



Stiftelsen BRÖDET

Newsletter
Late summer 2023

INDIA –
Principal
Mischael Chhetri

*Dear Friends and
Supporters,*



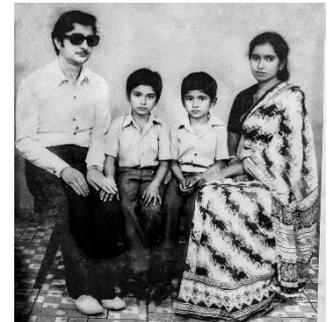
The message has reached us that the much beloved principal of the School for Blind Children, Mischael Chhetri, here shown surrounded by family and friends from the school, has passed away at the age of 74 after a brief illness. Here follows a short but gripping story of his life and his 50-year commitment to the School for Blind Children.



Mischael was born in 1949 in a Hindu home in the city of Darjeeling in West Bengali in India. He was blind from birth. When he was 5 or 6 years old, his parents left him at Salvation Army's home for the blind in the city of Kalimpong. His parents were never heard from again. He grew up as a blind orphan, but thanks to the loving ambiance among the soldiers of the Salvation Army, he received a good upbringing and education. When he was 15 or 16 years old in secondary school, he opened his heart to Jesus and became a Christian. He wrote many Christian songs in Nepali, his native tongue, many of which became well known and are sung in Nepali speaking churches everywhere.



Beginning in 1947, the Norwegian missionary couple Olav and Brit Hodne was stationed in West Bengali in India, where Brit founded a school for the blind in 1965. For the opening of the school, Brit invited a group of young blind musicians to play. She was especially impressed by Mischael, who was an accomplished musician and spoke English. When in 1973 Mischael had completed his teacher training, she hired him as a teacher. In 1975, Mischael married a girl from southern India by the name of Grace. She spoke a completely different language, Telegu, but was not visually impaired. They settled in Cooch Behar, where Bengali is spoken. They had two sons, who are now adults and have their own children. In 1995, Mischael was selected as head of school (principal). In 2009, Mischael should have



retired, but since no successor was at hand, he continued in his role. When the Hodnes returned to Norway in 2009, the school was handed over to the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (NELC), which



shortly thereafter wanted to cease operations and stop its support. Mischael who knew the importance of education and who had a big heart for all visually impaired children, opposed the closing and continued to operate the school with support from family and friends. Thanks to SB Foundation entering the picture in 2010, the school could revive in earnest. At the school's formal 50th anniversary celebration in 2015, SB Foundation's chairperson, Lena, was able to attend (pictured to the left). Since 2011, the principal's youngest son Raj has taken over as the school administrator. Up until shortly before his death, Mischael continued his daily activities at the school. About 75 students of different ethnic and religious backgrounds attend the school, which is now run as an independent Christian organization. – During the past 50 years many students have Mischael to thank for their invaluable education, enriched by music and song, as they move

forward into adult life. What an impressive feat by a blind, orphaned guy!

The School for the Blind Children and the SB Foundation warmly thank you for your faithful and valuable support. Greetings from us on the Board, *Arne, Elisabeth, Gloria, Lena, Roger*

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