

## HISTORY OF NAB

The National Association for the Blind India is a leading non-governmental organisation committed to the welfare, education, training, and rehabilitation of visually impaired individuals across the country. On 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1952 the flower bloomed from the seed sown way back in 1947 by Mr.Mangulal Jethalal Sheh, Mr.B.G.Kher, at the premier of Bombay province. They moved a resolution at the First All India Conference for the blind held in Mumbai lead to the foundation of the National Association for the Blind (India). NAB India works to empower people with visual disabilities by providing them with access to education, vocational skills, assistive technology and employment opportunities. Through its wide network of branches and partnerships, the organization strives to promote inclusion and equal rights for the blind and visually impaired, helping them to lead independent and dignified lives. In recognition of the outstanding performance in the field of Welfare of people with disabilities Government of India, Ministry of Social Justice And Empowerment has given National award for the welfare of people with disabilities to National Association For The Blind, India.

National Association for the Blind, Kerala State Branch (NAB Kerala) was initiated by the Late Benedict Mar Gregorios, the then Arch Bishop of Trivandrum. NAB Kerala started functioning from 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1962. It happened when Benedict Mar Gregorios accidentally met a visually impaired at the Trivandrum airport. He initiated a talk with visually impaired person & introduced himself and asked the whereabouts of him. It was from this visually impaired person named Mr. Rajendra Vyas, he heard about National Association for the Blind. From that moment the seed of NAB Kerala was sowed. Benedict Mar Gregorios became the first honorary President with members Mr.P.George, Mr.S V Pandit, Mr.Hassan Mariakar, Mr.Narayanan Pillai, Mr.Baskaran Nair,. etc. Initially the office was at Shalom Buildings, Archbishop's Campus, Pattom. In 1996 an old house was taken at rented basis for the training purpose. It was named as 'Happy Home for the Blind' and is situated at Plamood Vayal Road. In 2000 a new building was bought and the training was shifted to Training and Development Center situated at Palmoood Manchadivila lane. In 2006, 1<sup>st</sup> renovation of this building was done. In 2018, it was decided to construct a new building adjacent to the old building for better facilities and with the help of well-wishers and members the new building was inaugurated on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2022.

NAB Kerala is dedicated to the comprehensive rehabilitation and empowerment of visually impaired individuals and persons with disabilities across the state. NAB Kerala was formed with the intention of providing services to visually challenged persons. Quite a large number of projects in different parts of Kerala have been undertaken by NAB for the benefit of Persons with disabilities, especially the Visually Challenged. Our focus is mainly on empowering those persons, by sensitization, training and education and providing opportunity for rehabilitation.

The organization offers a range of services, including community-based rehabilitation, integrated education for children with disabilities, prevention of blindness and disability programs, placement and counseling, low vision centers and specialized support for individuals with blindness and multiple disabilities. These initiatives aim to promote independence, inclusion and equal opportunities for them in Kerala.

Presently the Association has around 300 Life Members. Administration of the Association is carried out by the Governing Council, consisting of Senior Advisers, Executive Officers and other members, elected by the General Body and the tenure of the Governing Council once elected is for three years.

Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Unit for Economical Independence is one the main activity of NAB. It is to introduce the visually impaired persons into the main stream of society. Vocational Training Center gives training in furniture re-caning, envelope making, candle making, home science, detergent making, creative crafts, computer operation, etc., with a sales unit to sell these products. This sales unit was developed and named as 'Home Need' and is functioning successfully. Mobility Training Session in this center helps blind person to learn to move independently.

National Association for the blind in association with proctor and Gamble India Limited has launched a sight restoration project in the country on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1999. The project attempted to restore sight to over 250 adolescent blind girls across the country as the year 1999 was declared as the Adolescent Girl's year by UNICEF. This is done through corneal transplant operations. The Kerala State Level launching of this project was held on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 1999.

An Envelope making unit was inaugurated at NAB Kerala on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2001, by the Mayor of Trivandrum Prof. Chandra. The machinery for this unit was purchased by making use of the grant given by Trivandrum Corporation.

On 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2002, Sri. Vakkom Purushothaman Hon'ble Speaker of Kerala Legislative Assembly inaugurated the first 'High-Tech Centre' for the blind person in Kerala at Priyadarsini Auditorium, Trivandrum. It started functioning at NAB Kerala office, Plamood. Kerala State Science and Technology Museum was the co-sponsor of this 'High-Tech Centre and Indian Association for the Visually Handicapped, Mumbai gave all technical expertise for the center. The facilities available at the NAB Kerala, Plamood are – Galileo Text Reading Machine, Computer Education to Blind Persons with Jaws Software and Computerized Braille Press. This center was later developed and it was financially supported by Amway Opportunity Foundation (AOF). Each year many students are passing out from this training. With the support of Amway Opportunity Foundation it was renovated in the year 2008. Again this center which was started with limited facilities was upgraded during the year 2016-17 with the financial support of Y's Men International. It was again renovated in the year 2019-20 with the help IBS Software Company

On 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2005 the Directorate of Census Operations in Kerala has commended and appreciated NAB Kerala with an Excellence award for its contribution in sensitizing people of Kerala about the importance of the question on disability during the conduct of Census 2001.

This Project of NAB is NAB Kerala and Care and Share Charitable Trust, USA had associated together to provide food, health care and financial support to persons belonging to BPL category who were blind or deaf-blind and to their families from 2006-7 onwards, particularly in rural areas.

The project 'Shakthi' was started in the year 2008 with the support of sight savers to transfer the skills to the community and community to respond to the needs of the persons with disabilities.

This project organized a series of sensitization, awareness and training programs with Govt. and Non-Govt. agencies of the area. This brought tremendous changes in the attitude of the panchayath officials and they started responding to the needs of the persons with disabilities.

The music troupe “The Voice of NAB Kerala” had been formed in the year 2018 with talented singers from the trainees and some training was given to them with intention of developing it into a full-fledged professional troop. In 2025 it was inaugurated as a professional music troupe.

Asianet is actively promoting a lot of Blind Welfare activities from the year 2018, particularly for empowering visually challenged women, with keen interest on the part of our patron, Mr.Frank.P.Thomas, Director and Business Head, Asianet News Network Pvt.Ltd. Asianet involved NAB trainees in two of their programs, held at Ernakulam and Thiruvanthapuram. Smart Electronic Canes were distributed to visually challenged women to aid their mobility as per the list furnished by NAB Kerala.

An Audio Recording Studio functioning at NAB office enables preparation of text books and study materials in audio format for the use of visually challenged students. In this facility we prepare audio version of text books and study materials for various academic courses, entrance examinations and other competitive tests. Recording Studio was reformed with the help of IBS Software Solutions. The audio of psc bulletins are recorded, edited and it is sent through whatsapp group to others.

From the year 2019 NAB Kerala YouTube channel named ‘Drishyam NAB’ started functioning. It contains audio recordings covering various subjects like current affairs, science and technology news, entertainment, health and lifestyle and editorials in leading dailies are being published. A digital weekly magazine containing the recording of a week is collated and published on Google Drive. NAB also maintains the Facebook account with posts on important activities of NAB.

A Care and Therapy Center was built with the help of Y’s Men International. It is built in the new Jubilee Building.

Empower Edu is the modified and developed project of NAB Kerala. It is a 6 month course that is given to visually impaired from all over Kerala without any age limit. They are provided with classes on computer learning, English, Laughing Yoga, Life Skill Development, Mobility and Counseling, etc.

Noon Meal program is the project formed with the intention of providing noon meal to the visually impaired. Any visually impaired coming to NAB will not leave the premise with vacant stomach is the policy of this program.

Talking about our supporters, NAB Kerala is supported by a network of dedicated individuals and philanthropic organizations. Key supporters include Y’s Men International, Amway India, Care and Share Charitable Trust USA, Asianet, ARTECH, KRLTRON, Ospyn Technologies, Federal Bank Hormis Memorial Foundation, IBS Software Company, etc. They are the backbone of this NGO. Their support helps NAB Kerala sustain and expand its programs in education, rehabilitation and empowerment of visually impaired individuals across the state.

## TIMELINE

PRESIDENT	From	To
Archbishop Mar Gregorios	1962	1994
Archbishop Lawrence Mar Ephraem	1995	1996
Major Archbishop Mor Cyril Baselios Catholicos	1996	2007
Major Archbishop Mar Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos	2007	
John Kurian	2017	

GENERAL SECRETARY	From	To
P.George	1986	2004
Josey Joseph	2004	2022
Er.J.Jayakumar	2022	