



# Vision for India

National Conference on Disability, New Delhi

September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Chief Guest: His Excellency Bharat Ratna Dr APJ Abdul Kalam

Former President of India

# Report

### Introduction:

SARTHAK is an NGO working in the area of disability rehabilitation for the past six years. In the past, the organisation has been actively involved in skills development and employment for People with Disability. The approach that the organisation uses, is a that of a Partnership model of Social Work principle where in all the stakeholders are involved with equal stake in the matter. In our case it is the involvement of all the stakeholders in the rehabilitation process of people with disability. It is true that the disability does bring along with it a few inabilities, but the focus should always be on what the abilities are and how it can be strengthened enough to enable the person with disability live his/ her life with independence, dignity and respect. To ensure that the following is not just a piece of text but happens in reality as well SARTHAK involves all the stakeholders in the process of rehabilitation of people with disability. The organisation believes in the philosophy that, each one is capable and should be used to their optimum capacity. Although according the census 2011, people with disability constitute about 3% of the total population, yet it is a highly complex and diverse group. There are different types of disability with different severity level. Along with that, India is a diverse country with regional and religious diversity. In addition to this there is diversity of economic status and gender. All this ultimately adds to the huge diverse group of people with disability. Supporting such a diverse group to get employed and live their life with dignity and respect, there needs to be a combined effort from all the stakeholders to bring about a difference in their lives. People with disability only need empathy and support for all the stakeholders.

In the past six years ever since SARTHAK came into existence in the 2008, it has worked extensively with all the stakeholders. It was experienced that there is a dire need to bring all the stakeholders on the same platform and think in one direction "Empowerment of People with Disability" and come up with concrete action plan for development. Therefore, the "Vision for India" - National Conference on Disability was organised on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014 with support of Tech Mahindra Foundation.

### About the Organiser:

SARTHAK Educational Trust is an NGO working in the area of disability rehabilitation ever since its inception in the year 2008. It works on the rights based model and believes that employment of people with disability into the mainstream is not a charity model but a business model for the employers. It was founded by Dr Jitender Aggarwal who was a Dentist by profession until he lost his vision. After losing his eye sight, like others he did not remain behind the four walls of his house. His "never give up" attitude lead him to move out and search opportunities for himself, when he realised that no concrete work is being done towards the employment of people with disability. This is what lead to the birth of SARTHAK. The organisation was born due to a personal tragedy and experience hence, the commitment towards the cause is very high. For details on the activities and achievements of SARTHAK, please log on to [www.sarthakindia.org](http://www.sarthakindia.org).

Tech Mahindra Foundation commits itself to creating a more equitable and inclusive India by supporting processes that will lead to sustainable transformation, social inclusion and integration. By creating opportunities that nurture talent and enable the socially disadvantaged to utilize their potential, the Foundation contributes to an equitable social fabric. We are committed to inclusive growth and values of good corporate governance, ethical practices, dignity of the individual and the creation of a just and humane society. Through programmes that involve both direct and indirect interventions in the community, the Foundation has reached out to more than 200,000 beneficiaries since its inception. These programmes are run in close consultation with government and non-government partners and maintain a high level of quality to ensure lasting impacts.



Details of the Conference:

Date: September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Day: Friday

Time: 9:00 AM - 5: 30 PM

**Agenda:**

- Event Inauguration by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, Former President of India
- Panel Discussion
- Panel of Government Bodies
- Panel of the Employers
- Panel of Medical Professional
- Panel of NGOs

P.S. Detailed Agenda can be found as Appendix 1: Agenda for the Event

**Process Recording:**

**Panel 1: Government Policy and Administrative Support to PWD**

**Rationale**

Government is primarily responsible for all major sectors such as health, education, livelihood and social security which require availability of adequate funds, appropriate policy framework and effective delivery mechanism. The Government of India is involved in large number of programs for the development of people with disability and they are the ones who can bring about a change at the policy level and the bring about a change amongst the masses. Therefore the Government is a very important stakeholder in the process of rehabilitating the people with disability.

**Panellists:**

Panel discussion Moderated by:

Shri Krishan Kalra

Shri Alok Kumar Director General, Govt of India- Ministry of Labour and Employment
Shri R.C. Meena Economic Advisor, Govt of India- Ministry of Human Resource Development
Shri Dilip Chenoy MD & CEO National Skill Development Corporation
Shri Prasanna Kumar Pincha Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disability, Govt of India

**Discussion Outcome:**

The panel was a mixed group of highly experienced people. Each one had a unique aspect to contribute to the discussion. The Government has extensive policy framework for the development of people with disability. The policies are inclusive and the government believes that segregation of people with disability is not the solution at all. The policy framework is extensive but there is still a need to bring about relevant modifications to them. The policies for people with disability need revision and amendments.

People with disability provided the right skills, training and opportunity can be brought to the mainstream. The issues related to physical accessibility should be resolved. There is a need for a aggregated effort by all the departments of the government will lead to a sustainable model of growth for the people with disability. Every program or project that is development oriented, should be scaled up and sustained through an end to end model.

Government of India has several policies and scholarships for people with disability. Inclusion in all aspects including education, workplace etc will lead to the real empowerment of people with disability. The training and skill development has to happen through a national vocational curriculum framework, Polytechnics and ITIs. Vocational Rehabilitation centres which fall under the ministry of labour and employment will have to revamp the training model to suit the market demands. The quality of training has to be improved to a greater extent. The Government is willing to support the trainees in all possible manners so that the output is desirable.

A National career service with special attention to people with disability with a defined scope needs to be set up. Rigorous advocacy and policy intervention is what will bring about a difference in the current scenario. The labour laws and the social security issues is something which needs to be looked through the disability lens.

In brief the Panel agrees that there are policies and framework which need modifications and implemented effectively. The objective is to transform the text into action so that it reached the people it is meant for. There has to special consideration in all the laws and framework for people with disability without actually discriminating them from the mainstream. The most important thing is that the government structure which is





complex, needs to have a convergence with respect to all the policies and laws for the people with disability. Each one is making an effort but due to lack of convergence the outcome is not optimum.

#### Inaugural Session:

#### Panellists:

Introduction by: Mr Sandeep Bhargava- Director Corporate Affairs, Microsoft India

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Bharat Ratna & Former President of India
Dr M.B. Athreya Padma Bhushan & Management Guru
Smt Reva Nayyar Former Secretary, Government of India
Smt Ritu Barua Representative from Tech Mahindra Foundation
Dr Jitender Aggarwal CEO, SARTHAK Educational Trust

As soon as Dr APJ Abdul Kalam arrived, he along with the eminent panel members were invited to light the lamp. The lighting of the lamp signifies the end of darkness and light brings knowledge.

Post the lighting of the lamp, Dr Jitender Aggarwal- CEO, SARTHAK Educational Trust made a brief presentation on SARTHAK. His presentation included the activities undertaken at SARTHAK, Achievements in the past 6 years and its vision 2020.

Followed by SARTHAK was the presentation by Smt Ritu Baruah, Representative from Tech Mahindra Foundation (Sponsor for the event) made a presentation on the activities done by Tech Mahindra Foundation in general with their intervention in the disability sector in specific. Dr APJ Abdul Kalam does not need any more words of introduction was the Guest of Honour. He delivered the inaugural speech which was highly motivating and the audience got an opportunity to interact with him on a one on one basis. He was open to answering questions and seeking suggestions. In his speech his focus was inclusion of people with disability in the mainstream for the empowerment of people with disability. This empowerment will only happen through employability. The people should be sensitised to hire people with

disability as a business model and not just on charity. He appreciated the efforts taken by SARTHAK in the area of vocational skill development. He also focussed on the fact that community based rehabilitation is the ultimate model as institutionalisation of people with disability segregates them from the society and the development and growth gets affected to a great extent. Combined efforts of all stakeholder around the PwD is the need of the hour.

Education is something that brings knowledge and knowledge empowers. Therefore people with disability must also think about their education very seriously. Education and employment boosts the self confidence which the only thing that people with disability face in their life. Disability increases dependency and hampers self esteem. But given the right direction at the right time, will enable these individuals to be groomed into productive members of the nation.

Dr Kalam also narrated the five success stories of people with disability that SARTHAK had taken an effort to compile in the Annual report for the year 2013. Post his speech the Vote of thanks for him was delivered by Smt Reva Nayyar, Former Secretary- Govt of India. She took the opportunity to Thank Dr Kalam for finding out time and also at the time brought the focus the most important aspect of disability that is, prevention of disability by ensure proper medical facilities for the expecting mothers even in the most remote parts of our country.

The last part of the Inaugural session was the Keynote speech by our very own Mentor and Guru Dr M.B. Athreya Padma Bhushan Awardee and Management Guru. He suggests adoption of Indian Disability Management Model through social entrepreneurship. His speech had a take away for each person present in the auditorium because each one represented either of the following groups,

- Government
- Corporate
- Parents
- PWD themselves
- NGOs

Each of the above mentioned group had an action plan and only when each one takes u their own task with sincerity and commitment, will the person with disability grow in life. People with disability can be made productive by putting enabling them to get a job, but their acceptance in the society and their self realisation of being a productive individual is the task of each one of us.



## Panel 2: Corporate leadership for PWD Inclusivity

### Rationale:

Corporate are the employers and they are the most important players when one talks about the employment of people with disability. They are the job providers and hence they understand the following,

- The history and philosophy behind hiring of people with disability
- Their expectations from the employee
- Challenges faced and resolved

Corporate culture reflects an organization's value system and impacts the recruitment, retention, and promotion of employees. Individuals with disabilities are positively impacted by a corporate culture that espouses and establishes a diverse workforce as a priority. This panel discussion provided an overview of corporate culture and the employment of individuals with disabilities, and presents a case example for many other companies to adopt and follow.

### Panellists:

Panel discussion Moderated by: Dr V.P. Singh, Executive Director HR & CPO, Devyani International; RJ Corp Ltd

Shri S.M. Gupta  
Global CPO - Aegis

Smt Ritu Verma  
Regional Director HR  
South Asia, Starwood Hotels

Shri Piyush Dutta  
Director HR, Vishal Mega Mart

Shri Sameer Chaturvedi  
CEO , Jaipur Rugs

Smt Sanchita Singh  
CPO, Yum Restaurants India Pvt Ltd

### Discussion Outcome:

The panel was a mixed dynamic group of young yet experienced people from different sectors of the Corporate world. The discussion started with a question posed by the Moderator, as to can CSR or Philanthropy be forcibly legalised?

The answer will always be "NO". CSR, although has been mandated by the government of India, yet the real change can be observed only with organisations which have taken it up as a responsibility as not as a Corporate responsibility. If understood as a corporate responsibility, it will not lead to sustainable growth of the society.

The panel of corporate shared that hiring of people with

disability in their organisation is not a charity but a business model. There needs to patience and sensitivity to handle these people in the beginning and that little time invested on them will show results very soon through their performance in all fields.

The benefits of hiring people with disability, as stated by the employers are,

- Passionate towards their work
- Excellent performers
- Low attrition rate
- Bring diversity in thoughts and action
- Motivate and boost the morale of other employees
- Good team players

A very interesting point that was brought up, by the panel was that People with disability is a diverse group. They may not fit into one role but definitely they will fit into some other role. It is important for the employers to understand the requirement of the job and put the right person in place. In case the job is not mapped well, there will be incompetency but that is not because of the disability but because if the wrong mapping.

The panel members have experienced the performance of people with disability within their organisations and hence they made an appeal to all the participants, to break their mind set and experiment with one or two and see the results for themselves.

The challenges that the employers are facing currently is the lack of trained pool of candidates. They have huge openings but the training and the required skills are missing. They are willing to provide on the job training and mentorships to the candidates to fill up the gap. SARTHAK also appealed to run training of the trainers program so that the skill imparted during the training is in the right direction.

The session was very interactive and people had so many questions to ask and discuss. Post the session with the Corporate sector, the session broke for Lunch









### Panel 3: Medical Professional Expertise for PWD

#### Rationale:

Rehabilitation according to WHO, has been defined as “a set of measures that assist individuals who experience or are likely to experience disability to achieve and maintain optimal functioning in interaction with their environment.” Rehabilitation team and specific disciplines may work across categories. Rehabilitation measures are broadly divided into three categories:

- Rehabilitation medicines
- Therapy
- Assistive Technology

The Doctors are the first point of contact in case of disability. Being the first people, their responsibility becomes most. Disability, be it to someone born with it, or to someone who acquires it is like a new mud pot, the manner in which it is held and the impression the hands leave on the pot, is what it will make it look in future.

The panel of Medical practitioners, was a sensitive group of people who have understood disability from the medical point of view as well social aspect of disability.

#### Panellists:

Panel discussion Moderated by: Dr Jahanara M. Gajendragad Associate Professor - IHBAS

Dr Santosh Bhargava  
Father of Neonatology

Dr Om Sai  
Assistant Professor,  
Psychiatry- Lady Harding College

Dr Arun Singh  
National Advisor,  
Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram

Dr Rajive Bhatia  
Consultant ENT Surgeon

Dr K.P. Sanyal  
Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

#### Discussion Outcome:

The Doctors during the discussion brought forth some very interesting and informative things. Their focus was on early detection, prevention and early intervention. This is possible. When the child is in the mother's womb,

that time itself the disability or chances of occurrence of the disability can be examined and corrective methods can be adopted. This is the best and the most important way.

In addition to that, negative attitude and therapeutic nihilism is something that needs to be checked upon.

The negative attitude towards disability leads the individual to look upon disability with disrespect which conveys a sense of pessimism.

The parent or the person who comes across disability is completely scattered and incomplete information and insensitive attitude adds to the sorrow and mess.

Therefore, the doctors, should always convey the right and the complete information about the disability, the challenges it will bring along and more importantly reflect on the positive side of the disability and all of this with much empathy and respect for the person. This will definitely help the individual to become better person.

The first negative attitude such as, “its no use exploring, your child has a disability” can just bring an end to the child's overall development and growth.

The complete information can be provided only when the evaluation has been done well. Many a times, Doctors, because of their busy schedule, conduct a superficial and incomplete evaluation for the beneficiary. Under assessing future attainments is one thing that usually happens. The doctors consider this not as a part of their job. But, actually this is their responsibility.

Assessing the capabilities helps to make a person feel empowered in spite of the disability. This information coming from a Doctor adds much more credibility and reliability. The Doctors also in the busy schedules forget to provide the right set of information to the beneficiaries. The medical practitioners should be the ones who should be able to provide alternative treatment options which should not include any false assurance. False assurance does not lead to proper decision making and hence it leads to more confusion and ultimately affects the rehabilitation process of the children or people with disability.

At the end again the Panellists emphasised on the fact that, it is only early intervention which is will help the development of the child in the right direction. The medical practitioners need to be sensitive towards the needs of the child and must find out time to counsel the parents for whom the disability comes as a shock in the first instance.



## Panel 4: NGOs serving PWD

### Rationale:

NGOs or Non Governmental Organisations/ Non profit Organisations play a critical role in the lives of people with disability. NGOs can mobilize resources for beleaguered movements and pressurise the government towards issues related to disability and the growth and development of people with disability. There have been many examples of the power wielded by the NGOs in India and abroad. There are several NGOs working at the grass root level and the understand the real challenges faced by the people with disability. They have been the key players in the process of rehabilitation. Hence, it is an important process to understand their perspective towards disability and the challenges they face with all the other stakeholders and the kind of support system that is needed to be developed.

### Panellists:

Panel discussion Moderated by: Dr Vaishali Kolhe, Associate Professor- TISS, Mumbai

Shri Bhushan Punani Secretary, Blind People's Association
Smt Uma Tuli Founder & Director Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust
Smt Meera Shenoy CEO- Youth for Jobs
Shri Rajiv Raturi Director Human Rights Law and Network

### Discussion Outcome:

People with Disabilities are ultimately people and they should be allowed to fly like a bird in the free air. The air free from pollution such as negative mind se. The society will have to realise their potential and nurture them accordingly. They are not people with disability they are people with special abilities. They have to empowered, engaged and provided with the economic independence. This is the end objective, but it is not possible to reach the ultimate goal out the support of all the stakeholders. People with disability have been discriminated for years and hence it is now the responsibility of each one to bring them the same platform.

The motive should be "Inclusion without discrimination". People with disability have done enough to prove their

worth. They have proved themselves in all fields be it work, arts, sports etc. NGOs definitely play a very important role in the development of people with disability. They not only look at the issue in solidarity but instead looks upon it as a complete entity. DPOs , the Disabled People's Organisations are coming up. It comprises of a group of People with Disability from an area who get tighter and understand the issues faced by people with disability in that particular area and resolve them by various means such as advocacy. The NGOs should extend their support to the DPOs in order to empower them to be financially independent. NGOs should be put into the panel for any working committee that the Government plans towards the development of people with disability sine the NGOs are also an important stakeholders and will bring a completely new perspective to the whole thing.

The Panel discussion concluded with some cultural performances by Anuj, a trainee with Visual Impairment at SARTHAK who put forth some soothing melodies to relax the brain and mind and celebrate the ability within the disability.

### Conclusion:

The conference summary was given by Dr M.B. Athreya Padma Bhushan Awardee and Management Guru. He is also a Mentor to SARTHAK. The summary and the action plan suggested by Dr Athreya was a concrete plan for all the stakeholders.







#### Action Plan for the Government:

- Update Policies and framework for People with Disability
- National Career scheme should be established for standardisation of the processes and improvement of quality enhancement
- Scaling up and sustainability has to be the area of focus for people with disability
- Efforts to support self employment

#### Action Plan for the Employers:

- HR Functions and key role
- Taking jobs to a different level
- Planning the growth of the beneficiaries
- Home based employment
- Employment in rural parts of the country

#### Action Plan for the Doctors:

- Need for great care
- Prevention of disability and early intervention of the disability is the need of the hour
- Special care for pregnant mothers and also during delivery in order to prevent disability in neonates
- Immunisation of the new born
- Proper guidance and counselling services for the parents

#### Action Plan for the NGOs:

- Bridge between the employers and PWD
- Support the corporate, to plan their career growth
- Adopt the integrated inclusive approach
- Advocacy in all areas

At the end the vote of thanks was delivered by Dr Sudhir Gupta, Director - Cygnus Medicare, who is also a part of the Advisory Board of SARTHAK.

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