

Press Information Bureau
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Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
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White Cane Day to sensitize people on the challenges faced by visually challenged people

Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is organizing White Cane Day on October 15 to sensitize the common man about the challenges being faced by visually challenged people. A week long activities already started on World Sight Day from October 8th2015 will conclude on tomorrow with eye checkups at various places in Delhi and public awareness campaigns in various shapes, etc.

Recently, on the occasion of ‘World Sight Day’ on 8 Oct 2015, the Department along with the Hans Foundation, The Score Foundation and other co partners organized an extensive awareness campaign to drive home the message of preventing ‘Avoidable Blindness’. Under this campaign volunteers from the partnering NGOs organized information kiosks at 5 major metro stations across the capital with an eye counselor and distribution of relevant IEC material for sensitization and spreading public awareness. Eye checkup and screening camps were also established at Dilshad Garden, Kabool Nagar Gurudwara and at Trilokpuri area under the able supervision of ophthalmologists from AIIMS.

There are over 16 million blind and 28 million visually impaired people in India who are often marginalized in terms of education opportunities, career opportunities or social standing as compared to their sighted counterparts. Due to a lack of access to information, they are often unable to lead fulfilling, independent, economic and socially productive lives.

The ‘White Cane Day’ also known internationally as the ‘White Cane Safety Day’ is celebrated on 15th October every year. The mission of White Cane Day is to educate the world about how the blind and visually impaired can live and work independently while giving back to their communities, to celebrate the abilities and successes achieved by blind people in a sighted world and to honor the many contributions being made by the blind and visually impaired.

It goes without saying that every visually impaired person in our country is a potential resource and they need to be invested in. They have the potential to become independent, contributing and fully functional members of society and various stakeholders – both government and private – need to forge a viable partnership that helps in utilizing their prospective talent to the best of their abilities. Here are some who forged their own path and beat the odds:

Rajni Gopalakrishnan: She is the first visually impaired lady to become a Chartered Accountant. **Kanchan Pamnani:** She is a practicing advocate and takes up cases with various courts of Maharashtra.

Dr. Garimella Subramaniam: He is a senior journalist with the Hindu.

Beno Zephine: She is the first visually impaired lady to become an IFS officer.

Hari Raghavan: A Senior Management at the corporate sector.

Charu Datta Jadhav: Senior Software professional with Tata Consultancy Services and an International Master in chess.

Late Ravinder Jain: A music composer, singer and lyricist.

Preeti Monga: A successful Human Resource Entrepreneur.

Taking inspiration from the above achievers on the occasion of White Cane Day, let us pledge to recognize enormous talent potential in people who are visually impaired. And also let us go a step further and explore how better can we harness this potential and include them as an integral part of the human resource of the country. With education, skill development and an accessible ecosystem being the bulwarks on which such ideas are implemented and thereby lead towards an all inclusive society
