

[Schooling the Blind](#)

Category : [May/June 2001](#)

Published by Anonymous on May. 02, 2001

EDUCATION

Schooling the Blind

Devotional programs, braille training and Quality eye care for children in Tirupati

Since its establishment in 1979, the Navajeevan Blind Relief Centre, located in the famed temple town of Tirupati in South India, has treated tens of thousands of patients free of cost. As of 1998 they rehabilitated more than 1,700 blind children, arranged 5,200 cataract eye operations, 79 group marriages and distributed 6,710 eye glasses. The center comprises a primary school for blind children, a home for blind and orphaned children, a free eye hospital, a home for the aged and a service center for Tirupati temple pilgrims. Founder Sri K. Sridhar Acharya Swamy hopes to expand the center's reach with a mobile medical van, a boat hospital and another eye hospital for the poor.

Each facility works to maintain a religious environment, complete with vegetarian meals. Since 1979 the blind children have chanted the anna poorna stotram five times daily and sing bhajanas, or devotional songs, in the morning and evening. Asked specifically about corporal punishment, Sridhar told Hinduism Today it is not used.

Testimonies

K. Ram Mohan (student): "I was born blind. It is my privilege to inform you that I have studied up to tenth standard here and now joined in pre-degree college. I have joined in the school from the beginning. I am in charge of the morning and evening bhajanas for the blind children."

M. Sambasiva Rao (school headmaster):" I was born blind. I obtained a graduate diploma in braille and came here in 1992 as a braille instructor, and music teacher. The management is looking after the students and teachers in a good manner."

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