

## **NAAI – A new initiative of Sarthak Educational Trust**

### **Background**

Abilympics (Olympics of Abilities) are vocational skills competitions, specifically designed for Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), to enable them to display their unique talents. The first Abilympics competition was held in Tokyo in 1981 to commemorate the United Nations' International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP). Abilympics now takes place every four years, governed under the International Abilympic Federation (IAF), with its headquarters in Tokyo, Japan. The competitions have been internationally held in Perth, Australia (1995) Prague, The Czech Republic (2000), New Delhi, India (2003), Shizuoka, Japan (2007), Seoul, South Korea (2011), and Bordeaux, France (2016), to enrich PwDs lives by training and encouraging them to pursue their utmost potential.

The National Abilympic Association of India (NAAI) was formed in May 2001, at the behest of Ministries of Social Justice & Empowerment (MSJE) and Human Resource Development (HRD), Government of India with the following objectives -

- To develop, initiate and implement strategies to promote abilympics in the country.
- To advocate, organize, and participate in regional, national, and international competitions to empower disabled persons.
- To provide exposure and equal opportunities to disabled persons to advanced technologies in various vocational, leisure and living skills.
- To help increase the confidence of those competing and provide memorable occasions for all persons involved.

NAAI was launched basically to organize India's participation in the 6th Abilympics, held in New Delhi (2003), and in the subsequent international events. In the year 2003 India hosted the 6th International Abilympics competition in New Delhi. The week-long event was held from November 23<sup>rd</sup> to November 29<sup>th</sup> 2003, at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, where more than 1500 participants from more than 33 countries, competed in 45 different vocational skill events. The event was inaugurated by the then Hon'able Prime Minister of India Late Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and graced by many other dignitaries including Shri Murli Manohar Joshi (then HRD Minister), Mr. KC Pant (then Vice Chairman, Planning Commission). The participants and dignitaries were also invited by the then Hon'able President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam to Presidents House, for a brief tete-a-tete with him.

### **About Sarthak NAAI**

Abilympics in India are held under the auspices of the National Abilympics Association of India (NAAI) under the ambit of Sarthak Educational Trust.

Sarthak Educational Trust is a Civil Society Organization working for the mainstreaming of Persons with Disability (PwDs), since 2008, through Early Intervention, Inclusive Education, Skill Development and Employment Generation and has successfully medically rehabilitated 1050 children with disability, included 425 students with disability in the mainstream education, trained and placed 16000 & 18000 PwDs respectively. Gradually Sarthak has expanded to 20 centres across nation, through its presence in Delhi, Chandigarh, Gurugram, Ludhiana, Lucknow, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Virar, Pune, Thane, Chennai, Ambala, Bhopal, Kolkata, Vizag and Ghaziabad, with the support of partners like National Skill Development Corporation, Capgemini India Private Limited, Mahindra Finance and various other agencies.

National Abilympic Association of India, was handed over to Sarthak Educational Trust, on 12th December, 2016. This remarkable association between NAAI and Sarthak paves the way for more inclusive approach, owing to Sarthak's Pan-India presence and strong support system of wide group of stakeholders (Government Agencies, Corporate Bodies, Civil Societies, and PWDs).

Sarthak – NAAI association is aimed at 'Excellence in Skilling' through dedicated efforts in the direction of Skill Competitions. In furtherance to skilling aspects, this association also aims at providing assistance and support to selected participants to find jobs and advance their careers.

### **Recent Milestones of NAAI**

#### **(a) Regional competitions 2018 and 2019**

For selecting PwDs, 8 Regional competitions were organized in different cities - Pune (29th & 30th May, 2018); Kolkata (1st & 2nd June, 2018); Hyderabad (15th & 16th June, 2018); Noida (29th & 30th June, 2018); Mumbai (14th & 15th June, 2019); Delhi (4th & 5th July, 2019); Chennai (19th & 20th July, 2019) and Kolkata (9th & 10th August, 2019).

Competitions were held in 20 skill trades under 5 major categories namely –

- a) ICT/Computers – Data Processing; Word Processing/English Text Processing; Creating Web Pages; Poster Designing; Computer Programming, Photography, Desktop publishing, Character designing, E-sports
- b) Crafts – Embroidery; Waste Reuse; Floral Arrangement, Painting
- c) Food – Restaurant Service, Bakery, Cooking
- d) Services – Beauty therapy, Tailoring, Jewellery making
- e) Industry – CAD Architecture.

More than 700 PwD participants competed. Overall, there were 26 Gold Medallists, 30 Silver Medallists and 25 Bronze Medallists in 2018, while in 2019 there were 23 Gold, 28 Silver and 28 Bronze, medal winners.

### **(b) National competitions 2018 and 2019**

NAAI in collaboration with World Skills India (National Skill Development Corporation), under the ambit of Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), jointly hosted National Abilympics competitions in Aerocity, New Delhi from October 2-6, 2018 in 10 skill categories. National World Skill competitions for Non-Disabled and Abilympics competitions of Persons with Disabilities were organized together as an inclusion initiative for the first time in India.

The event was attended by more than 15000 attendees from different locations across India. NAAI had its representation through 50 participants. There were overall 26 medal winners, of which 9 were Gold, 8 Silver and 9 Bronze medallists. As a precursor to the national, 3-day training camp was organized in Lady Irwin College, New Delhi for national participants.

In 2019 the national competitions were hosted jointly by NAAI and Sarthak in AICTE Campus, New Delhi on Nov. 15-16. Overall there were 21 winners (4 Gold, 8 Silver and 9 Bronze), in 10 skill categories.

### **(c) NAAI's presence in World Skills Asia Event 2018**

NAAI was invited by World Skills Asia to demonstrate the unique skills and talents of PwDs during their event held in Abu Dhabi from 26th to 29th November, 2018. More than 20 Asian countries including Chinese Taipei, UAE, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and many others participated in the event, to showcase their talent in 17 skill category competitions. During the event, NAAI participant also demonstrated the skills garnering huge attention and appreciation from the visitors. Delegations from Japan, Korea and many other countries were some of the main dignitaries who witnessed the NAAI pavilion and appreciated the talent.

### **Measurable Outcomes**

1. Participated in 4 International Abilympics since inception in 2003.
2. Organized 8 regional and 2 national competitions since 2016, in 20 skill categories.
3. Preparing 30 national winners for participation in 2021 Moscow International Abilympics.

### **Future Plans**

1. Training National winners for upcoming International Abilympics competitions in Moscow, Russia, May 2021.
2. Sending NAAI participants for International event in May, 2021.
3. Starting next cycle of selections at regional and national level for 2024 International Abilympics.
4. Bid to host 2024 International Abilympics in India, with the support of Govt. of India.

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