

Helping the visually impaired fulfil their academic dreams

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NEW DELHI: With less than 1 per cent of printed books available to visually impaired students in accessible formats in India, which has the largest population of such students in the world (about 15 million), efforts are being made to use technology to help them fulfil their academic dreams.

Not-for-profit organisation National Association for the Blind (NAB), Delhi, in association with Japanese automation technology provider Omron have launched 'Your Voice, Their World' project, under which they aim to create the country's largest accessible digital library for the visually impaired students. Under the project, the two will work together to create a repository of books in formats that can be used by such students.

NAB joint secretary Prash-

ant Ranjan Verma said the project will produce both text and leisure reading digital books (audio as well as e-books) for Class IX to college students.

Stating that technology can play a major role in bridging this digital divide, Omron Management Centre of India president Takuichi Shimizu said in the first phase they shall produce 2,000 hours of recording (books, poems or stories) by December 2014. Besides, the project shall also undertake conversion of 5,000 pages of standard print into e-book format. There is also a provision of making e-book readers available to NAB students at a subsidised cost.

Mr. Verma added that they aim to reach out to not only the students of NAB, Delhi - 250 in number - but also to around 2,000 individual members of NAB Delhi library and around 10,000 blind persons.