

CHAPTER I

On the Untrodden Path

Kheda District of Gujarat is known the world over for its milk and tobacco production. The White Revolution, a brain child of Dr. V. G. Kurien, has its origin in this region. This district is also known for sending the greatest number of *Patels* to all over the United Kingdom, Canada and Africa, for business and trade. Almost every household in the district has a number of family members abroad.

1928: Kheda District has a prosperous village called Borsad. On 5 September, 1928, a perfectly normal child was born in the family of Kashibhai Ishwarbhai Patel. The child was named 'Amrut', which means nectar. The child was subsequently renamed as 'Jagdish', which means Lord of the Earth.

Jagdishbhai spent the initial few months at his maternal uncle's place at Virsad, a prosperous village in the same district. He also spent a few years at Nadiad and then moved to Calcutta to join his father.

On-set of Blindness

The year 1936 witnessed an outbreak of meningitis in West Bengal. Jagdishbhai fell prey to this disease at the young age of 8 years and lost his vision due to paralysis of the optic nerve.

His father, a qualified medical practitioner, contacted the best doctors at that time in Calcutta and spent a lot of money for the treatment of his eldest son, but it was a hopeless prognosis. Jagdishbhai recalls that Dr. B. C. Ray, the most eminent Ophthalmic Surgeon of Calcutta, who subsequently became the Chief Minister of West Bengal, visited the Patel household on a regular basis while charging a princely sum of Rs. 64 per visit. Jagdishbhai later learnt that Dr. Niranjani Sarkar, a leading London based Ophthalmic Surgeon, also lost his eyesight due to meningitis.

As a child, Jagdishbhai prayed almost every day and begged that his eye sight be restored. His mother took a vow before *Baliadev* (God of Smallpox) that she would weigh Jagdishbhai in coins and offer all the coins to God if he regained his eyesight. This desperate plea of a distraught mother did not yield any results.

Ultimately during 1938, the family accepted his blindness as irreversible and sent him to the Calcutta Blind School at Behala, one of the oldest schools for the blind in India, as a day scholar.

Jagdishbhai's quest for regaining eye sight continued till 1962 when he visited Lourdes, a world famous pilgrimage of the Roman Catholic Christians in France, to have a dip in the holy water to regain his eyesight. The world over, there was a belief that if one takes a dip in the holy water, one would recover from any ailment. Jagdishbhai had read an article in the Reader's Digest about this holy place where thousands of people with hemiplegia, paraplegia and other ailments had recovered after the holy dip.

Many thousands of people visit this place, known for the Church of "*Appearance of the Holy Mary*" as they believe that the holy dip never fails. One finds at this place a large number of crutches and wheelchairs which have been left behind by people who have been cured.

Jagdishbhai, on completion of a professional course in London, travelled to Lourdes with the hope of regaining eye-sight. He reached there and to his utter surprise, there were thousands of people who had come from across the world to take the holy dip. A miracle, however, did not happen in Jagdishbhai's case. From this day onwards, he lost all hopes of regaining eyesight and reconciled himself to his blindness.

That day onward, he accepted his loss of sight as an integral and indivisible part of his life and stopped all attempts in regaining sight. In fact, when Sir John Wilson, former Executive Director of the Sight Savers International and Consultant to the United Nations Development Programme arranged eye check of Jagdishbhai with a leading eye specialist of London, he refused to go there. Similarly, when he visited the U. S. A., his sister Dr. Gita Trivedi, a medical practitioner herself, wanted him to consult leading eye specialists of that country, he plainly refused to do so.

Lasting Visual Memory

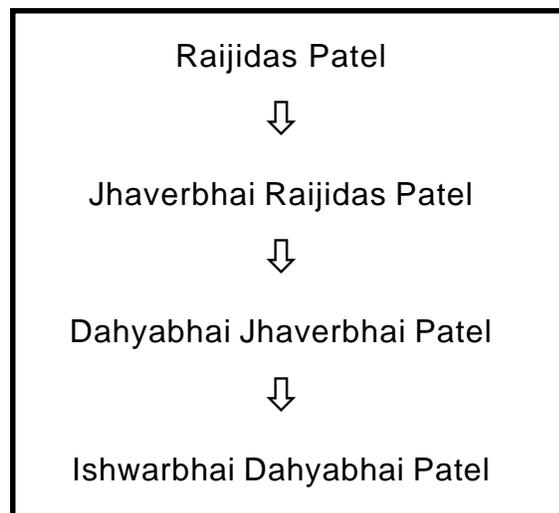
Jagdishbhai remembers only two scenes very clearly from his seeing years. Once while travelling by train from Mumbai to Calcutta, it was very cold, and he started shivering violently. His father thought that a rub down with hot water would thaw him. He ran to the steam engine and brought hot water which gave a lot of relief to him from the biting cold. This scene with a brass pitcher in his father's hand, with steam coming out in a spiral, the large wheels of the engine and the black smoke puffing out, has remained ingrained in his memory even today. This is a scene which is permanently etched.

As a sighted child, he was admitted to a Gujarati school in Calcutta. One day while playing, he hurt his foot and he was carried home with a stream of blood steadily pouring down. His father took stitches and bandaged him. This scene is indelible even after a gap of 60 years. His blindness has retained only these two visual memories. He is, however, unable to recall colours and the surrounding environment of these events.

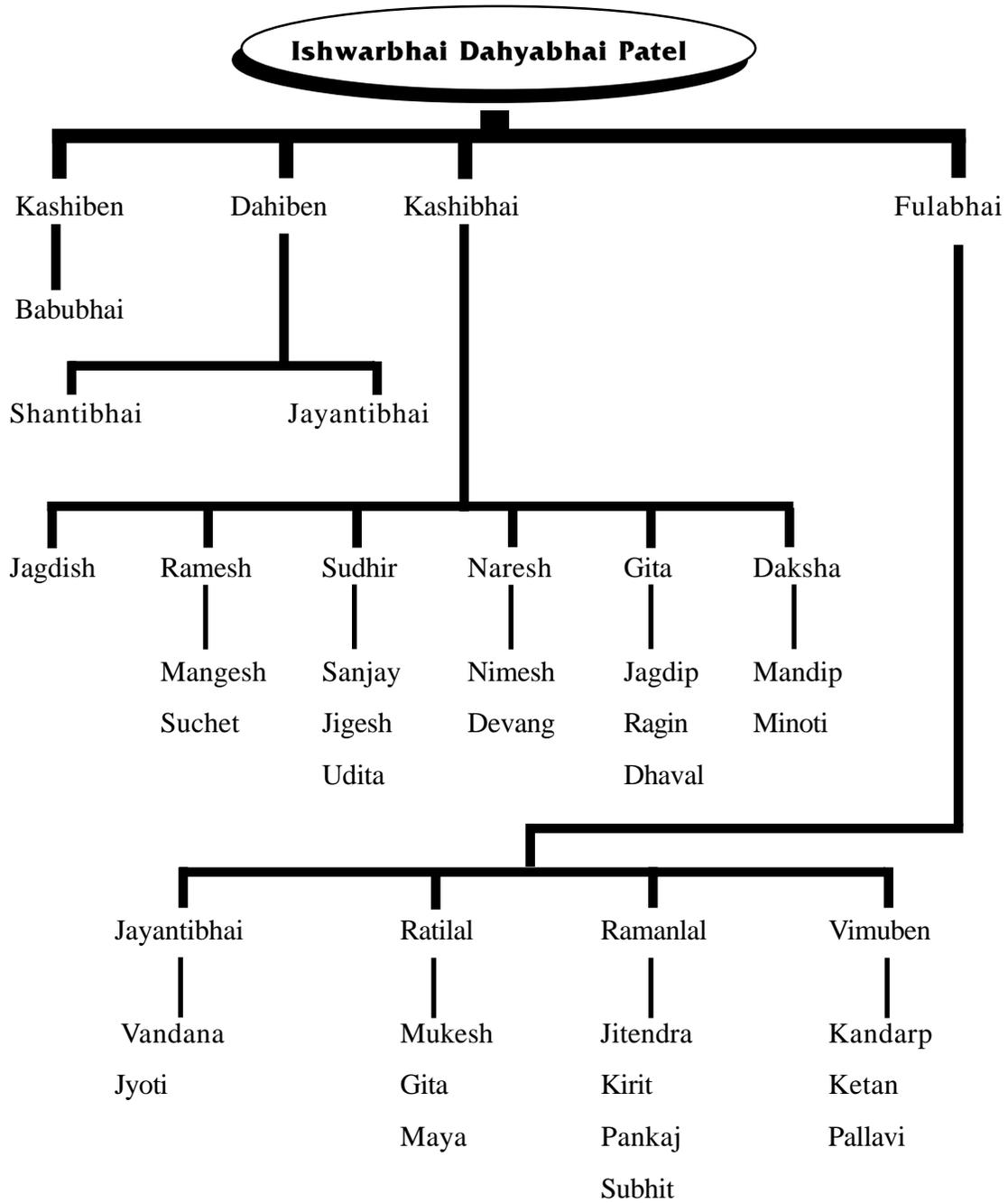
Family Tree

Mr. Sudhir Patel, Jagdishbhai's younger brother worked very hard to trace the family tree all the way up to the fifth generation. The biggest town of Kheda district is Nadiad which has a locality popularly known as Kakarkhad. In the beginning of the 18th century, Raijidas had established this locality. Most of the residents of that locality are descendants of Raijidas. The family tree establishes that he was the great great grand father of Jagdishbhai.

The names of heads of four generations from Raijidas downward could be traced as listed below:



Ishwarbhai was Jagdishbhai's grandfather. He had two sons and two daughters. Dr. Kashibhai Patel was the eldest son. He married Lalitaben of Virsad village. This couple had four sons and two daughters. Jagdishbhai has thus 3 brothers, 2 sisters, 6 cousin brothers and 1 cousin sister as listed below:



Ancestral House

Most houses in Kakarkhad still belong to the descendants of Raijidas Patel. As most of the family members have migrated to the U. S. A., Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Baroda, only a few of them live there and they are all retired . The ancestral house of Jagdishbhai bearing house No. 1331 in ward No. 8 of the Nadiad Municipality which originally belonged to Mr. Fulabhai Ishwarbhai Patel, uncle of Jagdishbhai has been donated to the Blind Men's Association. In fact, this house was purchased by Mr. Fulabhai from Mr. Vithaldas Trikandas on 25 May, 1904 for Rs. 325 only. The only ancestral property of Jagdishbhai's family has been donated for promoting welfare services at Nadiad. To recognize the kind gesture of the family members of Jagdishbhai, the Govt. of Gujarat has granted exemption from the payment of stamp duty on the transfer of the house to the BMA.

Family

Dr. Kashibhai Patel, Jagdishbhai's father completed his medical education from Mumbai during 1919, the year known for the *Jalianwala Bagh* Massacre. He was very enterprising and in no time, he started his private practice at Kalbadevi in Mumbai. Due to family constraints, he had to leave Mumbai and had to perforce close down his clinic. He then took up a job as Sales Representative .

As he always wanted to establish his own medical practice, during 1928, he shifted to Calcutta, the most prosperous city of those years. He set up his clinic at Lower Chitpur Road in Calcutta. He had an excellent practice and was very popular among Chinese and *Marwadi* patients.

Due to World War II and the fear of aerial bombardments by the Japanese, a large number of Gujaratis decided to leave Calcutta. Dr. Kashibhai Patel also shifted back to Gujarat and started his practice on 9 August, 1942 at Ahmedabad. He died of a heart attack on 26 February, 1961 when Jagdishbhai was 34 years old. His mother, Lalitaben also expired of a heart attack in January, 1967.

As the eldest son, Jagdishbhai had to shoulder the responsibility of managing the complete family. He encouraged his 3 brothers and 2 sisters to continue their education in areas of their choice. He successfully managed the household, earned sufficient money to provide for their education and other expenses of his brothers and sisters. He struggled relentlessly to settle all of them in suitable professions. Bhadraben, his wife, was his faithful supporter in these tragic times.



Jagdishbhai immediately after blindness

All Jagdishbhai's siblings are well settled. His brother Ramesh with a Master's in Surgery is the most leading surgeon in Godhra, a town located in Panchmahal district of Gujarat; younger brother Sudhir who used to work for a nationalized bank, is now settled in the U.S.A.; the youngest brother Naresh is also well settled in the U.S.A.; sister Gita is a medical practitioner and is also settled in the U. S. A.; the youngest sister Daksha is happily married and settled in Mumbai.

Naresh feels that after the death of their parents in 1962, Jagdishbhai took the responsibility as a father. Naresh was only in the high school and youngest in the family. He worked hard to be independent as early as possible so that he was not a burden to the family. Jagdishbhai, however, encouraged him to pursue his studies further and provided support for the same. Naresh feels indebted to Jagdishbhai for the encouragement and support he provided during those 10 crucial years.

Jagdishbhai solemnized the weddings of all his siblings. Dr. Ramesh Patel got married in 1962. The wedding reception was attended by Mr. Mehendi Nawaz Jung, Governor of Gujarat, Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai, leading industrialist, and many other dignitaries of Ahmedabad. Sudhirbhai got married at the BMA campus in 1966. The following year, Dakshaben, Jagdishbhai's sister, got married to Mr. Manmadbhai Patel. Jagdishbhai lost his mother only one month prior to this date and to top the tragedy, Bhadraben's mother died only 4 days prior to this wedding. Despite this dual misfortune, Jagdishbhai went ahead with the original programme. The Mayor of Ahmedabad and the entire top management of the Lalbhai group attended the wedding.

Jagdishbhai arranged the marriage of Nareshbhai, his youngest brother during 1970 which was the last wedding arranged by him at Ahmedabad. The wedding of Gitaben, the younger sister, took place during 1977 in the U. S. A.

Father's Role

Mr. S. R. Amin, London-based maternal uncle of Jagdishbhai recalls, *"I met Jagdishbhai for the first time during 1948 when he was twenty and we both became good friends apart from being close relatives as well. During his initial years Jagdishbhai used to consult his doctor father for everything he did. The initial years of his blindness were very difficult. With the passing of time, he realized that with his vision, his opportunities are not lost. He started deriving pleasure from helping other brethren"*.

Mr. Amin adds, *"His father played a major role in shaping his destiny. Being an established doctor, his father sent him to Victoria Memorial School for the Blind, Mumbai. There he learnt communication skills as well as braille. As he belonged to a medical family, he found it easier to establish his practice in physiotherapy. His parents and family members enabled him to realize the value of human life. They also inculcated feelings of self-confidence which enabled him to develop his professional relations with a large number of leading personalities of Ahmedabad"*.

Education

1938: Calcutta Blind School

An Indian Christian, Mr. Behari Lal Shah had established a school for the blind at Behala, Calcutta during 1887. This was one of the oldest schools for the blind in the country. After spending two years at home, Jagdishbhai was admitted to this school in 1938 as a day scholar. He studied there for three years and then left for Ahmedabad. Jagdishbhai fondly remembers his initial days at the school.

According to Ras Mohan Halder, *“This school was founded in 1887 by the late Mr. Lal Behari Shah on his own initiative. In March, 1899 the institution was given a public status, and in 1911 it was registered as society under the Societies Registration Act. The purpose of the school was to train and educate young blind of either sex, from 6 to 10 years for girls and to 14 for boys. The meritorious students were taken up through matriculation examination of the Calcutta University”.*

When Jagdishbhai was a student, of this school, 93 students including 74 boys and 19 girls were on roll here. During his short stay at Calcutta, he developed a very close friendship with his fellow students Madanlal Khandelwal, Shailesh Brother, Amin Abraham, Kaushalaya, Mira, Reba and Saraswati Mistry. Shailesh Brother came all the way to Ahmedabad to meet Jagdishbhai. Madanlal Khadelwal was his host when he visited the United Kingdom during 1961. He could not keep track of his other friends after he left Calcutta.

He also fondly remembers the Principal, Mr. Arun Ghosh and class teachers, Kalidas Babu and Kinkar Babu. During 1939, the school had a total strength of 112 blind boys and girls. The school was one of the oldest and probably the largest in the country at that time. The standard of education was quite good and Jagdishbhai remembers that his teachers were quite strict and believed in class discipline.

1941: V. M. School

As informed by Mr. H. U. Joshi, former Principal of the School for the Blind, Navrangpura, the Victoria Memorial School for the Blind, Mumbai was considered one of the best and most progressive schools for the blind in the country at that time. Mr. Ras Mohan Halder mentions that this primary school with industrial classes had been established on 13 December, 1902. Dr. Nilkanthrai Chhatrapati, a medical professional, was invited to this school as its Principal. He had started a school in Ahmedabad during 1900 and his first step on becoming Principal was to take all his pupils to Mumbai and amalgamate this Ahmedabad school with the newly founded one in Mumbai. Jagdishbhai joined this school during 1941 as a student of the vernacular class.

June, 1941: Mehsana School for the Blind

At that time, there was no school for the blind at Ahmedabad. The Baroda State had established a school for the blind and the deaf at Mehsana. Jagdishbhai was admitted to this school during June 1941 as it was felt that it would be better if he was educated in his home state. Jagdishbhai came in contact with Arvindbhai Vyas, Chandrakant Patel, Shivlal and Jairam. All of these became his life long companions. He remembers his teacher Jaam Saheb even today. He studied there only for 6 months and was shifted back to the V. M. School for pursuing his school education followed by his course in physiotherapy. The Mehsana school was not able to attract many blind children and it was subsequently shifted to Vadodara.

1944: V. M. School for the Blind

Dr. Rajendra T. Vyas recalls that Jagdishbhai passed his vernacular final examination from the V. M. School during 1944 and took admission to the three years course in physiotherapy at the same school. This was the only school in the country offering a course in physiotherapy to the blind.

The physiotherapy course was started by Dr. Desai, father of Capt. H. J. M. Desai, former General Secretary of the National Association for the Blind (India). Dr. Desai had a paralytic attack and realized the importance of physiotherapy. He had read about the unique Course in Physiotherapy for the Blind run by the Royal National Institute for the Blind in London and he wished to replicate the same for India. He was the Principal of the school and took personal interest in initiating and developing this course. This humble person deserves to be given the credit for his far-sightedness, his vision, his uncanny ability to perceive physiotherapy as a viable option for the employment of the blind. When agencies were concentrating on imparting training in making of brooms, brushes, chalk, this gentleman was ahead of his times.

The V. M. School imported braille material from the R.N.I.B., London, subscribed regularly to the monthly and quarterly journals of physiotherapy, and started a course of three years duration. The standard of the course was not comparable to that run by the R.N.I.B., still it was a blessing for the educated blind persons.

Jagdishbhai recalls his physiotherapy teacher, Mr. A. S. Jagos, a qualified Physiotherapist who used to visit the school on his motorcycle in the evening between 5 to 6 p.m. to conduct classes in physiotherapy.

At the V. M. School, Jagdishbhai developed friendship with fellow students Vasudev Dave, Hira Kachhi, Mangubhai Shah and Shantibhai Zhaveri. He remembers two teachers Narandas and Lakshmanbhai very fondly. He also developed good interpersonal relations with the Principal, (Late) Mr. K. N. Jassawala, a well known educationist of the blind and the founder of the National Association of the Instructors of the Blind.

With a total student strength of 60, the school was very popular in the western part of the country. The staff of the school was very liberal and accommodating. In fact, students used to dominate the education as well as hostel activities. Jagdishbhai maintains that he developed his habit of having a nap in the afternoon during his stay at this school. He made a habit of sleeping between 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. He would always wake at 2 o'clock in the afternoon to attend the class conducted by the Principal.

In spite of his penchant for absconding from classes, he was the most popular student. He was always entrusted the responsibility of showing visitors around the school and charming them with his engaging manner. He was also the Editor of *Satya Prakash*, the official publication of the school. While he did not have any flare for instrumental or vocal music, he was a member of the school orchestra. By being a member of this orchestra, he got the opportunity of touring around India!

He was fond of garlic chutney which was not provided in the hostel meals. He cajoled the cook, tipped him regularly and got his stock of his favourite chutney!

Apart from his many friends in the school, he built up friendships with young ladies outside the campus. He remembers his two young friends, Frenny and Dolly, guests of Ms. Rani Khetwala, house mother of the school. Apart from reading lessons to him, Frenny and Dolly would take him to the movies on Sunday, provide him snacks occasionally at their cost. This friendship continued till he left the school during 1947.

Jagdishbhai's academic performance was outstanding. He stood first in the physiotherapy course. While doing his regular studies, he also completed certificate courses in cane-work, tailoring and weaving and scored first position in all these trades. He was the king performer in elocution and debate competitions of the school.

1956: Matric

Along with his private practice in physiotherapy, Jagdishbhai appeared for the Matric examination as a private candidate from the Bharti High School and obtained 57 percent marks. He could appear for this exam only because of the dedicated efforts of Miss Vinoda Kanugo, who volunteered and read to him at four in the morning. As he was a busy physiotherapist by that time, this was the only time of the day that he could spare for his studies.

1962: Graduation

After completing his matriculation, Jagdishbhai joined the Swami Narayan College, Maninagar. As he was very busy with his physiotherapy practice, he would hardly attend the college. He claims that he attended the college only for 2 hours on the first day, managed his attendance, and then prepared on his own. He recalls a volunteer who was a dedicated

reader, Ms. Suhasini of Devasana Pada, a locality in the walled city of Ahmedabad. His prowess in Sanskrit and her reading enabled him to pass his Sanskrit examination with flying colours. Similarly, Daksha Mehta, read out all his papers to him during his graduation. Mr. Jitubhai Trivedi, former Principal of the Secondary School for the Blind taught him logic.

He completed his graduation from the Gujarat University during 1962. Ms. Gita Satia, niece of Bhadraben Satia, helped him in writing the final examination. At that time, only a few blind persons had competed their graduation from this University.

Professional Career

1947: First Job Offer

Soon after acquiring his Diploma in Physiotherapy from the V. M. School for the Blind, Mumbai, Jagdishbhai started working in the Massage Clinic of the same School. He worked there for a period of six months and built up a group of clients who were very loyal to him. His first client was one whom he has never forgotten. She was one Mrs. Sabawala and she lived near Opera House. She was so happy with Jagdishbhai's treatment that she gave him a gift of Rs. 500, a princely sum in those days!.

Family pressures forced him to return to Ahmedabad. The joys of independence were evident in the city and the textile industry was doing so well that Ahmedabad was known as the Manchester of India. Very few people knew about physiotherapy in those days and as he had no clinic and no recommendation, Jagdishbhai was without work for nearly six months.

When he was at the V. M. School, he had applied for a job at the K. K. Home and School for the Blind, Bhavnagar for the post of a teacher. This school was founded by the Maharaja of Bhavnagar, Mr. Krishna Kumarsingji on 6 January, 1932. When Jagdishbhai was jobless in Ahmedabad, out of the blue, came an offer letter from Bhavnagar. He went for the interview and was offered Rs. 40 per month. Jagdishbhai's shoes that he had worn during the interview cost Rs.40! He was a man who loved expensive things, loved wearing the best clothes, how could a teacher's salary keep up his expensive lifestyle? He declined the offer and returned to Ahmedabad.



First Patient

1948: Medico Massage

His father, Dr. Kashibhai, realized his son's potential and felt that he would do well if he had a clinic. He, therefore, assisted him to set up his physiotherapy clinic "*Medico Massage*" at Khadia, a central part of Ahmedabad city on 1 January, 1948. His father who was very fond of him played a very important role in assisting him to establish his practice.

1948 saw a great increase in the number of polio cases and parents of such children came



in Medico Massage

to Jagdishbhai for massage. His first case in Ahmedabad was Mr. K. K. Thakore, a leading advocate. Jagdishbhai cured him and in gratitude, Mr. Thakore paid Rs. 100 per month. With his first earning, Jagdishbhai bought a radio which became his constant friend and companion. The radio gave faithful service for over twenty years.

1949: Calico Hospital

In 1949, Jagdishbhai's fame as a physiotherapist and the first blind physiotherapist at

that, had spread. He was invited by the Calico Hospital, a hospital started by the largest textile mill of that time. He was offered the post of Honorary Physiotherapist of the hospital.

Jagdishbhai still remembers his first meeting with the textile tycoon, Sheth Shri Ambalal Sarabhai. Mr. K. N. Chhatrapati, brother of Nilkanthrai Chhatrapati, founder principal of the V. M. School for the Blind, Mumbai, took him to meet Shri Sarabhai. Jagdishbhai wore a suit and felt hat and was introduced to the owner of the Calico Mills. Jagdishbhai told Ambalalbai that he would give him physiotherapy treatment but he would charge Rs.7 per visit. Ambalalbai was impressed by this tall and good looking young man who was so confident inspite of his handicap. So started Jagdishbhai's association with Ambalalbai. He went to the latter's house every morning at 9.00 a.m. and while massaging him, learnt about the intricacies of business and handling of people. This practical training from a genius stood Jagdishbhai in good stead all throughout his life. Ambalalbai became his anchor and recommended him to the top businessmen of Ahmedabad.

Home Visits

Soon the good news travelled across the whole city and Jagdishbhai was acclaimed as a leading physiotherapist. He used to start his practice from 5 a.m. and would call it a day only at 10 p.m. His clients included:

- Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai, leading Industrialist of Ahmedabad
- Ms. Bhartiben Sarabhai from Sarabhai family
- Ms. Sarladevi Sarabhai
- Ms. Mrinalini Vikram Sarabhai, leading Dancer
- Ms. Anarkali from Sarabhai family
- Mr. Harshvadan Mangaldas, former Chairman, IIM, Ahmedabad
- Ms. Kanchan Gauri Harshvadan Mangaldas
- Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai, doyen of the “Lalbhai” textile group
- Mr. Inderjit Chimanlal, a Textile Mill Owner
- Mr. Chinubhai Naranbhai, a Textile Mill Owner
- Mr. Dungaji Daruwala, a well known Weaving Master
- Mr. Mahendra Chimanlal, a Textile Mill Owner
- Mr. Ramesh Kapadia, Manager, ICI
- Mr. G. L. Sheth, former Home Secretary
- Dr. Sumant Shah, a leading Cardiologist
- Mr. K. K. Thakore, a leading Advocate

1951: Association of Natwarbhai Patel, a blind Physiotherapist

Natwarbhai, a life-long companion of Jagdishbhai recalls “*In the first encounter itself, I found Jagdishbhai a very impressive person. By that time, Jagdishbhai was a well established and a very famous Physiotherapist. I had the distinction of assisting him as Physiotherapist in his Medico Massage clinic from 1965 to 1976. I parted company after he discontinued his flourishing practice and decided to devote himself completely to the development of the Blind Men’s Association. At that stage, I was always planning to migrate to the U. S. A., hence we decided to close our Medico Massage Clinic. In fact, whatsoever proficiency I have achieved in physiotherapy, it is mainly due to his encouragement, guidance and support*”.

His life-long companion Natwarbhai not only assisted Jagdishbhai in his profession, he also encouraged and supported him to initiate services for blind persons. Natwarbhai clearly remembers and narrates the initiative of Jagdishbhai, “*My first encounter during 1951 brought me so close to him that we decided to establish a Recreation Club for*

the Blind in 1960. This Club was the first milestone in the long journey that Jagdishbhai took. The ultimate triumph of the quest was the formation of a large conglomerate as the Blind Men's Association. I, however, never played any active role in the administration of the BMA. While Jagdishbhai was busy establishing and managing his blind welfare activities, I handled his professional activities. In fact, I was handling three-fourth of his work load in physiotherapy”.

1960: L. G. Hospital

As he had already become a very popular physiotherapist, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation invited him to join as Honorary Physiotherapist at the L. G. Hospital, Maninagar. At this hospital, he came in contact with a large number of medical professionals. He also had the opportunity of handling a large number of poor patients who could have never afforded a visit to his private clinic. After a while he was appointed as a part-time paid physiotherapist. He continued in this post till he retired at the age of 60 years in 1988 after his service for 28 years.

1964: Approved Physiotherapist

The Employee State Insurance Corporation appointed him as an approved Physiotherapist. All members of the ESIC who required physiotherapy could avail it from Jagdishbhai's "Medico Massage" clinic. This arrangement brought in a stream of patients requiring physiotherapy, massage etc. and continued till 1973 when Jagdishbhai decided to close his private practice due to his increasing and active involvement in blind welfare activities.

1966: Gulab Bai Hospital

He was appointed by a leading charitable hospital situated at Relief Road, a main business area of Ahmedabad, as Honorary Physiotherapist for a period of 2 years. As he could not cope up with his hectic schedule, he relinquished charge in 1968.

1971: Blind Physiotherapists Association

Mr. Anil Patel of Junagarh approached Jagdishbhai with a request to establish an association of blind physiotherapists. Jagdishbhai, immediately convened a meeting of all the blind physiotherapists of Gujarat. All the members decided to establish the "Blind Physiotherapists Association" with Jagdishbhai as the founder President and Mr. V. K. Vithlani as the Secretary. For the convenience of the Secretary, the headquarters of the Association was kept at Rajkot. Jagdishbhai subsequently relinquished his charge as President during 1973. Vithlani, however, continued as the Secretary till his death during 1995. Vithlani very fondly remembered his first interaction with Jagdishbhai which gave a new meaning to his life and career.

The Blind Physiotherapists Association has remained dysfunctional and in a dormant

condition for many years. Jagdishbhai is now planning to convene a meeting of its members to rejuvenate and reactivate it. Most members are depending upon Jagdishbhai to give it a healing touch.

1976: Curtain Drawn

After a very lucrative, well established and roaring practice as the most leading Physiotherapist for 28 years, Jagdishbhai decided to wind up his practice to devote his full time to blind welfare and such developmental activities. He decided to close down his both “*Medico Massage*” clinics at Khadia as well as Relief Road. He also dissociated from the insurance corporation. He transferred his occupancy rights of the basement of the N. L. Trust building at Ratanpole, Relief Road, which housed his clinic, to the Blind Men’s Association. The BMA in turn established its first showroom “*Handika*” for selling various products manufactured by the blind and disabled persons in this same basement.

He, however, continued his attachment with the L. G. Hospital, but he started devoting his full time towards developmental activities. During his visit to L. G. Hospital, his life time secretary, Mr. Ramchandra would also accompany him to read his mail, plan correspondence and do other developmental work. Thus the L. G. Hospital, during the last 11 years, was more of his mobile office.

His retirement on 5 September, 1988 from the L. G. Hospital was an end to an exciting and lucrative career as a well known Physiotherapist.

Professional Achievements

Jagdishbhai is proud of his professional background. He considers his private practice as an important ingredient of his success. It was during his regular discussions with Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai, doyen of textile and chemical industry, that Jagdishbhai learnt table manners, etiquette, general principles of administration and learnt the value of time. He learnt to maintain his timings and to be punctual. He also understood the importance of personal grooming, proper presentation, sophistication and appropriate dressing etc. Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai played an important role in helping to build up Jagdishbhai’s private practice in physiotherapy. He introduced and recommended him to his family members, friends and other leading industrialists of Ahmedabad. Mrs. Mrinalini Sarabhai and Mr. Harshvadan Mangaldas were introduced in this manner.

Jagdishbhai was always happy in taking up complicated cases where the possibility of success was remote. He loved challenges and taking risks. He derived great satisfaction whenever he treated a difficult case and achieved encouraging results. He proudly recalls the case of Mrs. Lilawati Shirish Badshah who fell down from the fourth floor of her house. She was rushed to L. G. Hospital, Maninagar with at least 18 different fractures of varying complexities. Dr. Nanubhai Desai, Superintendent of

the hospital referred the case to Jagdishbhai for physiotherapy treatment. He gave her passive as well as active exercises for 12 months at a stretch. Lilawati recovered completely and had no residual problems. For a person whose prognosis was poor and chances were bleak, Mrs. Badshah lived a fully participative and functional life.

Craze for Cars

As a student, Jagdishbhai always dreamt of owning a car. His burning desire was to earn well, live a life of comfort and to own a car. After starting his private practice during 1948, he started saving with the objective of owing a car.

His mother, Mrs. Lalitaben was also very keen on fulfilling his desire. She withdrew Rs. 1800 during 1950 from her life time savings and purchased a second hand Austin car for Jagdishbhai. His happiness found no limits and he decided to visit his clients in this car.

He changed to Hindustan-10 during 1951, to Baby Austin during 1952, to Hindustan-40 during 1955 and to Desotto car in 1965. Till 1967, due to financial constraints and family responsibilities, he could manage to purchase only second hand cars. He borrowed Rs. 18,000 from the Blind Men's Association and purchased a new Standard Car during 1967. This was beginning of his owing a new car which he maintained thereafter.

He purchased a second car during 1971 for the use of Bhadraben. He went on to a new Ambassador car during 1978 which he used till 1983. His brother Naresh Patel, Non-resident Indian settled in the U. S. A. gifted him a new Ambassador car purchased during 1984 under deemed export scheme.

To keep pace with changing time, he shifted to Maruti 800 during 1987. He, however, shifted to a comparatively bigger and more expensive NE-118 car during 1989 which he is using till date. He, however, wanted to own Ceilo, a luxurious and expensive car.

Through his career span of 35 years, he owned a variety of cars. For him, owning a car is essential. His quest for a better and more sophisticated car still persists---

Wedding Bells

1951: First Encounter

Bhadraben Satia comes from a leading Jain family of textile traders. As per the Gujarati tradition, the suffix 'ben' is added to her name. Her uncle Mr. Chandubhai Satia was President of the Maskati Market, the biggest wholesale textile market of Ahmedabad. She and most of her family members participated in the Indian Independence Movement. Fair, delicately built, with long flowing black tresses, she met Jagdishbhai for the first time

in 1951 at his clinic “*Medico Massage*” at Khadia. She was appearing for an interview for a job at the Light House for Blind Girls. As the salary for the post was very low at Rs. 100 per month, Bhadraben declined the offer.

After a few days of their first meeting, Bhadraben took her younger sister Indira, who got injured, to Jagdishbhai for physiotherapy treatment. She took her sister daily to Medico Massage for one month for this purpose. She started helping Jagdishbhai by reading the newspapers, letters and other material. Their acquaintance deepened into friendship, they realized that they shared a mission and a vision and they decided to get married.

Bhadraben’s family follows *Jainism* and was one of the well known families in Ahmedabad. Her parents had great hopes of her marrying a textile tycoon, as the textile industry at that time was dominated by *Jains*.

When she informed her family that she wanted to marry a person who belonged to another caste and who was blind, they were aghast. They cajoled, threatened, emotionally blackmailed her and ordered her to stop meeting Jagdishbhai.

Bhadraben remained very firm and expressed her strong desire to go ahead with the wedding. Usha, wife of Mr. Prafulbhai Vyas, a close friend of Jagdishbhai acted as the messenger and letter carrier.

1958: Wedding Ceremony

Both of them remained firm in their commitment and much against the wishes of both families and society, they got married on 25 April, 1958, at the home of Mrs. Vinodini Nilkanth, a progressive social worker. Mr. Gattubhai Dhruv, President of BMA, Raja Pandya, Ushaben Vyas, Daksha Patel, Vinayak Amin, Jagdishbhai’s uncle and Ramesh Patel, Jagdishbhai’s brother attended the ceremony which was performed as per *Arya Samaj* rituals.

They made a striking couple - a tall fair, handsome man and petite girl with delicate features. The bride wore a simple, handspun cotton saree, no jewellery - so rare a sight in India. This unique and unconventional wedding became the talk of the town for days on end.



Wedding Ceremony

Bhadraben's family refused to accept the wedding. Mr. Chandubhai Satia, her uncle played a very significant role in prevailing upon the family to accept this wedding. The family, was left with no choice than to accept the wedding within a few weeks.

Jagdishbhai brought Bhadraben to his residence at Maninagar. His mother showed a certain amount of resistance as Bhadraben belonged to a different religion and caste. As other family members including Jagdishbhai's father accepted the marriage gladly, Bhadraben found easy acceptance in the Patel family over time.

The most revered and popular saint and social reformer of Gujarat, respected Shri Ravi Shankar Maharaj was the first person who visited Jagdishbhai's residence and blessed the newly married couple. His visit, in a way, was his implied consent to this inter-caste and inter-religion wedding. While blessing, he advised Bhadraben, "*Always be prepared to sacrifice without any expectation of any gains from society*". Bhadraben always acted upon this advice.



Just Married

On the second day, Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai, textile tycoon of Gujarat, invited the newly married couple to his residence and blessed them. Vinodaben Desai, Secretary of the Light House for the Blind Girls, extended her fullest cooperation and even provided new clothes to Bhadraben who had left her house empty-handed. (Late) Mr. Vinayak Amin, Jagdishbhai's uncle and Income Tax Commissioner also supported this wedding and advised other family members to accept it.

After a tumultuous beginning, they settled down in their lives and started planning new programmes for the blind. They mutually decided not to have children and thus devote themselves totally to the welfare of the blind.

His Life-long Mission

Jagdishbhai has won the unique distinction of establishing and developing a large number of blind welfare organizations in Gujarat and elsewhere. He inspired and initiated schemes

for establishing such organizations and enriched them with the active participation and involvement of local persons who were hand-picked for the cause. Most of these organizations are need based, encompassing available resources and functioning for the social and economic rehabilitation of the disabled. These organizations have become models for other agencies.

1947: Foundation of BMA

A historical meeting of a few leading blind persons was convened at Surat in October, 1947, immediately after India attained independence, under the presidentship of a well known blind barrister and the founding father of Blind Men's Association as well as the National Association for the Blind, Mr. Rustomji Meherwanji Alpaiwala. Mrs. Tehmina Alpaiwala, Mr. Balwant Bhatt, Mr. Kanak Trivedi, twin brothers Kanti and Shanti Shah, Mr. Siraj Basrai, Mr. Mangulal J. Shah, Dr. T. K. Modi, Dr. Rajendra T. Vyas and Jagdishbhai participated in the meeting. They all unanimously resolved to establish the Blind Men's Association under the leadership of Sardar Dawar T. K. Mody, a leading lawyer of Surat.

Dr. Vyas maintains that it was in this historic meeting in which Jagdishbhai also actively participated that the Blind Men's Association was born which ultimately became a vanguard in the movement of developing blind welfare services in India. The founding fathers of this movement decided to convene the first provincial conference for the blind at Mumbai during 1948 under the chairmanship of Mrs. Lilawati Munshi, wife of Mr. Kanhayalal Munshi - a renowned novelist under the auspices of the Blind Men's Association. The first All India Conference for the Blind was organized by this group in Mumbai. This conference resulted in the formation of the National Association for the Blind which is today a premier national level blind welfare and development organization in the country.

1950: BMA Ahmedabad

By 1950, the Blind Men's Association which was founded at Surat in October, 1947 got fragmented into three independent organizations, one each at Ahmedabad, Pune and Mumbai. Jagdishbhai, one of the founders of the Surat BMA, founded Blind Men's Association at Ahmedabad on 4 April, 1950 with no office premises and no staff. Since its inception during 1950, Jagdishbhai has been its Founder General Secretary and the guiding spirit. The first President of the organization was Mr. Nagardas Arjundas Chavda, a blind person. He had gained good reputation in the field of music.

Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai donated a house at Kameshwar Ni Pole in the heart of the walled city of Ahmedabad. Jagdishbhai along with other members of BMA started the Maganbhai *Kendra* (Centre). All the members of the Association met every Saturday night and Sunday morning. They used to contribute for the expenses of this Centre themselves.

1952: National Association for the Blind (India)

The NAB was established on 19 January, 1952, by a resolution of the First All India

Conference on Work for the Blind held in Mumbai. Jagdishbhai was one of the organizers of this Conference. It was registered as a Public Charitable Trust under the Mumbai Public Trusts Act 1950 (Bom XXIX of 1950) on 12 May, 1953 and also registered as a Society under Indian Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 on 21 July, 1954.

In 1952, the NAB had no funds, no office of its own, and no staff. Today after 44 years, it is recognized as the foremost national organization working for the welfare of the visually impaired in India. Its financial strength as on 31 March, 1996 is depicted below:

Table:

Financial Strength of the NAB

S.N.	Item	Rs. in Millions
a.	Trust Funds	24.23
b.	Other earmarked funds	48.66
c.	Immovable properties	15.35
d.	Investments	47.06
e.	Movable assets	6.39
f.	Expenditure (1995-96)	18.72
g.	Budget (1996-97)	37.49

Jagdishbhai has always been elected as one of seven Secretaries of the NAB (I) for every triennial term through an election process. In his term during 1993 to 1996, he could not attend most of meetings of the Managing Committee as well as Executive Committee of the NAB (I), he has been once again elected as Secretary of for the term 1996 to 1999.

He has served as Chairman and Member of number of committees of the NAB. He was appointed Secretary of the NAB Rural Activities Committee on its inception during 1982. He was elevated as Vice-Chairman during 1984 and then as Chairman during 1990. As he is based at Ahmedabad, the Central Coordinating Office of the NAB RAC is located at Ahmedabad since its inception during 1982.

1954: Light House for the Blind Girls, Ahmedabad

Jagdishbhai with the financial support of Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai established a centre exclusively for blind girls at Memnagar village near Ahmedabad. He became the founder Secretary of the Centre. During these days, Jagdishbhai was also preparing for his matriculation examination. He used to visit the Centre regularly for learning English from Manju *Chacha*, uncle of Mrs. Vinodaben, another Founder Member of the Centre.

The Light House is now a well-run special school imparting education and vocational

training to about 200 blind girls. It also provides hostel facilities to blind girls pursuing higher education. Jagdishbhai who was instrumental in establishing the Centre had to part company in 1966 due to certain inter-personal conflicts.

1956: Recreation Club

All the members of the Association decided to establish a Recreation Club for the blind. The first six members of the Club included Jagdishbhai, Arvind Vyas, Praful Vyas, Nanalal Kanabar, Ochhavlal Shah and Nagardas Chawda. Praful vyas worked as Secretary of the Club. Ochhavlal used to prepare tea and snacks etc. By 1960, the membership of the Club increased to 13. The new members included Biharilal Shah, Jaggabhai Darji, Chinubhai Shah, Chinubhai Patel and Giriraj Shankar Gaur.

The activities of the Club included chess, playing cards and reading braille books. Ms. Ranna Patwari, daughter of Mr. Prabhudas Patwari, a well known social worker, used to read news to the members of the Club. There was no radio in the Club and television had yet not been introduced. Thus listening to newspaper was the only mode of receiving daily news.

Jagdishbhai was very popular among the members. He used to read foreign braille literature and share the latest information with them. He also used to narrate success stories of blind persons in other parts of the world. During 1961, the Recreation Club was closed down.

1958: Prisoners Transcription Project for Braille Circulating Library

Mr. Kevin Carey, former Overseas Director of the Sight Savers International, U. K., in one of his letters written in 1995 remarked that he was busy developing an innovative project on production of braille material with the help of prisoners in London. What Kevin was developing as innovation in the nineties, Jagdishbhai had introduced and perfected in 1958!.

Jagdishbhai embarked upon a new concept of involving the prisoners of Sabarmati Central Jail at Ahmedabad for embossing of braille books. He approached Mr. Rustom K. Anklesaria, Superintendent of the Central Jail with this thought. Mr. Anklesaria, a very enthusiastic and devoted Parsi gentleman immediately gauged the potential in this thought and supported Jagdishbhai. The first of 10 prisoners were taught braille during 1958 and within a few weeks braille books were available to blind readers in Gujarat. The Jail Authorities even allotted a room, popularly known as "*Braille Barrack*", granted permission to BMA to station one staff in the jail, and accepted the project as an official project.

Encouraged by the performance of prisoners and consistent efforts of Jagdishbhai, the Jail Authorities decided to provide proportionate remission from Jail sentence against embossing of braille books. While the organization pays an honorarium of Rs. 60 for 100

pages embossed, a remission of 1 day is given for 45 pages embossed. One of the prisoners is also providing services as *Jobdar*, a responsible person. He is paid an honorarium of Rs. 90 per month for his services.

Even today, the *Braille Barrack* exists. The organization has placed Manubhai Barot, a blind person, for teaching braille and coordinating braille book production on a regular basis. So far, the prisoners of Sabarmati Jail have embossed 15,000 braille volumes for the C. N. Braille Library.

April, 1958: Beginning of Life-long Trio

Kanubhai lost his vision in the month of May 1952 due to vitreous hemorrhage while pursuing his M. Sc. (Research) in Bio-chemistry. He had to discontinue his higher education as he could not perform laboratory experiments and could not manage a writer for his thesis on the subject, "*Ascorbic Properties of Vegetables & Fruits and Seeds of *Celetterus Peniculatus* (Mal-kangdi)*".

As he lost all hopes of completing his education and pursuing any meaningful profession, he took recourse to meditation. He followed the preaching of *Shankracharyaji* of Jagannth Puri. During 1952 to 1957, his only pursuit was meditation, yoga, *mantras* and following the preachings of his Guru. Due to intuition from within, Kanubhai wanted to meet Jagdishbhai. Smt. Shushilaben M. Thaker, Kanubhai's sister-in-law, traced the address of Jagdishbhai and took Kanubhai to him during early April, 1958.. His first encounter was at the *Medico Massage* - physiotherapy clinic of Jagdishbhai at Golwad, Khadia.



Kanubhai A. Thaker

When Kanubhai approached Jagdishbhai, the latter was treating patients. As Shushilaben had already given Kanubhai's case-history, Jagdishbhai started teaching braille to him in the first meeting itself. Kanubhai, in the first encounter itself, experienced in Jagdishbhai a great dynamism, rationalism and desire to do something for his blind brethren. The latter had a seemingly impossible dream to establish an institution on the lines of Shantiniketan for the blind.

Kanubhai saw in Jagdishbhai an outstanding person who could achieve anything he desired. So far, his profession of physiotherapy was concerned, he had a deep knowledge and great affection towards his patients. His patients were attracted because of his result-oriented and successful treatment.

During subsequent meetings, Jagdishbhai, through discussion and narration of successful

case studies, developed self-confidence in Kanubhai. The outcome of the discussions held in the Recreation Club, was a group decision to establish a centre for those adult blind who were devoid of any kind of education or rehabilitation. Kanubhai learnt from Jagdishbhai that there was a lack of such opportunities due to ignorance and negative attitude of the parents as well as a deep-rooted social stigma toward disability.

Jagdishbhai encouraged Kanubhai to establish a centre for the adult blind. He entrusted to him the complete responsibility of establishing such a centre. By this time, Bhadraben Satia, a lecturer at S. L. U. College for Women had come in contact with Jagdishbhai and Kanubhai and had subsequently married Jagdishbhai. She had an ardent desire to do some meaningful social work. She supported Kanubhai in this task of establishing the Adult Training Centre for the Blind during 1960, which over the next 40 years emerged to be the largest and economically viable on-the-job training centre for the blind.

Kanubhai was reborn after his meeting with Jagdishbhai. That meeting transformed him from a passive life as a meditator to an active educator of the blind. He along with Jagdishbhai and Bhadraben formed an ever-lasting trio on the Managing Committee of the BMA. His association with Jagdishbhai grew from strength to strength over 40 years. It had turned out to be a life long association. Kanubhai was reckoned to be one of the most leading educators of the blind, promoter of residential education for the adult blind as well as integrated education of blind children.

Kanubhai left for his heavenly abode suddenly and unexpectedly on 8 March, 1997 at 9.30 p.m. The Times of India, Ahmedabad edition published the following news item “*In the City Today*” column:

Hail, Kanubhai

“The inmates of Blind Men’s Association (BMA) would never forget 45-year-long dedicated services of 68-year-old blind Kanubhai A. Thakar, who died here last week. For BMA, Kanubhai was a persistent hard worker who had totally devoted his life for the welfare and rehabilitation of blind people.

Kanubhai, a bachelor, became blind at the age of 23, when he had to appear in the post-graduation examination. Undeterred by the blindness, Kanubhai joined BMA and relentlessly worked for the blind. Interestingly, he retired way back in 1988 as the Principal of the Secondary School for the Blind. But his love for the betterment of blind could not separate him from the institute. He already had two heart attacks; that did not keep him away from BMA work.

Even after retirement, Kanubhai continued to work full time honorary Director (Education) for BMA till the end without earning anything. On the contrary, he donated Rs.

30,000 to BMA for increasing the facilities for the blind people. From every month's salary, he used to donate small amounts to blind students to enable them to meet routine expenses.

Kanubhai who had won prestigious R. M. Alpaiwalla National Award for outstanding contribution to the welfare and rehabilitation of blind, was instrumental in setting up a school for the adult blind. His dedication to the blind people is evident from the fact that on 8 March, the fateful day, he worked till 8.30 p. m. in BMA and went home where he died due to severe heart attack”.

1959: Beginning of Braille Reading and Writing Competition

Mrs. Rehmat S. Fazelbhoy, a well known educationist of the blind and a fund-raiser, met Jagdishbhai and Bhadraben during 1959, when she had just entered the field of blind welfare as a teacher of blind children. She recalls, *"Their welcome was warm and sincere and their enthusiasm in their projects for the blind was infectious"*. She could not help feeling that with this kind of dedication and devotion, to their self-chosen vocation, the complex for the blind at Ahmedabad would develop into one of the finest projects in the country.

With her newly acquired diploma for teaching the blind children, she felt that she knew everything there was to know about how the little ones should be taught and cared for. After a patient hearing about her ideas and how she proposed to implement them. Jagdishbhai remarked, *"You are talking like a 'Mother Superior'. Many things which you have just said may be good for England but they will not work in India. Very soon you will learn how to use this knowledge for our children who live in poor conditions and, in many cases, whose parents are quite illiterate."*

How right he was and how fruitful this first encounter turned out to be! She found herself totally unsuited to teach in a school for the blind for two main reasons. Firstly, there was the language barrier for she could not speak or communicate in any of the regional languages. Secondly, she found that much of the energies of the school committee members as well as the staff were utilized in raising funds to keep the school going rather than in educating the children who were in their care.

She, therefore, turned her energies in different directions. In every project which she wanted to implement, it was Jagdishbhai whose opinion she sought and valued. The first unusual project she started was a braille reading competition for children in schools for the blind in the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Jagdishbhai's participation was enthusiastic. He motivated all the schools for the blind in Gujarat to join the programme and, for the first time a large contingent of children from Gujarat came to Mumbai to meet and compete with their peers from Maharashtra.

So enthusiastic was his approach to this new idea that, two years later, he hosted the first All India Braille Reading Competition at Ahmedabad in which 200 children from all over India participated.

1960: Adult Training Centre for the Blind

Bhadraben recalls that Rajpal, a 25 year old, congenitally blind orphan and a beggar by profession, came to Jagdishbhai's *Medico-Massage* to meet him in 1956. He was very enthusiastic and wanted to give up begging and live a life of dignity and respect.

He felt very happy to meet Jagdishbhai who was earning almost Rs. 5,000 per month and was by then Ahmedabad's leading Physiotherapist in the city. He considered Jagdishbhai as a role model and symbol of great achievement.

Impressed by Jagdishbhai's achievements, Rajpal started visiting the Recreation Club almost daily. He used to tell stories, sing songs and play the *Dholak*. The members decided to dissuade Rajpal from begging. The major question was his survival.

Already the N. S. D. Industrial Home for the Blind was founded on 1 April, 1917 at Mumbai for imparting on-the-job training in weaving, cane-work, wire-work, cardboard box making and knitting string-bags to the adult blind. Jagdishbhai had already observed the functioning of this centre. The plight of Rajpal encouraged him to replicate such an experiment at Ahmedabad. The members unanimously decided to start the Adult Training Centre for the Blind. The President of the Blind Men's Association, Mr. Jaikrishna Harivallabhdas also supported the idea. The Centre was registered as a Public Charitable Trust under the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950 and a Society under the Indian Societies Registration Act, 1862 on 30 December, 1965.

Jagdishbhai borrowed Rs. 1,000 from his kind-hearted father, Dr. Kashibhai Patel. With this initial capital, the group purchased a set of one dozen cups and saucers, one stove and other such items. Mr. Ochhavlal very generously donated one bag of wheat. Bhadraben recalls that they used to visit each and every shop in the grain market to solicit donation of grain etc. Mr. Arvind Sahiba, President of the Grain Merchants Association used to help in this endeavour.

Along with Rajpal, Shivaji Patel, Mohan Sitapara and Ramji Prajapati joined the Centre as the first batch of trainees. Handloom weaving and braille writing were introduced as the first activities. Mr. Mavji Macwana joined as the first Instructor of the centre.

Recognition of the Government: Jagdishbhai approached the Director of Social Welfare, Govt. of Gujarat to grant recognition to the Centre. The Department carried out inspection and granted the certificate of recognition on 1 June, 1961 which reads as follows:

“This is to certify that the Adult Training Centre for the Blind and the Sheltered Workshop for the Blind situated in Maganbhai Kendra, Raipur and managed by the Blind Men’s Association, Ahmedabad is a grant-in-aid institution of this department”.

Subsequently, the Department also recognized the Adult Training Centre for the Blind (Hostel) for providing boarding and lodging facilities to 275 blind persons. The Department provides grant-in-aid for the staff salary of the hostel and kitchen staff, admissible expenses and meals expenses of Rs. 225 per inmate per month.

1960: Blind Welfare Organizers Association

Jagdishbhai invited all the leading workers and organizers in the field of blind welfare for a State Level Convention organized at Kameshwar Ni Pole, official head-quarter of the BMA. Dr. Rajendra T. Vyas of Mumbai, Mr. Bhikhabhai Shah and Mr. Nanalal Kanabar of Rajkot and many other workers attended the convention. Gujarat was bestowed a separate statehood on 1 May, 1960. The convention was organized immediately after that to attract attention of the state authorities. The participants resolved to approach the Govt. of Gujarat for evolving the grant-in-aid code for extending assistance to blind welfare organizations.

Jagdishbhai was always dynamic and forceful in his approach with the State Government. He was instrumental in getting heads of all disabled welfare agencies to combine together to have negotiations regarding salary code, procedure of release of grants. Due to this cooperative stance, Gujarat is the first state to have a standard code for Grant-in-aid. NGOs and the State Government have a very good equation and healthy respect for each other.

Through the efforts of Jagdishbhai, Anantbhai Shah of Bhavnagar, other members of Viklang Sanstha Sanchalak Sangh and Mr. R. K. Shah, former Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare, Govt. of Gujarat has evolved and adopted the most liberal Grant-in-aid code for the disabled welfare organizations. The staff of the disabled welfare organizations are entitled to almost all the benefits available to other government employees.

1960: C. N. Braille Circulating Library

The Chhotalal Narsidas Braille Circulating Library which is housed in the building donated by Sheth Mr. Indubhai Dahyabhai in the memory of his late father Mr. Dahyabhai Maneklal Shah has a pride of place in Gujarat. The Braille Library has proved to be an invaluable gift to its blind members. It has more than 15,000 volumes ranging from educational text books, novels in Gujarati literature and books on general reading etc.

The members of this library who come from different parts of India are secure in the fact that almost all aspects of knowledge can be obtained through the books available here. Every year, 400 blind members, who availed the library services free of charge, helped

themselves to this store house of knowledge. Braille books are mailed to the houses of blind readers all over Gujarat.

Rajnikant P. Patel with a Certificate Course in Library Sciences joined the library in 1973 when the library had only 6000 volumes. Before that Kailashben and Purnaben Jhaveri had provided their services for developing this Library. Late Ramanbhai Andhariya, a blind person provided his services as a proof reader in the library. The library used the services of blind persons and the prisoners of the Sabarnmti Central Jail for producing the braille books using braille slates. Ramanbhai used to proof read these books and then put them in the library.

Braille Library for Children: The Lions Club of Ahmedabad (Main) supported a section in the Library for the blind children during 1989. The section known as *Lioness Club of Ahmedabad (Main) Children's Library* has acquired 600 volumes. It has enrolled 10 organizations for the blind and 25 individual blind children. This section provides story books and books on general knowledge to blind children.

Expansion of Library: As the library building is packed to capacity, the organization constructed one more floor during 1996 to expand the library services. This section is named as *Lioness Karnavati Smt. Ruxmaniben Deepchandji Gardi Braille Documentation & Research Centre*. Shri Dipchand Gardi, a well-known philanthropist, provided a donation of Rs. 3 lacs and Lioness Club of Karnavati raised another Rs. 2 lacs for this purpose.

1962: Land for Campus

Jagdishbhai invited Major Bridges, Director, American Foundation for the Overseas Blind, now known as American Foundation for the Blind for a visit to Ahmedabad. A public function was organized in the ATIRA Auditorium. This visit generated a lot public interest and awareness about the services for the blind in the U.S.A.

Encouraged by this visit, Mr. Mehendi Nawaj Jung, Governor of Gujarat, paid a visit to the Maganbhai Kendra at Kameshwar ni Pole which housed all the activities of the Blind Men's Association. It is reported that Mr. Jung himself had a blind friend. Therefore, he took interest in services for the blind. He assured all assistance of the State Government to the organization for promoting services for the blind.

Jagdishbhai wanted to encash this opportunity and requested the Hon'ble Governor to allot a piece of land for constructing a building for the organization. A number of prominent citizens including Mr. Arvind Buch, President of the Ahmedabad Textile Labourers Association; Mr. Arvind P. Sheth, a known printer; and Mr. Arvind Sahiba, President of the Ahmedabad Grains Merchants Association supported the idea. Bhadraben followed up the matter with the District Collector and officials of the Revenue Department.

Ultimately, the BMA was allotted 5,759 square yards of land near village Vastrapur.

This plot of land accommodates the present head quarters of the BMA and other institutional programmes. This piece of land was cleared as “*Non Agriculture*” land on 14 March, 1962 by the City Deputy Collector, Ahmedabad.

Additional Land: The Ahmedabad Education Society, a leading educational society of Ahmedabad allotted 3038 square yards of land to the BMA at a nominal rate of Rs. 10 per square yard through deed of conveyance on 28 January, 1966. With this addition, the BMA till that date had acquired 8797 square yards of land. Shri Arvindbhai, Jagdishbhai and Bhadraben worked very hard for acquiring these adjoining plots of land. The Deed of Conveyance was signed by three of them on behalf of the organization.

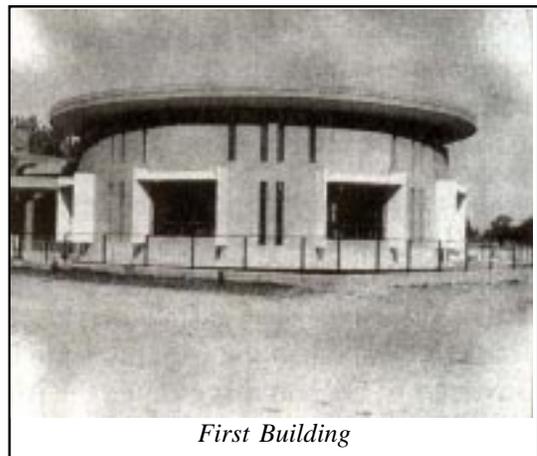
Land for New Campus: A news item appeared in Gujarat Samachar, a leading daily newspaper of Ahmedabad, that according to Government Notification, the BMA would be provided land near Vastrapur village for promoting services for the blind. Jagdishbhai and Bhadraben followed up this matter. On 7 June, 1973, the Government of Gujarat allotted 4840 square yards of revenue-free land to the organization. On this plot of land which is 700 meters away from its Central Campus, the organization has established the *BMA Lioness Karnavati Hostel for the Blind Women*; and the *C. N. Kinariwala CIDA Asian Rehabilitation Training Institute*.

Additional Land for Campus: As the organization was expanding its services during the 70s, it required additional land for constructing a building for the recording studio. It once again approached the Ahmedabad Education Society with a request to allot 2,000 square yards of land. The Society allotted this land on 3 September, 1982 at a Government approved nominal rate of Rs. 75 per square yard. With the acquisition of this land, the total plot size of the campus increased to 10,797 square yards.

The organization has recently made an application for the allotment of revenue-free 25,000 square yards of additional land near village Vastrapur.

1963: First Building

The Lions Club of Ahmedabad decided to donate Rs. 25,000 for the construction of the first building in the Vastrapur campus. Mr. Arvind N. Lalbhai who subsequently became the President of the BMA motivated this donation. This building was completed during 1964 and hostel and schools were started in this campus. Bhadraben recalls that the campus was isolated and there was no metal road. They had to pass through shrubs and traverse muddy roads to reach the campus.



First Building

Fortunately, the campus of the Indian Institute of Management was taking shape at that time only. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, eminent nuclear scientist and institution builder used to visit IIM to monitor progress of construction of buildings. He used to meet Jagdishbhai and Bhadraben and always inquired about the progress of construction etc.

This building today houses the Cama Secondary & Higher Schools for the Blind, Adult Training Centre School for the Blind, Principal's office, staff room and the central store. This building is the centre of learning of the BMA.

1963: Braille Periodical 'USHA'

Praful Vyas observes that Jagdishbhai was very popular among his blind friends as he used to read lot of published material, listen to radio and gather information from his patients and share the same with his friends. He also used to write a column on blind welfare services for Gujarat Samachar, the most popular local daily newspaper. To share such information with other blind persons who were not able to reach him personally, Jagdishbhai started a quarterly newsletter in Braille.

The earlier copies of the newsletter were produced on braille. With the establishment of the H. N. Makim Regional Braille Press, the copies were produced in the braille press. This was a very popular newsletter among the blind readers. During 1979, its name was changed to *Pratibha* and it was printed in Gujarat as well as English ink-print and Gujarati Braille. The English edition was distributed to readers all over the world.

BMA Newsletter: As the Registrar of Newspapers, declined to register the name "*Pratibha*", the name was once again changed to *BMA Newsletter* during 1987. It is published every quarter in English and Gujarati in ink-print and in Gujarati braille and distributed to its readers all over the world. The Ministry of Welfare provides grant-in-aid for its publication under the Central Scheme of Assistance to Organizations for the Disabled.

1964: National Association for the Blind - Gujarat State Branch

By the early sixties, the National Association for the Blind (India) was the country's most premier non-governmental voluntary organization. It had also acquired the status of a national organization. It entrusted the responsibility of nomination of Indian delegations to a number of international conferences and world assemblies.

Jagdishbhai was the one of the Members of the Executive Committee of NAB (I). As NAB (I) was planning to expand its activities at the national level, its Executive Committee decided to establish State Branches all over the country. The first State Branch for West Bengal was established at Calcutta. However, this was not much functional. The NAB (I) decided to establish the Gujarat State Branch during 1964. Mr. Mehendi Nawaj Jung, Governor of Gujarat inaugurated the Branch on 25 October, 1964 in the premises of the Blind Men's Association.

Jagdishbhai has been the Founder Honorary General Secretary of the Branch since its inception. The Branch has played a significant role in the development of services at the grass-root level. The first project launched under the Branch was establishing an Employment & Placement Services with the financial assistance of the head-quarter during 1967. Oliver and Nandubhai Panchal were the first Placement Officers appointed by the Branch.

The Ministry of Finance has recognized the Gujarat State Branch under section 35 AC of the Income Tax Act, 1961 for the Assessment Years 1997-97 to 1999-2000. It would enable the Branch to extend an incentive to the donors in terms of 100 percent exemption from the income tax.

1964: Secondary School for the Blind

Jagdishbhai was always keen on promoting education of blind persons. During the early 60s, there was no provision for secondary or higher secondary education for blind students in Gujarat. As a student of the Calcutta School for the Blind, he had learnt that the Calcutta University was conducting matriculation examination of the meritorious blind students.

Jagdishbhai with the help of (Late) Kanubhai Thaker started a pilot project of conducting private classes for the Music Teachers of the Blind for imparting them secondary level education. The first batch of 5 students appeared for the secondary level examination as private candidates through Bharat Secondary School Khadia for the secondary board examination. Thanks to the keen interest of Mr. B. V. Bonde, Principal of Bharat Secondary School as well as Mr. Bhanot, Chairman of the Secondary School Examination Board that this unique arrangement could be possible. As Mr. Bhanot had a blind niece, he was very sensitive to the needs of the blind.

During 1963, Mr. Badlani, Director of Secondary Education paid a visit to the organization and showed his satisfaction with its progress. Jagdishbhai inquired whether it was possible for the Department of Education to grant recognition to the organization to run a Secondary School for the Blind. Mr. Badlani took personal interest and granted recognition to such a school for the first time in Gujarat. The school started admitting blind students for standards VIII to XI.

Mr. Jitendra M. Trivedi was promoted as Principal of the school. The first final examination for the secondary level was held during 1967. The school achieved 100 percent result during its first year itself. The school has always achieved 90 percent or higher results. Due to agitation of select school staff which coincided with the widespread *Navnirman* Movement, the school was closed during 1974.

Higher Secondary School for the Blind

(Late) Kanubhai Thakar took over as Principal of the School and re-started with fresh

recognition during 1975. He also managed recognition for the Higher Secondary School for the Blind during 1976. As Kanubhai himself was a science graduate, he took the lead in starting the science stream for the blind students.

Encouraged by the achievements of this school, Navrangpura School for the Blind, Ahmedabad; Govt. School for the Blind, Junagadh; School for the Blind, Amreli; and K. K. School for the Blind also applied for and got recognition for imparting secondary level education to the blind.

Vocational Stream: BMA took the lead in initiating a Stenography Course under the Vocational Courses Scheme of the 10+2 stream from the academic year 1989-90. Jagdishbhai always felt that blind persons can be trained in almost every trade with some adaptations. The BMA standardized the Gujarati Braille Shorthand system with the collaboration of the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, Dehradun as part of a research project. The students of this course have passed with flying colours and proved Jagdishbhai's words. Yahya Sapatwala, a blind person learnt braille shorthand and used it with effect for taking down notes. He completed his post-graduate and is currently doing his Ph.D. under the guidance of Mr. Kumarpal Desai, a noted literature. Yahya is one of the many blind persons who have completed their stenography course and are pursuing brilliant career.

1967: Music School for the Blind

One of Jagdishbhai's close associates, Praful Vyas encouraged him to impart training in music to the blind students. The first batch of 11 students appeared for *Prarambhik to Madhyama* during 1961. Slowly and steadily, number of aspirants started increasing and the organization felt the need for establishing the Music School for the Blind from the academic year 1967-68. In the first batch, 66 blind students joined the school. The school was granted affiliation by the *Gandharva Mahavidhayalaya Mandal* on 5 February, 1971.

Jagdishbhai motivated Ratilal M. Solanki, a blind person with Diploma in Music from the M. S. University, Vadodara to join the school as Music Teacher. Subsequently, Baldevbhai D. Prajapati, with the same qualification joined the school as teacher. Then Chaturbhai B. Patel, also with the same qualification, joined the school as Teacher and has continued ever since. Satyanarayan R. Tiwari completed *Sangit and Siksha Visharad* joined the school as Band Master subsequently.

The school provides training in music upto *Shiksha Visharad* level which is recognized by the Gandharva School of Music, Miraj, Mumbai. This school enables trained blind persons to get jobs as music teachers or be self employed. The school taps the musical potential of blind students and helps them to blossom into professional musicians.

Jagdish Mehida, a student of this school, who completed *Visharad*, joined the M. S. University Faculty of Music and completed Master of Music. He joined the IPCL

School as Music Teacher. He is earning Rs. 12,000 per month. Similarly a large number of other students completed Bachelor of Music as well as Master of Music and pursued suitable career in teaching of music. Piyush Dave, Aljibhai and Jayant Vyas who completed *Visharad* from the school are now Radio Artists. Natwar Solanki and Urvish Mehta have already released their audio cassettes. Similarly, Kutubudhin Moraswala runs his own music group. 11 blind students of the 1996-97 batch have lent their voice and played musical instruments for producing public awareness cassettes for *Jan Kalyan*, a leading non-governmental developmental organization. The blind students of the school are very popular as folk singers and musicians and they are in great demand during the *Navratri Garba Festival*.

During 1967 to 1997, about 1219 students appeared for various examinations, 95 completed *Visharad* and 35 of them completed *Shiksha Visharad* from the school.

1 August, 1967: NAB P. N. M. Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind, Mount Abu

Through the generous gift of a bungalow and three acres of land given by Smt. Khoorshed Gharda to the National Association for the Blind in memory of her two sons Pheroze and Noshir at Delwada Road, Mount Abu in Rajasthan, a rehabilitation centre for providing need based services to the newly blind was established. The Committee of Management constituted Mr. Arvind N. Lalbhai as Chairman, Mrs. Queenie H. C. Captain as Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Khoorshed Burjor Gharda, Mrs. Coomi Pheroze Merwanji, as representatives of the donor. The Committee of Management appointed Jagdishbhai and Capt. H. J. M. Desai as Secretaries and Bhadraben Satia as Director of the Centre. Mr. Kantibhai Upadhaya, Babu Ramchandra, Thakur Devi Singh, Parvez Merwanji, Dr. Rajendra Vyas as Members played an instrumental role in establishing this centre. During the initial years, the Centre was managed by Jagdishbhai and Bhadraben from Ahmedabad.

This is the first full-fledged rehabilitation centre for the newly blind in India. It aims at adjusting and orienting the newly blind and those who have no formal training after blindness. The centre trains the adult blind in orientation and adjustment, personal management, personal grooming, orientation & mobility, various handicrafts and vocations.

Just take up this topic with Jagdishbhai and Bhadraben and they will narrate detailed stories of their shifting all the furniture, raw material, food items, staff and even the trainees in their Desotto car. Mount Abu being a small isolated town in those years, they have to put a lot of efforts and maintain the supply line from Ahmedabad. Jagdishbhai served the centre as Secretary from 1 August, 1967 to 30 September, 1988 for almost 21 years. After that he was appointed as Member of the Advisory Committee of the Centre. This has been the only Centre providing rehabilitative services to the newly blind persons in the western part of the country.

1968: Technical School for the Blind

To promote technical education of blind persons, the organization established the Technical School for the Blind for the first time in India. The schools has been recognized and funded by the Director of Technical Education. The examinations are conducted by and the certificates are awarded by Technical Examination Board. It was through the efforts of Jagdishbhai that the Director of Technical Education, for the first time, agreed to recognize technical courses for the blind. The school imparts one year training in various trades viz. general mechanic, electric motor rewinding, carpentry practices, hand & powerloom weaving, cane-work, coir-work and card-board work.

1969: Regional Braille Press

During 1969, the National Association for the Blind Regional Braille Press was established at Ahmedabad. The NAB (I) provided braille embossing machine and stereotypers. The Victoria Braille Press was manufactured during 1942 in the United Kingdom. The NAB Gujarat is still using this out-moded machine. Shankarbhai Patel and Piyush Sanghani assisted Jagdishbhai in establishing the Press. Futarmal J. Porwal, himself a blind person and an ardent follower of Jagdishbhai joined the Braille Press as Manager on 1 October, 1976 on a monthly salary of Rs. 450 per month. Futarbhai has always been a very close associate, companion and follower of Jagdishbhai. He has been successfully handling the Central Scheme of Aids and Appliances since 1981. He has distributed aids and appliances to the needy disabled persons across the State of Gujarat worth Rs. 20 millions.

The Department of Social Defence, Govt. of Gujarat provides 100 percent grant for the maintenance of the staff and for other recurring expenses. The staff gets all other benefits available to employees of the State Government. From the year 1992, the Braille Press has been named as H. N. Makim Braille Press in the memory of Mr. Makim, a blind entrepreneur and close friend of Jagdishbhai.

1973: Archana Natvarlal Kinariwala Talking Book Library

All educational material necessary for the blind is not always available in Braille. This creates a host of problems for blind persons desirous of pursuing higher education. Jagdishbhai took the lead and approached the Ministry of Welfare to provide grant-in-aid for establishing the Talking Book Library. The Ministry sanctioned a recurring grant of Rs. 7,780 and non-recurring grant of Rs. 11,890 for this purpose. The Ministry has been providing the grant-in-aid under the Central Scheme of Assistance to the Organizations for the disabled for the maintenance of the project.

The Vice President of the organization, Mr. Natwarbhai Kinariwala very gracefully contributed Rs. 1,90,000 for the construction of a new building for the library. Smt. Sheela Kaul, former Minister of Social Welfare & Education, Government of India laid the foundation stone on 6 June, 1982. The former President of India, (Late) Giani

Zail Singh inaugurated the project on 12 December, 1985.

The organization imported the latest recording equipment from Studer International, Switzerland for producing audio cassettes of the best quality. During 1989, the Canadian International Development Agency provided a financial support of Rs. 2,70,000 for purchasing recording equipment, cassettes player and the cassettes.

Popatlal J. Solanki joined the project as Radio Engineer and played an important role in initiating the production of audio cassettes. Prabhudas Yadav took over as Radio Engineer during 1978 and developed the recording facilities to the present level. This library is the most well equipped cassette library established by any blind welfare organization in the country.

1973: Adult Training Centre (Workshop) for the Blind

This 'on-the-job' training centre was established to provide transitory employment and 'on-the-job' training to the blind and disabled persons of all categories. In this centre, training is provided in carpentry, general mechanics, motor-rewinding and book winding.

Since its inception during 1973, the objective has been to manage it as a financially viable entity. While the primary objective has been expediting economic rehabilitation of disabled persons, associated objective also has been recovering the complete cost on training through the sale of various products manufactured by the disabled persons.

1973: Multicategory Training Centre for the Handicapped

The Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India had evolved a scheme of extending assistance to multi-category workshops for the handicapped under the Central Scheme of Assistance to the Organizations for the Disabled. Jagdishbhai, as enterprising as ever, submitted his application for grant-in-aid. The Multicategory Workshop for the Handicapped was one of the five such workshops in the country which was recognized by the Ministry for the purpose of grant-in-aid. The first installment of Rs. 30,000 for recurring expenditure and Rs. 30,000 for non-recurring expenditure was released vide sanction letter No. F.8/101/73/HW on 22 March, 1974, followed by a grant-in-aid of Rs. 1,00,000 for equipment on 30 April, 1974. In fact, this was the first grant-in-aid from the Ministry to the Blind Men's Association. Since then, the organization has been receiving grant-in-aid regularly every year mostly for the recurring expenditure.

This centre provides on-the-job training in simulated industrial settings. The blind and disabled trainees are selected on the 1st and 15th of every month and given training after their residual abilities, aptitude and dexterity are checked up by a Vocational Counsellor, a Welfare Officer and an Occupational Therapist. The trainees are imparted training in various trades viz. light engineering, commercial design, files & stationery, tailoring, composing, printing and book-binding.

The trainees are imparted training for a period not extending 2 years. They are assisted by the Employment & Placement Services of the organization to get employment on completion of training. During the period of their training, they are paid a stipend in the range of Rs. 300 to 550, depending upon their performance, regularity and progress in training. So far, 980 students have been enrolled in the training centre.

1974: Lock-out of the Institute

Jagdishbhai recalls that 26 April, 1974 was the darkest day in the history of the Blind Men's Association. The Principal of the Secondary School for the Blind, Mr. A. P. Trivedi convened a meeting of the parents of blind students in the prayer hall. The students, parents and staff instigated by the Principal and other voluntary workers decided to launch an agitation against the management. A number of speakers made provocative speeches against the management. The major issues were quality of food, general behaviour of Jagdishbhai and lower salary of staff.

The Vice-president of the Adult Training Centre for the Blind, (Late) Mr. Indrarvadan Pranal Shah, an industrialist and a strong person volunteered to negotiate on behalf of the management but it was of no avail. At that time, the whole of Gujarat and particularly, Ahmedabad was in the grip of the *Navnirman* Movement. The centre of this agitation was L. D. College of Engineering which is just a kilometer away from the organization.

All colleges, schools and educational institutions in Gujarat were closed for over six months. The Government and the then Chief Minister, Chimanbhai Patel had to bow out in the face of opposition.

All those present in the Prayer Hall took a procession to the Department of Social Defence at Lal Darwaja. Blind students of various educational programmes of the organization joined the agitation. In all, about 100 persons went on indefinite fast. The first reaction of Jagdishbhai to this agitation was "*I did not expect so much*".

Praful Vyas confirms that he along with Dhiru Davariya and Nandu Panchal tried to persuade the students not to go on strike but could not succeed. Slowly, most of the students went away home and a number of teachers also followed suit. Thus the number of agitating students and staff was reduced to a small number. At this stage, Shri Ravishankar Maharaj, Reverend Saint of Gujarat and leader of *Navniraman* Movement advised Jagdishbhai to hand over administration of the organization to the Department of Social Defence, Govt. of Gujarat. Honourable Governor of Gujarat, Mr. Vishwanathan also intervened in the matter.

With tears in their eyes, Jagdishbhai, Bhadraben and Nandiniben Munshaw, three Secretaries, handed over administration of the organization to Mrs. Singhla, Director of Social Defence. At this moment of great crisis, Shri Arvind Lalbhai, Nandiniben Munshaw, Manubhai

D. Shah, Bhadraben Satia, Arvind P. Sheth, Indravadan Pranlal Shah, all members of Executive Committee of BMA stood by the side of Jagdishbhai.

This crisis was mainly caused by A. P. Trivedi, Principal of the Secondary School for the Blind and Shrikant Shah, Shankarbhai K. Patel and Vandanaben Nagarsheth, all volunteers of the organization. The major cause of this agitation was interpersonal conflicts between this group on one side and Jagdishbhai on the other side.

A. P. Trivedi & group however did not take charge of the organization and decided to establish a new organization. They set up a secondary school for the blind named as “*Andhjan Uttarmadhyamik Shala*” at Keshavnagar, Sabarmati under the auspices of another well-known social welfare organization “*Sadvichar Parivar*”. All the teachers loyal to A. P. Trivedi were accommodated in this school. Even the students who decided to part company were admitted in this school.

The *Sadvichar Parivar* acquired 60 acres of land near village Uvarsad near Gandhinagar, the Capital of Gujarat. It had planned to establish a modern, well equipped and economically viable centre for all categories of disabled. The Keshavnagar school was also shifted to this campus. It also started the technical school for all categories of disabled, a production cum training centre and an agriculture training centre for the disabled.

A. P. Trivedi, who was promoted as Director of the Centre subsequently, left the organization and joined Navodaya school as principal. He virtually left the field of blind welfare for ever.

1975: Beginning of Professionalism

Jagdishbhai was always very keen on professionalizing the training-cum-production activities. Hence he brought in Harish M. Panchal, with Diploma in Electrical as well as Mechanical Engineering. He joined the centre as Works Manager with effect from 10 October, 1975. The average sale at that time was Rs. 30,000 a month. He was given the target of increasing the sale to Rs. 10 lakhs per month which he achieved by the year 1977-78. The pattern of growth in sale is reflected below. The sale of the Workshop increased from 3.48 lakh during 1975 -76 to Rs. 2.93 crores during 1996-97 which is an increase of almost 82 times.

Table 2
Sales (Rs. in lakhs)

S.N.	Year	ATCB	BMA	Total
1.	1976	3.48	-	3.48
2.	1977	6.14	2.19	8.33
3.	1978	13.52	2.60	16.12
4.	1979	23.15	2.81	25.96
5.	1980	39.01	2.28	41.29

S.N.	Year	ATCB	BMA	Total
6.	1981	53.25	8.70	61.95
7.	1982	65.03	20.07	85.10
9.	1983	65.10	14.04	79.14
10.	1984	44.90	22.67	67.57
11.	1985	60.80	23.54	90.34
12.	1986	79.46	26.46	105.92
13.	1987	82.70	33.39	116.09
14.	1988	91.80	37.57	129.37
15.	1989	141.77	26.97	168.74
16.	1990	158.88	34.33	193.21
17.	1991	150.05	39.01	189.06
18.	1992	180.92	43.53	250.68
19.	1993	207.15	47.64	229.80
20.	1994	182.16	47.54	255.95
21.	1995	208.41	64.42	357.42
22.	1996	293.00	74.42	367.42

The training centre achieved financial viability from the financial year 1978-79 itself. It availed bank loan under Differential Rate of Interest from Dena Bank, Navrangpura Branch to begin with and then from the Bank of India, Memnagar Road Branch. over the past decade. It took bank loan for its showrooms from the Union Bank of India. It has maintained its consistent rate of growth over all the years.

Harishbhai was subsequently promoted as Manager (*Training*) and then Director (*Training*). He has been assisted in task by Vithalbhai Patel, one of the oldest employees of BMA, Premjibhai Moradia for the despatch and inspection respectively. Badribhai Patel, Chaturbhai Chauhan, Damjibhai Tank, Kantibhai Jethwa, V. C. Mitra, Jagdish Trivedi, Jayantibhai Suthar, Naranbhai Patel and Sunil Parmar have assisted at the shop-floor level; Bharat Suthar, A. P. Pandya, Shataram Parab and Shashikant Ajalpuria have assisted at the store and purchase level; Mayaben Patel, Dipak Joshi, Rohit Dave, M. Panchal, Atul Patel and Shakuntalaben have assisted in accounts and secretarial work.

1983: Handika - A Marketing Outlet:

The sales turnover of the Workshop has been consistently increasing every year. Till 1983, the major sales were to the government departments, state-run corporations and such other institutional clients. As furniture is an item of household use, there existed a large market for household furniture. To tap this market segment, the organization launched its

marketing outlet, a showroom at Relief Road, in the heart of the city. Mr. Shreyansh S. Shah, Managing Editor of the *Gujarat Samachar* inaugurated the showroom “*Handika*” on 19 February, 1983.

During 1985, the workshop established its second outlet “*Handika-2*” at District Shopping Centre, Sector 24, Gandhinagar, the capital of Gujarat. The third showroom “*Handika-3*” was established at the Kamdhenu Commercial Centre at Panjrapole, Polytechnic, Ahmedabad. In due course of time, the workshop closed the Gandhinagar showroom due to poor response from the residents of Gandhinagar, who are mainly government employees. The other two showrooms have been performing well which is evident from the sales turnover reported in Table 3. Mr. Pankaj H. Shah, Mr. Vinod Leuva, Vinod Vyas and Jayshree Mehta have played significant role in promoting sales through these showrooms.

Table 3

Sales Performance of Handika (Rs. in lakhs)

S.N.	Year	Kamdhenu	Relief Road	Total
1.	1983	-	2.67	2.67
2.	1984	-	4.48	4.48
3.	1985	-	8.03	8.03
4.	1986	-	4.09	0.49
5.	1987	-	11.72	11.72
6.	1988	-	19.87	19.87
7.	1989	5.93	13.95	19.88
8.	1990	9.34	17.34	26.66
9.	1991	10.88	13.36	24.04
10.	1992	16.82	16.53	33.35
11.	1993	15.15	14.38	29.63
12.	1994	16.84	14.38	31.22
13.	1995	19.25	20.03	39.28
14.	1996	21.28	20.21	41.49

The outstanding performance of these showrooms establishes that any developmental organization can also compete in the open market provided its products are sold at competitive rates, meet other requirements of the customers and an effective marketing campaign is launched to popularize the same.

1979: District Branches of the NAB Gujarat State Branch

To take the services to the grass root level, the NAB Gujarat Branch established its first District Branch at Rajkot on 17 June, 1979. Jagdishbhai inaugurated the Branch and Mr. Pravin C. Dandia, Director (Client Services), NAB (I) was the Guest of Honour. Today it

has 17 District Branches out of 19 districts in Gujarat. Most District Branches have constructed their own buildings. Most District Branches are promoting integrated education and community based rehabilitation. The NAB Rajkot District established its first Taluka Branch on 19 June, 1989 at Gondal. The movement of establishing Taluka Branches could not gain momentum. The net-working has remained confined to the district level only.

The NAB Gujarat State Branch has the unique distinction of having 17 district branches out of the total of 19 districts in Gujarat State. Thus from Banaskantha in the north to Valsad in the South, from Kutch in the west to Sabarkantha in the east, the Gujarat Branch is reaching out to the blind all over Gujarat through a network of active, dynamic and socially conscious District Branches.

During 1997, there were the following District Branches:

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. NAB Mehsana | 2. NAB Sabarkantha | 3. NAB Rajkot |
| 4. NAB Surendranagar | 5. NAB Jamnagar | 6. NAB Bhavnagar |
| 7. NAB Vadodara | 8. NAB Panchal | 9. NAB Bhuj |
| 10. NAB Valsad | 11. NAB Surat | 12. NAB Bharuch |
| 13. NAB Banaskantha | 14. NAB Gandhinagar | 15. NAB Junagadh |
| 16. NAB Kheda | 17. NAB Amreli | |

1979: Fund Raising Unit

With increase in complexities and programmes of the BMA, Jagdishbhai realized that a sound financial base was imperative. He decided that a fund raising unit be established on a firm footing and with professional staff, for dissemination of information of BMA and roping in of funds for development. For this, he approached Mrs. Rehmat Fazhelboy, Fund-Raiser par excellence of the National Association for the Blind to help establish such a Unit at Ahmedabad.

The Revenue Unit as it was then called, was set up in 1979 and Jagdishbhai gave invaluable guidance in initiating sponsored events for fund raising. Nautama Shukla, the first M. S. W. to join BMA, took up the challenge of running this unit. The first few events were the School Match-box Competition, Kite Flying Competition and premier shows of movies. Ms. Shreyashi Parikh succeeded Nautama who left for the U.S.A.

Mrs. Vishakha Shroff was one of the first voluntary fund raisers who really succeeded in substantially increasing the fund raising. Her husband, Mr. Mahesh Shroff, was a bank executive and she unceasingly moved around with the new officer, Mrs. Mira Shah, in meeting people for the success of the first mini lottery programme. Mira Shah joined in 1983 and joined hands with Mrs. Shroff in relentless and systematic fund-raising. Mrs. Nandini Munshaw, Secretary, BMA, who had been handling fund raising almost single-handedly now had valiant supporters.

From mere fund collection, the focus shifted to donor participation and choice in the end use of funds. More volunteers like Mr. H. L. Khar, Managing Director, Bahuma Polytex and Mr. N. Madhukar Pai, retired Director, Department of Geology and Mining; came in to galvanize the fund raising efforts. The combined efforts of professionals and volunteers helped the BMA to have a wide and varied donor base.

Mira Shah was deputed to an Asian level Fund Raising Workshop for imbibing new and improved fund raising techniques. The fund raising efforts are now geared at public awareness and participation and more importantly institutional image building.

1980: Gujarat State Level National Award Committee

To promote employment of the disabled persons, the President of India has been giving away three awards annually to the outstanding employers of the disabled and three awards to the most efficient disabled employees. The procedure for selection of these awards includes constituting a State Level Award Committee with the Minister of Welfare as Chairman. The Chairman has been empowered to nominate two prominent experts in the field of rehabilitation of the disabled as non-official members of the committee. Jagdishbhai was nominated as member of the committee during 1980. Ever since he has been member of the State Level National Award Committee.

1980: Nutrition Project on Prevention of Nutritional Blindness

Dr. Rajendra T. Vyas, former Director of the Sight Savers International had initiated Xerophthalmia projects at various locations for the prevention of nutritional blindness. Jagdishbhai also wanted to contribute his mite in this respect. He sought the help of Dr. R. R. Doshi of Chikhodara Eye Hospital for orientation of staff in blending and distributing protein food. Ms. Hansa Punani (nee Trivedi), the then Marketing Assistant was deputed to observe this programme. Within a few months, this programme was launched at various locations.

Ms. Tejal Lakhia, a qualified dietitian from M. S. University joined the organization as Nutrition Assistant. BMA covered a large number of villages around Ahmedabad and provided protein supplement - *Sukhadi* - vitamin A syrup to malnourished children. The Fund Raising Unit launched a campaign of mobilizing public support to this programme. It solicited donation of Rs. 250 for adopting one malnourished child under the project. There was a overwhelming response to this appeal.

As incidence of Xerophthalmia showed a declining trend, the BMA discontinued the project during 1989. Ms. Tejal Lakhia was redesignated as Public Relations Officer.

1981: Integrated Education

Mr. Lallubhai Prajapati, Principal, Smt. M. K. Mehta School for the Blind, Palanpur came to seek guidance from Jagdishbhai about promotion of integrated education of the

blind. He was intimidated in this maiden encounter! At the same time, Jagdishbhai's frankness and boldness impressed him the most. At the outset Jagdishbhai pointed out that come what may, he must initiate the concept of admitting blind students in the regular schools and then wait for results.

Jagdishbhai always wanted to promote integrated education of blind children. In his paper presented during 1980, he emphasized the promotion of integrated education and integrated approach to comprehensive rehabilitation of the blind.

It was, however, during 1981, that the Mehsana District Branch of the National Association for the Blind, with headquarters at Visnagar, initiated integrated education with 2 Itinerant Teachers and 16 blind students with the financial support of the Sight Savers International . The pilot experiment became so successful that today there are 240 blind children under the Mehsana Branch itself and more than 1200 all over Gujarat under different District Branches. Most projects are receiving grant-in-aid from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi. This is the largest coverage of blind children under the itinerant mode of integrated education. From 1 April, 1997, the financial support is being provided by the State Government.

The projects on integrated education have already been initiated in various districts including Valsad, Banaskantha, Junagadh, Kaira, Mehsana, Panchmahal, Rajkot, Sabarkantha, Surendranagar and Ahmedabad. The most striking achievement has been adoption of the scheme of integrated education by the Department of Primary Education, Government of Gujarat from the financial year 1996-97. For that year the Government allocated Rs.75 lacs for the promotion of this scheme.

1981: Free Appliances for Disabled Persons

Under the *Scheme of Aids and Appliances for the Disabled Persons*, the Ministry of Welfare has so far provided assistance of 1,42,00,000/- to the BMA. The Organization has provided aids and appliances to 11,000 disabled persons. Since 1981, all these aids and appliances are made in the Priti Jagmohan Bhogilal National Rehabilitation Engineering Institute. The BMA in the year 1994-95, distributed aids and appliances free of charge, worth a record Rs. 35 Lakh. The camps were held in remote parts of Gujarat like Bhabhar, Meghraj, Bhachau, Dahod, Patdi, Sawarkundla, Bhavnagar. Disabled persons who were dragging themselves on the ground were seen driving away in tricycles or walking away on crutches or on calipers. Disabled people in remote areas learnt about aids and appliances for the first time. It was as if they had found their place in the sun.

1982: Nandini Ramesh Gandhi School of Physiotherapy for the Blind

As Jagdishbhai himself was a very successful Physiotherapist, he wanted to establish a good school of physiotherapy in his native state of Gujarat . The Royal National Institute

for the Blind, London has been running the RNIB School of Physiotherapy for more than 100 years, with the course being recognized by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicines. Jagdishbhai approached the State Department of Education and State Department of Medical Education and Research with a request to grant recognition for such a course. He had to struggle for almost 7 years before he ultimately got recognition under the 10+2 system of Vocational Career Courses from the Department of Education. This was the first recognized course in physiotherapy for the blind.

So far, 110 blind students have successfully completed the Physiotherapy Assistant Certificate course from this school. About 98 percent of these students have been placed in the Departments of Orthopaedics in the Civil or Private Hospitals or have established their private practices in physiotherapy, generally named as physiotherapy centres.

To support this initiative of Jagdishbhai, the Ministry of Welfare extended grant-in-aid, under the *Central Scheme of Assistance to Organizations for the Disabled*, from the financial year 1985-86. The Ministry has been providing a maintenance grant ever since. This is the only school of physiotherapy which has been receiving regular grant-in-aid from the Ministry of Welfare.

This school has been admitting blind students from other states in India. These students have subsequently established practices in Calcutta, Dhanbad, Indore, Bangalore, Pune, Mumbai, Darjeeling, Kalimpong. In the 1996-98 batch, one student has been admitted from Nepal. A request has been received from Ghana for admitting a qualified lady nurse who has recently acquired blindness.

The organization has also conducted three refresher courses for the employed or practicing Physiotherapists with sponsorship received from the National Institute of the Visually Handicapped, Dehradun.

1982: National Rehabilitation Engineering Institute

Whenever Jagdishbhai visited organizations for the blind abroad, he used to collect latest aids and appliances for the blind. He was keen on establishing production facilities for such educational and mobility aids in India itself. With the appointment of Harish Panchal, a qualified engineer, he commissioned a project on development of a braille stereotyper. He also initiated development and production tools and spares for manufacturing a brailier. Both these products could not be manufactured due to very large initial costs involved.

This, however, did not deter him from establishing the Braille Aids Workshop in 1980. During 1981, the BMA introduced development, manufacturing and distribution of various ortho-prosthetic aids and appliances for the orthopaedically handicapped persons, hence the unit was renamed as the National Rehabilitation Engineering Institute (NREI) during 1982. This Unit manufactures and distributes ortho-prosthetic aids and appliances,

rehabilitation appliances and educational and mobility aids for the blind and the disabled. All these appliances are manufactured by the persons with disabilities themselves.

It has done pioneering work in developing innovative aids and appliances such as tricycles for paraplegics, light weight, low cost nylotic calipers, new prosthetic aids etc. These innovative appliances have helped to popularize the use as they are more suited to Indian conditions, made of indigenous material, low weight and supplied immediately.

Due to the efforts of Jagdishbhai, the Ministry of Welfare recognized this project for the purpose of grant-in-aid under the *Central Scheme of Assistance to the Organizations of the Disabled* from the year 1984-85. A known philanthropist, Shri Jagmohan Bhogilal provided financial support to this centre, hence the centre has been named in the memory of his daughter (Late) Priti Jagmohan Bhogilal.

The Centre has exported a variety of aids and appliances to Srilanka, Nepal, Germany, Pakistan, Newzealand and a number of other countries.

The recently enacted Persons with Disability Act, 1995 also envisages provision of appropriate aids and appliances to the disabled persons. With the expansion of CBR programmes for all categories of disabled people, there is tremendous increases in demand for suitable assistive devices. NREI with its infrastructure and production facilities, would be geared up to meet such increasing demand.

1982: Bakery & Skill Development Unit for Disabled Women

These are very few programmes for the rehabilitation of blind and disabled women. Being a disabled woman is a double disadvantage in India and very little is done for their rehabilitation.

Jagdishbhai approached the Gujarat State Social Welfare Board to provide financial support for establishing this unit for imparting training to blind and disabled women in various bakery operations. His idea was that such training would enhance finger dexterity, functional coordination and skill development of the trainees. It would also promote self confidence among them.

The Social Welfare Board gladly sanctioned Rs. 1,81,000 for the bakery shed, equipment and machinery; and Rs. 65,000 for the working capital. With this assistance, the first bakery of its kind in the country was established for the blind and disabled women.

Jagdishbhai then approached the Ministry of Welfare for grant-in-aid under the *Central Scheme of Assistance to Organizations for the Disabled*. The Department of Social Defense evaluated the project and recommended grant-in-aid to the Ministry. The Ministry sanctioned Rs. 23,150 for recurring expenditure of the Unit vide its letter No. 22-4(3) 86-HW-II dated 26 June, 1986. The Ministry has been providing an annual recurring grant since then.

The Unit has effectively proved that woman and that too disabled women can work as productively as their male counterparts. They have proved that women are penetrating into territories which were traditionally dominated by men. Due to sharp decline in enrollment of disabled women for this project, the Unit was discontinued with effect from 1 April, 1996.

1983: Community Based Rehabilitation

The NAB Gujarat State Branch took the lead in the country in the field of community based rehabilitation by establishing the first such project at Dholka under the close supervision of Mr. Gautam Majumdar, who is known the world over for eye donation. The NAB (I) decided to establish the Central Coordinating Office of the NAB Rural Activities Committee at Ahmedabad under the direct monitoring of Jagdishbhai. All the Coordinators of the Committee have been stationed at Ahmedabad. Jagdishbhai has been Chairman of the Committee since September, 1991.

Till 31 May, 1996, the NAB RAC had coordinated community based rehabilitation project at 111 locations, covering 16,008 villages and 28,178 blind persons. The projects provided services of economic rehabilitation to 8,247; state pension to 7,223 and bus pass to 8,857 blind persons. So far, 1,286 blind children have been enrolled for integrated education. The NAB RAC has provided technical and training support to projects in Malaysia, Malawi, Bangladesh, Kenya and Nepal. These community based rehabilitation projects have the largest coverage of blind persons any where in the world.

In Gujarat, this concept has been successfully implemented at various locations viz. Dholka, Dhandhuka, Patdi, Lakhtar, Kankrej, Patan, Chanasama, Sami, Harij, Viramgam, Sanand, Vijapur, Idar, Vijaynagar, Khedbrahma, Malpur, Prantij, Rapar, Mendarda, Bhesan, Lodhika, Nalakantha, Limbdi, Sayla, Gandhinagar, Daskroi, Dehgam, Dhrangadhra, Valsad, Dahod, Petlad and Kapadwanj.

The projects have already been successfully initiated in various States including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi.

Dr. Iqbal Mohammadi, Past President, Rotary Club of Mahu Gate (3040), Indore explains of Jagdishbhai's contribution to CBR, *"During our first interaction during his field visit to the Mhow Rural Rehabilitation Project, Jagdishbhai gave me demonstration and information about blind welfare which I shall always cherish. Whenever he wrote me letters, he wrote them in a graceful manner"*.

Iqbal provides further details about this visit in these words *"Jagdishbhai always says that never think what a blind person can not do. He can do each and every thing. We kept a musical competition at Mhow. He appreciated the performance of a*

blind person in playing instrumental music. This incident motivated the blind person so much that he got ready to get the ophthalmic check done, go for eye surgery and to avail other services under the project. This was a sound beginning of the rural rehabilitation project. Encouraged by the visit of Jagdishbhai, we promoted economic rehabilitation as a major component of the project. We identified rope making as an appropriate trade and provided rope making machines to selected blind persons”.

“Jagdishbhai advised us to involve the community in every sphere of the life of a blind person. During our visit, we met a blind person who had remained confined to his house for the past twenty years. His immediate problem was solemnizing wedding of his daughter. Jagdishbhai felt that this wedding should be organized by the community”.

“The Field Workers also got motivated and collected funds from the local community and organized the wedding with active participation of the community. Thanks to Jagdishbhai, this was a true beginning of our project on social and economic rehabilitation of the rural blind”.

1984: National Seminar

The NAB Gujarat State Branch hosted a meeting of State and District Branches of NAB (I) during 1984 at Ahmedabad. The representatives of almost all the State, District Branches participated in the seminar. Jagdishbhai chaired a session on community based rehabilitation. He recommended that each State Branch of the NAB must initiate atleast one pilot project of CBR. He also desired the promotion of integrated education.

1984: Employment & Placement Services

The burning issue of today is the employment of the blind and disabled. In spite of massive efforts at the state and national levels, employment still continues to be the toughest problem plaguing the rehabilitation scenario.

The State and Central Government have given scholarships and have initiated several modern trades and professional courses, yet the employment of the blind is a major problem. It is thus imperative to boost this process by initiating employment, self employment and rural self employment measures.

Jagdishbhai has always been very keen on promoting open as well as self employment of the blind and disabled. He established the Employment and Placement Services during 1984 with the support of the National Association for the Blind. The Unit was established under the auspices of the NAB Gujarat State Branch and NAB India provided salary grant for the first five years.

Year	Total Employment
1992	56
1993	49
1994	50
1995	61
1996	76
<i>Average</i>	58

1984: Awareness Creation, Training and Counselling Parents of Disabled Children

The BMA implemented this programme funded by UNICEF from 1984 to 1988. 2800 parents having disabled children participated in the programme. The findings of this Project are:

- a. Parents are ignorant about disability and its consequences.
- b. Child rearing practices and management of disability are poor
- c. Much disability could have been avoided or corrected, had parents been counselled earlier.
- d. There are almost negligible services for mentally handicapped children or their parents.

1984: Cama Computer Training Center for the Blind

The idea of initiating a computer training centre for the blind and disabled was conceived during the visit of Jyotindra Mehta, a visually handicapped person.

Jyotindra was sales trainee at the Blind Men's Association when he decided to leave for the U.S.A. during 1978. He completed a computer programming course and joined as junior computer programmer in a commercial company in Rockvile. Encouraged by Jyotindra's achievements, the organization approached the Directorate of Employment & Training, Government of Gujarat. The Directorate very kindly provided recognition to the BASIC Programming and Computer Operation Course, during 1984. However, there was no provision for providing grant-in-aid for purchasing hardware and special adaptations for the blind. To avail/grant in aid for the equipment, the organization approached the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India. The Ministry provided grant-in-aid under the Scheme of Assistance to Organizations for Disabled Persons during 1986-87.

The organization approached the Directorate of Employment & Training for the recognition of the BASIC Programming and Computer Operation Course for the blind and disabled

under the Career Development Courses Stream. The Directorate recognized this course, which is the first course of its kind recognized by the concerned State Government.

The Vice President of the organization, Mr. Jehangir R. J. Cama, very generously provided a donation of Rs. 5,00,000 for establishing this centre. Mr. Naresh Patel and Mrs. Gita Trivedi, brother and sister of Jagdishbhai, donated a braille embosser for promoting training of the blind in computer operations. The Christoffel Blindenmission donated the Versa Point Braille Computer to the centre. The British High Commissioner, Sir Nicholas Fenn who happened to meet Jagdishbhai during an award function in London, donated a braille embosser. The Deputy British High Commissioner, Mr. T. D. Curran, visited the organization and donated the Kurtzweil Reading Machine. With all these equipments, the Cama Computer Training is probably the most well equipped training centre in the country.

The BMA Computer Training Centre has been established with the following objectives:

- Imparting training to the blind & disabled in data entry.
- Imparting training to the blind & disabled in BASIC & Dbase -III +
- Collecting and disseminating information regarding new adaptations in computer hardware for enabling the blind to operate the computer
- Collecting literature and compiling information about the software specially designed for the visually handicapped
- Import of special computer equipment for the blind and disabled and its demonstration
- Providing placement services to the blind and disabled as computer operator and computer programmers.

Nainesh Purohit joined the centre as Programming Instructor. He has played an instrumental role in developing a variety of soft-ware for the organization and imparting training to the blind and disabled persons. His major achievement is training Nirav, a deaf-blind student and helping him to get a job as Computer Programmer with the Gujarat Electricity Board.

1985: BMA-IDBI Electronics Training Centre Project

Jagdishbhai always wanted to promote training of the blind and disabled persons in electronic assembly. The organization approached the Gujarat Industries Development Corporation to allot a plot of land in the Electronic Estate, Gandhinagar. The GIDC allotted 2995 Sq.Mts. of land at the concessional rate of 50 percent on 29 October, 1995.

The organization invited Shri Arvind S. Sanghvi, former Minister of Finance and Planning, Government of Gujarat. to perform the Foundation Laying Ceremony on 23 October, 1985. Mr. Vishnu Panchal, a qualified Engineer joined the project as project Engineer

with effect from 1st August, 1986. The Centre started producing degaussing coils during 1987-88.

The Project was inaugurated by (Late) Shri Shashikant Lakhani, Speaker of Gujarat Legislative Assembly and (Late) Mr. S. S. Nadkarni, Chairman of the Industrial Development Bank of India on 16 June, 1990. The Industrial Development Bank of India donated Rs. 25 lakhs for constructing the building and purchasing the equipment for this project. The IDBI also provided support for the post of Marketing Officer for two years during 1992 and 1993.

At present the Centre imparts training to the blind and the disabled persons in assembly of antennae, production of communication components and other electronic items.

1989: Urban Community Based Rehabilitation (UCBR) Project for Aged and Disabled

The BMA has departed from traditional institutional programmes and decided to foray into the field of grass root, non-institutional, community-based programmes to reach out to a larger number of beneficiaries. While implementing institutional programmes, it was realized that aged disabled were grossly neglected in rehabilitation services. Experience of implementing community based programmes for rural aged and a pilot project for providing services to the aged and disabled in the slums of Ahmedabad city during 1981, popularly known as Home-bound Project, revealed the following:

- Aged persons were the most neglected sections of society
- Break-up of joint family and industrial sickness had resulted in poor living conditions and lowest priority being accorded to the aged
- Aged persons were found to be incapacitated due to rampant ill health, disease and poor nutrition.
- Old age homes were too expensive a solution for a capital scarce country like India
- Health facilities were not utilized to the optimum due to lack of an intermediate agency between the health organization and the beneficiary
- Aged persons need to be involved in community life and be rendered economically self reliant for their acceptance in the family.

The Blind Men's Association thus applied to Helpage International for funding an urban community based rehabilitation programme for providing services of health, hygiene, counselling and economic rehabilitation to the needy aged and disabled. Helpage International and Helpage India funded this five year programme which would cover 30,000 aged and disabled in the slums of Ahmedabad city. The general objectives of the programme are:

- Providing need based services
- General health care
- Cure as well as prevention of disability
- Productive rehabilitation
- Financial support
- Extension of concessions and other facilities
- Social integration
- Development of leadership and of voluntary efforts
- Creating public awareness

The organization incurred an expenditure of Rs. 3.7 millions during 1989 to 1996 in extending services to 21,794 persons. An independent evaluation of the project established that the majority of beneficiaries are in the age group of 65-75 and above, including 62 percent female beneficiaries. The project has successfully given treatment in case of eye ailments, eye check up and cataract surgery. 98.8 percent respondents expressed their satisfaction with the working of the project. As 72.5 percent respondents had received one or other rehabilitation aid, this component has emerged very strong. The organization could mobilize significant local resources for providing better health care and rehabilitative services like aids and appliances, corrective surgeries and other diagnostic surgeries.

J. T. Panchal with the help of B. G. Zhalla and Ramesh Patel as Supervisors, Dilip Shah as Physiotherapist and 9 field workers has been coordinating the programme since its inception during 1989. Dr. Ahshish Divetia, a young Ophthalmologist has been providing his services since the inception of the project.

1990:Mental Hygiene Clinic

This activity supported by the Department of Social Defense, Government of Gujarat under its grant-in-aid programme, was formally inaugurated on 21 May, 1990 at the worthy hands of Shri Pravinsinh Jadeja, Minister of Employment, Government of Gujarat.

The Mental Hygiene Clinic provides services to the mentally handicapped, mentally sick and emotionally disturbed persons, children with learning disabilities and behavioural disorders, children with cerebral palsy, other disability groups with specific needs, parents of disabled children and multiple sclerosis patients.

The Mental Hygiene Clinic aims at survey of target groups, evaluation of handicap, intensive therapy and counselling services improving functional abilities and provision of aids and appliances. Vimal Thawani as Vocational Counsellor and Ushma Das as Play-

room Assistant have been handling the clinic with a team of visiting medical professionals. Jyoti Doshi, Jayshree and Asha Khaitan have also been providing their services in the clinic.

Shri Natvarlal P. Kinariwala, Vice-President of the organization provided a donation of Rs. 2,00,000 to commemorate the memory of his (late) wife Smt. Chandrikaben. Hence the clinic has been named after her.

7 September, 1990: LCIF Professional Training Centre for the Blind

Lion Donald Banker, 1st International Vice-President of Lions Clubs International laid the corner stone of the BMA LCIF Professional Training Centre for the Blind on 7 September, 1990. Lion Rohit Mehta, second International Vice-President, LCI, Mr. Arun Parikh, District Governor, District 323-B were also present on this occasion.

The Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF) has very kindly donated \$50,000 being 50 percent of the cost of construction of the centre. The centre has housed the professional courses namely Computer Programming, Telephone Operating, Stenography and Physiotherapy, Mental Hygiene Clinic and the project on the Multi-handicapped Visually Impaired Children. The new and well planned building has lecture rooms as well as rooms for practicals. More importantly, all these courses are housed under one roof.

26 January, 1991: Lioness Karnavati Hostel for the Blind and Disabled Women

Lion. Dilip Shah, Multiple Council Chairman, District 323-B performed the Bhoomi Poojan of the Lioness Karnavati Blind Women's Hostel at 9.00 a.m. on 26 January, 1991. This hostel is built on the land of the Blind Men's Association and is fully funded by the Lioness Club of Karnavati.

H.E. the Governor of Gujarat, Dr. Sarup Singh inaugurated the Hostel at 11. a.m. on Monday 1 July, 1991. Lion Arun Parikh, Immediate past District Governor of Lions District 323-B graced the occasion as Guest of Honour.

Jagdishbhai has always advocated that construction of a hostel was imperative if fruits of rehabilitation were to permeate to the blind women residing in far off areas. At this juncture, when BMA was planning for funds for this hostel, the Lioness Club of Karnavati came in with their proposal of giving funds for such a hostel. It was the realization of a very precious dream and BMA is grateful to Lioness President Urmila Kalantry and her Club for giving a donation of Rs. 21 lakhs for this hostel and this can be seen in the beautiful building that has come up due to this joining of force.

This hostel is more than a mere hostel - it is a place which has enabled blind women to stay and avail of training which will help to harness their potentials and give a new meaning to their lives. This hostel is initially providing lodging and boarding to 50 blind

women and will, over a period of time, increase its capacity to accommodate 200 women. BMA is trying to provide a home away from home for these blind women by having facilities of recreation and training. Blind women residing here are able to pursue professional courses such as Telephone Operating, Physiotherapy, Computer Programming and Stenography to name but a few. Blind women employed in open industry are also able to stay here and thus be saved from expensive urban living.

The hostel has been covered under the grant-in-aid scheme of the Department of Social Defence, Govt. of Gujarat. The Department will provide grant-in-aid for staff and admissible recurring expenses.

1991: Multiple Sclerosis Society of India (Gujarat Chapter)

Multiple Sclerosis is a chronic, progressive disease of the central nervous system in which even simple everyday tasks can no longer be taken for granted. Its symptoms can vary from slight blurring of vision to complete paralysis. The disease could thus result into severe disability. The Multiple Sclerosis Society of India was formed in 1985 in Mumbai by Mrs. Rehmud Fazelbhoj, who has been an active worker for the blind since the past forty years.

The Saddbhawna Rural Development Trust decided to take up this challenging new project and decided to provide comprehensive services to MS patients. The Gujarat Chapter was inaugurated on 4th January, 1991 - Louis Braille Day by (late) Shri Babubhai Vasanwala, Minister of Health, Government of Gujarat.

The Chapter is providing family counselling, home visits, medicines on a regular basis, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, aids and appliances, guidance for availing social security schemes. Economic rehabilitation services are also provided after adequate training.

Vimal Thawani, Coordinator, MSSSI, Ahmedabad Chapter and Jyoti Doshi, Rehabilitation Worker are providing their honorary services to the families and people with multiple sclerosis. So far the chapter has identified and enrolled 86 confirmed cases of multiple sclerosis. The major break through of the Chapter was organizing free or concessional MRI check up. The Chapter approached the concerned officials of the Regional offices of the UCO Bank and the Bank of Baroda to retain the services of the employees suffering from MS. The Chapter could also organize provision of medicines to many needy persons.

Dr. Sudhir Shah, Dr. Bharat Shah, Dr. Ajit Sowani, Dr. Chetan Trivedi from Vadodara, are Neurophysicians; Dr. Narendra Patel, Dr. Suresh Shah, Dr. Premal Shah, are the Radiologists who have provided exemplary services to the Chapter.

1993: Ratanlal Lallubhai Centre for Multihandicapped

The organization deputed Mr. Akhil S. Paul for a training in handling children with multiple disabilities at the Hilton Perkins International programme, Perkins School for the Blind,

U.S.A. during 1994. On return, Akhil with the involvement of Vimal Thawani and Jyoti Doshi established integrated services for persons with multiple disabilities.

The Hilton Perkins International programme of the Perkins School for the Blind approved a three years grant of US\$ 34,225 to develop and expand integrated services in India for persons with multiple disabilities. This grant is for the period from 1 September, 1995 to 31 August, 1998.

The family members of Ratanlal Lallubhai have donated Rs. 2,00,000 for the naming of this centre. The organization has already conducted short term courses for the teachers of the blind and CBR personnel for promoting services for children with multiple disabilities.

Ms. Marianne Riggio, Educational Consultant and Mr. Kirk J. Horton, Regional Representative, Hilton Perkins International programme have been visiting the centre regularly and providing their technical and administrative support. Ms. Charlotte Cushman also provided consultancy to the programme during 12-22 March, 1996.

1994: Shakriben Mangaldas Teacher's Training Centre

The Diploma Course for the Secondary School Teachers of the visually handicapped was inaugurated on 18th July, 1994. This course trains 15 itinerant teachers every year who are already working in the Integrated Education Programmes in the various parts of Gujarat. This course, sponsored by the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped and recognized by the Rehabilitation Council of India is providing a recognized diploma to these teachers. Under the Scheme of Integrated Education of the Disabled, it is imperative that teachers have successfully undergone a one year recognized diploma in special education. The Sight Savers International donated Rs. 25,000 and Manav Kalyan Trust has sponsored the furniture and equipment for this course.

The BMA has a large number of human resource development programmes and a teacher's training course is the crowning glory. (Late) Kanubhai used to coordinate this course. Now, Mr. H. U. Joshi, retired Principal of the Navrangpura School for the Blind coordinates teacher training activities. Mr. Kailashbhai Shah has donated Rs. 1,11,000 for naming the Centre in the memory of his aunt Shakriben.

1994: NIVH National Seminar

The National Institute for the Visually Handicapped (NIVH) Dehradun is a national level organization set up by the Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India. The NIVH and the Blind Men's Association, Ahmedabad jointly organized a National Seminar on Visual Handicap at the BMA campus on 23-24 March, 1994. The seminar had a participation of 70 leaders in the field of blind welfare from the different parts of the country. These experts deliberated on the present trends in the educational rehabilitation of the blind and planned for a better future. Shri T.C.A. Rangadurai, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of

Social Welfare Govt. of Gujarat inaugurated the seminar. Lt. Col. A. K. Verma, Director, NIVH, Shri Arvind N. Lalbhai, President, Blind Men's Association and Heads of various renowned blind welfare agencies were also present on the occasion.

9-11 January, 1995: Asian Conference of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment

The Asian Conference of the ICEVI was organized for the first time in India during 1995 and the Chairman of the Organizing Committee was Jagdishbhai.

The conference was inaugurated on a cold yet sunny morning on 9 January, 1995 by H. E. the Governor of Gujarat, Dr. Sarup Singh. The city of Ahmedabad and the Blind Men's Association was host to 205 delegates from 17 Asian countries. The most noteworthy achievement was that almost every state of India was represented as also representatives of every major funding agency were present at the conference.

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) is the largest and the most significant professional body in the world working in the area of education for persons with visual impairment. The aim of the ICEVI is to promote the equalization of educational opportunities for the people with visual impairment throughout the world. As per the constitution of ICEVI, the term "*visual impairment*" refers to those who are blind or who have low vision, including those with additional disabilities.

After three days deliberations, the participants recommended the following four-pronged strategy which should be followed by the member countries:

- **Do what is possible now:** The challenge for the member countries will be to reach *MANY* children, in *MANY* areas, in the *SHORTEST* possible time. The approach should be - more programmes in '*unreached*' areas and effective utilization of the existing infrastructure in the '*reached*' areas to attain the highest level possible.
- **Disadvantaged groups come first:** The programmes will prioritize in favour of the disadvantaged groups. Tribal/rural areas come before the urban areas. Special efforts must be made to cover more visually impaired girls.
- **Collaboration and coordination is the key to success:** ICEVI advocates for effective collaboration and coordination amongst its member countries, implementing agencies and various programmes and activities for synergistic results.
- **Reach them young:** The focus should be on early identification, intervention and education to provide maximum benefits to the target clientele.

When the ideal is not possible

Make '*what is possible*' as your ideal

1995: Regional Workshop on CBR

The Blind Men's Association, Ahmedabad organized a two day workshop on Community Based Rehabilitation sponsored by the Rehabilitation Council of India (*A statutory body under Ministry of Welfare, Government of India*). Around 30 participants from the western states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra participated in this workshop.

A huge knowledge base of CBR has been developed all over the world. It needs to be disseminated for CBR to reach the unreached. The Rehabilitation Council of India has been setup for ensuring the quality of knowledge and skills amongst the rehabilitation personnel so that the disabled persons can get qualitative care. The RCI sponsored this workshop which sought to enable 30 people from western India to learn about CBR and implement such programmes in their own areas. The Blind Men's Association which organized this programme, has fourteen years experience in successful implementation of CBR Programmes.

The programme was inaugurated by Dr. B. P. Yadav, Chairman, Rehabilitation Council of India, at 10 a.m. on Friday, 28 April, 1995 at the Arvind Narottam Lalbhai Convention Centre, Blind Men's Association Campus, Ahmedabad.

1995: Braille Research & Documentation Centre

The organization is well known for its revolutionary and trend setting programmes for the blind and disabled. It has undertaken a variety of research in the areas of rehabilitation and mobility aids. It can take the credit of collecting together a lot of research material, documents and aids and appliances which have benefitted a large number of disabled persons. It realizes that it is essential that it keeps its research and other studies on a continuing basis to incorporate the changes which occur due to change in technology and modernity.

Foundation stone of the BMA Lioness Karnavati Smt. Ruxmaniben Deepchand Gardi Braille Documentation and Research Centre was laid by noted philanthropist, Dr. Biharilal Kanaiyalal and in a record six months inaugurated by Shri Jay Narayan Vyas, the then State Minister, on 28th February, 1995. The total sum of Rs. 5,00,000/- needed for this project was channelized by Lioness Club of Karnavati which has earlier donated an amount of Rs. 21 lacs for starting the first ever hostel for working blind and disabled women. Rs.3 lakhs have been donated for the above centre by Shri Deepchandbhai Gardi, a well known philanthropist.

This centre will have braille books and techniques from all over the world and will also exhibit technical aids for the blind like talking dictionary etc.

2-3 March, 1996: NAB National Seminar

The National Seminars of the State and District Branches of the National Association for the Blind are held in rotation in different states and organized by the state branches. The District Branches of the NAB Gujarat Branch have excellent leaders and they offered to host such seminars.

The NAB Jamnagar District Branch was given the privilege of hosting the 5th National Seminar of State and District Branches organized by the NAB Head Quarters during 2-3 March, 1996. This was the first time that a District Branch had hosted a national seminar. Jagdishbhai also presented a paper on employment of the visually impaired. His most recent paper advocates exploring all avenues of employment, promoting appropriate on-the-job training as well as professional training and evolving a co-ordinated approach to training and employment.

The seminar was very efficiently handled by the Branch which is now a very respected organization in its area. The theme of the seminar was to disseminate information between the Head Quarters and the various State and District Branches regarding education, new avenues of employment and the needed attention to community based rehabilitation. Representatives of most of the NAB State Branches and all the District Branches of the NAB Gujarat State Branch participated in the seminar.

14 July, 1996: Bhikhabhai C. Shah Memorial Award

Jagdishbhai played the most significant role in mobilizing financial resources for instituting an Award to commemorate the memory of Late Shri Bhikhabhai C. Shah, a doyen who had put years of selfless efforts for comprehensive development of blind persons of Saurashtra. The Award is being presented on Mr. Bhikhabhai's birthday every year on 14 July to outstanding personalities in the field of blind welfare.

1996: District Branches Workshop

The NAB Surat District Branch hosted a Two-Day Workshop, for the Presidents and Secretaries of the various District Branches of the NAB Gujarat State Branch, on 28-29 September, 1996 at Surat. Nearly 40 Office Bearers and Executives attended this Workshop which was inaugurated by Dr. B. A. Parikh, Vice Chancellor of South Gujarat University.

14 October, 1996: Parent Teacher Training

The BMA organized a unique training programme for training parents who have blind children. This programme was undertaken over a period of 3 months and these parents were given training in orientation, mobility, braille, teaching of science and maths to the blind children etc. This programme was concluded on 14 October, 1996 at the worthy hands of Mr. Bhaskaran, Chief Post Master General, Ahmedabad.

One of the parents, Mr. Dilipbhai Bhatt, who works in ISRO has developed a unique aid for teaching drawing to blind children. It consists on a board fitted with velcro strips, a pen with thread inside it which will enable the child to make meaningful pictures which he can touch, feel and be able to act as teachers for their own blind children. Mrs. Nandini Munshaw, Secretary, BMA, was motivated by Jagdishbhai to commit Rs. 1 lakh for this Project.

1996: I.T.I. Level Courses for the BMA

The BMA has been given the recognition and permission to initiate three courses under the Industrial Training Institute pattern by the Department of Employment and Training, Govt. of Gujarat. These courses are Receptionist-cum-Telephone Operating, Computer Programming and English Stenography. This recognition was given in a meeting where the Joint Director of the Department, Mr. A.I. Shaikh was present. As these courses are recognized, blind and disabled persons will be able to get jobs in open industry on completion of training. The minimum requirement for the Receptionist Course is Tenth Standard with English as a subject, students entering the Computer Programming have to be Higher Secondary pass and student undergoing Stenography has to pass the Tenth Standard. The students are provided educational materials in braille as well as on audio cassettes. They are also provided brailers, shorthand machines, type-writers and computer for their practicals etc. 40 students will be enrolled every years under courses.

Tejal Lakhia provides her services as Honorary Superintendent of the ITI, Nainesh Purohit, Kalpana Dani and Chetna Parikh as instructors of Computer Programming, Telephone Operating and Braille Shorthand courses respectively.

1996: BMA Nadiad Branch

Mr. Ramanbhai F. Patel and Mrs. Shantaben J. Patel, family members of Jagdishbhai decided to donate their ancestral house at Kakarkhad, Nadiad to the BMA. The house was gifted in the month of May, 1995.

The BMA decided to establish BMA Nadiad Branch for promoting services for the visually impaired persons of Nadiad taluka. The branch was inaugurated by Mr. Indubhai Patel, a leading industrialist of Nadiad on 27 October, 1996 at 10.30 A.M. Shri Ganeshdasji Maharaj of Shantram Mandir, Umreth; Dr. Ratilal P. Patel, Chairman, Education Society, Nadiad; Shri Dhirubhai Gopaldas Patel, Chairman Human Welfare Trust, Dar-e-salam; and Mrs. Jyotsanaben C. Bhrahambhatt, President, Nadiad Municipality were the Guests of Honour.

The organization has constituted a local management committee with Rakshaben J. Mehta as President; Mr. Chandrakant K. Solanki as General Secretary; and Ashok H. Patel and Sudha K. Patel as Vice Presidents. The branch has started distributing bus passes, organizing eye camps and promoting general services for blind persons.

1996: CAPART Project

The Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology of the Ministry of Rural Development has sanctioned a Project to the BMA for development of various formats regarding assessment, evaluation, monitoring for cross disabilities. Mrs. Brahada Shankar, has been appointed as a Project Coordinator for this 6 month project. A national level workshop to finalize reporting formats was convened at the BMA during 28-29 April, 1997.

1996: CBR Networking

CBR-Network for SAARC countries has been launched effectively. India has been divided into four zones - North, East, West and South with a Coordinator for each zone. Nandini Rawal has been appointed as the Zonal Co-ordinator for the Western zone. Mr. Ashok Kumar has been appointed as Project Coordinator for handling this work.

The National CBR Network envisages a network system for smooth flow of information, experience and knowledge on CBR in the country, to strengthen existing CBR programmes in respective zones and to initiate new ones. The National CBR Network is a part of a wider network on CBR in the SAARC region.

3 December, 1996: Most Outstanding Placement Officer

Naresh Rathod, Placement Officer of the organization was conferred the Most Outstanding Placement Officer Award by the President of India, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma on 3 December, 1996 which is the World Disabled Day. This Award has been instituted by the Ministry of Welfare for promoting employment of disabled persons. The Award Citation reads as:

34 years old Shri Rathod is a graduate and has been assisting in placement of handicapped persons in employment through his own efforts. During the last five years he has registered 385 handicapped persons, out of which he placed 292 persons in different jobs in different organizations with a success rate of 80 percent.

1997: National Seminar on Community Based Rehabilitation

The National Workshop on Community Based Rehabilitation organized by the National Association for the Blind, Rural Activities Committee and the Blind Men's Association, which was sponsored by the Royal Danish Embassy was inaugurated at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday 6th February, 1997 by Dr. Hans Limburg, Chief Adviser, Danish Assisted National Programme for Control of Blindness. Mr. P. G. Ramrakhiyani, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Social Welfare Govt. of Gujarat was the Chief Guest.

56 delegates from all over India, who are experts in the field of community based rehabilitation, were invited to this Workshop. In the inaugural function, two Manuals, one each on

community based rehabilitation and integrated education were released by the Chief Guest. These Manuals which are free of cost were distributed to all delegates present. Dr. Hans Limburg in the inaugural address said that the Danida Mission and the National Association for the Blind had collaborated together to come up with a unique and extremely practical model for eye care and rehabilitation. He urged all the agencies to come together and attempt to create a massive demonstration effect by covering lakhs of blind persons in CBR programmes spread over the length and breadth of India. He added that there was no other option but to start CBR projects on a large scale all over India in the form of a widespread movement.

The 3-day Workshop had representatives from funding agencies, frontline workers, grassroot agencies and specialist workers. The topics discussed ranged from the prevalent and popular CBR models in India, networking amongst the various agencies, role of grassroot agencies in proliferation of CBR, scaling up model, human resource development in CBR, integrating CBR in general rural development, resource material in CBR and evaluation. There was also a great deal of discussion on Government policy regarding CBR and the need of lobbying for funds from the Government.

All participants felt, that instead of piece-meals efforts and sporadic attempts, the CBR concept must emerge as a national movement. On the last day, participants recommended that a National CBR Fund equivalent to the status of the Prime Minister's Fund be set up. Donations to this fund should also be given 100 percent exemption under Section 35 AC of the Income-tax Act. Delegates also recommended that the National CBR Forum be set up for lobbying with the Government for allocating and releasing funds for CBR programmes. They also felt that the Members of Parliament should be sensitized and this issue be raised in Parliament and its national ethos and importance be recognized by the planners of the country. This Scheme for Community Based Rehabilitation was finalized by the Ministry of Welfare and allocation had been made, but due to financial constraints, this Scheme was arbitrarily scrapped even before it took off.

Jagdishbhai said that the rural blind and disabled have been ignored for centuries, Government must wake up to the concern of this large majority. The participants appreciated efforts of Government of India in enacting a comprehensive Persons with Disabilities Act, launching a large number of schemes and for recognizing the needs of disabled persons. The Ministry of Welfare so far has not recognized the CBR concept. They felt that there was an immediate need for evolving a realistic and practical scheme for promoting this concept.

The Workshop concluded with the Valedictory Session being graced by Dr. Kirit N. Shelat, Commissioner, Employment and Training, Government of Gujarat. Mr. Arvind N. Lalbhai, President of the National Association for the Blind presided over the function. Speaking on this occasion, Dr. Kirit N. Shelat declared that registration of blind persons for employment would be done at the campus of the Blind Men's Association. He also

declared that his Department would be glad to recognize new trades under the ITI. His Department has already recognized the first ITI for the Disabled in the country set up at the Campus.

He also desired the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) to allocate larger funds for promoting community based rehabilitation and added that blind and disabled persons must be covered under various rural development programme. Mr. Subhash Datrang, Executive Director, National Association for the Blind presented details of the Workshop. Mrs. Bhadra Satia proposed a vote of thanks.

Representation at National Level

Jagdishbhai has been invited on a large number of expert committees of various Ministries, governmental bodies and other reputed agencies.

- Founder General Secretary : Blind Men's Association, Ahmedabad since 1950.
- Secretary and E. C. Member, National Association for the Blind, Mumbai.
- Founder Honorary General Secretary, Gujarat State Branch, NAB (India) since 1964.
- Founder Honorary General Secretary : P.N.M. Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind, Mount Abu, since 1967.
- Past President : National Federation of the Blind, India, New Delhi.
- Founder Executive Member, NASEOH, Gujarat Chapter, Ahmedabad.
- Member, Advisory Committee, State Social Defence Department and Social Welfare Department for Physically Handicapped.
- Member, Central Governing Council, NASEOH, Mumbai.
- Founder Secretary and Executive Member, Light House for the Blind Girls, Ahmedabad.
- Member of Advisory Committee, Vocational Rehabilitation Centre, Ahmedabad.
- Executive Member, National Society for the Prevention of Blindness.
- Ex-member, Junior Chamber of Commerce, Ahmedabad
- Member, Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Ahmedabad
- Member, Ahmedabad Productivity Council

- Past President, All India Confederation of the Blind, New Delhi
- Member, Committee for Helen Keller Centenary Celebration, Gujarat State.
- Secretary, Rural Development, NAB, Mumbai
- Director, Multicategory Workshop for the Handicapped, Ahmedabad.
- Member, State Level Committee of I.Y.D.P. 1981.
- Member, Gujarat State Level National Award Committee, since 1980
- Member, Tata Agricultural & Rural Training Centre for the Blind, Phansa.
- Member, Academic Council since 1983 and Member of the General Council of the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, Dehradun
- Chairman, NAB Rural Activities Committee since 1983
- General Secretary, Saddbhavana Rural Development Trust (Blind and Disabled) since 1984.
- Member: National Council for Vocational Training, Govt. of India.
- Member, Selection Committee, National Technology Award for Welfare of the Handicapped.
- Past Chairman, BMA Staff Cooperative Credit Society.
- Member: National Advisory Committee, District Rehabilitation Centres Scheme, Ministry of Welfare
- Member: National Fund for Handicapped Welfare, Ministry of Welfare

If one has to list the successful blind persons in India, there are a few thousand of them. There are a few hundred most outstanding blind persons in the country. Most well-known leaders of the blind - there are around 10 leaders, if we have to go by the All India Confederation of the Blind Award, 1987 list. But institution-builder blind persons there are only three - Dr. Rajendra Vyas, Mr. Lal Advani and Jagdishbhai.

If one has to identify the most successful and most outstanding blind person, who is a well known leader and who has established a large number of institutions single handedly, on his own initiative and without any major backing of any international organization or any government - one could short list Jagdishbhai only.

The founder General Secretary of the Blind Men's Association (Ahmedabad), Adult Training Centre for the Blind, Saddbhawna Rural Development Trust (Blind and Disabled), Past President of the National Federation of the Blind; Founder President of the All India

Confederation of the Blind; Founder and Secretary of the National Association of the Blind, Jagdishbhai has been associated with the leading blind welfare organizations of this country.

If one has to go by the National Delegation of the World Blind Union till 1996 - there were three national level organizations viz. NFB, AICB and NAB in India. The fourth set of organizations, 3 Blind Men's Association have been contesting for his honour. Jagdishbhai is the only person who steered these organizations as President of the first two organizations, Secretary of the third organization and General Secretary of the Blind Men's Association (Ahmedabad).

It is possible only for a versatile person like Jagdishbhai to head two national level organizations with conflicting and very diverse ideologies simultaneously. In the field of Lionism, Jagdishbhai is the first blind person to reach the level of Deputy District Governor. As President of the Lions Club of Digvijaynagar, he was adjudged the Best President of the year. It is an established fact that most of the people who have money power can generally head a public charitable organization. Jagdishbhai is an exception. While he never had money power, he always had a strong will power. He could hit the top due to this quality and, of course, tremendous self confidence.

Global Efforts:

Jagdishbhai has toured extensively to exchange views in various conferences and seminars. He has earned international prestige for his modern approach to the economic rehabilitation, integrated education, community based rehabilitation and professional training. He has presented a number of papers on these and related aspects in number of seminars in the country and abroad.

1962: Blind Administrators Course

At the age of 24, he got the first opportunity of travelling abroad. He was selected to undertake a three months Blind Administrative Officers Course in London. Through the efforts of Mr. Arvind Lalbhai, Mr. Jivraj Mehta, Chief Minister of Gujarat sanctioned Rs. 5,000 as a grant for foreign travel. Mr. Arvind Lalbhai provided funds for his travel to other countries after completion of the course.

During his stay, he visited all the leading



institutions for the blind in the United Kingdom. He also travelled to other European countries and observed a variety of innovative programmes.

First World Conference

From London, he travelled to Germany to participate in the World Conference of the International Council for Education of the Visually Handicapped (now known as International Council for Education of the People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI)). In this conference, Ms. Rehmat Fazhelboy presented a paper on education of the visually impaired. This conference was just a beginning of consistent efforts of Jagdishbhai on promotion of services for the fellow beings. After that, he participated very regularly in a number of conferences at international level.

Jagdishbhai participated in the following international conferences:

1. World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, New York, 1964
2. Visited U.S.S.R. as delegate of Government of India, 1967
3. W.C.W.B. World Assembly New Delhi, 1969
4. International Federation of the Blind, Sri Lanka, 1969
5. Seminar on Rehabilitation and Employment of Physically Handicapped, Germany, 1972.
6. Visited Berlin for International Federation of the Blind as President of National Federation of the Blind, 1974
7. Fourth Asian Conference WCWB Committee, Mumbai 1974
8. Fifth Asian Conference WCWB Asian Committee, Hongkong, 1978
9. Sixth General Assembly for the Blind, WCWB, Antwerp, 1979
10. Sixth Asian Conference, WCWB Asian Committee Jakarta, 1980
11. Asian Conference of the WCWB, Singapore, 1983
12. Valentine Huay World Conference in Paris, June, 1984

The world conference was convened to celebrate bicentennial of the world's first school for the blind. Jagdishbhai accompanied with Bhushan Punani participated in this important conference. Bhushan presented a paper on the employment opportunities for the blind in the developing countries. Jagdishbhai also shared his experience of promoting employment services for the blind in India.

13. World Assembly of World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, October, 1984, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

14. Quinquennial Conference of International Council for Education of the Visually Handicapped, Wurzburg, West Germany, 1987

In this conference, a manual titled “*Social and Economic Rehabilitation of the Rural Blind*” was released. This manual was presented by Capt. H. J. M. Desai and Jagdishbhai, Chairman and Co-chairman of the NAB Rural Activities Committee respectively. Nandini presented a Paper on " Learning to live in the Community" in the plenary session of this Conference.

15. Conference of the World Blind Union, Madrid, Spain, 1988

16. Meeting of the Asian Blind Union, Karachi, Pakistan, 1989

Jagdishbhai presented a paper titled “*Community Based Rehabilitation: Management Perspective*” in the Asian Conference of the World Blind Union held in Karachi, Pakistan during 1989. This paper was published in the **World Blind**, a publication of the World Blind Union during 1990. Jagdishbhai updated the content during 1995 and sent it for publication in a book to be published by the Christoffel Blindenmission, South Asia Regional Office.

In this paper, Jagdishbhai emphasized that the unorganized sector is definitely the most ideal avenue for the economic rehabilitation of blind persons. The strategy of their resettlement into these occupations should be well planned, individual need based, client centred and should involve family, community and local administration at all stages of rehabilitation. These efforts should be supported with appropriate research and development.

The community based rehabilitation programme should encompass all aspects of rehabilitation including prevention of blindness, integrated education of blind children, social integration through orientation & mobility training, training in activities of daily living, counselling and economic rehabilitation. As far as possible, the economic rehabilitation should be in the family occupation or trade and it should be within the community.

17. Conference for the Deaf-Blind, Stockholm, Sweden, 1989

18. Meeting of the Deaf-Blind Activity Committee of the World Blind Union at Osimo, Italy, May 1992.

The 5th Helen Keller World Conference on the Quality of Life on Deaf-Blind People: Realities and Opportunities was convened at Osimo, Italy during 25-

30 September, 1993. Jagdishbhai presented a paper "*The Situation of Deaf-Blind in Developing Countries - An Overview*" in the conference.

He emphasized that services for screening, assessment and early intervention of the deaf-blind in the developing countries are almost non-existent. Lack of programmes, paucity of funds, limited human resources, and lack of inter-agency coordination have resulted into this situation. New strategies should aim at promoting skills of total communication as well as independent living. These should expedite their social integration through result-oriented, community-based, client centered and cost effective programmes.

19. Chairman, Organizing Committee, Asian Conference, International Council for Education of the People with Visual Impairment, 9-12 January, 1995, Ahmedabad

While proposing the Vote of Thanks in the inaugural function on 9 January, 1995, Jagdishbhai remarked, "*I am very glad to be standing before the august gathering. I feel that my dreams have come true today. I am glad that my organization which I have built up from scratch is acting as a host of a gathering of such esteemed participants from so many countries.*"

While welcoming the guests in the Valedictory function on 11 January, 1997, Jagdishbhai offered to host the Eleventh Quinquennial Conference during the year 2002 at Ahmedabad.

Jagdishbhai truly personifies a global persona, his many visits around the world and his attendance at various international conferences has made him an international citizen. When work for the blind was in its infancy stage in India and organizations were managed by unambitious and god-fearing do-gooders, Jagdishbhai was decades ahead of his time in vision. He was globe-trotting even then and constantly learning about advancements in the developed countries. He was a man constantly in search of new ideas and on the move. Even today, when fate has been unkind to him in his physical limitations, his spirit still longs to soar. Even today with multiple disabilities, he is busy planning his participation in the forthcoming quinquennial conference of the ICEVI and the next World Assembly of the World Blind Union.

He is saddened and disheartened that today people look more at his disabilities rather than the razor sharp intelligence within him. He is out of the reckoning at many stages when delegations are drawn up for attendance at world conferences. However, he realizes that he cannot forever attend conferences. He has to make way for the new order. Some part of his being does resent this change brought about primarily by his disabilities, but the rational side tells him that he must heed the writing on the wall.

Lionistic Career

1968: Beginning

Jagdishbhai joined the Lions Movement during 1968 and emerged to be a very active Lion. He was the first blind person in Gujarat to be accepted as a member of Lions Club of Digvijaynagar, the most prestigious club of the Lions International District 323-B. Ever since he joined the club, he has been striving to improve life for others in general, and disabled in particular. He has helped to restore sight and dignity to many individuals through his continued interest in the activities of the club.

1969: Chairmanship

Due to his hard work and achievements, during the second year itself, he was appointed Chairman, Sight Conservation Committee at club level for the year 1969. His work at the club level was appreciated so much that he was promoted as District Chairman, Sight Conservation and Work with the Blind for the year 1970-71. The very next year, he became the Secretary of the club for the year 1972-73. After serving as Vice President for 3 years, he rose to the post of President of the Lions Club of Digvijaynagar for the year 1975-76.

1975: President

During his tenure as President, the Club secured the Best Club Award for the third time. The club also secured five highest awards including the Best Club Award, Best President Award, 100 percent International President Award, Melvin Jones Medal, and Membership Achievement Award.

1982: Deputy District Governor

Encouraged by his performance, he was invited to work as District Chairman, U.N.O. and CARE Activities for the year 1977-78; District Chairman, Sight Conservation for the year 1981-82 and then Deputy District Governor of the Lions International District, 323-B for the year 1982-83. Jagdishbhai is the only blind person in the Lions International District who could achieve this level through his persistent efforts and result oriented nature.

Mr. Dilip R. Parikh, Past Dist. Governor, Lion Clubs District 323-B and Minister of Industries, Govt. of Gujarat, a close associate of Jagdishbhai narrates his lionistic achievements, *“It was only in the year 1973 when I was the President of my home-club Lions Club of Ahmedabad Main that I came in contact with Jagdishbhai. The latter also confirms this encounter. I distinctly remember that the man wearing sun glasses was aware of everything that was going on in Lionism. Such was his striking personality and such was his level of personal involvement”.*

Dilipbhai further narrates Jagdishbhai's achievements , *“Our friendship grew when he was the President of the Lions Club of Digvijaynagar and at that time I was the Cabinet Secretary of the Lions District 323-B. What tremendous efforts he put up during his tenure as the President of the club, it was a matter of no surprise when he received an award for the Best Lions Club in the district. It was an achievement which he very truly deserved”*.

Jagdishbhai values Dilipbhai's friendship very much. In fact at all the important social gatherings at the latter's residence Jagdishbhai has always been invited and introduced to the other guests personally by Pritiben, Dilipbhai's wife. She was instrumental in helping Jagdishbhai to raise Rs. 21 lakhs from the Lioness Club of Karnavati for constructing the Lioness Karnavati Hostel for Blind Women.

Even after Dilipbhai switched over to politics and got elected as Member of the Legislative Assembly (Gujarat), he maintained his concern and respect for Jagdishbhai. Whenever Jagdishbhai wanted to meet any Minister in the Government of Gujarat, Dilipbhai extended his fullest cooperation.

Once, however, such an assistance rebounded, as the former Chief Minister of Gujarat Late Mr. Chimanbhai Patel, who was very considerate and support the cause of the disabled whole-heartedly, refused to even talk to Jagdishbhai as he was taken to him by Dilipbhai. Dilipbhai represented the opposition party and Chimanbhai inspite of knowing Jagdishbhai very well, he declined to co-operate and listen to him.

While Jagdishbhai learnt a lesson that it is desirable to avoid being identified with any particular political party, this incident did not hamper the personal bond of friendship between him and Dilipbhai.

Lion Homi S. Tarapore: Past Dist. Governor, Lions Clubs also explains his association with Jagdishbhai in respect of his lionistic career. He narrates, *“My association with Jagdishbhai goes beyond two decades, and more, we have on many occasions worked together, being members of the Lions fraternity.*

Having had past experience of working for and with the handicapped, Jagdishbhai became the natural choice to be appointed as Chairman: Sight Conservation during my tenure as District Governor during 1981 - the International Year of Disabled Persons. I feel that none other would have suited the occasion and the position better than him. The guidance and the services rendered by him during that year have left an exemplary landmark for one and all to follow.

Yet another brain-child of this pioneer was the International Project comprising of sending a team of Ophthalmologists to Sri Lanka fully equipped with medicines and instruments. The project, the first of its kind in our Lions International District,

made it possible for us to lend a helping hand to our neighbouring country. This won Lion Jagdishbhai the acclamation world over. To his credit our District also revived the dormant “Eye Donation” project.

Devotion to duty and the capacity to lead and rehabilitate the blind at home as well as abroad was rightly appreciated by the Lions International and Jagdishbhai was presented the coveted Appreciation Certificate, the one and the only one of its type received during the year. The excellent work done by him lives up to the saying “Act well thy part and there the honour lies”.

Jagdishbhai in turn always finds Lion Homi to be full of life, jovial and respectful. He and his wife always give due respect and consideration to Jagdishbhai whenever and wherever they happen to meet him.

Jagdishbhai feels indebted to Lion Homi for providing him a berth in the District Cabinet and for giving him the opportunity of proving his prowess in the spirit of lionism. This is probably for the first time that a blind person was inducted into the District Cabinet. A number of other blind persons like (Late) Mr. H. M. Makim and (Late) Mr. Kanubhai Thaker were also co-opted into the District Cabinet subsequently.

Awards Galore

Jagdishbhai has been conferred a number of awards for his outstanding contribution in the field of disabled. His encouragement and support has helped his colleagues to carve a niche for themselves. Jagdishbhai thus belies the popular myth that nothing grows under a large tree.

1980: Club Award

Jagdishbhai was honoured with the first award “*Late Nilkanthrai Chhatrapati Award*” during 1980 jointly by the Lions Club of Ahmedabad (North) & *Andh Kalyan Kendra*, Ahmedabad. This was just a beginning of Awards Galore to this visionary which has continued till today.

Ms. Bhadraben Satia, another Secretary of the organization was also conferred this Award on 8 February, 1997.

1981: Rustom Merwanji Alpaiwala Memorial Award

The National Association for the Blind has instituted this award to commemorate the memory of its Founder President, for honouring professional as well as voluntary workers in the field of blind welfare. Jagdishbhai was conferred this prestigious Award as a professional worker for the year 1981. The award was conferred on 19 January, 1981 at Mumbai.



The award citation highlighted that this award has been conferred in appreciation of his outstanding contribution in promoting vocational training and rehabilitation of the blind as a professional worker.

(Late) Mr. Kanubhai Thaker, Treasurer of the organization and life-long companion of Jagdishbhai was also conferred this Award on 19 January, 1992 in recognition of his outstanding pioneering services to the cause of the blind as a professional worker.

Kanubhai helped develop education of the blind, including integrated education, BMA School of Physiotherapy, Teachers training Course, Braille Shorthand and other Career Development Courses.

Ms. Bhadraben Satia, Secretary of the organization and life partner of Jagdishbhai was also conferred this Award on 19 January, 1994 in Mumbai. She was conferred this Award in recognition of her outstanding work for the welfare of the visually handicapped as a voluntary worker.

1981: State Award

The Department of Social Defence, Government of Gujarat presented a State Award to Jagdishbhai on 26 December, 1981 in appreciation of his outstanding and dedicated services in the field of disabled welfare.

Mr. F. J. Porwal, Braille Press Manager and a close associate of Jagdishbhai was also presented the State Award as the Most Outstanding Blind Employee by the Hon'ble Governor of Gujarat, Shri Krishnapal Singh 7 January, 1997.

1982: FICCI Award

The Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi presented the FICCI Award to the Blind Men's Association in recognition of institutional initiatives in training & placement of disabled persons. The award citation read:

"The Blind Men's Association, first in the State of Gujarat of its kind has rendered yeoman's services to the cause of the blind by providing training, rehabilitation and gainful employment. Nearly 600 disabled have been trained and 400 found suitable placement. Professionalism in operations, commercial outlook, economic viability, motivating of trainees and periodic evaluation of programmes have all resulted in increased turnover from its multi-purpose workshops undertaking a wide variety of

jobs. The many sided activities of the Association at bringing solace and succour to the blind is of a very high order.”

Jagdishbhai received the award on behalf of the organization on 2 April, 1982.

1987: Centennial Award

The first school for the blind in India was established at Amritsar during 1887. The year 1987 was celebrated as the Centenary of Work for the Blind. The All India Confederation of the Blind convened a National Seminar in New Delhi and instituted a Centennial Award for outstanding work for the blind. The Confederation selected 10 Most Outstanding Blind Persons from the whole country for this Award. Jagdishbhai was selected for this Award. Mr. K. C. Pant, former Central Minister presented the Centennial Award on 4 January, 1987 in New Delhi.

1989: Shastipurti Mahotsav

Friends, well wishers, admirers and heads of the organizations established by Jagdishbhai, District Branches of the NAB got together and decided to celebrate his 60th birthday in a befitting manner. It turned out to be grand event with the Governor of Gujarat, Mr. R. K. Trivedi presenting a souvenir, shawl, a purse of Rs. one lakh and a citation in a packed public hall of 1000 capacity; release of a book titled “*On the Untrodden Path*”; large press coverage and active participation of a large number of persons.

The citation read on the occasion personifies Jagdishbhai most accurately:

Having conquered blindness you, Shri Jagdishbhai Patel, with your unparalleled prudence, self confidence and keen foresight have toiled for the comprehensive development and progressive welfare of the blind and the disabled.

With your devotion, dedication, dynamism, fearlessness modern thoughts and your innate ability to realize dreams and concretize plans, you have achieved success and as an innovative person, you have proved a beacon to many a floundering persons and provided able leadership to many institutions to become a recordsetting founder, administrator and trendsetter.

With your contemporary ideas, your ability to transform western ideas to suit Indian conditions with infusion of your experience, you have ushered in light in the lives of thousands of blind persons by initiation of modern need based programmes of education and training.

You have blazed a new trail by reaching out to the teeming millions of blind persons in remote rural villages and rehabilitating them in familiar surroundings. History and posterity will always remain a witness to this unprecedented phenomenon.

Your active involvement in the Lions and other service clubs, your participation on Governmental Committees has enabled you to focus attention on the blind and the disabled and initiate varied and well organized programmes for their rehabilitation. Your efforts in this direction have been appreciated by the numerous national and international accolades, laurels and awards accorded to you.

Your faithful supporter and your shadow with you on your illustrious path has been none other than your wife, Bhadraben whose union with you has complemented your life, made it rich with meaning, warmth, love and understanding.

Sensitive, sensational, self-confident, frank, blunt, open hearted, judicious, foresighted, friendly are some of the qualities which have enabled you to strive relentlessly for the welfare of the blind and the disabled.

*With an earnest desire of felicitating you on your achievements, we the Members of the Shashthi Purti Committee, sponsoring institutions well wishers and friends present you this humble citation on the 6th of April, 1989. With the hope that the Almighty blesses you with a long and healthy life, free from want and woe, for the welfare of the cause most dear to your heart. - **Shashthi Purti Mahotsav Samiti***

Jagdishbhai was presented a purse of Rs. 1,00,000 contributed by his friends and well wishers and welfare agencies from all over. Jagdishbhai very graciously gifted that money to the Blind Men's Association for promoting education and innovative services for the blind. This amount has been earmarked as Lalitaben Kashibhai Endowment Fund in the memory memory of Jagdishbhai's parents.

1991: 'Padmashri' Award

The President of India, Mr. R. Venkatraman conferred this most coveted title to Jagdishbhai at the Investiture Ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi on 26 January, 1996, the Republic Day of India. The Citation reads "*In recognition of your personal qualities this Padmashri is bestowed on you*".

Overjoyed Jagdishbhai on hearing about this great news remarked spontaneously, "*This Award is not my individual recognition - it is recognition of the blind community, it is recognition of a team work. This Award is due to perseverance and efforts of his band of dedicated workers of the BMA.*"

1991: Golden Award for Overseas Services

Help the Aged, United Kingdom selected Jagdishbhai for the International Award for Community Services Overseas. The Award was presented at the Hilton Hotel, in London,

by the Princess of Wales, Princess Diana, on 4th November, 1991. The citation reads as:

“In 1983 Jagdish turned his attention to the elderly people of his country. As he says “Elderly people are valuable in their own right, they are worthy of our respect.” working through Blind Men’s Association, Jagdish lobbies government servants on pension issues and has organized a system of community projects helping to alleviate the problems faced by the poor areas of Ahmedabad.

The aim of the project is to establish self sufficient centres within each community which arrange for operations, disability aids, physiotherapy and treatment for those who need it, often with volunteer doctors.

So well loved has Jagdish become through his tireless work that he is known as Jagdish-bhai, or ‘brother’, a term used to express affection and respect.”

This event was covered in a number of leading publications circulated in the U.S.A. and U.K.

Asian Herald of 8 November, 1991 published a photograph of Jagdishbhai and Bhadraben with the Award. *“India Abroad”* also published this photograph.

Current Weekly Newspaper, 18-24, January, 1992 published a lead story under the title, **“Jagdishbhai, the First Asian Helpage Winner.”** The news item narrates, *“The successful implementation of the Urban Helpage Programme won Jagdish Patel one of 963 nominations for the 1991 Helpage Golden Award, proposed by Graime Jackson, Head of Asia Department of Helpage, U. K”. “Is not it like winning an Oscar”,* enthuses Jagdishbhai.

1994:National Award

The President of India, Mr. Shankar Dayal Sharma presented the National Award to Jagdishbhai for his most outstanding services in the field of blind welfare. Jagdishbhai was presented a citation and a cash award of Rs. 10,000 on this occasion. Every year, the Ministry of Welfare selects one most outstanding worker of the disabled for this coveted award. Jagdishbhai is one of the few persons who have received *Padma-Shri* as well as the National Award. The Award citation mentions that this Award has been conferred to recognition the most outstanding services of Jagdishbhai in the field of welfare of the blind and the disabled.

1994: Braille Shree Award

Jagdishbhai was given *“Braille Shree”* Award by Mr. Upendra Trivedi, Minister for Information, Youth Services and Cultural Activities of a Seminar, on 12 November, 1994 organized by *Louis Braille Smarak Samiti*, Amreli.

A befitting homage was paid to Louis Braille, who invented the “*Braille Alphabet*”. A life size statue of Braille was unveiled by Mr. Upendra Trivedi.

Addressing the Seminar, the Minister said that “*the tribute paid to Braille was most befitting. There is one statue erected in France to commemorate the great inventor, while the statue here is the second one. The Frenchman had rendered exemplary services to the cause of the blind. He provided them with a master-key to the realm of knowledge. It has been easier for the blind to read, write and communicate now, thanks to Louis Braille’s efforts. Eventually this has enabled members of the world of the blind to lead normal lives with self-respect*”.

1996: “Pride of Ahmedabad” Award

The Ahmedabad Medical Association honoured Jagdishbhai as Pride of Ahmedabad; 1996 in a public function organized on 25 February, 1996. Honourable Chief Justice of India, Shri A. H. Ahmadi was the Chief Guest of the Function. This was the first time that such a function was arranged by the Medical Association.

Other Awards

Date & Year	Name of Award	Place	Organization
19 January 1981	Rustom Merwanji Alpaiwala Memorial Award	Mumbai	National Association for the Blind
26 December, 1981	Certificate of Appreciation	Gandhinagar	Department of Social Welfare
14 February, 1982	Special Award	Vadodara	Blind Welfare Council
2 April, 1983	FICCI Award	New Delhi	Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
16 July, 1983	Certificate of	Gandhinagar	Department of Appreciation Employment & Training
13 May, 1985	National Award	New Delhi	Ministry of Welfare

Date & Year	Name of Award	Place	Organization
17 May, 1987	Special Award	Rajkot	Akhil Gujarat Andh Shikshak Sangh
11 May, 1987	Special Award	Idar	Blind Physiotherapists Association
25 December, 1987	Special Award	Idar	NAB Sabarkantha Dist. Branch
25 December, 1988	Special Award	Porbandar	Shree Andh Sarvodaya Mandal Braille Library
11 March, 1989	Special Award	Palanpur	Palanpur Shishushala Balmandir & Education Trust
6 April, 1989	Special Award	Ahmedabad	Trainees, Adult Training Centre for the Blind
6 April, 1989	Certificate	Ahmedabad	ShashtipurthiMahotsav Samiti
25 December, 1989	Special Award	Rajkot	Andh Apang Manav Kalyan Trust
25 December, 1989	Special Award	Rajkot	NAB Rajkot Branch and Andhjan Kalyan Mandal
23 March, 1991	Padmashree	New Delhi	President of India
21 March, 1993	Special Award	Rajkot	The Society for Mentally Retarded
13 October, 1993	Certificate	Ahmedabad	Paraplegic Hospital
30 January, 1994	Special Award	Wankanar	Shree Navjeevan Andhjan Mandal

Date & Year	Name of Award	Place	Organization
20 March, 1994	National Award	New Delhi	Ministry of Welfare
12 November, 1994	Braille Shree Award	Amreli	Louis Braille Smarak Trust
12 November, 1994	Special Award	Kheda	NAB Kheda Dist. Branch
Awards for Bhadraben			
18 March, 1989	Special Award	Rajkot	Blind Physiotherapists Association
25 December, 1989	Special Award	Rajkot	Andh Apang KalyanTrust
1 May, 1994	Certificate	Amreli	Andhjan Pragati Mandal, Amreli
1 May, 1994	Certificate	Kheda	NAB Kheda Dist.Branch
27 Feb., 1997	Gujarat Stri Kelvani Mandal Award	Ahmedabad	Gujarat Stri Kelvani Mandal
2 March, 1997	Dr. Nilkanthrai Chhatrapati Award	Ahmedabad	Andh Kalyan Kendra

Journey on Untrodden Path Continues

Jagdishbhai does not seem to be handicapped in any way by his blindness. He has achieved several distinctions which many a sighted person has not been able to achieve. He is a good employee and a democratic leader. He has worked hard and knows the true meaning of labour. He is a dynamic man spontaneous, witty, charming and extremely intelligent. His ideas are always novel and he has been recognized in circles of disabled welfare as an '*Idea Generating Computer*'. His achievements portray his independence, his meteoric rise in spite of his handicap. He is a person who has laughed at fate and has succeeded in softening her cruel blows by determined effort. He is a model of endless patience, unceasing effort and should serve as a model for other blind people to emulate. He is risen on his own, is a self-made man, and can be called '*Swayambu*'.

Jagdishbhai is known all over India for developing innovative need based programmes for the comprehensive rehabilitation of the blind and disabled persons. His major contribution

included professionalization of services for the disabled, introduction of a nationwide community based rehabilitation programme. Introduction of professional training for the blind and disabled, Introductory approach to vocational training, and promotion of professional employment of the visually handicapped.

At present, Jagdishbhai is concentrating on economic rehabilitation of the rural disabled and developing professional training for the blind and disabled. He feels that blindness is not a tragedy, it is a mishap. The disabled do not expect charity, they need opportunity to grow, develop their personality, integrate themselves and become economically independent.

He desires the society not to isolate the disabled but to accept them in the mainstream of social progress. He is also proud of his blindness and deafness. He says, *"It is a blessing in disguise because by this multiple handicap, I am able to understand the agony of the millions of the blind and disabled"*.

