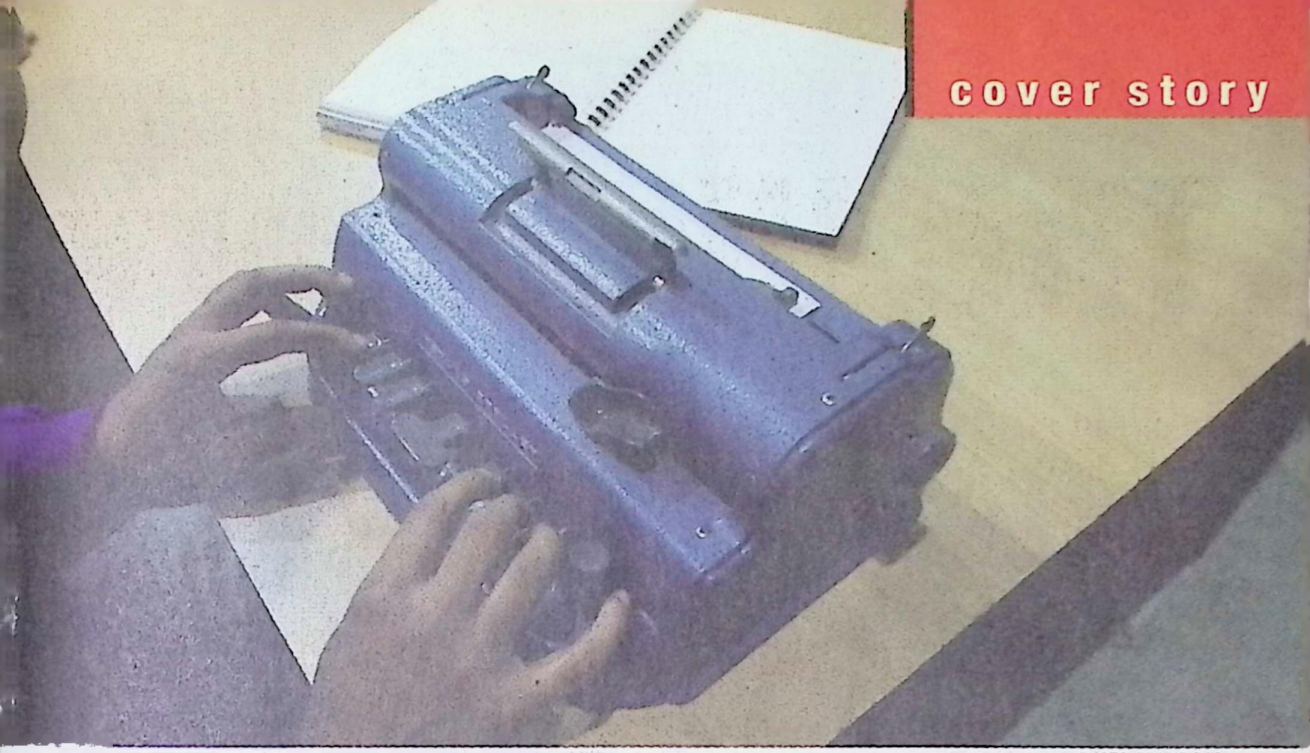
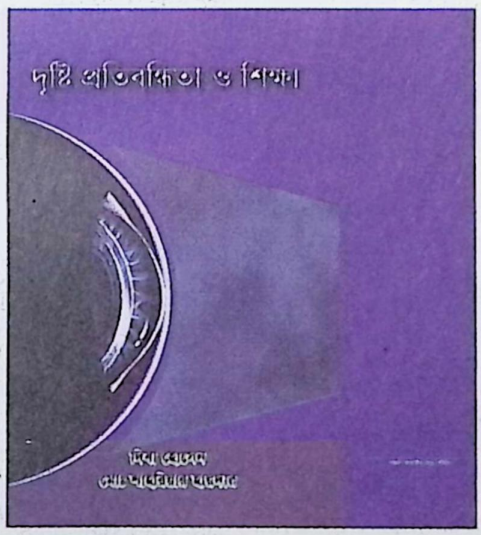


Using Perkins brailler of the centre visually impaired students can prepare their lessons in braille. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Sultana, decided to continue her work on visually impaired children. She joined the IER as a teacher of the department of special education to conduct broader research on the education of visually impaired children. After joining the institute Dr Diba counselled the authorities to ease the admission process for the blind students at the DU. From the very beginning, each year she always welcomes some visually impaired students to her department and gives them lessons on the process of teaching visually impaired learners. She has established a laboratory with the help of Sightsavers International in the institute to develop educational equipments for the visually impaired students. Here visually impaired students can also use the modern educational equipment to help them with their studies at the university.



Cover of the book *Drishty Protibondhita o Shikha* (Visual Impairment and Education) the first Bengali book on blind children's education and life skills

There are only three universities in Bangladesh that admit students with visual impairment. But they have very few resources for these students to continue with their studies. At DU, the largest university of Bangladesh, there were no special services that blind students need for studying. Dr Diba pointed it out and her team in IER came forward to establish a resource centre attached to the central library of the DU. The resource centre was established in 2007 with the help of Sight Savers. Since its journey, it has become the sole study centre for the blind students of the university. Now it has collected at least three reference books from 10 departments each to convert them into Braille to facilitate the study of the visually impaired students. The resource centre also has computers with screen reader softwares, Braille printers and type writers. Mir Hosen, a blind student and a regular visitor of this facility says, "The centre means everything for my study. My study would not have been possible without it. I always thank all the teachers connected with it, especially Dr Diba, the founder of this facility."

Dr Diba continued her study to introduce more innovative methods of teaching blind learners in Bangladesh. She went to the US to learn more on the education of the blind children from the Perkins School for the Blind (PSB), the first modern school for the visually impaired where Helen Keller had studied. At the PSB she got an in depth understanding on educational techniques and more up to date technologies that are needed for the education of the visually impaired children.