot benefit from printed books. Many years back, Braille simplified the jigsaw with his great invention. But, it is a costly affair to produce books in Braille. If that was not enough, they are cumbersome to maintain and cannot be used by more than one person at a time.

Saksham understood this dilemma and crafted the solution in the form of digital talking books, a computerised recording of selected text identified by a panel of experts.

These talking books are able to overcome practically every inadequacy of books in Braille. Unlike Braille books, they are easy to produce and replicate. Recording takes place only once and the books are converted to audio CDs. These CDs can be replicated using a CD recorder and can be circulated to the desired audience as required.

Saksham plans to provide these books across the country for the benefit of the blind.

Seeing light

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

“I see with my hands and feel with my heart.” Such are the poignant words of Aditya, 12, at Saksham. He can't see.

While Saksham may have come to his rescue, fact is that there are many children, who do not receive care. Infrastructure or expertise isn't lacking, it's because of paucity of human endeavour, compassion and the will of the community at large, to improve the quality of life of those affected. The question

staring at us is, 'What have we done towards the community, and my country at large?'

Disability and care

A sizeable part of Delhi's population lives below the dreaded poverty line. And the spectre of disability further adds to the degree of difficulty in overcoming the inherent agony and pain. Such children need special care and attention, feel experts. Since there is a social angle to it, it requires the community's



Fiserv employees with children of Saksham

efforts to bring about change.

NGOs chipping in

NGOs extensively involve in supporting the all-round development of children with disabilities. In Delhi, Saksham is one such humble effort that is bringing education to many children who are visually impaired. It seeks to breathe life into disability and sever the barricade between the domains of the 'able and the disabled'. Saksham is methodically producing all NCERT and State Education Board textbooks under project Daisy (Digital Talking Book formats). These books reach end users across the country through partner organizations and libraries.

An elixir of hope

Saksham has been involved with visually challenged children since 2003. All this while, the Trust has lent a helping hand to the visually challenged, and empowered them to use opportunities available by identifying new methods to simplify and enhance the existing skills available to such children.

Their biggest endeavour is the Saksham Daksh School. The school has special educators, speech and occupational therapists, transport facility,

functional assessment and sensory stimulation facility. Every educator has previously worked with children with special needs.

Saksham distributes aid and support material by collecting them from all over and making these readily available.

Corporate support

Supporting them is Fiserv, a Fortune 500 company and the leading global provider of financial services technology solutions. Fiserv employees are involved in teaching, organising activities and most importantly in recording digital talking books. "With little time from us, thousands of visually impaired children can use these books. All it requires is a laptop, recording software (provided by Saksham) and most importantly time," says, Firoz Ansari, associate, Fiserv India.

"Fiserv is proud of its social commitments. It is heartening to see the variety of causes we are associated with—educating the underprivileged and disabled, to conservation and protection, and many other admirable causes. 'Fiserv Gives Back' is a way to recognize our employees' efforts and say thanks to each one for their commitment to social causes," says, Shrihari Gokhale, President, Fiserv India.