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Capgemini 





*It is not the disability that defines You, it is how you deal
with the challenges the disability presents you with.
And, we have our obligations to the abilities we Do Have,
not the disability.*

Jim Abbott



Foreword

Capgemini is one of the world's foremost providers of consulting, technology services and digital transformation, having presence in over 40 countries with more than 200,000 people. Capgemini enables clients to realize their business ambitions through an array of services from strategy to operations. The 50-year-old company has strong sectorial expertise with a large gamut of dedicated offers to help its clients transform at scale.

Capgemini aspires to be recognized worldwide as a leading responsible company - we, at Capgemini want to be the 'Architects of Positive Futures'. Our goal is to drive positive impact with the help of our expertise and the personal commitment of our global community.

This strategy focuses on three main pillars:

- Diversity: Build an inclusive workplace; attract and retain a diverse workforce to enable Capgemini and our employees to thrive
- Digital Inclusion: Use our expertise to help societies in which we operate to address the challenges of digital and automation revolution by imparting digital skills
- Environmental Sustainability: Minimize our environmental impact, build business resilience against climate change and support clients with their sustainability challenges

Corporate Social Responsibility can't be the job of a handful. An organization with 200,000 people can create

a huge impact on the society, if each one of us plays our part to make a difference and that is what we are striving for.

In the Indian context, sustained growth for the community and its various stakeholders can be achieved by facilitating community-centric services, programs and initiatives. Capgemini continues to enable and deliver value creation in the society and community for the fulfillment of its role as a socially responsible corporate. The driving force of our CSR commitment is our partnership and engagement with the community and together, we can create and deliver sustainable solutions.

We believe, digital inclusion could be the driving force to achieve our CSR goals. The different processes that we follow for transformation of community capabilities are:

- Enhancing local organizational capacity through social mobilization
- Working towards greater inclusion and participation
- Strengthening local leadership and their capacities to articulate.

I am happy to introduce this book which is a compilation of success stories from one of our partner organizations - 'Sarthak'. Employment of disadvantaged youth is one of the biggest challenges, especially, when the youth is also a disabled person. In India, Sarthak not only trains youth with disabilities, but also prepares them to pursue careers

with confidence and self-esteem. Hailing from diverse backgrounds, our beneficiaries battle different physical disabilities - Visual Impairment (VI), Hearing Impairment (HI) and Orthopedic Impairment (OI). Most of these youth are motivated to find their feet, only looking for a little support due to their special needs. With the help of the training provided by Sarthak, most of them are financially independent, some even working with international brands such as Amazon and Flipkart.

We launched our LEAP Inclusion program with Sarthak in 2015. Hard work, persistence and commitment has made this project a huge success. In spite of multiple challenges, these youth put endless efforts to reach levels many of us can't even imagine.

Though society is slowly becoming more accepting of people with disabilities and many corporates are coming forward to offer mainstream roles, we still have a long way to go before we rest. Those who have taken the steps to help them are the ones paving the way for a better tomorrow, not only for people with disabilities, but also the society at large.

Extending support & making PwDs Equal contributors in Growth

Disability, in the wake of existing discrimination, paucity of inclusive services, and resulting lack of skills, prevents people with disability from moving forward.

It further gets clubbed with the interplay of demographic, socio-cultural, economic and various other related factors. As a result, marginalization is followed by multiple marginalizations.

Thus, catering to the needs of PwDs calls for a strategic approach with due consideration to all such variables and their interaction.

It calls for ensuring reach to the beneficiaries and post assessing their needs and concerns, providing customized support system from both physical and perceptual lenses.

This is what Capgemini, along with NGO partners, equipped with field experience and understanding, is geared towards.

Capgemini is engaged in ensuring inclusive education system and workplace opportunities through awareness generation, intervention, and supportive services. It is dedicated towards reaching to the maximum number of PwDs, supporting them in their passions and making them equal contributors in growth, shares Mr. Anurag Pratap Singh, CSR Head, Capgemini.

Capgemini ensures welcoming environment through timely access audits and working on structural barriers. Besides removing any attitudinal barriers, it also follows policy and culture in support of an inclusive workplace.



Christine Hodgson,
Group Head, CSR and
Capgemini Group Executive Committee Member



Padma Bhushan Dr. Mrityunjay B Athreya,
Ph.D. (Harvard)

Message from the Mentor

Over the years, I have had the pleasure of writing several addresses. The books have been biographical, on historical personalities like Swami Vivekananda, spiritual themes, Management, etc. But, writing this Foreword gives me a special, almost divine joy. The book is about 15 Divyangjan, often, mundanely called PwD, People with Disabilities, or more recently, by more positive

terms, such as, people with special abilities, or the differently-abled. The early sufferings of the Divyangs, and their families, and how they find hope in a dedicated NGO like Sarthak, seize the opportunity, lap up the skill training, and find a job, are inspiring and humbling to those of us, who, fortunately, are fully physically abled. Many go on to advance in their careers, marry, have children,

and live full lives. There are, broadly, two psychological paths, which Divyangs could take, in their deep early frustration. One is the path of helplessness, hopelessness; and even suicide. The second is the path of hope, positive action and sublimation into work, success, recognition, self-worth, joy, etc.

You, dear reader, will read in this book about young men and women with hearing impairment; low vision; paralysis; locomotor disability; etc. Many come from poor or middle-class families. Some have a sibling also with disability. Imagine the plight of the parents. Even normal human beings are often in a state of tamas, sadness, depression, resignation, and consequent inactivity. It requires enormous ichhashakti, will power, on the part of Divyangs, to overcome their even deeper tamas, pursue education, and search for a job, despite many rejections and failures. When they do succeed, they have the wisdom to bypass the rajasic phase of ahankar, ego, conflict, and leapfrog to satva, maturity, self-discipline, responsibility, focus, dedicated work, high productivity and employer's satisfaction, and even delight.

This book gives heartwarming stories of such transformation. The trigger is when a Divyang is reached by Sarthak, its mobilisers, its current trainees; alumni; or some other stakeholder who mentions Sarthak; or at a Job Fair, etc. Sarthak has so far helped about 15,000 Divyangs. That is high growth in its first decade, which was celebrated on July 21, 2018. But the numbers of Divyangs in India are in the millions, perhaps 60 million. No single NGO, however good, as indeed Sarthak is, will be enough. We need thousands of such considerate, competent teams like Sarthak. While

opening its own centres, as and when donor and state support is available, Sarthak is working on a "partnership" model. It is ever ready to share its knowhow and methodology, with newer Divyangs - oriented NGOs, anywhere in the country. Those NGOs and the partnerships need the support of donors, and employers.

This book of 15 Divyangs examples is from the four Sarthak Centres, generously supported by Capgemini. In my work, in the last few decades, in the field of Daanam, Philanthropy, I have come across two major concerns. NGOs with a worthwhile mission and motivation are desperately looking for funds. On the other side of an invisible fence, there are donors, who are keenly looking for reliable, competent NGOs, to support. When the two meet, wholesome results follow. The Capgemini - Sarthak cooperation is one such blissful partnership.

This publication has been designed as a coffee table book and it will reach a select audience, through both Capgemini and Sarthak. The two organizations may consider printing a cheaper version, for much wider circulation. It should reach the following segments of a huge target audience. First, distraught parents of young Divyangs with School and College education, but unable to find a job due to the lack of awareness of some prospective employers and interviewers of the

latent, high potential of Divyangs. Second, the Divyangs themselves, who may be on the verge of giving up their search for meaningful employment, need to hear about an organization like Sarthak, which gives them suitable skills training and helps them find a job. Even if Sarthak itself is not present now in their location, the Divyangs and parents can invite Sarthak there, or catalyze the start of a similar organization with Sarthak's help, or the help of a partner of Sarthak. Third, the employers all over India who may be aware of their CSR to employ Divyangs but are unable to find suitable skilled candidates. Fourth, many more possible donors like Capgemini, and other existing kind donors of Sarthak, who may welcome Sarthak or catalyze a similar NGO, in geographical areas, or industry sectors, which they want to help. Fifth, all state and central politicians and civil servants concerned with the welfare of Divyangs. Sixth, the print and electronic media, who can take these live cases to the large community of readers and audiences. Seventh, the academicians, especially at school and college levels, teaching some Divyangs among their students. In short, we need to work on a Divyang Empowerment and Transformation Revolution, in India.

01

Changing Interiors & Transforming Lives!

Anant - Mumbai



What is needed for revitalising an empty apartment, home, office premises or a shop and turning it into a functional, furnished, 'ready to move in' space with amazing looks and that too, in tune with client's brief?

...Creative Insight

And, how do you match it with the financial ceiling and time deadlines?

...Undoubtedly, with a Sound Business Head on Creative Shoulders.

Yes, with a degree in interior design under his belt and with creativity and financial acumen in his blood, Anant Naik runs his interior designing business in an amazing manner. What makes him

more amazing is that, his passion is not restricted by his Hearing impairment.

It was not easy for his parents - Banker and Teacher by profession - coming to terms with the news of deafness of their only child. It was traumatic to begin with. They tried everything within their means to get him treated, but the loss of hearing was irrevocable. Since both were well educated, they accepted the fact and drew Anant towards academics.

Backed by his parents' support and guidance, Anant completed his education and started exploring job opportunities. That's when he got to know about Sarthak's vocational skill building course. Although, he was more inclined towards creativity, he found basic computer learning as a necessity to manage one's business. So, he

earnestly took sessions and equipped himself with requisite skills. Right after completion of his training, he was selected for a job in an interior designer's office.

His dedication and hard work made a positive impression on his employers and clients alike. But keeping his higher aspirations in mind, he moved ahead, started his own 'interior designing business' and went on to employ four others.

Anant not only earns his livelihood by creating beautiful interiors, but also transforms lives. He is known for his penchant for meeting timelines and exacting standards. The efforts by his parents, team Sarthak and of course Anant himself, have paid dividends. He is now set to live an independent life and take care of his family as well.





Journey from Treating Machines to Greeting Customers

Bharat - Pune

02



Greeting and guiding customers with a reassuring smile, is the new role 26-year old Bharat Thorat plays now a days at Amazon - a leading E-Commerce venture. A machinist by education and Customer Service Associate by profession, Bharat plays his role to perfection; maintaining balance between his eye for detail and command on soft skills.

For a boy born in a lower middle-class family in Pune, life took an unexpected turn when Bharat (24) had to leave his job in 2016 due to a paralytic attack. The incident shattered the whole family and suddenly 'bread and butter' issue became the most pressing one. Raising a family of four was a real challenge with the meagre salary of his wife

as a primary school teacher. Bharat was on the verge of breaking down.

Devoid of any expectations from himself, idly turning the pages of a local daily newspaper, an article titled Job Fair for Divyangs by Sarthak caught his attention. Suddenly he was excited and hopeful, and to explore the same he paid a visit to Capgemini supported Sarthak LEAP Inclusion Centre in Pune the same day itself.

This was a defining moment in Bharat's life. Witnessing the huge display of success stories of PwDs and cheerful trainees studying in classes and working on computers, he looked at himself

and his aspirations and potential to achieve them, with an entirely different perspective.

A detailed interaction with the help desk staff, further cleared his doubts and made him aware of training and placement prospects. He immediately got himself enrolled in the program and put his 100% efforts to equip himself with employable skills and the rest was a very pleasant journey.

He feels elated being employed and supporting his family financially, which was his biggest challenge due to the unfortunate paralytic stroke. He is looking forward to completing his graduation, along with his present job, to further fast track his career growth.

Working Six Days a Week, Performing Par Excellence & Inspiring Many

Chintu - Hyderabad



03



Chintu is the typical worker you would spot at any of the high-end retail stores. Vibrant, well dressed and forever extending support to customers to get the right sizes and making the right choices. But he is different in one way - He is 100% Hearing Impaired.

His difference, in no way affects his efficiency. He works six days a week, up to ten hours a day, and performs par excellence. But realizing his potential and convincing others was a trail full of challenges.

Born in a poor farmer family in a village, Chintu had this disability since birth. So, everything that

comes to a child automatically, came to him with struggle -whether a playful childhood or education.

But he was equally blessed with guiding forces and support systems at different stages. For one, his elder brother, who brought him to Hyderabad from the village and facilitated his education. And, then Team Sarthak which approached him, counseled him and his family, prepared him for employability and finally helped him to achieve financial independence.

Initially, for him, it was tough to make the choice of the '3 months training program' but his zeal to

become independent and support his family made him strong. He was delighted to undergo practical training sessions in Retail Lab, Exposure visits, and varied allied activities. The training program resulted in overall improvement of his personality and thus, prepared him for job prospects.

Well-equipped to grab the opportunity, he cleared the interview of Fashion Consultant at Being Human and now draws a handsome salary. He proved his potential, which was fuelled by his aspirations and motivation from his family and Sarthak. Today, he is an inspiration to many others in his village.

Combating Challenges and Aiming High

Dnyaneshwar - Pune

04



Silence has been a constant companion of Dnyaneshwar since his birth, but this young man refused to submit silently to his fate. He combated his disability with all his might and successfully created a niche for himself, despite turbulent circumstances.

Born with 100 per cent hearing impairment, in the family of an auto rickshaw driver, Dnyaneshwar's childhood was complex. Not only did he have to deal with the stigma of his disability, but also their poverty. Yet, despite the perpetual financial crunch, he was enrolled in a nearby school.

Soon, he had to quit studies owing to the inability of his aging father to provide for his family single-handedly. The young child was left with no other option except looking for a job. But in the wake of his disability and inadequate qualifications, it was a tough trail. After several job applications and numerous interviews, he found himself gaping at nothing but rejection.

Mounting family pressure on one hand and failure in getting a job on the other, almost drew him to a breaking point. That's when a friend mentioned the Sarthak LEAP Inclusion Centre located in Pune. Desperate Dnyaneshwar lapped up the opportunity and joined the three-month, free-of-cost training that Sarthak Centre, supported by Capgemini offered and quickly picked up the nitty-gritties taught at the training centre.

The three months training was perhaps what required to give him the much-needed boost of confidence. He was now a transformed young man, willing to take on the world. Right after completing his training, he was selected for a Data Entry Operator profile at Crystal Info, a Pune based ITES company.

His father, who was once extremely unsure of Dnyaneshwar's future, beams with pride to see his son standing on his own feet and supporting the family.

As far as Dnyaneshwar is concerned, his next aim now is to rise to the post of a manager in the same firm!



Tiny Clicks & Little Thumps, are the True Sounds of Empowerment

Goutham - Hyderabad

05



Standing on one's own feet is more than a proverbial phrase in Goutham's life. Born with 85% disability in his lower limbs and raised by his mother single handed, Goutham realized his responsibilities at a very tender age. Between the stuttering bursts of sewing machine sound, he used to hear his mother's aspirations to give him a carefree childhood and education.

He completed his education in engineering, but this prolonged period of struggle and deprivation left a deep scar on him. He used to lose heart and all hope, even on trivial issues and that portrayed him as a pessimist and not a preference for interviewers. He was shortlisted due to his academic record, but he faced several rejections in interviews because of his attitude.

Dejection soon led to frustration and bitterness. His aspirations were crash landing right before his eyes. Then destiny intervened and out of nowhere Goutham received a call from Capgemini LEAP Inclusion Centre of Sarthak. The quick five-minute interaction with the help desk staff struck the right chord, as there was a commitment of placement support in case of successful completion of training program. He attended the counseling sessions and impressed by activities and prospects of a job, got himself enrolled in the training program.

The training was an eye opener as he was realizing his shortcomings in the initial sessions itself. The effective and well-drafted module made Goutham understand the importance of being

confident and having a positive approach. His yearning for knowledge gradually turned into his passion to excel. He started staying back even after his four-hour batch timing and strived to polish his English speaking and computer skills.

His hard work and sound preparation led him to crack the first interview he faced through the employment team at the Sarthak centre.

His happiness knew no bounds as he got selected as a Project Engineer with Wipro Technologies in Hyderabad, one of the leading IT firms in India. The leap from his mother's struggling sewing machine sounds to the tiny clicks and little thumps on his key-board is the true proverbial leap of empowerment and independence for him.



Silent Cruise towards Empowerment

Karan - Delhi



06



Well dressed, well groomed, and well prepared for his job, Karan punches his attendance, exchanges greetings with fellow colleagues and gears up for his work in Lodhi Hotel, weaving plans for the day ahead.

Fond of singing, despite being hearing impaired, life is no less than a beautiful song for Karan. He dreams of a managerial role, getting married and starting a family of his own, very soon.

His pleasing personality and broad smile mask the struggles he went through in getting a job of his choice, lending a supporting hand to his father, and daring to dream.

We all dream and prepare for being independent and support our families, through thick and thin.

But, for some, even dreaming calls for sheer determination. Hearing impairment is not just an ear and speech issue, it affects families, friends, education, employment, and almost every walk of life one can think of.

Karan was born as 90% deaf and that is not all. Owing to poverty, it was almost impossible for his father to afford his education. But, Karan's mother, who herself is deaf, insisted that he should finish school despite all challenges and got him enrolled in a school for deaf.

He completed his education along with others like him and learnt sign language as well. But, once you have stepped in a comfort zone, it's very hard to come out of it and face the heat. The same was bound to happen, when Karan started looking out

for jobs. Disappointments followed, and success eluded Karan who faced nothing but rejection everywhere he tried.

It was then that he came to know about the free training program for persons with disability, through one of his friends, who had also received training and placement support from Sarthak. Inquisitive Karan visited the centre and after a quick tour and interaction with the trainers, decided to join. After successfully completing the program, he landed the position of Assistant Steward with the Lodhi Hotel - one of the top hotels in Delhi.

From Clueless Cross-roads to Guided Trail of Professional Life

Pintu - Hyderabad

07



'Nothing can thwart human spirit.'

The above line is not from a motivational book but depicts the life of Pintu - working as an associate in Capgemini, a leading IT firm. For him, strength does not come from physical capacity, but from an indomitable will.

Born in a poor farmer family, Pintu witnessed his father toiling in the field day and night - who, despite all efforts, could barely meet family requirements. He longed to be the support his father desperately needed. However, his physical limitation - 65% polio inflicted leg - was a major obstacle.

Clueless Pintu explored possible ways to become the supporting hand and realized that education

was the only means to overcome his disability induced limitations. Fighting all odds, he managed to complete his Bachelor's in Computer Application and started exploring jobs. But in the light of his rural background and low self-confidence, he was facing failures repeatedly.

He needed to be presentable to work in a big company and thus, started looking for a low-cost option to hone his skills. As a pleasant surprise, he was approached for the free short-term training and placement program for PwDs by the Capgemini supported Sarthak centre at Hyderabad. After he found out more about the course, he was convinced, and joined quickly.

The short term 'Employment Enhancement Training' course at Sarthak proved to be the

finishing touch for him. Although, he was educated, he required better English communication skills and a confident approach, to prove his mettle. After completion of the three-months training at Sarthak, he was better prepared and easily cracked the interview impressing everyone with his confidence and skills. His hard work and resolve paid off and today, he works as an Associate at Capgemini, supporting his family.

The motivating work environment, supportive team and an opportunity to grow, make him feel at the top of the world.



08

Silent Brew Master... She Brews to Conquer!

Rakhi - Ghaziabad



A cup of tea or coffee kicks off the day for many of us, but for Rakhi it's more than just a day starter. In fact, it sets the course of her independent life!

If you happen to visit Cafe Coffee Day Outlet at Vaishali, Ghaziabad, to enjoy your preferred cuppa, you may be amazed by this young and exuberant girl. You need not know sign language to get the beverage of your choice, though. Just pen it down and the silent brew-master will get it done, in a couple of minutes.

This was always a dream for Rakhi - to live her life independently and to lend a supporting hand to her father. But she was also aware that her disability may pose a challenge in realizing her dreams. Born 100% deaf, she completed her schooling from a school for deaf and learnt sign language as part of the curriculum. What she

could do thereafter, was neither clear to her, nor her parents. She was clueless and disarrayed.

Then, with some divine intervention - as she confidently claims - she got to know about the Capgemini supported Sarthak Ghaziabad centre, at a job fair. On further inquiry, the Sarthak team shared the training program details, placement prospects, and success stories of many individuals with hearing impairment. That interaction proved to be life changer for her. She grabbed the opportunity and registered for the training program the very next day.

She utilized the three months program very effectively to hone her skills and prepare for job placements. During her training, an 'Exposure Visit' to one of the Cafe Coffee Day outlets helped her to decide her job preference and the first-hand

exposure to work culture and interaction with employees, left a very positive impact on her.

Focused preparation for facing interviews in the last 15 days of training, proved to be the cream over the coffee. When she got the opportunity to appear for interviews, she cracked the very first one and got selected in Cafe Coffee Day.

Diligently attending to her customers, Rakhi says 'Thank You', with a million watt smile. She really brews to conquer!

Putting his Best Foot Forward and Marching towards Success!

Ram - Ghaziabad



'Ram works as a Sales Associate at Vishal Mega Mart and supports his family.'

The statement is very easy to read and equally easy to comprehend.

But, the journey behind this is not that easy and leaves one awestruck by the spirit with which this young man faced the challenges.

Polio struck Ram at the tender age of 12. The setback was huge and as he hailed from a lower middle-class family, the expensive treatment was beyond their reach. Though deeply impacted by the event, Ram - with the support of his family soon came to terms with the bitter reality. He realized that there was no point in crying over what had happened, and he must move on.

Despite their poor financial status, he completed his graduation with dreams of a job, which he could take up irrespective of his physical limitation. But testing times were not yet over for Ram. Although, he managed to find a job, the long, rigorous hours of standing were too taxing for his body. Further, as he could not afford a personal vehicle and public transport was also not available during late night hours, so traveling was problematic. Yet, he continued with the job for a few months, but finally succumbed to family pressure and resigned.

Again, the struggle started to get another job but most of his efforts turned out to be futile. For six months he was without a job and all his savings were fast slipping out of his hands. However, all this time, his self-confidence and hope for a better future kept him motivated and his fighting spirit alive.

One day, on a job-hunting spree, he learnt of the Sarthak Educational Trust and its initiative to support training and placement of PwDs. He visited Sarthak's Capgemini supported Ghaziabad Center but initially refused to join the three months training program. However, once counseled by the help desk team about benefits of the training and job prospects, it seemed like a wise choice. He geared up to walk once again, and this time put his best foot forward.

He attended the training sessions regularly, participated actively and grew more confident. Fully prepared to appear before any interview panel, Ram was selected by one of the leading retail chains for a respectable job, with suitable working hours and reasonable accommodation due to his physical limitations.



Setting in Everything in the Right Order

Rupesh - Mumbai



Life is silent yet pulsating for Rupesh, born with 100% hearing impairment.

Happy faces of people shopping for themselves or buying gifts for near and dear ones, make his day. Dressed in official attire and engaged in folding, stacking and arranging clothes of different types and sizes, he feels happy and content with his respectable job.

But his life was not the same a few years back. Despite observing the daily struggles of his mother, working as a domestic help, he was helpless. Although, he somehow studied till Intermediate with the meagre means, considering his low self-confidence, the aspiration to take care of their small family looked distant.

It was then that he came to know about the Training and Placement program for PwDs by Sarthak, from a friend and decided to visit the center. The infrastructure at the centre caught his fancy, but what attracted him the most was the fact that, the training was free of cost. So, he registered immediately.

With his dreams of doing well in life, he attended all the classes regularly and with active participation, benefitted tremendously from the employability enhancement module. Additional responsibilities of managing the Discipline Committee, Revision Committee and others infused him with more confidence and made him realize his potential.

Well-armed to grab upcoming opportunities, Rupesh got his first chance to attend an interview at a Max Retail Store at Vile Parle, Mumbai. Casting a positive impression over the interview panel, he was selected as a Customer Service Executive.

Now, his days are colorful, literally and he enjoys arranging clothes in the correct order for an attractive display.



An Effort to Blur the Lines of Discrimination

Sagar - Mumbai



All of us keep complaining about trivial issues and want them to be sorted for us. But, when we witness someone facing the real challenges of life bravely, with a pleasant smile and without any complaints, we are awestruck. We get inspired to learn about the person's motivating force.

What if the motivation stems from loss and challenges one has faced? What if we get to know that the person to whom we are complaining about a malfunctioning machine, that too, at the top of our voice, is dealing with a severe disability gracefully and striving hard to blur the lines of discrimination with his extra efforts and continuously pushing himself for excellence?

Yes, this is what Sagar and his team do in EuroAble, a call center run by Eureka Forbes - India's first call centre, manned and operated by PwDs.

Sagar, a Trainee Sales Associate in EuroAble, has locomotor disability. It all began when the after-effects of a failed surgery to treat severe back pain, hit him. Sagar started facing difficulty in standing without support and it remained so even after several months post the surgery. Doctors had given up by now and it was a massive jolt for Sagar and his family, as with this disability, his future looked bleak. But he pulled up his socks and decided to take charge of his life. He started going for medical rehabilitation at AIIPMR hospital and met a Sarthak representative, quite by chance. He learnt about the training program offered by Sarthak and various success stories of PwDs. This filled him with hope, and he visited the centre to register for the course.

Regular visits to the training centre were a struggle, but he focused on his objective and worked hard to hone his skills during the program.

His determination and hard-work finally paid off as he was selected in EuroAble.

Every day, one can spot the team dealing with irate customers, resolving queries, and handling grievances with patience and dedication. Rather than fretting over their own disability induced limitations, they channel their energies on resolving customer complaints, to make their lives pleasant and hassle-free!

Sagar's is a classic turnaround story, where he preferred working hard to succeed, rather than complaining and succumbing to his fate. He is grateful to the training and placement support program at Sarthak LEAP Inclusion Centre at Mumbai, because of which, he got selected for the job and is leading a financially independent life.

12

Treading the Unbeaten Path

Shiva - Hyderabad



Working in the Process Department of Quality Control at Dr. Reddy's Lab, with the team of 13 others, Shiva Shanker is living life on his own terms. His locomotor disability is not the decisive factor for him in life. Instead, it is his dreams and dedicated efforts.

Despite 74% locomotor disability, Shiva completed his Master's in Pharmacy giving a tough fight to all physical and perceptual barriers that his disability could impose. It did not stop at getting the Master's Degree, as getting a job of his choice was another challenge. He appeared for many

interviews, but faced failure due to the stereotyped mindset that he would not be able to perform at par.

Although, the continuous fight and rejections were disheartening, he kept his hopes high and continued his march towards carving a niche for himself. One day, he learnt about Sarthak and its efforts to help attain financial independence for PwDs, through suitable employment. He immediately approached the team for direct placement support as he had already completed a post graduate degree.

Sarthak Team did a thorough assessment and trainers counseled him to polish his computer skills and prepare to grab a job in tune with his qualifications. He readily agreed after weighing the possible advantages. Further, during the training of three months, he actively participated in different allied activities to get ready for a professional life.

He was immensely pleased to get selected in Dr. Reddy's in line with his aspirations. He is happy at his achievement and aims to move ahead with every passing day.



One who stares down life with blurred vision

Siddhesh - Mumbai



13



It is a choice - one can sit idle and make excuses for his challenges or face the challenges bravely and act as an inspiration to others.

20-year-old Siddhesh opted for the latter. Coming to terms with his low vision and associated challenges was not easy. However, Siddhesh not only accepted it, but also successfully completed his education till intermediate.

He grew up seeing his father toiling in a private firm to provide for his family single handedly and always longed to help him. Thus, immediately after completing his education, he started making efforts to get a decent job, due to his disability, faced failures repeatedly.

Amidst all these challenges, the Sarthak mobilization team approached him for getting enrolled in a three months training and placement program at the centre supported by Capgemini. Initially, he was reluctant to waste his time, but after he visited the centre and studied the curriculum, he decided to join.

He was initially provided training in basic computers, English and soft skills and then, based on his interest and progress mapping, was screened for sector specific training for Customer Service Associate Profile of Retail Sector. During the training, various exposure visits to retail outlets equipped him with complete understanding of the role and when he got the opportunity to appear in

an interview at Marks & Spencer, one of the leading retail chains, he impressed all with his confidence and got selected.

He now serves his customers well, and performs all his jobs and responsibilities at par with the other 25 members in the team. With sheer determination and hard work, he is a role model for many, and sensitizes all those, who think disability as a barrier. He stares down life with blurred vision but is living it on his own terms!

14

Embracing Struggle and Coming out as a Leader

Timcy - Delhi



Professionalism, Management, Motivated Spirit, Leadership Skills and 50% Vision.....Yes, you read it right. This is the perfect way to describe Timcy, team leader at a financial firm in the heart of India, Delhi.

On the verge of finishing her Bachelor's in Commerce, loss of 50% vision in both the eyes, was a massive jolt for Timcy after her lens replacement surgery went horribly wrong. Her family was devastated by this fateful development and they spent an entire year running from one hospital to another in a desperate bid to revive her vision. Sadly, nothing worked.

Her father, running tea shop to feed his family, motivated her to continue her education to keep

her from succumbing to despair and losing track of her dreams. She did his bidding and meanwhile, kept searching for jobs. She was repeatedly reminded of her disability and thus, 'rejected' for many jobs. However, she never gave up because she firmly believes that, life will throw many challenges, but nothing should stop you.

During her struggle, she got to know about the Vocational Skill Building and Placement Support Services of Sarthak. She immediately approached the team there and got herself enrolled for the three months training program. This course equipped her with the required skills - she mastered JAWS - text to speech software for the vision impaired.

Finally, her hard-work and dedication paid off when she was selected in a placement drive. She started her career as a tele-caller and owing to her performance, got promoted to the profile of Team Leader within two months of joining.

Now, she jump starts her day with a quick meeting and analysis of the assignments progress of her team members. She also motivates them to explore their full potential and do their best. She is happily doing her job, 'leading a group' and guiding them; the dream she always cherished despite the fateful loss of her sight.

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Bridging the Gaps with a Small Notebook & Pen

Vaibhav - Mumbai



'I use Sign Language' reads the badge Vaibhav Gore sports proudly, working as a housekeeping staff in IBIS Hotel at Mumbai. You can also spot a small notebook and pen with him, that he carries all the time, to communicate with those who don't know sign language. To him, language is never a barrier; one must be thoughtful and considerate of the ways to communicate, that's all.

Vaibhav recalls how he started his career with a data entry job after completing his education till intermediate but had to discontinue in a few months owing to all kinds of challenges and communication barriers. It was followed by a long period of struggle and despair when all his efforts to find a job were going in vain. Each rejection was shattering his faith in his potential to support his

family, along with his father and elder brother. Amidst all this, seeing his friends leading a normal life and pursuing their interests without much problem, disillusioned him further.

Life would have been no different, if he had not received that WhatsApp video from the Sarthak Team, in his own language - "The sign language"! The messages from the video are still fresh in his memory. They were - 'Are you a Person with Disability? Are you looking for a job? We provide placement support and required training in three months, and that too, free of cost.' Although, the claims were hard to believe, he decided to give it a try, and paid a visit to the Capgemini supported Sarthak Centre.

He registered for the training program immediately and started with trial sessions. Soon, he completed his training program with good scores in all assessments, and active participation in all allied activities.

The training program, once again, instilled in him 'confidence and faith' with which he could steer his life the way he wanted. A mix of guest lectures, motivational and practical learning sessions, was all that he needed to get ready for the upcoming opportunities. Well prepared with requisite skills and confidence he cleared the interview of IBIS Hotel and is now happily catering to customer needs. Vaibhav's family is now happy and proud witnessing his confident persona and independent lifestyle.



Sarthak Educational Trust

- 2008 to 2019

Sarthak, as the name suggests is engaged in doing something meaningful or significant for the persons with disability since 2008. It was the outcome of the personal struggles of Dr Jitender Aggarwal, when he lost his vision in 2004.

The organization is actively working through its 17 centres all over India and caters to varying needs of PwDs, of different age brackets and is known to many.

The great journey began with a batch of 8 blind students in Delhi in 2008. The batch was trained in Medical Transcription and other employment prospects were also explored and provided to them.

In parallel, with the intent to create a larger impact and expand the reach to more beneficiaries, team Sarthak started organising job fairs and facilitating employment for PwDs across India through sensitization and involvement of corporate groups.

But soon it was realized that the maximum of beneficiary group is not meeting the corporate

requirements and thus, failing on sustainable employment prospects. As a solution to it, Sarthak started Vocational Skill Building for Persons with Disability with a centre in Delhi. The first centre was started with the support of Team Computers and Nokia Siemens. Soon, Tech Mahindra Foundation came into picture and started supporting Delhi centre and other centres in Chandigarh, and Gurgaon.

Years later, with the support of National Skill Development Corporation and Uttar-Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Punjab Governments, three more centres were started in Lucknow, Jaipur, and Ludhiana in Year 2015.

Again, in the year of 2016, Capgemini came up with CSR Support to run three centres in Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Pune. Thereafter, HDB Financials, Mahindra finance, HSBC, Swadesh Foundation, SBI Foundation, Cognizant Foundation, HT Parekh Foundation and Credit Suisse also came into supporting role and new centres were started in South Delhi, Bhopal, West Delhi, Faridabad, Kolkata, Chennai and Thane.

Considering the pressing concerns of early prevention, identification, and intervention, Sarthak also started delivering free and quality services through its Early Intervention centre in Delhi. With the support of Government schools in Delhi, they also strived for setting up inclusive education system in schools through remedial classes and stakeholder engagement. Another set up was started in Jaipur.

In addition to direct services, Sarthak is also engaged in creating more change makers through continuous advocacy activities and associating various stakeholders together to contribute to the sector. Capacity building of other civil societies, Parents' Interaction Forum and Accessible Event Management Support are other action areas.

In 2016, Sarthak was bestowed with another great responsibility of managing National Abilympics Association of India, by Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust. It is aiming to represent India in the 2020 International Abilympics in Canada and bringing laurels to the nation with persistent and dedicated efforts.

EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

Sarthak Educational Trust warmly acknowledges the impetus behind this Coffee Table book, our Mentor and Guru Padma Bhushan Dr. M B Athreya, for continuous direction and motivation to come out with this power packed compilation of real life struggles and achievements of Divyangs.

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Our teams at Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad and Noida are also acknowledged for their contribution in creating the positive shift in the lives of these trainees and many others, with their dedicated efforts.

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