

6 SATURDAY **Sounds good**

PREETI SINGH on computers with sound devices for the visually impaired

UNTIL late 1993 computer was the domain of the sighted alone in our country. Then in late 1993 with the introduction of the speech synthesiser this magic machine became accessible to the visually impaired.

The need of today is to disseminate this vital information to the masses. As you know the computer has a monitor which gives all the information on the screen which can only be seen. So, even if a visually impaired person manages to learn to operate a computer, it was not of any use, as there was no way to know what was being done. But now with the speech synthesiser, we can use the computer, like any sighted person.

The speech synthesiser is a device which can be interfaced to any computer. Once this is done, this device speaks out what ever is keyed in. The software which is responsible for the speech output is called C.A.B. or "Computer Assistance for the Blind." There is one more device which when fitted into the computer gives speech output. This is known as the "Sound Blaster Card". The softwares which is used with this card is called "Talk". Both the software are from the "Indian Institute of Science and Technology," Bangalore.

The gadget speaks out the alphabet, number or punctuation which you key in simultaneously. With the various

word or the complete line on which the cursor is positioned. One can go into the reading mode and go into the menus and get the talking device to read them, word by word or line by line. The speech gadgets also can read the complete document if you so desire. So once material is

sight. Moreover, as there are not enough Braille presses, it is next to impossible for all print matter to be made available to the blind. Also, as Braille has to be embossed, the paper used has to be thick. As a result, Braille books and magazines become too bulky, making stacking and

taneously, which made it possible for the blind to be able to listen to these recordings repeatedly and thus improve their learning capacity. The books on tape are known commonly as talking books. Talking books are again few compared to the quantum of information required to stay abreast with the fast progressing world.

COMPUTERS with speech device is the answer. The speech device attached to computers can make it possible for the sightless to have access to nearly all the text which is available to the sighted. Most of the printed matter today is made ready for printing on a computer before it is given in to the printing press. There will be hardly any extra cost incurred to store the preprint matter on floppy diskettes, making these floppies available to blind persons as they then will have access to all such information through their talking computer.

Computer network had made it possible for people staying in one country to have easy access to articles and books in the others thousands of miles away. This facility is also available here in India. Most universities having internet facility make this available to students at a very nominal cost. It is also made available to those who are not students but would like to use the system at a higher cost. It is the lack of awareness and in-

For ages Braille has been the only mode by which a blind person can read and write independently. Braille is a script by which visually impaired persons can communicate only amongst themselves. It cannot be used to communicate with those with sight. Moreover, as there are not enough Braille presses, it is next to impossible for all print matter to be made available to the blind. Also, as Braille has to be embossed, the paper used has to be thick.

on the hard disc or on the floppy, a visually impaired person can read it independently.

For ages Braille has been the only mode by which a blind person can read and write independently. Braille is a script by which visually impaired persons can

transportation a problem. To overcome this hazard, blind persons have used voluntary readers to read to them. This meant they had to rely on their memory nearly completely, as the readers were also hard to come by.

Then came the use of tape re-

of the origin of surplus value. That is because he believes that the origin of surplus value is labour. Money which is generated as a result of labour is a tool of exchange of different kinds of products, both tangible and intangible, while Marx only believes in tangible goods. If a writer writes a book he must earn exactly as much as the typewriter, printer or the publisher, irrespective of the fact that it sells or not. A good writer must earn as much as honest man is one who knows that he cannot consume more than he has produced." He who consumes more than he produces is a waste, notwithstanding a class differentiation which is indispensable for the "circula-

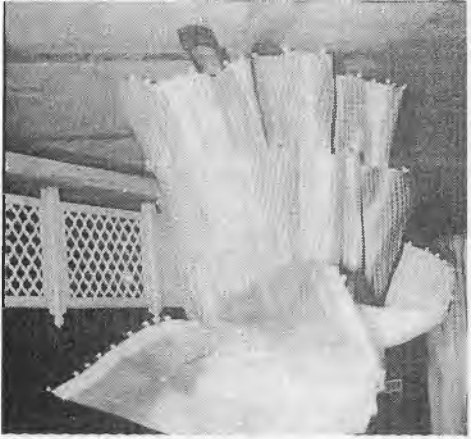
Mahatma Gandhi however has not that scorching, and the days of the summer of 1996 will pocket. The summer of 1996 will suits your figure as well as you and duces it a waste, notwithstanding a class differentiation which is indispensable for the "circula-"

What does this lead one to? Yes, the best thing is to stop sharing with unlimited number of Western dresses, ladies one-piece-dresses, tops in various shapes and sizes and fairly long skirts are in vogue.

Among formal trousers, cor-mids, and so on. jacks, trousers, skirts, minis, made in shorts, sleeveless gently, on the other hand, opens but into the retailing market de-tion of all summer wear is denim- production of goods. Hence she saving machines for the mass-

cotton/terrycot
salwar kameez
(with several
modifications)
which sells like
hot cakes.
However, the star
attraction of all
summer wear is
denim made into
jackets, trousers,
skirts, minis,
midis, and so on.

Joty, who has made their de- Vppl, marketing manager of shirts are going to be in abun- The dresses need to be comfortable, they should be wear-able at all times, at work, at parties, formal gatherings et al. From the realm of fantasy, chic, elegance, now to the nitty-gritty — the casual everyday wear clothes for the man on the street; clothes for you and me. In sharp contrast with the Haute Couture, a major portion of thing that takes your fancy and suits your figure as well as you and duces it a waste, notwithstanding a class differentiation which is indispensable for the "circula-"



REHABILITATION



Computers with speech device the answer. The speech device attached to computers can make it possible for the sightless have access to nearly all the text which is available to the sighted

of the visually impaired make this network accessible to the sightless, all that is needed is a talking device to be attached to the computers used for networking. The cost of doing so is negligible in the face of the cost incurred in putting up the network.

Although the speech synthesiser is still under development for marketing, the sound blaster card is available with companies like Hewlett Packard, Digital etc. The software talk card can be obtained from I.I.S.T. Bangalore. Speech devices for computers can also be imported from the USA and the UK etc. If further information is required, it can be obtained from National Association for the Blind, R.K. Puram, Sec-5, Delhi-110022. Phone 6102211926.

Vision impairment is a disability, but given the opportunity and facilities, we blind people can be productive members of the society. The effort and cost of providing the same will certainly not be too much.

(This article has been written by...)