

Blind in Jharkhand fight for their rights

Blind people in Jharkhand have formed an association to create awareness in society about the visually impaired and fight for their rights.

The association, Jharkhand Adarsh Dristihin Sangh, was formed earlier this month and the 40-member group aims to give voice to the 31,000 blind people of the state.

'The association has been formed to ensure protection of blind people, both at social and economic levels. The state government is indifferent to our rights and has done nothing for us,' said Krishna Kumar Mishra, president of the association. Mishra is a retired principal of the blind school here.

According to members of the group, out of 31,000 visually challenged people, hardly 300 are educated. While nearly 50 people have studied till higher secondary, graduation and post-graduation levels, none of them hold a job in the government sector.

'Blinds have the right to lead a graceful life like others. We have right to education and work. The motive of the organisation is to ensure development of the blind people and remove myths associated with the visually challenged,' said Sarju Prasad, general secretary of the association.

The association will hold an executive committee meeting Aug 19 and decide their future course of action. 'We will meet the governor and chief minister and submit a memorandum to ensure development of the visually challenged people. We will press the government to ensure reservation for blind people in the state,' said Mishra.

In Jharkhand, there is only one blind school situated in state capital Ranchi. The state government plans to open seven more such schools. 'The proposed school buildings are ready, but the government has not appointed teachers,' alleged Mishra.

The association will open its branch in other districts of the state. 'We want people to allow us to play a greater role in the society,' said Prasad.

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