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THE ACE OF CHESS

A PAN-INDIA STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF CHESS PROGRAMMES HAS REVEALED THAT THE GAME CAN AUGMENT THE LEARNING SKILLS OF VISUALLY CHALLENGED CHILDREN. PROYASHI BARUA REPORTS

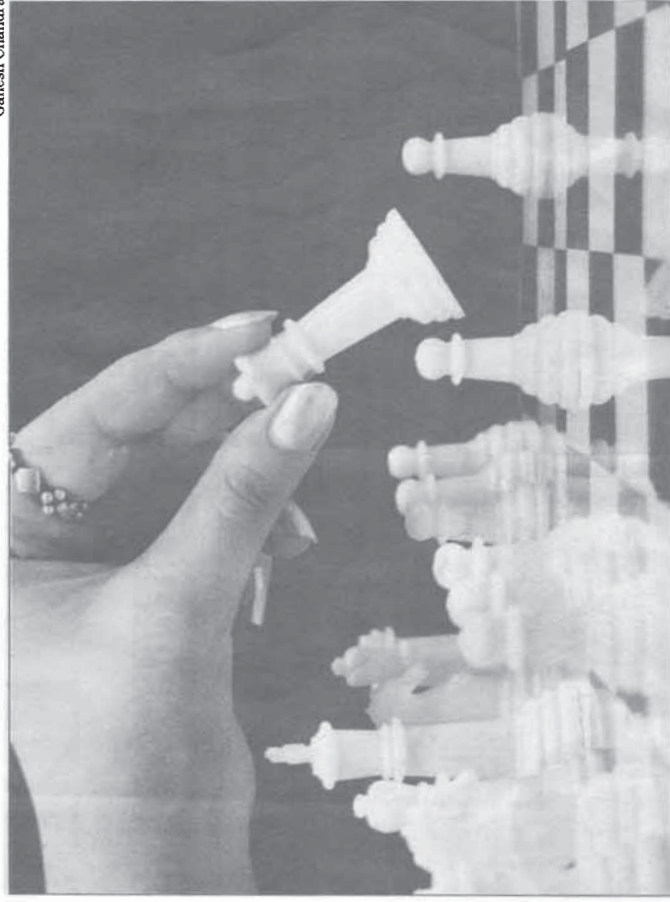
CHESS is clearly one game that puts visually challenged children on a par with other children. "It does not require any modification of rules as far as visually challenged children are concerned that in itself helps in establishing a sense of equality and self-worth for these children," says Charudatta Yadav, chairman, Braille Chess Association. Explaining further, he says, "Visually challenged children leverage their memory to a very high extent (compared to other children) in terms of learning. They assimilate, process and reproduce knowledge and information by visualising things or developing photos in the mind. These visualisations can often be in the form of graphs and symbols. Chess is all about making intelligent moves on the chessboard through intense and focused concentration. Hence, visually challenged children can easily handle a game of chess by forming an imprint of the chessboard in their mind."

A recent report titled 'Developing Mind Champions through Chess: A study on the academic impact of chess programmes in schools' that has been put together by NIIT reveals that chess can improve concentration and channel aggressive tendencies into

constructive action as far as children are concerned. The report was launched by World Chess champion Viswanathan Anand.

"At a cognitive level, chess helps in inducing organisational ability in children and helps them to manage time appropriately. It has also been found that children learn to apply their experiences from chess to different life situations and change the course of action dynamically. Needless to say this goes a long way in fostering a sense of maturity while dealing with life's situations," says Anand while referring to some of the key findings of the report. "Children who are exposed to chess also score better in subjects like maths and science," he adds.

Children who play chess are more adept at self regulated learning. "They also are more open to new concepts and methodologies of learning," says Anand. "In addition, the report has also revealed that chess-playing children tend to use notes in a better way compared to children who do not play chess. They use notes to intuitively represent a problem, rather than simply carrying out the working of a solution," he adds.



Ganesh Chandra