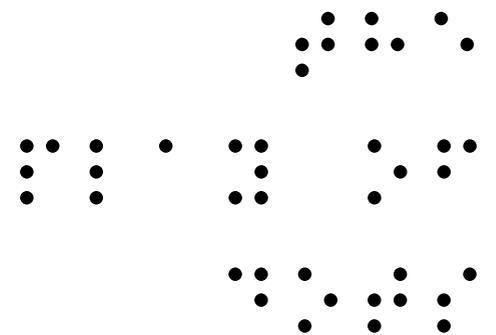


THE
PLAY OF
DOTS



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C O N T E N T C U R A T I O N

Sukhmanni Bhandari

Swapna Merlin

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D E S I G N

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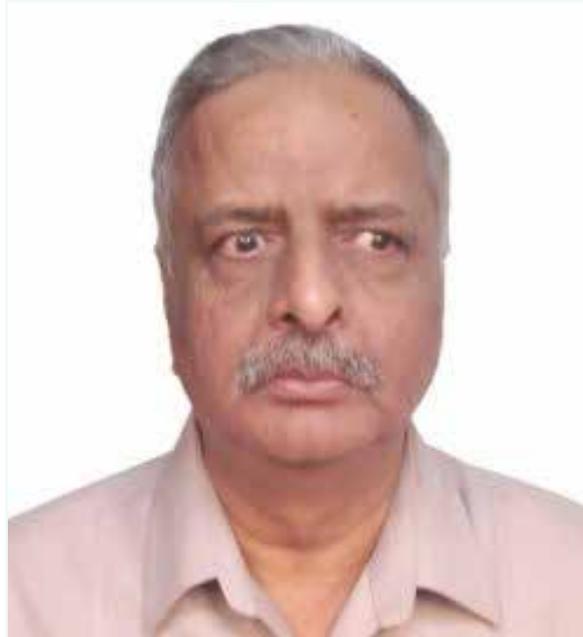


Dedicated to,

(L A T E) M R S . M A N J U B H A R A T R A M

Founder Chairperson,
Indian Blind Sports Association.

For her abiding support and guidance and
her pioneering role in the field of blind sports.



Dedicated to,

(L A T E) M R . A J A I K U M A R M I T T A L

Former Vice Chairperson
Indian Blind Sports Association

Mr. A. K. Mittal was a great lover of sports and took a special interest in the promotion of sports among the visually impaired. He was one of the founders of the Indian Blind Sports Association and played a key role in building up the Association to ably work and deserve the status of a national level sports body to promote sports among the blind and represent India in International Blind Sports Federation.

He was actively involved in planning and organizing the first National Sports Meet for the Blind hosted by the Blind Relief Association, Delhi in 1982 and subsequently, after the formation of IBSA in 1986 in organizing IBSA National Sports Meets for the Blind being regularly held since then on. In 1998 he led the Indian contingent to the First World Championships and Games for the Blind held in Madrid, Spain under the aegis of the International Blind Sports Federation.

Having served as Vice Chairperson and in other capacities in the Executive Committee, he made a very major contribution to the promotion of sports among the blind in the country.



C H A I R P E R S O N

They say sport is magic because it tests human resolve, challenges pre-set conditions and motivates those that experience this even from the side-lines. I am no exception. It was therefore, with great excitement that I took charge of the IBSA in 2016, as its chairperson. But nothing had prepared me for the incredulity of the Sports for the Blind – the exhibition of the indomitable human spirit and going beyond what seems ‘possible’ has made me experience a range of emotions that I had not felt before. From that one day to today, IBSA has become an all-important part of who I am and what I do.

I must mention here that, given my association with the Blind Relief Association, visual impairment was not foreign to me. I was familiar with the stories of grit and effort and therefore, to see the visually impaired push their personal boundaries in competitive sport was both personally exhilarating and deeply inspiring. As we began to work, one of my main goals extended to reaching out to the grassroots to motivate and encourage the visually impaired girl to participate and excel at all levels. I am, therefore, extremely glad to note that we have been able to make visible progress in this space, some of which has been documented in this meaningful publication. Do spend some time to read about and take pride in the journeys of these inspiring athletes.

While this coffee table book will mark a milestone in the journey undertaken by IBSA, I consider it to be a gateway to more wondrous transformations that IBSA will effect in the future.

Let us all clap and cheer for these awe-inspiring and laudable journeys!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Radhika Bharat Ram". The signature is fluid and cursive.

R A D H I K A B H A R A T R A M

Chairperson,
Indian Blind Sports Association.



MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS & CULTURE, NEW DELHI

As a patron of the Indian Blind Sports Association, it gives me immense pride to witness the evolvement of IBSA over the years and the amazing work it has done in identifying, nurturing, and training the visually impaired to be courageous sportspersons. As a wise man once said, "You do need sight to do something life, all you need is a vision". It is the vision of IBSA and the perseverance and undying spirit of the sportspersons that has brought laurels to not only IBSA but to our country as well.

I am glad to know that IBSA is bringing out this coffee table book for the public to get a glimpse of all the hard work we have done all through years and how sports has empowered the visually impaired in ways they might have not expected.

I congratulate IBSA for making such significant progress in its dedicated work in the field of sports and give my best wishes for their great success in the future with a hope that their efforts will keep the morale of the sportspersons high.

MEENAKSHI LEKHI
Minister of State for External Affairs & Culture
Government of India, New Delhi



P R E S I D E N T , P C I

I have great pleasure in sending my congratulations to the Indian Blind Sports Association on publishing this coffee table book. Being a Para sports woman myself and serving as the President of the Paralympic Committee of India, I have first-hand witnessed the progress para-sports has made recently. And the contribution of the Indian Blind Sports Association - being one of the oldest and most active organizations to blind sports and sight classification is immense.

Visually impaired sportspersons have brought laurels to the nation on many occasions and it is a great joy to have some of those recorded in this book. Along with my good wishes, I also share my gratitude for the service extended by IBSA.

With best regards

Your Sincerely,

D R . (H . C .) D E E P A M A L I K
Padma Shri, Khel Ratna & Arjuna Awardee
President - Paralympic Committee of India



G E N E R A L S E C R E T A R Y

A long thought vision has finally come into reality. This book encompasses the indomitable spirit of visually-impaired athletes from various sports. Being a witness to their struggles and achievements, I always wanted their stories to get the recognition they deserve. These are not merely life stories but chronicles of inspiration, for not just the visually-impaired community but for each of us.

The Indian Blind Sports Association has been providing constant support for the athletes since its inception. It has aimed to provide them the right guidance along with psycho-social support for their athletic development. Each of their victories have added laurels to the name of the Association. And, we can't be anything less than delighted to showcase the best of talents in the country through this book.

The world we live in has created many social hurdles for visually-impaired persons by virtue of their loss of sight. Through these stories, one would be a spectator to these shackles being broken by the determined vision of the athletes. I hope the readers enjoy reading the book with as much contentment it gave me to be a part of this endeavor.

D A V I D . A

General Secretary,
Indian Blind Sports Association.



F O U N D I N G M E M B E R & F O R M E R G E N E R A L S E C R E T A R Y

As one of the founder-members of the Indian Blind Sports Association, and serving as the first General Secretary, I am so proud of the heights IBSA has reached in these years. It is a great comfort and excitement that I carry when I witness what IBSA has accomplished over the years.

One of the important reasons for the development of IBSA over the years has been the efforts of the band of highly motivated and devoted people - Mr. KC Pande, the present Hony Executive Secretary of the Blind Relief Association, late Mr. AK Mittal, then JPM School's Principal, late Mr. RS Bansal, then Physical Education Teacher, Late Mr. KN Nayar, then Hony. Executive Secretary. In starting with integrating outdoor sports for the school children of the Association, it did not take long for us to share our experiences with other institutions for the blind working in Delhi. Soon inter-institutional sports competitions began to be organized every year, which later developed into a countrywide movement.

A significant memory that strikes me is accompanying along with Shri A K Mittal ji, a contingent of athletes to the first IBSA World Championships & Games held in Madrid, Spain in 1998. It was an honour and joy. Today, as a veteran seeing some of those athletes' life chronicled in this book brings me so many more memories worth recollecting.

This coffee table book produced by IBSA is a testimony to the many lives of the visually impaired transformed by sports and the significant role IBSA has played in accomplishing that.

Best wishes,

C A P T . C . V . N A R A Y A N A N

Founding Member & Former General Secretary
Indian Blind Sports Association.



FORMER VICE CHAIRPERSON &
GENERAL SECRETARY

It is indeed a great idea to bring out this coffee table book on portraits of outstanding visually challenged athletes from India recording their indomitable spirit, hard work, and achievements. It has not been an easy journey for these athletes to achieve laurels in world competitions.

I fondly recall the outstanding achievements of our young athletes at the IBSA World Youth and Students Championships held in Colorado Springs, U.S.A. in the year 2009. It was perhaps the first major medal haul for the blind athletes from India bagging as many as 9 gold, 1 silver, and 7 bronze in an international event. For me personally, it was indeed a proud moment to be heading this team under the flag of the Indian Blind Sports Association (IBSA) and witnessing the inspiring achievements of budding athletes.

It is heartening that in the ensuing years several of them continued their passion and made a mark in the top national and elite international events organized under the Paralympic and IBSA banners. Notwithstanding that some of them received the prestigious Arjuna Award, unfortunately, the achievements of these para-athletes are not adequately highlighted in the media and remain unknown to the public. I am sure this impressive coffee table book would bring these sporting heroes out from obscurity. I commend Indian Blind Sports Association for this thoughtful and meaningful initiative.

K A I L A S H C H A N D R A P A N D E

Former Chairperson & General Secretary
Indian Blind Sports Association.



(Right) Sukhmani Bhandari pictured with (from left) Dr. Satyapal Singh (Dronacharya Award Winning Coach), Ankur Dhama (Arjuna Award Winner), Ramanjee (First 100% visually impaired athlete to represent India in The Asian Para Games).

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

The Play of Dots would not have been possible without the exceptional-proactive effort and support of our volunteer Sukhmani Bhandari. Her persistence, enthusiasm, dedication, timeliness, focus, knowledge, and exacting attention to detail are acknowledged and met with deep gratitude. Independently she helped transform our vision and latent desire to document and showcase the journey and achievement of some extraordinarily talented athletes and coaches into a reality.

As an athlete, Sukhmani has always been inspired and astonished by successful athletes and their extraordinary feats discovering these winners who achieve beyond the physical boundaries of the field and courageously overcome the odds stacked against them.

With a strong relationship with Indian Blind Sports Association, she worked on encapsulating these unique journeys, difficulties and triumphs of these inspirational, determined, and courageous visually-impaired Indian sports personalities through interactions and immersing herself into their world. Our shared desire to have society recognise and reward these efforts and ensure the grant of equal opportunities led to the creation of this book.

D A V I D . A

General Secretary,
Indian Blind Sports Association.

T H E P A S T

As we undertake to chronicle the origin of the Indian Blind Sports Association (from now on referred to as either the “Association” or “IBSA”), it is only natural to start from the beginning - how the Association came into being and evolved through the years.

The Blind Relief Association had taken the lead in organising sports competitions and meets for the blind at the local and national levels before IBSA’s formation. Until 1985, it had conducted three National Meets. A crucial aspect emerging from these meets was the necessity to provide a stable foundation for blind sports in the country. It soon became clear to all the participating institutions that the best way to provide such a reliable foundation was to form a separate national organisation devoted exclusively to developing sports for the blind in the country.

The management of The Blind Relief Association again took the lead and, after due consultations with like-minded institutions and organisations, submitted the necessary documents to the Registrar of Societies for establishing a separate blind sports organisation at the national level.

On 30th October 1985, a formal application was filed for registration. It carried the signatures of the following eleven founder members:

Mrs. Manju Bharat Ram (Chairperson), Mr. R. N. Bhargava Vice-Chairperson), Mr. Pran Nath (Vice-Chairperson, Mr. C. V. Narayanan (General Secretary), Mr. R. S. Bansal (Joint Secretary), Mr. B. L. Bhardawaj (Joint Secretary), Mr. B. L. Bhardawaj (Joint Secretary), Mr. K. N. Nayar (Treasurer), Mr O. P. Nagar (Member) Mr. C. D. Tamboli (Member), Mr. Prem Dutt Sharma (Member), Mr. R. N. Kripalani (Member).

The Association was successfully registered on 8th April 1986, and IBSA was formally born. It is the premier national blind sports body in India today. The first meeting of IBSA’s Executive Committee was held on 17th July 1986 at the premises of The Blind Relief Association, Delhi.

IBSA successfully conducted its First National Blind Sports Meet in December 1986 with the support of The Blind Relief Association. In 1997 IBSA received international recognition. Its activities have received support from the Union Ministry for Youth Affairs and Sports and the Sports Authority of India, bearing testimony to the confidence of these Government bodies in the working of the Association. On 23rd July 2004, IBSA associated itself with the Paralympic Committee of India.

T H E P R E S E N T

IBSA today has 247 affiliated institutions and organisations spread across 25 States and Union Territories.

The Association has, over the years, taken several innovative initiatives for the development and promotion of blind sports in the country. IBSA has organised national level sports meets annually/biennially, sponsored Indian athletes to participate in top international championships and games, held coaching camps to raise sporting standards, and introduced new and challenging sports disciplines for the blind. Two of its athletes and its Chief Coach have received the highest National sports honour (Arjuna Award) from the Government of India.

The Blind Relief Association, Delhi, continues to play a sterling role in giving shape to IBSA's development plans and initiatives. It also extends valuable financial support to augment the Association's resources, provide accommodation and transportation for the conduct of sports activities and, most willingly, offers the services of its selfless staff to organise the Association's varied events.

Indian Blind Sports Association is the oldest blind sports organisation in India and one of the earliest organisations established to promote sports in the entire disability sector in the country. The Paralympic Committee of India and many other apex organisations and bodies were formed much later.

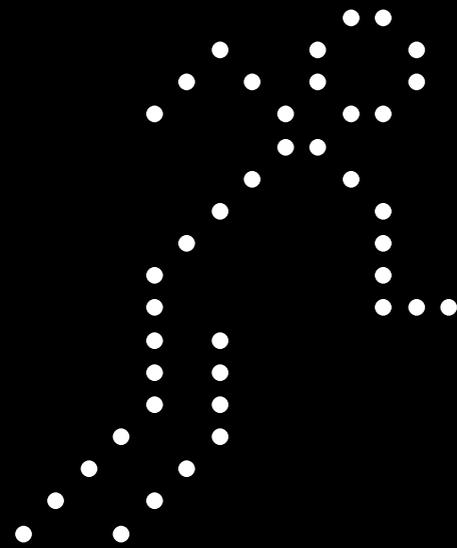
I N T R O D U C T I O N

From its formation in 1986, a shared vision led to the creation of the IBSA to build opportunities for the visually-impaired and bring about sporting parity. Today, this drive has only grown, leaving no stone unturned to achieve its objectives. The Play of Dots highlights the stories and accomplishments of 14 extraordinary Indian Para-athletic sports men and women who have excelled despite challenges such as congenital disabilities (since birth) or life-altering injuries caused by accidents or disorders later in life. Captured are their journey to becoming unsung heroes with remarkable grit, transforming themselves into some of the most accomplished athletes.

In addition, featuring 4 distinguished Coaches, this book gives a glimpse into the support, effort, and commitment they have contributed to empowering these successful Indian Para-athletes. Collectively, these role models and their chapters of courage inspire and encourage others to dream big, have a vision, and make determined and focused efforts to achieve their goals.

Through this book, what will strike out at you is the recognition, rewards, and celebrity-like status that follow the success leading to opportunities and out-of-the-ordinary policy changes that work towards bringing about parity between sighted and differently abled athletes. This is especially true for those athletes who contributed to The Play of Dots. With lessons learnt from our Indian Para-athletes: "Nothing is impossible" and "Where there is will, there is a way", society must wake up to contributing to this greater goal. With an immense untapped sporting potential of the large Indian population, to be a global sporting super-power, we must collectively tune our mindsets to nurturing talent rather than mere adoption. The success story of our Indian Para-athletes and coaches is testimony that the talent exists. We need to discover, motivate and nurture this talent for success. If other countries have done it, so can India.





The Blind Runner is tethered to a sighted Guide Runner with a tiny strap attached to either their arms or hands and must always finish the race in front of their Guide Runner.

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A T H L E T I C S



Daily morning practise session at
The Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi.

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A N K U R •• •• • •• •
A N K U R D H A M A

True to his name, Ankur is the living epitome of what a young sapling can blossom into with focus, determination, and backed by the proper guidance, support, and motivation, irrespective of one's condition.

Born in Baghpat, a small village in Uttar Pradesh, to a family of farmers, Ankur gradually began losing his sight when he was 5. Within a year, he was bereft of sight and completely demotivated. Guided by his teachers and doctors, he travelled to Delhi and began attending the Jormal Perival Memorial (JPM) Senior Secondary School for the Blind, Lodhi Road. There he witnessed his seniors participate in sports. Enthused, he too joined in. What started as curiosity soon climaxed into resounding triumph. He won Gold Medals in 400 and 800 meters at IBSA's 2008 National Meet.

This win also qualified him for the World Youth and Student Championships in 2009 at Colorado Springs, USA. To his surprise, he repeated the success at both these events. Ankur gained self-confidence and achieved more, both on and off the field.

Continuous encouragement by his teacher-idol, Dr. Ravinder Singh Nagar, was paying a dividend. Despite his rigorous training under Dronacharya Award Winning Coach, Dr. Satyapal Singh, Ankur was careful not to neglect his academics. He secured phenomenal grades to gain admission into the prestigious St. Stephens College, Delhi. To Ankur, academic pursuits due to his career orientation had always been as important as sporting successes. Ankur's philosophy has been to draw inspiration from role models, focus on goals, and use opportunities optimistically.

He believes that we can realise all our dreams with internal strength and external support. To Ankur, life is like a roller-coaster ride: a journey full of challenges and emotions. And to evolve, we must experience and enjoy it all.

History student makes history.



Men's 1500m - T11 Round 1 Heat 1 at Rio 2016 Paralympic Games on Sep 11, 2016 at The Estádio Olímpico João Havelange.

Ankur Dhama, a 2013 alumnus of JPM Senior Secondary School, was nurtured by IBSA since his school days. Medals at the 2012 Malaysian Open Championship (Kuala Lumpur); 2014 Asian Para Games (Incheon, Korea); 2014 Sharjah Open Championship (UAE); 2014 Fazza International Athletics Competition (Dubai, UAE) eventually led Ankur to his landmark achievement: of being the First completely blind (B1) Para-athlete to represent India at the Rio Paralympics in 2016. Now in the limelight, on 25th September 2018, Ankur Dhama's outstanding Track and Field Achievements in the Men's 800, 1500, and 5000-meter events were honoured with the prestigious Arjuna Award by the President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind.

As a student of history, Ankur never realised that he, too, would one day be immortalised in its pages; and serve as a guiding light for recognising and giving parity to persons with disability. Ankur is a role model for other sportspersons like him and continues to aspire for holistic growth and achievement.

Ankur has also played 5-a-side blind football. He is the first person ever to score a goal for India in an international football tournament for the blind. He devotes his time to strategising on ways to optimise the balance between power, endurance, and speed. His goal is to achieve perfect and beautiful harmony, which will orchestrate further success for both him and Motherland India.

Ankur's advice to youngsters:

*Don't shy away from challenges.
The greater the difficulty, the greater the satisfaction.
Work hard with both focus and determination.*

Runner



Asian Para Medalist speaks at
The IBSA National Athletics Championship,
BRA, Delhi held from 10-13 Dec 2018.

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A V N I L K U M A R

Talk about Usain Bolt, widely considered the greatest sprinter of all time with world records in 100, 200 and 4 × 100 meters relay, and Avnil Kumar's ears stand up, and his face lights up. A huge fan, he has attempted to model his career after Bolt's.

He can be found watching Bolt's races repeatedly, seeking inspiration from them. And Avnil has made a conscious effort to emulate his idol's style of taking more extended and more powerful strides to improve his technique. His goal is to win Gold Medals for India in the Paralympics and Asian Para games.

Avnil first took up athletics when he was in the 8th Grade. His love for Sports largely transcended form. He is an all-rounder and has played Blind Cricket, Football and Chess at the National level, aside from Athletics. While good training can help all budding athletes improve their performance, it is said that the best sprinters always benefit from being naturally talented. This is true for Avnil too. He had spent his early childhood in the hilly environs of Himachal Pradesh's Kangra, a well-known trekker's paradise.

Belonging to a middle-class family, Avnil was fortunate to be blessed with supportive parents and friends, who have been a constant source of strength and inspiration. They encouraged him to try different sports as per his interest. Coach Dr. Satyapal Singh, Dronacharya Award Winner 2012, further spotted Avnil's natural talent and encouraged him. Dr. Singh has been instrumental in his success; and, to this day, arranges special training for this quiet performer, who he thinks is yet to achieve his full potential.

Avnil has thus far had an excellent stint in the field of Athletics. He has won National medals in 100, 200, and 400-meter races and Long Jump. National glory led to Avnil's professional discovery. It provided him with a life-changing opportunity to compete in the 3rd Asian Para Games in Jakarta in 2018.

Push the barriers.



Competing in men's 400m in the T13 category at 3rd Para Asian Games 2018 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

After two unsuccessful attempts at the 100 and 200-meter events, the last 400-meter race was a Do-or-Die situation for him. Avnil performed to the best of his ability.

The race ended in a photo-finish with 2nd and 3rd place tied and was finally decided based on nanoseconds. Avnil was awarded the Bronze by the slimmest of margins. As they say, the Rest is History.

Upon returning home, things changed for the better. His outstanding performance in Jakarta garnered appreciation from the sporting community. He was even awarded a job in recognition of his contributions. What impressed Avnil the most was that the Delhi Government had treated him on par with abled sportspersons post his international performance: a decision without precedent in the Indian sporting community. Better opportunities and job provisions for the differently-abled were now considered priority items in the government's policy agenda.

Avnil's message to budding athletes:

*Be positive and confident.
You can and will do well.
And do not give up.
Always think this way.*

Runner



At the Asian Para Games in Jakarta, Indonesia held from 06-13 Oct 2018.

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A S H I S H S I N G H N E G I

Born in a typical Indian family obsessed with Cricket, Ashish too grew up playing the sport in the neighbourhood streets as a child. When Ashish was eight years old, he had lost 75% of his eye-sight due to a medicinal reaction. But his love for cricket was unwavering. Instead of giving up his passion, Ashish transitioned to Blind Cricket.

No matter what problems he has had in life, Ashish strongly believes in adapting to life as it happens and changes, one day at a time. To him, success is not an overnight outcome; only gradual and consistent efforts lead to it.

Due to his natural aptitude, Ashish was selected for the Indian team and became an underarm bowler within just a year of training. He started with Zonal cricket, then progressed to represent different Indian States (Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand) and finally made his international debut in the first-ever Pakistan Tour from India in 2004. As the Vice-Captain of the Indian Blind Cricket team squad, Ashish fondly remembers the 3rd World Cup in 2006 in Pakistan, where he was declared the Best B2 Batsman and Best B2 Fielder.

Given his innate athleticism, Ashish was encouraged by his friends to try his hand at Shot Put and Discus Throw. When Ashish attempted them, he discovered that not only did he enjoy them, but the time demands of these were relatively limited compared to that of cricket. While cricket had endured in his life since childhood, it made balancing the needs of his job and training schedule extremely difficult.

Thus, he decided to transition from Cricket to Athletics in 2015. Success came quickly to Ashish. Soon he received a Gold Medal in Shot Put at the 20th IBSA National Sports Meet for the Blind in New Delhi in 2016. Ashish retained the National Shot Put crown in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021.

It's all about patience & passion.



Batting in a Practise Match on 21 Nov 2016 organised by The Bengal Cricket Club.

Though his routine remains exhausting, Ashish has started to find exhilaration in his demanding circumstances and trained his mind to accept and execute. Recently he took up competitive powerlifting. So strong is his power of conviction that in 2020 he clinched the National Gold Medal.

Ashish knows that hard work is the key to success. His peers look up to and respect him for his tremendous perseverance. However, Ashish strives for greater heights, making a sincere effort to set the best example for others like him. Goal setting, strategising, and relentlessly working step by step (without losing hope) are in his DNA. He believes that his most significant strength lies in being positive in adversity. His blurred vision doesn't matter to him as it's his goal that he can see clearly.

Ashish believes:

*If there is a will to succeed, there is definitely a way.
Sportspersons never fail. They either win or learn.*

Cricket, Shot Put, Discus Throw, Powerlifter



Posing before practice on
06 May 2020 at New Delhi.

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G U L S H A N

Gulshan, a young girl from Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, attended regular school. Soon her teachers observed that something was amiss and that Gulshan could not see the blackboard during classes. After some medical tests, the doctors diagnosed Gulshan with a visual impairment and suggested that she be admitted into a special school suitable to help complete her education.

Gulshan's parents admitted her to The National Institute of Visually Handicapped, Dehradun. Finding herself in a more comfortable environment, Gulshan began exploring her interests outside the classroom. She started to play sports, including cricket, with the boys, as no cricket team was considered complete without at least three girl members. During her Physical Training class, an instructor noticed her potential and encouraged her to start running. Sports tremendously improved Gulshan's well-being, increased her self-confidence, helped her learn faster, and boosted her strength.

Gulshan trained hard. She made her debut and mark at The National Athletics Meet in 2006 by winning a Bronze Medal. Internationally, at the 2009 International Blind Sports Association's World Youth and Student Games at Colorado Springs, USA, she proved her mettle and won a Bronze Medal in the 100-meter race. Motivated by her successful debut, she trained harder as she looked forward to The 2011 IPC Athletics World Championship in New Zealand and her possible qualification for the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

But life is full of surprises. It sometimes unfolds in the most unexpected of ways. Despite Gulshan's best efforts to raise funds to compete at The 2011 IPC Athletics World Championship, she could not gather the monetary resources required. Government grants were limited for sports, and her family could not afford to bear the cost. Dejected, she decided to take time off to re-calibrate her mind and body. However, she was too devoted to sports to give up. She focused on herself and dedicated time and energy to a practice-recovery-practice-diet-sleep daily regimen.

Live and enjoy life.



Daily morning practise session at The Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi in 2019.

Although committed to sports, Gulshan simultaneously pursued her education. In 2014 she joined Miranda House, Delhi University, from where she completed both an undergraduate and postgraduate degree. After college, she was able to obtain an excellent job too. Gulshan continues to train hard in her quest for Gold Medals for India at the 2022 Asian Para Games in China and the 2024 Paris Summer Paralympic Games.

Gulshan is delighted that Indian Parasports are undergoing a gradual transformation with rising awareness and increased funding. She feels that now is a much better time for youngsters to pursue sports than a decade ago. She only hopes that things progress faster. She ardently believes that India can emerge as a super-power in Parasports with the nation's talent pool.

Gulshan's words of aspiration to young sportspersons:

*Life is like a game.
It is full of surprises, ups, and downs.
Play it.
Enjoy it.*

Runner



Complemented by Prime Minister Modi on 16th Oct 2018 for her Bronze Medal in Women's Discus Throw at The 3rd Asian Para Games 2018.

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N I D H I M I S H R A

Ask Nidhi Mishra to describe herself, and she says, “Academician by profession, sports person by passion.”

Nidhi has retinitis pigmentosa, a genetic eye disorder that has caused complete blindness. While Nidhi lost her eye-sight, she never lost her vision. This sharp and focused vision helped Nidhi achieve academic feats that even abled people seldom dream of, let alone accomplish. A consistent performer and a deserving student, she finished her Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees and was conferred with the prestigious Shankar Dayal Sharma Gold Medal and Student of Excellence certificate. Nidhi then pursued a Doctoral Degree from Jawaharlal Nehru University and is presently an Assistant Professor at Delhi University.

Life for a visually-impaired person is quite difficult. Her life, too, was full of challenges. However, with continuous support and encouragement from her parents, Coach Hukam Singh Rawat, and friends, Nidhi was able to excel in sports and academics. Her condition did not hinder her determination to succeed and remain free from a subjugated and marginalised life. There were periods of depression and exclusion. But once she embraced and accepted her identity, life became more manageable. She began exploring ways and possibilities to build and capitalise on skills that would make her happy and financially independent. Nidhi is a realist who continues to craft her life journey path rationally and meticulously.

Societal recognition comes from one’s achievements. Nidhi’s life transformed post her success at The Asian Para Games 2018 (Jakarta, Indonesia). It was a landmark win. Even the Indian Prime Minister, Honorable Narendra Modi, tweeted about Nidhi’s achievement and said, “Nidhi Mishra has made India proud by bringing laurels home. She won the Bronze Medal in the Women’s Discus throw event at the Asian Para Games 2018. She is an inspiration for all of us.”

Believe in yourself.



Daily morning practise session at The Chattrasal Stadium, Delhi in 2019.

Nidhi's confidence soared. Financial stability followed. It confirmed to her that mass recognition largely followed the exceptional and extraordinary. Further recognition followed when she was conferred with a Gold Medal in History at The Jawaharlal Nehru University. Thereon she was taken more seriously and thus able to realise her vision.

While Nidhi has her hands full balancing academic and sports commitments, she has already zeroed in on her next set of goals: To work towards uplifting the lives of the marginalised through their empowerment. She also wants to open an Academic Institution, a Sports Academy, and a Shelter Home. She is confident that one day, with her hard work and support from society and government, she will realise her dream.

Nidhi's message to everyone, both abled and the differently-abled, is:

*Not to sit back and curse your circumstances.
Instead, aspire for big things but take small steps to reach your goals.
Be confident and strong.
Take criticism positively.
Bad phases in life come and go.
The most important thing is to accept yourself, your ability (or disability),
and make your own identity.
Then work hard and relentlessly towards your goals.*

Discus Throw



Ramanjee during practice.

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R A M A N J E E

Asked to describe his personality in three traits, Ramanjee observes that he is, self-motivated, balanced, and positive.

Ramanjee was born in a small village of Sanghopatti in Bihar with 100% visual impairment. His movement was restricted mainly to his home. In 2001, he attended a competition, where he was asked to participate and run. Adventitiously he won. The win boosted his self-confidence, and the prize motivated him to pursue running professionally. Ramanjee moved to Delhi to hone his natural athletic skills under the tutelage of The Blind Relief Association. In 2004, Ramanjee attended the IBSA National Sports Meet, where he bagged his first-ever Gold Medal in 100 meters sprint running.

And in 2006, despite various challenges, he became the first 100% visually-impaired athlete to represent India in the FESPIC Games (now commonly known as Asian Para Games) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Ramanjee's journey had just begun. He achieved laurels in his academics and sports. He always wanted to emulate his father, a School Headmaster, so he kept studying towards his dream: to be a Professor. Lack of accessible audiobooks, preparatory material, and an inability to hire private tutors did not prevent him from achieving his childhood dream of studying at St. Stephen's College.

He graduated with a praiseworthy First Division and was also declared the Sportsman of the Year twice. Simultaneous pursuit of education and sports was challenging, but he has managed the two successfully with determination and family support. Ramanjee's mantra of making the best use of what you have and leaving the rest to God keeps him extremely self-motivated and self-driven. Representing India at various international events and winning Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals further energises Ramanjee to keep going.

Be positive.



Ramanjee sharing his experience at Tarey 2016 - Run 4 Cause organized by Dr. Lal Singh's Foundation.

While most sportspersons, differently-abled or otherwise, are nervous while representing India internationally, Ramanjee uses his visual impairment advantageously. Ramanjee, when at a competition, entirely focuses on the event. He instructs his guide-runner not to tell him about what is happening around him. He self-talks, eats easily digestible-food, and listens to music. Together they help lower his heart rate and anxiety levels. Although Ramanjee is proud that he has made his mark in his field and is amongst the top 5% of all athletes in Asia, he firmly believes his best is yet to come.

Ramanjee has had a very balanced run so far. Small failures do not deter him. They are part and parcel of everyone's lives. Despite his full-time commitment to Athletics, Ramanjee pursues a regular job and finds time to play Cricket and Chess, read Romantic Novels, and listen to soothing music. Once Ramanjee retires from competitive athletics, he plans to set up a Training Academy for talented athletes. His aim: To establish India as a super-power in Para-athletics during his lifetime.

Ramanjee's message to society at large is to:

Get into any sport or activity (run, brisk walk, swim, aerobics, anything at all) even if only for fitness, As it is insurance to better health.

The benefits of exercise are too hard to ignore if done right.

Runner



Ramkaran won Bronze Medals in 5000m & 10000m with Asian Record of 5000m in the 4th IBSA World Championships and Games, Turkey in 2011.

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 R A M K A R A N S I N G H

“If you want to shine like a diamond, you’ve got to cut like a diamond.”

Ram Karan Singh’s struggle to overcome thoughts of helplessness that came with his condition of visual impairment remarkably embodies the statement.

Ram had lost vision in one of his eyes when he was only 3 years old. Merely two years later, his condition worsened due to an accident that led to complete blindness. The Behmai village in Uttar Pradesh, where he resided, barely had any opportunities for people with visual impairments, thus, growing up there came with many challenges. Fortunately, one of his uncles brought him to Delhi, where Ram pursued his primary and higher education.

Coming from an agriculture-based household, his family relied heavily on farm produce for income. There were days when the harvest reaped benefits and at other times when there was next to nothing. This financial uncertainty added pressure on the young boy’s mind. Due to the constraints Ram managed to save money without the family’s knowledge and underwent a medical procedure that partially restored his eyesight.

In what started as a casual sign up for the ‘Salvaan’ Marathon, Ram least expected it to open a gateway of boundless opportunities for him. One medal after the other, Ram Karan Singh became unstoppable. There was nothing he didn’t conquer: National Games, Salvaan Marathon, IBSA National Sports Meet, World Championships, and Para Asian Games. He was also awarded the Rajiv Gandhi State Award in 2011.

In 2012, the Arjuna Award - one of India’s highest sporting honors, was bestowed upon Ram Karan Singh. Receiving the Arjuna Award was one of the most significant moments of his life because it was a revelation for his parents on how far he had come from his humble beginning.

As strong as a diamond



Ramkaran Singh receiving the Arjuna Award in 2012 from the then-President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee.

As destiny would have it, once again, he lost his sight in another accident in 2018, but Ram partially recovered from it. “It was by God’s grace” he says. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic that shook the world hampered Ram’s training regime in performing consistently. However, he is focused on his training and aims to participate in the upcoming 2023 Para Asian Games.

Having completed his post-graduation, in addition to vocational training courses in craft and computer applications, Ram values education a great deal. He feels that one of the biggest lessons he has learned from life is that education must go hand in hand with whatever dreams one wishes to accomplish. He firmly holds on to the belief that education is indispensable for any individual.

Through his education and experience gained in Delhi, Ram managed to start a LPG gas agency with his earnings. Ram Karan Singh has all the money and fame he barely envisioned, yet he remains grounded and humble. He is grateful for the dignity and respect he has earned through sports.

“Like any seed requiring constant nurturing and patience, the fruits of hard work start blossoming at their own pace. Para-athletics has come a long way from where it had begun. Years ago, persons with disabilities could not access grounds for fear of injury; today, there is no ground where para-athletes don’t train. Change is the only constant. However, change takes time and comes with perseverance. Everything takes place at its own time and pace,” Ram emphasizes.

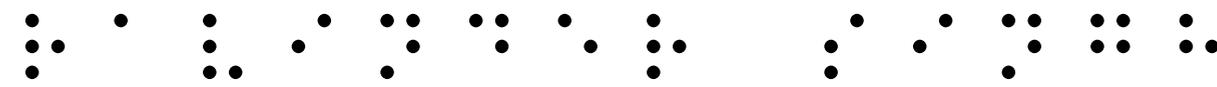
Athlete



Ravinder Singh Nagar at the Athens Olympic Torch Relay in 2004



Ravinder Singh Nagar presented an award at the IBSA National Sports Meet 2004 by Shri Banwari Lal Joshi, the then-Lieutenant Governor of Delhi


 R A V I N D E R S I N G H

Born in a small village in Haryana, Ravinder Singh started his sports journey when he was as young as seven years of age. He remembers his childhood days dearly when playing sports was a crucial part of his daily life. Born as a sighted child, Ravinder lost his vision in Class VII but this did not deter his passion for sports. He continued practising, setting the foundation for an excelling sports career. His first experience as a visually impaired athlete was his participation in the National Sports Meet for the Blind organised by Indian Blind Sports Association at Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium, Delhi on the International Day of Disabled Persons in 1994. His victories of that day gave him the confidence he needed to pursue sports wholeheartedly.

Ravinder has many laurels to his name. The Indian Olympic Association selected him to participate in the Athens Olympic Torch Run in New Delhi held on 10 June, 2004. He was also the torch bearer for the Commonwealth run in 2005. Ravinder has achieved distinguished positions in various track and field events as an international athlete. Since the inception of his journey into sports in 1994, he has participated in around 50 championships and games. He has been recognized five times as the best athlete at the state level in Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi. Ravinder Singh is a huge fan of marathons. He has run alongside sighted athletes in several marathons including 21 km, 42 km, etc. Until 2006, he was very active in participating in such events.

After spending his core years as an athlete, Ravinder became a mentor to budding visually impaired sports persons. His experience and insights were valuable to the Indian team at the 5th IBSA World Games for the Blind, held in Seoul, South Korea. He spent relentless years training children in various schools for the blind in Delhi. Looking back, he says that sports for the visually impaired were not so developed in the country. There were no facilities, scholarships, or even proper shoes. Without much support, Ravinder pursued sports with utmost discipline. For instance, he used to wake up early for practice in his school days. In retrospect, he feels satisfied that all his hard work has led to living a fruitful life. His heart fills with pride when he reminisces the appreciation and recognition he gets in his village and from around the world.

Today, Ravinder runs his own business, and plans to resume coaching to athletes. He also hopes to train his own children in sports.

With sheer will, you succeed



Execution of the Throw: Men's Javelin F13, Final, 2015 IPC Athletics World Championships at Doha, Qatar.

Things have drastically changed for Rishi since winning his medals. He now receives more support from the government in recognition of his accomplishments. Rishi encourages younger sportspersons and emphasises the need to work hard to succeed internationally.

His messages can be summed up as follows:

*Do not give up or lose faith.
Life's hurdles, like the hurdles in athletics,
Are simply obstacles to be jumped over.
Enjoy every moment and
Every phase of your life as we don't know what lies ahead.
So make the most of life today.*

Javelin Throw



Shavaad showcasing his medals.

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S H A V A A D J E D I K E R E

Shavaad Jedikere Mohammed Ali's personality and achievements are concealed in his name. His small, undiscovered native village JEDIKERE gives root to his humble and grounded personality. At the same time, the international footprint of his achievements undoubtedly follows the legendary and perhaps the most famous professional boxer of all time, MOHAMMED ALI, aka Cassius Clay.

Rarely does a simple naming ceremony sub-consciously spell your destiny. But for Shavaad, it did. And we, as Indians, are thankful. Born in a poor rural household, Shavaad was a regular, cheerful, and naughty child with an innocent and contagious smile. At the age of 8, however, his life turned upside down when negligent treatment for a sudden fever caused permanent nerve damage and loss of blood supply to his eyes, leading to total blindness.

Notwithstanding the tragedy, he joined a blind school, where he learned Braille, screen reader software, yoga, karate, music, bag, and furniture making. Shavaad was passionate about cricket and even played at the National level between 2006 and 2010.

Continuous coaxing by his teacher made Shavaad change track and get into Athletics, and from then on, there was no looking back. He is thankful to many unwavering pillars of support for his success. He is especially grateful to Kaanchanamala (his class teacher), BL Gopal (his PT Teacher, who bought him his first pair of running shoes), Dr. JP Krishnegowda (President of Asha Kiran School for the Blind), Coach Sathya Narayana (who believed in him and supported him), IBSA Committee, Paralympic Committee, the Karnataka State and Central Government (who together continue to leave no stone unturned to ensure his future success).

Shavaad's achievements are exceptional. He has won numerous Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals over the last decade in National and International events that include World Championships (2011 and 2015), World Student Youth Athletic Championships (2011), IPC Grand Prix (2014), and Asian Para Games (2014 and 2018).

Set vision and toil hard to achieve it.

Bronze with a golden feel

Perseverance pays for Mohd Ali Shavaad, a visually impaired runner from Chikkamagaluru

Practice makes a man perfect. The adage conveyed to him by his teacher during his school days still remains the motivational force behind Jedisare Mohammad Ali Shavaad.

Shavaad, a visually impaired athlete, bagged the men's 800 metres (T11) bronze medal in the Incheon Para Asian Games in October, overcoming another hurdle in a young life that has only seen barriers at every turn.

Losing his father was a blow he could not even comprehend, for he was only five at the time. Losing his sight at the age of nine after a prolonged illness was painful. For a young boy from Jedisare, a village in Chikkamagaluru in Karnataka, the way ahead seemed all dark.

A hard-working mother fuelled his fighting spirit. Shavaad also found timely support in his teachers. Sports then showed him the way forward, finally landing him the lap of success in a foreign country. "My mother would make beedis and sell them to nearby towns to raise money for us," says Shavaad about the tough days in his village where he, his mother Alima and his brothers toiled hard to make a living. After joining a special school for visually impaired children, Shavaad found more



moving ahead of the athlete then it leads to disqualification.

After his tentative beginning, progress has been steady for Shavaad. He won the 800M gold in the National championships at New Delhi in 2010 and made a major breakthrough a year later, winning the bronze at the fourth ISBA World Championships and Games at Antalya, Turkey, timing 2:19.31.

After the 2012 Para National Athletic Championship in Bengaluru, where he won the 200, 400 and 800 gold medal, Shavaad moved to the city at the instance of Satyanarayana, former secretary of the Karnataka Athletic Association, and Paralympic official.

A bronze medal at the IPC Grand Prix Tunisia back in June earned him a ticket to Incheon, where he did not disappoint his well-wishers. A personal best of 2:14 was the icing on the cake.

"I was coming with a lot of exposure. I was confident I would win a medal," says Shavaad, who finished behind Japir Shinya Wada (2:08.97) and fellow Indian Ankur Dhama (2:09.11).

Rewards have been quick in coming with the State government presenting him with Rs 8 lakh for his bronze medal.

He, one day, received a message from The President of India, Dr. Pranab Mukherjee, himself. Shavaad's success has been documented as a Great Pride for Indians and an Inspiration to both sportspersons and differently-abled people of our country. The President's message reinforced what the magical combination of hard work and dedication could unfold. These two very traits transformed Shavaad from an aspiring sportsperson to an international athlete. Shavaad always takes rejection as a challenge.

He may have lost his eye-sight, but his strength and spirit to perform continues. Now amongst the best Paralympic long-distance runners globally, he is known as the Para-world's Namma Milkha Singh. Shavaad's Never Give Up attitude comes from his mother. Cricketer Yuvraj Singh's post-illness comeback also serves as an inspiration to him.

Shavaad patiently continues pacing his undeterred journey to realise his Dream: To be the Best.

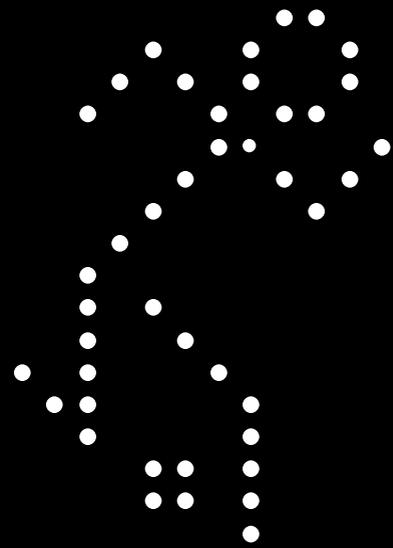
While personal awards and accomplishments are important to him, what truly matters to him is to win awards for India and make the country proud. Shavaad trains day and night to meet this goal. Although visually challenged, the only thing he "sees" in his mind when he runs is the finishing line. He wants to win India a gold medal and "hear" the Indian National Anthem.

Shavaad's thoughts and beliefs are echoed in Hellen Keller's words below:

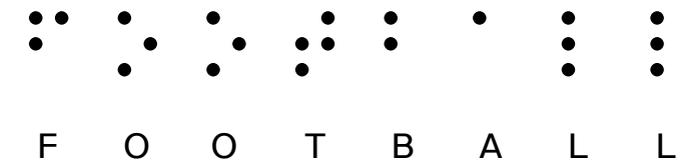
*Eyes are useless when our mind is blind,
The only thing worse than being blind is
Having sight but no vision.*

Runner





5-a-side Blind Football team consists of 4 blind, outfield players and 1 sighted goalkeeper and has no throw-ins and no offside rules. They use an audible ball that makes a noise so that players can hear and react accordingly. The sport allows sighted coaches to stand behind the attacking goal to verbally direct forward players.





Training & Selection Camp for
The Indian Blind Football Team.

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A N T H O N Y S A M U E L

Anthony Samuel had visualised being a famous and successful Bollywood Actor. Like all hopeful actors, he had even temporarily moved to Mumbai, commonly described as the city of dreams, where he went from one Film Studio to another without success or opportunities. As a youngster, Anthony sought out adrenaline-inducing activities and participated in Skydiving, Bungee Jumping, River Rafting, and Racing Motorcycles. All was well until that fateful late night in 2012 when he met with a severe accident while biking and lost his eye-sight.

Recollecting the incident, Anthony remarks, “I lost a part of myself the day I lost my sight” and, “I thought I had lost my identity.” People started seeing and treating him differently. The world of his dreams came crashing down on him. Access to public areas and job opportunities, things he had taken for granted, now became a challenging proposition. The subsequent years were extremely difficult. Anthony’s frustration and depression led him to attempt suicide twice unsuccessfully. Gradually he motivated himself and improved his mental and physical condition.

He accepted his visual impairment and resumed living with greater positivity and purpose. Anthony made a fresh beginning both in his mind and in his practice.

Sunil J. Mathew, Head Coach and Sporting Director of The Indian Blind Football Federation, accidentally discovered Anthony and persuaded him to join the Blue Dolphins’ 5-a-side Blind Football Indian squad. Football gave Anthony the freedom to feel, the freedom to express himself, the freedom to decide his fate, and the freedom to dream of bringing glory to India. Anthony participated in many National and Zonal Tournaments and represented India at International Blind Sports Federation’s Blind Football Asian Championship in Thailand. Even today, despite his handicap, Anthony continues to improve his skills and explore newer career options, namely that of a Life Coach, Motivational Speaker, Radio Jockey, and Podcast Guest Speaker.

Ambition and enthusiasm in top gear.



Men's National Football
Tournament held on
27-30 October 2021
at Chennai, Tamil Nadu.



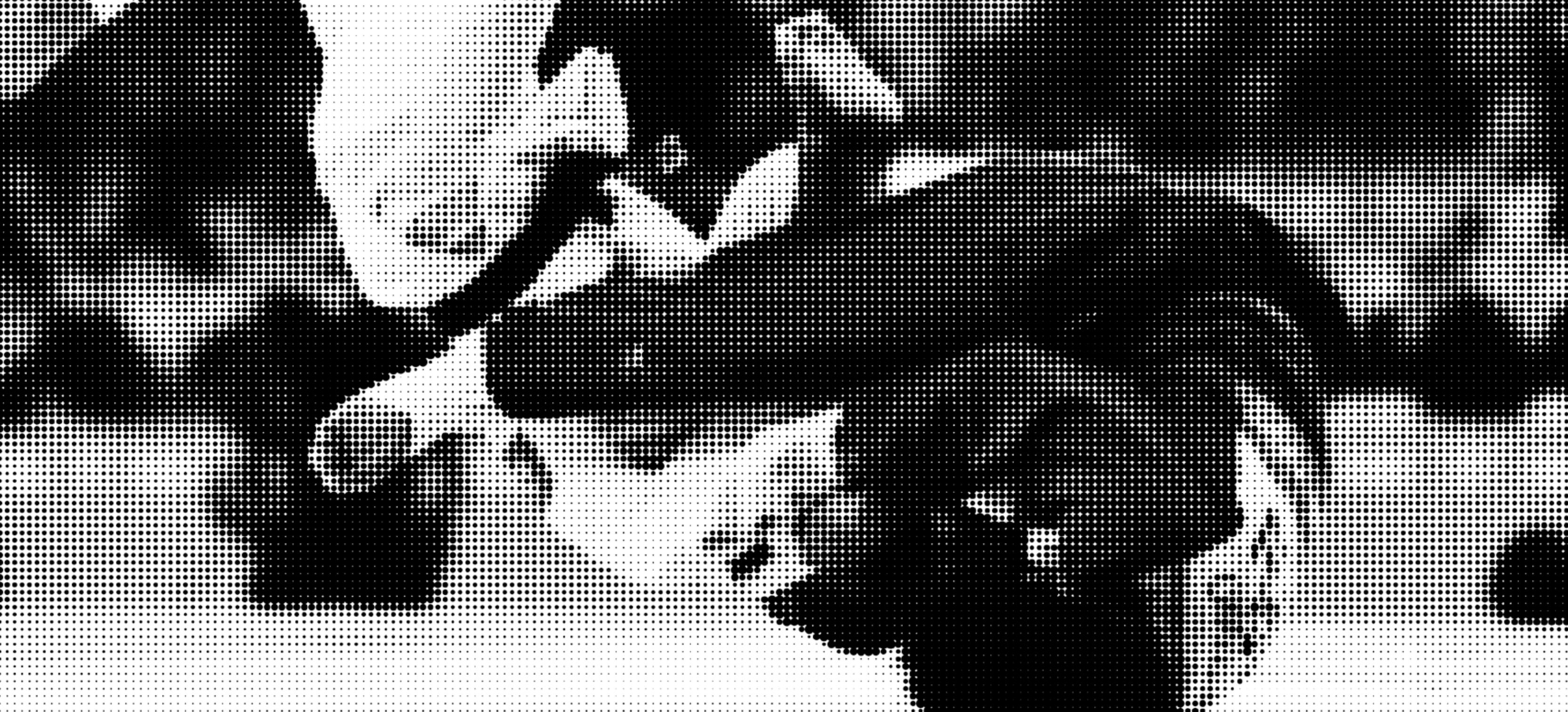
Philosophically Anthony considers himself and those like him as “Special” (because they were the chosen few) and “Strong” (because God had confidence in them and their ability to take this daunting “Test of a Lifetime” daily). He believes that he needs to do all within his powers to ensure and prove that his selection by God was well-founded and right. Anthony doesn’t believe in being pitied. Instead, he seeks the blessings of the society at large and the government; as he continues his quest to bring Glory to Motherland India.

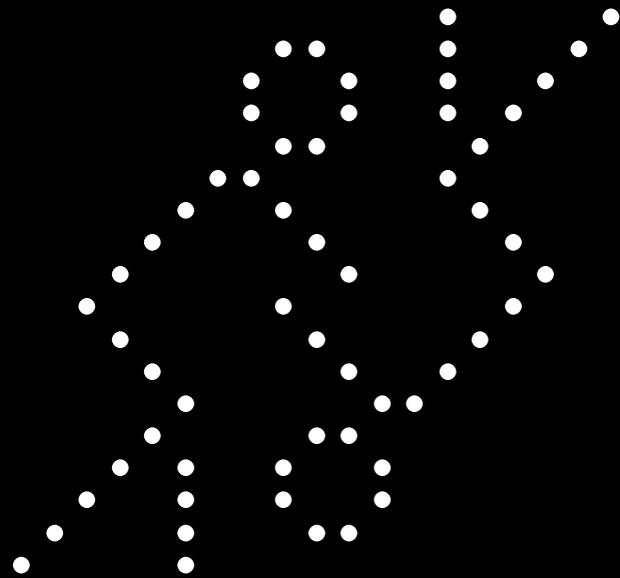
Anthony is like a matador thrown into the bull ring of life: Always Ready to take on challenges and outmanoeuvre them. Anthony’s nickname of “The Unbreakable Bull” stems from his skills in the game and his attitude toward life.

Anthony’s advice to all:

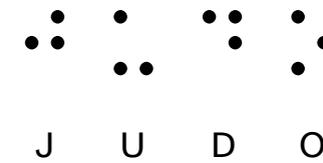
*Be ready to take on challenges life throws at you.
Be ambitious and enthusiastic.
You are the matador of your life.
Train your mind and body to succeed.*

Football





The Match Referee audibly alerts the visually - impaired Judo contestants when they are reaching the edge of the playing area as they are not able to locate it with their sight. The Judoka must grip their opponent's sleeve and lapel and hold still before a match can start.



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J A N K I B A I G O U D



Judo Training Session on 03 Oct 2021 organised by Sightsavers.

For Janki Bai Goud, the threat of physical and sexual abuse has long remained a central challenge. In her remote village, she did not experience any difficulties because of her blindness. But she did, on several occasions, feel that some people in her neighbourhood would try to take advantage of her.

Janki, who lost her eye-sight at the age of 5 due to measles, bought into the merits of joining a Judo and Self-defence Training program initiated by Sightsavers, an international non-government organisation, in 2014. The decision was transformative as it helped reorient the course of Janki's life. In 2017 she was crowned National Champion in Blind Judo. She flew on a plane for the first time to win a Bronze Medal at the Judo Asian and Oceania Championship held by the International Blind Sports Federation in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

International competitions instilled pride in her and her broader community when she proved cynics who previously thought she couldn't accomplish anything wrong. After the event, she remarked, "My family is feeling good. This has changed my life." Before joining Judo, Janki barely spoke due to her low self-esteem, and her body language was very negative. The win helped boost her confidence. Today she is an unofficial spokesperson for the program organisers and teaches younger Judokas.

Janki proudly proclaims, "Once I was looked down upon. As a daughter of a daily wager, no one thought I could do anything, let alone go out and work. After I won medals I earned both respect and recognition. Besides visually-impaired girls, even those who have healthy eye-sight now want to learn judo from me. I am very happy that I led the Indian team to victory in Uzbekistan, which not only made my parents and village proud but also my country". The remarkable feat not only won her official felicitations when she returned home but accolades from the state chief minister.

Extraordinary determination and discipline.



Competing in The National Blind Judo Championships at The Blind Relief Association, Lodi Road, New Delhi on 08 Mar 2018.

Recently, Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh) district authorities indicated their willingness to build a judo academy named after Janki, to facilitate better training for visually-impaired girls. At present, there are no training centres in the district.

To her, judo is more than just a means of self-defence now. She has become deeply passionate about the sport. Janki's courage and dedication inspire one to emulate her mental strength and determination. Judo has helped Janki rejuvenate herself and thereby transform her mind and body to achieve what was unthinkable. She is a living example that life need not stop even if you have disabilities. Her struggle and success story is a lesson for all, as Janki has proven that life and success exist beyond physical ability.

The overarching message from Janki's story:

*With patience, determination, and good guidance,
Nothing is impossible.*

Judoka



Manoharan catches a breath after the practice session at his Dojo, housed under a metal shed in Tamil Nadu in July 2021.

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J M A N O H A R A N

Janakiraman Manoharan was born to a low-income family in Sholavaram with 85% visual impairment. He completed Class 10 from a regular school, but his impairment made it impossible to continue schooling. Compelled by financial need, he worked as a daily wage labourer carrying heavy loads for a mere sixty rupees per hour, often working more than 12 hours every day.

Unhappy with his mundane life, Manoharan heard of a Karate School in his neighbourhood and decided to join to change the course of his life. Soon he earned a Black belt and started successfully competing with normal-sighted contestants in State-level tournaments. With limited growth prospects personally for Manoharan, his Siddha Doctor encouraged him to discontinue karate and adopt judo. He was introduced to a judo coach. Judo has perhaps the steepest learning curve and highest injury rate relative to all other sports. But Manoharan fell in love with the sport, and there was no looking back.

Judo helped bring out the best in the already hardworking and motivated-to-learn Manoharan. Disability did not hold this true champion back. Judo fascinated him. With just his first grip, he mastered gauging his opponent's build, height, and distance. And based on this mental assessment, he fought.

Manoharan candidly thanks all his friends, coaches, and well-wishers who helped shape his career and dream. They helped him buy tickets to participate in Championships, managed his expenses, and ferried him to the distant Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu training facility. They were all indeed his pillars of strength.

Having proved himself repeatedly in the domestic national circuit since 2012, Manoharan has gone on to win medals at the Asian Para Games (2014), Commonwealth Judo Championship in South Africa (2016), and more recently, a Gold Medal at The Commonwealth Judo Championship in England (2019).

Hard work always pays.



Manoharan (Right) exhibits a Koshi waza, hip throw technique at his Dojo in Tamil Nadu in July 2021.

The man instrumental behind Manoharan's success is judo coach Sensei S. Umashankar, who coaches most of the professional judo players in his state. Umashankar hopes more funds and facilities are allocated to the differently-abled athletes who spar against non-disabled, normal-sighted individuals and can even beat them at the sport.

Manoharan, like his peers, echoes the general feeling. With international training, exposure, financial and non-financial support, including job opportunities and recognition, on a level similar to that received by the regular normal-sighted sportspersons, the differently-abled too can almost certainly qualify for the Olympics. They can scale great heights and make the Motherland proud.



Manoharan (Right) trains with one of his students in Tamil Nadu.

Take-away from Manoharan's bout with judo:

Sincere and focussed hard work pays.

Judoka



10th National Blind & Deaf Judo Championship held on 05-09 Mar 2022 at Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan.

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K O K I L A

Kokila Kaushiklate's elder sister was a Judoka and received special treatment from the family. She did not have to bear the burden of studies, got extra time to rest, and received a special diet. Assuming that she would be given similar privileges, Kokila opted for judo as a hobby. She wanted to take the easy way out, which would reduce her school workload and allow her to play. But things unfolded differently for her.

Contrary to her expectations, the workload increased instead of going down. The demands of judo and studies called for an often punishing schedule. Soon competitions began. Higher level of competition meant, greater difficulty of the challenge. Relentless hard work, however, soon bore fruit. A year into training, Kokila was selected for the Nationals and won the Gold Medal and the Best Judoka Trophy in her category in the 6th Para Blind Judo National Championship, 2018. She has been on a medal-winning streak ever since.

After her success at Nationals, she decided to participate in international competitions. She was a novice but a determined one. Unsurprisingly, she won a Bronze Medal, in both individual and team events, at the IBSA Asian and Oceanian Championships in Kazakhstan in 2019. She followed it up with a Silver Medal at the 2019 Commonwealth Judo Championship in England. And Kokila soon attained IBSA Senior World Rank 17 in her 48-kg category as of June 2021.

Kokila's journey as a judoka has not been easy. Discovering the right coaches, training centre, and a productive, competitive environment were hurdles she had to overcome. She trains at the Inspire Institute of Sports, Karnataka, under Dronacharya Awardee judo coach Shri Jiwan Kumar Sharma. In a country where the system is designed to adopt winners rather than nurture them, be it an abled or a disabled sportsperson, it is a continuous struggle for athletes and their families to keep afloat financially and emotionally. Kokila's family leaves no stone unturned for her to achieve success. Limited resources do, however, hinder her progress.

Believe in equality and parity.



Kokila perfecting her mind-body coordination with each contest.

Kokila considers herself as “differently-abled” rather than “dis-abled”. Cherishing the thought that she was the only 17-year-old Judoka to have gone for Paralympic Qualifying Rounds in the history of Indian Judo, Kokila is cheerful and determined to achieve what no Indian Judoka has done before and make India proud.

Kokila’s family is happy that The Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, launched “Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao” initiative.

They would love to see this initiative evolve further into,

*Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao,
Beti Khelao, Beti Badhao,
Beti ko Padak aur Padvilao.*

(Translation)

*Educate your daughter, Save her,
Encourage your daughter to adopt and play sport, Uplift her,
Help your daughter attain medals as well as her societal rights and titles, Support her.*

Judoka



9th National Visually Impaired & Deaf Judo Championship held on 05-18 Mar 2021 at Lucknow, UP.


 P O O N A M S H A R M A

Some meetings seem to be destined. Never in her wildest dreams had Poonam, a shy, visually-impaired girl from Bhopal, thought she would meet Mrs. Bittu Sharma. Coach Bittu, a former Judo National and International Medalist, and holder of the Vishwamitra Award (2008) for coaching, after a few days of interaction with Poonam realised her true potential. She took up the challenge of coaching her first blind student, Poonam, pro bono and soon opened a Judo Training Center: Shri Bliss MP State Mission for Para and Bright.

Coach Pravin Bhateley intensified Poonam's training at the centre and encouraged her to train with visually-impaired and normal-sighted Judoka. For Poonam, circumstances engineered another favourable meeting around that time. This time she met with Shri Munawar Anzar. Anzar was a Judo Master and the only Indian World Referee in Judo. The Founder of the Indian Blind and Para Judo Association, Anzar helped Poonam compete internationally.

The results were astounding. In her short stint as a Judoka, Poonam won Two Gold Medals (Commonwealth Judo Championship 2018 and 2019) and a Bronze Medal (IBSA Judo Asian and Oceanian Championship 2019 at Kazakhstan) internationally. The outcome of these events propelled her to IBSA Senior World Rank 14 in her 63 kg category as of June 2021: A remarkable achievement for a 4-year-old Judoka. Poonam has also staged her National presence and bagged several Gold and Silver Medals. Poonam's thinking distinguishes her from the others. She considers herself as "this-abled" (meaning "very-abled") and not "dis-abled".

Poonam believes that all girls should do something, as they are equally capable and hard working. Poonam encourages every one of us to follow our interests. Sports allowed Poonam the perfect opportunity to prove her "ability". Success, she claims, is a beautiful equaliser as it helps neutralise the imbalance between the visually-impaired and those that are not.

Focus on this-ability and not dis-ability.



16th Edition of the Commonwealth Judo Championship 2019 held at UK.

She believes that if the Government and Society were to give equal opportunity to the visually-impaired by way of facilities, funding, and jobs, they too could scale greater heights than they have done so far. Poonam's effort to bring about policy changes bore fruit when the Madhya Pradesh Government began considering disabled sportspersons for State awards and honours.

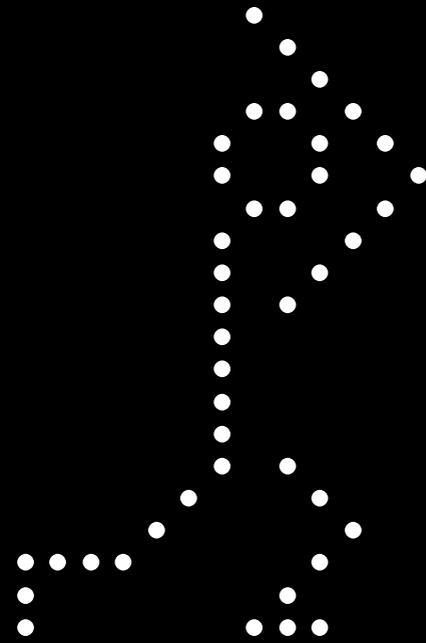
While she can only pray that things improve further, Poonam continues to focus her attention and energy on self-improvement. With or without support, she vows to be a role model for all impaired future aspirants and help them succeed. With an international footprint already, Poonam's dream now is to work harder. She wants to attain World Rank # 1 for herself, her family, coaches, supporters, and above all, her country.

Poonam's message to all:

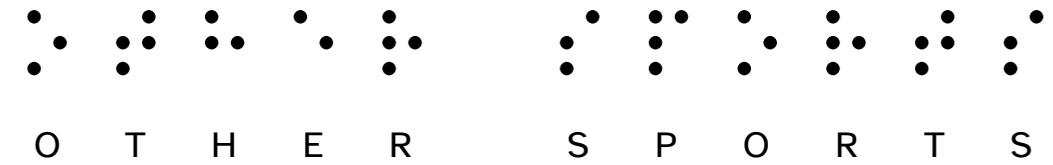
*Focus on hard work, discipline, dedication, punctuality, performance, and positivity.
And you will be pleasantly surprised at your very own capability.*

Judoka





Blind cricket has 11 players; minimum of 4 Totally Blind (B1), 3 Partially Blind (B2) and a maximum of 4 Partially Sighted (B3) players. While they play with a normal bat, a considerably larger ball filled with ball bearings to help the players sense the direction of the ball is used. The blind batsmen cannot be out due to being stumped and must be found to be LBW twice before being given out.





Participating in Nagesh Trophy Blind Cricket at DDA Sports Complex, New Delhi in 2021.

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B A L M U K U N D

The common aspiration of visually-impaired sportspersons is to cross the boundary from a side that the world looks down upon to one that the world embraces as its own. Sports and education were two possible avenues to transcend into a world that would not discriminate, and provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Balmukund chose the more difficult route. He decided to strive toward excellence in both sports and education to achieve his goal.

Balmukund Chaturvedi, a B3 category visually-impaired, entered the world of sports with Athletics in 2002. Having won Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals in Paralympic National Games, Balmukund's zenith came when he represented India at the 2010 Para Asian Games in Guangzhou, China.

While Balmukund's athletic journey came to an end recently, he continues playing Blind Cricket. Despite the hectic demands of any competitive sport, Balmukund did not neglect his educational pursuit. He completed his schooling, Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Education. He even cleared the Central Teacher Ability Test in 2019.

Conscious adoption of sports as a lifestyle was a metamorphic and transformational decision for Balmukund. It taught him the importance of discipline, setting goals, and making a tireless effort to achieve them. It also enhanced his mental and physical health. It is a decision that Balmukund encourages everyone to make knowingly. Although challenging, playing a sport has no disadvantage and is both fulfilling and stimulating. Balmukund, too, faced many challenges when he started. Lack of proper facilities for the blind, nutrition and diet, trained coaches, and financial support were some hurdles that he had to overcome to succeed.

However, once he started to achieve success, things changed for him. The by-product of winning medals was greater recognition and respect from society. The very people, who had earlier sneered at him, now showed him respect.

Discipline is the key.



Practicing at DDA Sports Complex,
New Delhi in 2022.

His entry into cricket and his affiliation with the Cricket Association for the blind was instrumental in cementing his enhanced social position. It also drastically improved his access to facilities and infrastructure.

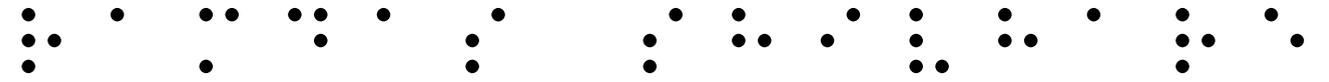
Despite the roadblocks that every Paraspports person faces, his sheer passion and drive to prove his worthiness and fit into society helps him be successful and overcome all difficulties that would usually make lesser mortals crumble.

Words of advice from Balmukund:

*Set goals and work hard to achieve them.
Be disciplined and relentless in your effort.
Avoid bad company.*

*Lack of discipline and bad company can make or break you.
So be very, very careful before it is too late to recover.*

Runner, Cricket



 R A M D A S S H I V H A R E



Water-rafting in Himachal Pradesh.

India has the highest number of persons with disabilities in the world. A considerable number of these disabled people live in villages and struggle with conditions of poverty and lack of education. Although awareness in society of disabilities is growing, much needs to be done to make the community genuinely inclusive and caring.

Belonging to a backward rural area and a poor, marginalised family, Ramdas Shivhare learned much from his own experience of exclusion. He resolved to do something about it to bridge the immense and glaring gap. After being admitted to a special school, Ramdas realised the importance of education as it had helped put his own very life on the right trajectory. He completed his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in History (graduating with First Class Honors) from the prestigious St. Stephens College. He was awarded the Prem Nath Bhalla Memorial Award and the Swami Vivekananda's Chicago Lectures Centenary Award for his orientation towards social service, Indian culture, personal values, and excellent and consistent academic performance. Currently, Ramdas is pursuing a Ph.D.

During his student life, Ramdas has held several positions of responsibility, including President of JPM School Rotary Club; Senior Executive Council Member and Coordinator of Social Service League, St. Stephen's College; Organizer of Drishtikon Inter-college talent event for the visually challenged students; Chief Editor of Kalyan; President of Debating Society and Hindi Sahitya Sabha, St. Stephen's College. Ramdas was among the six Asia-Pacific participants selected and awarded a 10-month fellowship for participating in the 18th Duskin Leadership Training Program in Japan in 2016-17. In 2018, he was among ten participants selected globally for the 18th Teruko Ikeda ICT Training in Japan.

Ramdas has won Silver and Gold National Medals in Athletics (Sprinting), has captained the Indian team at the 2015 IBSA Asian Blind Football Championship in Japan and even ran a Marathon in Japan in 2016. 2019 onwards, Ramdas has been the President of the National Blind Football Committee, Convener of Lawn Tennis and Member of the Executive Committee, IBSA.

Be the change.



Skiing at the Smile Resort, Kullu.

Ramdas is aware that the ground reality has not been altered significantly. He is conscious of the limitations posed by pervasive ignorance in society (to disabilities), which has diluted the intended effects of the progressive legislative framework and affirmative action initiated for making society more inclusive. It explains his strong commitment to work with persons of disabilities and community to ensure dignity and equal rights for persons with disabilities.

Ramdas has played a proactive role as a disability activist and is an active member of the National Federation of the Blind, Samadrishti Kshamata Vikas Anusandhan Mandal, and The Blind Relief Association, amongst others. He regularly presents research papers, acts as a technical expert and holds seminars, workshops, events, and activities. Ramdas' constant effort to create a network, which operates at the grassroots level and in tandem with existing service and advocacy organisations, and one which links them with appropriate government schemes designed to reach the neglected children and adults in the hinterlands continues.

Athlete, Activist, Coach



Triptpal Singh at 2019 World Para Powerlifting Championships, Egypt


 T R I P T P A L S I N G H

“There could be no better feeling than being able to represent your country in a foreign land and be recognized for that contribution” expresses Triptpal Singh. His journey will astound readers into thinking that loss of sight does not mean the absence of vision.

Triptpal Singh was born and brought up in the village of Kajiwala in Punjab, where his family derived their livelihood from agriculture, and his childhood revolved around pasture fields and livestock. He has fond memories of playing various sports such as shot put, wrestling, and discus throw with his cousins. He recalls that while growing up, all he wanted was to be the best at what he did. When he started school, his teachers realized Triptpal was facing difficulties in academics because he could not clearly see and read from the blackboard. His battle of accepting vision impairment had thus begun.

The journey ahead was challenging. Triptpal’s dreams and aspirations shattered on knowing that his sight was gradually diminishing. Just when he thought the end to his dreams was near, it dawned on him that he should not stop doing what he loved the most. And, that for him was sports. At the young age of 15, he began training in weightlifting. It gave him immense joy in being able to lift weights, and gradually increasing the levels of difficulty gave him hope. After the completion of his studies, he got introduced to powerlifting. Squat, bench press, and deadlift became his allies. Those were his three favorite words that served as an engine behind his empowerment. Life may have taken away light from his eyes, but the flame of perseverance continued to flicker in his heart.

Triptpal Singh has played in numerous national and international events. He earned his reputation through a Junior World Record he made in 2011 in Turkey in squatting and deadlifting 255 kilograms. Stuningly, this record remains unbroken to this date. In 2015, he bagged two bronze medals in powerlifting at the International Blind Sports Federation Games in Seoul, South Korea.

Resilience is the key



Triptpal Singh at 2020 IBSA National Sports Meet, New Delhi

He continued to prove his mettle again and again. The Government of Punjab awarded Triptpal Singh the Maharaja Ranjit Singh Award in 2019 for his excellence and achievement in the field of sports. “My next goal is to win a gold medal for the country. It will make me feel like I have conquered the universe” he says.

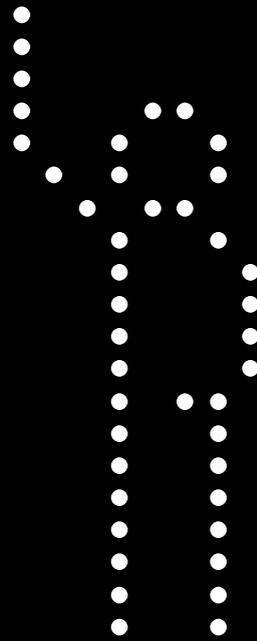
Triptpal Singh lovingly credits his family for his success. In his opinion, support and encouragement from near and dear ones strongly motivate and keep the person grounded.

Currently, Triptpal Singh is working at a Municipal Council in Punjab. While he finds ways to impact the lives of people in his district, he is simultaneously managing his career in sports. Recently, he developed an interest in Judo and after extensive training, he made it to the 7th position at the IBSA Grand Prix 2022.

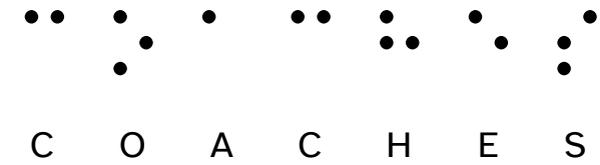
Triptpal Singh also runs a gym in his village and is now the wind beneath the wings of many youngsters who want to pursue sports, especially those with visual impairment. He stresses that success does not come overnight; it takes passion, patience, dedication, and tremendous hard work to get what you desire.

Athlete, Powerlifter





The word "Paralympic" derives from the Greek preposition "para" (beside or alongside) and the word "Olympic". Paralympics are the parallel Games to the Olympics and illustrates how the two movements exist side-by-side.



S A T Y A P A L S I N G H



Posing just prior to the 2010 Commonwealth Games held 03-10 Oct 2010 at New Delhi.

The growth and success of Indian Para-athletics have been astounding. Have you ever wondered how the Indian Para-athletic contingent regularly fights for gold against nations like the USA and Jamaica even without access to regular funding from any sports body or organisation? The answer to the question roots in the passion and sacrifice of Coach Dr. Satyapal Singh, whose achievements make him the most successful coach India has ever produced.

With 54 international medals across 15 athletes in competitive multi-sport events, including the World and Asian Championships and the Commonwealth and Paralympic Games, Dr. Satyapal became India's youngest ever Dronacharya Awardee (Best Coach National Award) for his outstanding contribution to Para-Athletics in India. Dr. Satyapal, when hunting for talent, looks primarily for discipline in the prospect. Discipline is the all-important quality required to bring the best out of him. Society must understand that the goal is not merely a medal or distinction for motivated Para-athletes. The over-arching goal is to show the world that they, too, can achieve everything that individuals described by society as normal can. Therefore, Dr. Satyapal scouts for and motivates talented athletes and then works with them on refining their athletic ability. It is this formula that has proven to be super successful for him. Dr. Satyapal is proud of Ankur Dhama, Sandeep Singh, Ramkaran Singh, Deepa Malik, and Jagseer Singh, all outstanding athletes who have won the Arjuna (National) Award.

Dr. Satyapal's work doesn't end with recruitment alone. The athletes, once recruited, become a part of his extended family. He cares for them, plans for them, and even funds them for travel and their needs. This sacrifice and attribute distinguish Dr. Satyapal from all other coaches. Dr. Satyapal's commitment is timeless: from early morning training at The Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium to planning for each athlete till midnight. To manage this superhuman daily routine is demanding for a family and working man and needs to be complemented. Before Dr. Satyapal took up the mantle of a coach, he was an exceptional athlete himself. During his athletic career (1993-2003), Dr. Satyapal participated in National, University, and State level competitions and won several medals. He simultaneously pursued his education in sports.

Discover, motivate and nurture talent.



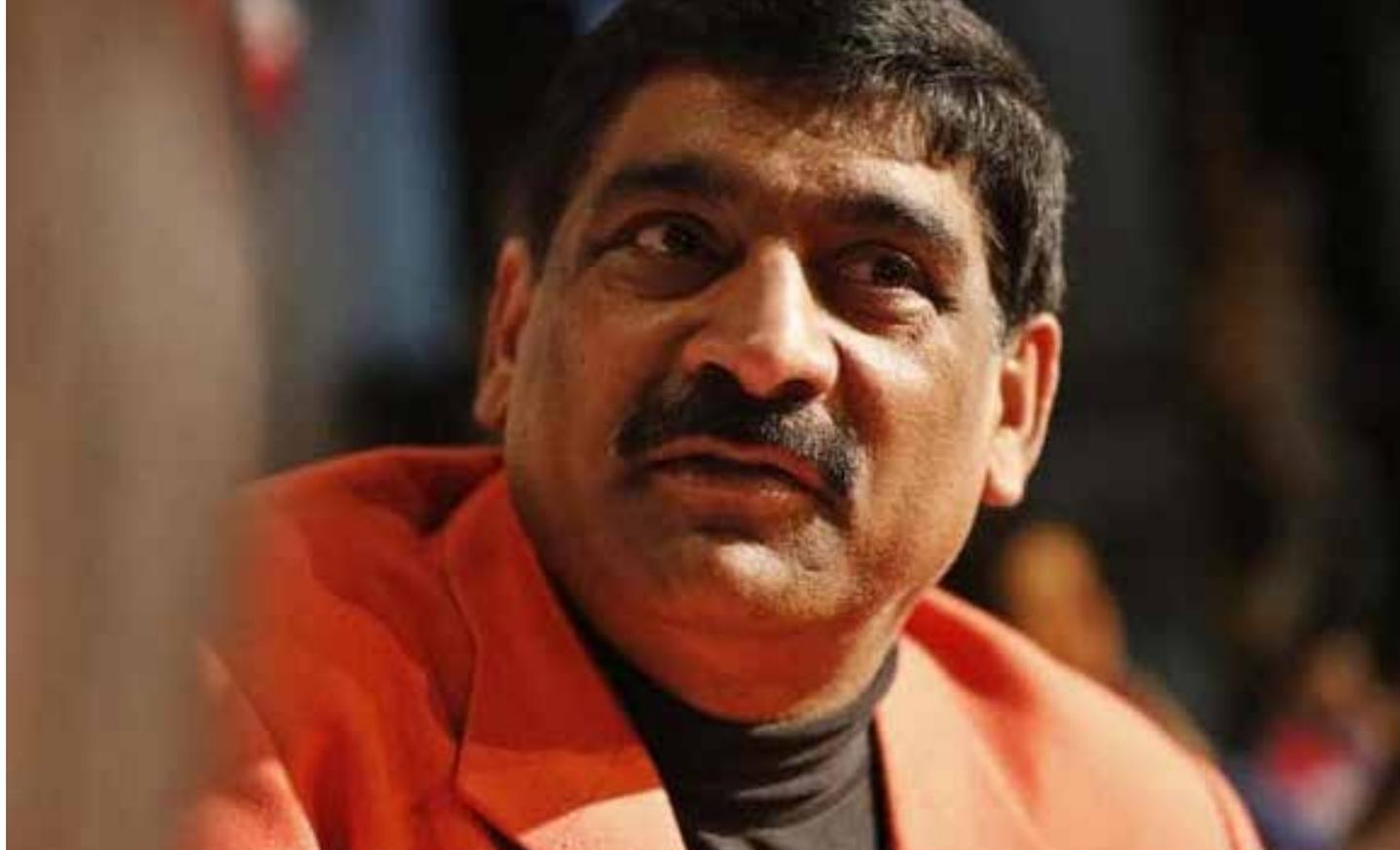
With his trainees at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi.

Amongst other qualifications, Dr. Satyapal completed his BA and MA in Physical Education; a Doctorate (Ph.D.) in Athletics; a Certification in Yoga; a Diploma in Sports Coaching in Athletics, and the International Association of Athletics Federation Technical Officials Course (Level-1). His passion for education led him to a career in teaching at Delhi University. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Physical Education. In 2004, he completed his education and started his coaching career. Aside from his education, he focused on sports and was constantly found playing on the field. Sub-consciously, he felt that he was not good enough to represent the country internationally. Sports were his passion and hobby at the same time. It was then he decided to help others. What he couldn't accomplish as a sports person, he wanted to as a coach. He vowed to transform Indian Paraspports. His philosophy was simple: to discover, motivate and nurture talent. He was confident that his contingent of trainees would represent India at Asian and World events one day.

When Dr. Satyapal finally started coaching in 2004, he didn't have a job. He began as a coach without taking any salary from the government or fees from his players. Dr. Satyapal, as one of India's most successful international coaches, has worked with many national and international sporting bodies. He has coached the Indian Para-athletics team from 2007 onwards in 35 international competitions, including Paralympics (2008 and 2016), Asian Para Games (2010, 2014, and 2018), and Commonwealth Games (2010). Dr. Satyapal started coaching due to his passion for sports. The continuous paucity of funds is a hurdle Para-athletes in India have come to terms with, at least for now. Dr. Satyapal's commitment is truly remarkable. If he is in Delhi, his place of residence, he always makes it a point to reach the training grounds, regardless of the situation. And to this day, he trains without any pay, pro bono. The coach has provided enormous support, including financial, to the Para-athletics community. In the past, he has brought equipment required by the athletes, often with his money. The Para-coach is not demotivated by the lack of financial support from the government. He is thankful to the government for providing a field to play on. However, greater support from time to time is required to progress. The goal in both Dr. Satyapal's mind and his athletes is crystal clear: They want to continue to win medals at the Asian Para Games and the Paralympics, and nothing less would suffice. If the past track record of Dr. Satyapal and his athletes is anything to go by, they will achieve this goal sooner than later. "The Play of Dots" salutes true achievers like Dr. Satyapal for his "Heart of gold and will of steel".

Athlete, Coach

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M U N A W A R A N Z A R



Eyeing a Gold rush in 2020 Paralympics.

Like any Indian, Munawar Anzar, too, was interested in hockey and cricket at first. But when he attended a Judo Camp organised by his school, things took a turn. The experience was life-changing. He took to the sport like a fish to water. He then participated at several District, State, Inter-University, and All India Judo Championships and won medals.

After winning many medals and accolades, Anzar was once asked to officiate at a state-level contest in 1986 in Mumbai. It was his first experience as a referee. The experience was so enriching and satisfying that he decided to turn professional. He has not looked back since. In 1989, he passed the National Referee examination and in 1998 officiated at the African Games, where he also cleared the International Referee Category-A exam. Founder and Secretary of the Indian Blind and Para Judo Association and Technical Secretary of The Judo Federation of India, Munawar Anzar is the only Paralympic Referee from India who officiated in the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

Anzar, who represented the country as a Referee in dozens of International Judo Competitions in Asia, Europe, and Africa, wasn't deterred by the arduous task of making the sport popular among differently-abled athletes. Officiating judo for the visually-impaired at the 2010 Asian Para Games in Guangzhou, China, was eye-opener for Anzar. He was utterly disheartened that while small countries like Vietnam, Thailand, and Pakistan had sent their respective judo contingents, none was from India. He took up the challenge of making the sport popular in India. Anzar has trained over 3700 talented and determined differently-abled athletes as a recipient of the prestigious Yash Bharti Award. He stays focused on popularising judo and works relentlessly to sending a sizeable Para judo contingent to future Paralympic events aiming to win laurels for the country.

When asked to recollect his most memorable moment as a sportsman, Anzar immediately speaks about his nomination as a Technical Delegate for the 2014 Asian Para Games, Incheon, Korea.

Build credibility. Think continuously.



Referee at the 2014 Commonwealth Games at Glasgow.

And as a Coach, he fondly remembers when the visually-impaired Judo Team won Bronze medals at both the Men and Women Team Championships at the above event in Korea. Another distinct memory is the selection of his deaf students, Mr. Harish Chand and Ms. Divya Tiwari, by the Sports Authority of India to participate in the Deaf Olympics at Sophia, Bulgaria, in 2013. Promotion of visually-impaired Judo is hugely challenging mainly because of the difficulty of training coaches and preparing judokas for competition. Matters get even more complex with the cross-category competition of the B1, B2, and B3 judokas in India, and Anzar is trying to work with IBSA to stop this unfair practice immediately.

Anzar is a highly respected sporting official and referee. His decisions are a function of fairness, integrity, knowledge, good judgment, consistency, courage, and common sense. Anzar, at a competition, ensures that he hustles into place so that no tiny detail escapes his trained and experienced eye. A Judoka himself, he understands the importance of accurate calling and its impact on the contestants. Anzar, on his part, leaves no stone unturned to uphold sport's credibility and his position.

Anzar is also a highly accomplished Judoka Coach. His commitment, knowledge, enthusiasm, patience, goal-orientation, and open-mindedness have been instrumental in producing successful Para Judokas. His trainees include Kuldeep, Rajan Babu, and Kamal Sharma, all of whom are making their mark nationally and internationally.

When asked about the state of the Indian Parasports ecosystem, Anzar observes that despite the improved performance of Indian Para-athletes that has brought in more medals, much needs to be done. We need to build better facilities and infrastructure; encourage more differently-abled athletes to join Parasports; train more coaches, psychologists, and physiotherapists; and set up a Research Team that shares adaptable updates on global sporting advancements. Anzar is aware of his contribution and achievements. However, he is modest and proclaims that "still so much has to be done". His mind continually ponders on the ways and means to achieve excellence in the Parasporting world.

Athlete, Coach, International Referee



Saravanaram standing tall.

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P S A R A V A N A R A M

P Saravanaram holds a Master's Degree in Physical Education, a PG Diploma in Yoga, and a University Record in the 100-meter race. During his younger days, he was an ambitious athlete. Determined to make a difference, when he learned that a Blind School needed a Physical Education Teacher but would not be able to pay, Saravanaram volunteered and began training children in a manner that underscored his selflessness. His effort paid off. Within a year, his 18 participants won 12 medals at the Nationals. Awards became a regular feature for his trainees. But the high point of his coaching career came in 2014 when his Boys Kabaddi Team won the Nationals.

He then established The Tamil Nadu Blind Sports Association, affiliated with IBSA, IBFFA, and The Paralympic Committee of India. And during his 20 years of coaching journey with the visually-impaired, Saravanaram has trained many sportspersons who have made their mark Nationally and Internationally in diverse sports that include Kabaddi, Athletics, Judo, Volleyball, and Football. Saravanaram, amongst all his students, finds training visually-impaired girls the most challenging. Saravanaram has surmounted their natural shyness challenge by counselling and psychologically tuning these girls for success.

Saravanaram demonstrates how dedicated and non-commercial coaching, done with sincerity, can make a genuine difference and help the visually-impaired and disabled gain social recognition and parity.

On the question of providing sporting opportunities and training to Indian differently-abled, Saravanaram believes that the country does not have (a) Competitions for visually-impaired Students in Universities; (b) a syllabus in Physical Education Colleges for training the blind and disabled students; (c) any experiential and proven formal coaching course or program to train the visually-impaired as well as disabled; (d) any institutes (like the Sports Authority of India and Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports) to train visually-impaired sportspersons.

Selfless service.



Saravanaram's trainees at a practice game.

And finally that (e) SAI and other NGOs do not accord same priority to disabled and visually-impaired as normal-sighted players. Saravanaram strongly believes that this category of students has bundles of talent. In fact they can learn better than ordinary people. Saravanaram fondly recalls one athlete, Mr. Chellamuthu, who was blind from birth and demonstrated this trait perfectly. One day, Saravanaram explained the triple-jump to Chellamuthu. The jump dynamics are particularly complicated even for the normally-sighted athlete because it involves coordinated hoping, stepping, and then jumping. Chellamuthu immediately understood. To Saravanaram's surprise, within only one month of training, Chellamuthu brought home a Gold Medal from IBSA's 2001 National Sports meet at Delhi.

Saravanaram, through this book, wants to raise awareness. He wants the shortcomings highlighted above to be seriously considered and addressed. It will eventually lead to more medals and achievements. It will showcase that India cares for the visually-impaired and disabled sportspersons and further be a positive step towards attaining the constitutional Right to Equality for all.

Athlete, Coach



WE ⠠⠠⠠⠠
DID ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
THIS ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

ANKUR DHAMA

ANTHONY SAMUEL

ASHISH SINGH NEGI

ASHWANI KUMAR

AVNIL KUMAR

BALMUKUND CHATURVEDI

FALHAN C S

GABRIEL NONGRUM

GULSHAN

HITESH SACHDEVA

JAYDEEPKUMAR HRIDAYA SINGH

KLINGSON D MARAK

KULDEEP

MAMTA KOLAMKAR

MOHAMMED MEGHRAJ

NIDHI MISHRA

JANKI BAI GOUD

JANAKIRAMAN MANOHARAN

KOKILA KAUSHIKLATE

PANKAJ RANA

POONAM SHARMA

RAMANJEE

RISHI KANT SHARMA

SHAVAAD JEDIKERE MOHAMMED ALI

MUNAWAR ANZAR

RAMDAS SHIVHARE

RAM KARAN SINGH

RAVINDER SINGH NAGAR

P SARAVANARAM

DR SATYA PAL SINGH

SHIVAN SINGH NEGI

SOVENDRA SINGH

TANYA JAIN

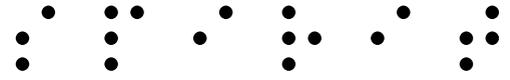
TRIPAL SINGH

T H E F U T U R E

This attempt to showcase a few of the many shining stars in blind sports is the first step, we believe, in bringing to the notice of the world the awe and marvel of sports into a whole new dimension.

The Indian Blind Sports Association has made intentional efforts to reach out at the grass-roots to encourage and attract many young visually-impaired athletes and players who are yet to see what the world can offer them for their talents and skills.

We invite the public to understand and support the cause for the empowerment of visually-impaired persons, which is not limited to education and vocational training, but also includes sports.



S P I R I T

Self Belief

Positive

Enthusiasm

Discipline

Patience

Courage

Focus

Sincerity

Ambition

Inspiration

Determination

Equality

Confidence

Passion

Never Give Up

Hard Work

Spirit in motion.

OUR PARTNERS



OUR SUPPORTERS



I M A G E C R E D I T S

8	ISBA	56	TOMSA	90	Kokila Kaushiklate
22	Rajeev Bhandari	58	Just Play Sportz	92	Poonam Sharma
24	Pokhara Tennis Association	60	IPC Doha 2015	94	Poonam Sharma
36	The NewJ Garv	62	IPC Doha 2015	100	Balmukund Chaturvedi
38	Rio Paralympic 2016	64	Shavaad Jedikere	102	Balmukund Chaturvedi
40	Naresh Singh Nayal	66	Shavaad Jedikere	108	Satyapal Singh
42	Sumit Badola	72	Techno -Travel Hangout	110	Oaktree Sports
44	Ashish Singh Negi	74	Anthony Samuel	112	Press Trust of India
46	Ashish Singh Negi	80	Sightsavers	114	Chow Ngai Hung
48	Gulshan	82	Arko Datto	116	P Saravanaram
50	Gulshan	84	Janakiraman Manoharan	118	P Saravanaram
52	Nidhi Mishra	86	Janakiraman Manoharan	120	Ramdas Shivhare
54	Nidhi Mishra	88	Kokila Kaushiklate	122	Ramdas Shivhare

The word that has been close to our hearts is PLAY and at Usha, we have been part of sports for decades. Usha International is associated with Indian Blind Sports Association (IBSA) for the last five years for Usha National Athletics Championship for the Blind. The purpose is to be part of the journey of differently abled athletes and increase their participation in sports. This also inspires us to live an active and healthy lifestyle. Congratulations on The PLAY of Dots to team IBSA!

Best wishes,

Krishna Shriram
Executive Chairman, Usha International

We have always been inspired and astonished by successful athletes and their extraordinary feats. Delving deeper into the life journeys of a particular subset, namely the visually-impaired, reveals that these athletes, in particular, are winners even beyond the physical boundaries of the field as they have courageously overcome the odds stacked against them to achieve success.

“The Play of Dots” highlights the accomplishments of these unsung heroes whose struggles are often overlooked. Despite congenital disabilities (since birth) or life-altering injuries caused by accidents or disorders later in life, these Indian visually-impaired athletes have shown remarkable grit and self-belief to transform themselves into some of the most accomplished athletes.

The underlying research and interviews that culminated in this book startlingly revealed that although these Indian Para-athletes came from different backgrounds and had their individual and unique stories of difficulties and triumphs, they were united by their pursuit of personal happiness, passion, and drive.

With the desire to allow their journeys to gain recognition and advocate for their parity in Indian society, “The Play of Dots” brings you the voices of these athletes that are discretely making India proud.



INDIAN BLIND SPORTS ASSOCIATION