

Giving Wings to Dreams

Dr Jitender Aggarwal (45), Founder & CEO of Sarthak is transforming India's landscape for 'people with disabilities' (PwDs); Here the founder has shared his life journey and what drove him to this crucial area for inclusivity of the country's 30 million or more PwDs

Empowering Indian Divyangjan

Dr. Jitender Aggarwal, a PwD (Person with Disability) is rendering years of service to India's community of PwDs. The term PwD has been variously modified as "Differently abled"; or "Specially abled", etc. Prime Minister Modi has called them Divyangjan. Since 2004, Dr. Aggarwal has dedicated himself to empowering India's Divyangjan. In 2008, with the help of some close associates, he formed the NGO "Sarthak Educational Trust". Sarthak means Enabler. It has earned reputation as a leading, NGO in India's disability universe.

Tragedy and Sublimation

Dr. Aggarwal was not congenitally disabled. From a modest Haryana family, he studied Dentistry in Karnataka, and opened his own Dental clinic in Delhi. When tragedy struck in 2004, almost overnight he lost his eyesight, due to macular degeneration. After a period of understandable depression, Dr. Aggarwal got skill training in medical transcription. He thought "If this is my fate with a BDS, what about the millions of disabled youth of India?" He quit his job, and formed Sarthak in 2008. (<https://sarthakindia.org/headoff>)

Socio-Economic Innovation

The foundation of Sarthak's success has been the innovation by Dr. Aggarwal of a new model for the empowerment of Divyangs. It is to provide suitable Skill Training and find them jobs in industry. When he began, the general assumption was that PwD are not fit for employment. Like all revolutions, the Sarthak Divyang Swawalamban Abhiyan began with just eight trainees, in the first batch in 2008. Today, Sarthak trains 3 to 4 batches of 20 Trainees each for three months, in 20 Centers, across 15 States, in India. It has so far trained and placed 20,000 PwD, in over 1,000 companies. Sarthak is multiplying the service to PwD, by sharing its model with other NGO's. It has catalyzed the formation of the Rashtriya Divyangjan Sashaktikaran Manch, (National Disabled Empowerment Association).

Contribution to Society

Sarthak's pioneering work makes multiple contributions to society. First, the young PwD, through skill and job gains livelihood, self-confidence and further aspirations. http://sarthakindia.org/file/Skill_Building.pdf Second, their parents are relieved, and can focus on their own work. Third, the economy has more human resources. Finally, society has more self-reliant parents, who can bring up future citizens, who may be without any disability. http://sarthakindia.org/file/Early_Intervention.pdf

Contribution to Government

As Sarthak earned a name for its service to PwDs, it began to attract the appreciation and support of Central and State Governments. Dr. Abdul Kalam, Former President, inaugurated Sarthak's annual National Conference on Disability. PM Modi and UP CM Yogi Adityanath visited one of its Job Fairs Sarthak supported the formulation and implementation of the Gol's "Accessibility Campaign". The Labour Departments of many states, like Punjab, Chennai, Haryana, & Odisha gave Sarthak facilities to conduct training,



and Job Fairs for placement. Sarthak gave inputs to the formulation of the milestone 2016 Disabilities Amendment Act, expanding the recognized disabilities from 7 to 21. The Government has nominated Dr. Aggarwal, as a member of several quasi-government bodies - Sector Skill Council; National Fund for PwD; Member of Selection Committee of National Action Plan, National Advisory Committee on Accessible Elections, etc. Sarthak is fortunate to have on its Advisory Board, Shri Lov Verma, IAS (Retd), Former Secretary, DePwD, Gol. http://sarthakindia.org/file/org_capacity_building.pdf

Contribution to corporate

Sarthak is pioneer in empowering Persons with Disabilities by providing vocational skill building training and sustainable employment opportunities in leading sectors of IT, ITes, Retail, Hospitality, E-commerce, Manufacturing, Civil Aviation, Banking, Insurance and Healthcare sector. In each sector, prominent

partners are supporting the agenda of Diversity and Inclusion namely Accenture, Concentrix, IBM, Infosys, Startek, Wipro, Global Logic, Vishal Mega Mart, Big Basket, Optum, Reliance, Aditya

Birla Capital, InterContinental Hotels Group, KFC, Marriot International, Royal bank of Scotland, Subway, Walmart, Amazon, Flipkart, Make My Trip, H&M, Sodexo and many more. Further to ensure skilling of PwDs, corporate houses are supporting under the umbrella of CSR namely National Skill Development Corporation, Capgemini Technology Services Pvt Ltd, Cognizant Foundation, Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Ltd, HT Parekh Foundation, Credit Suisse Securities (India) Pvt Ltd, HDB Financial Services Limited, Delhi International Airport Ltd, Altran etc. http://sarthakindia.org/file/Sustainable_Employment.pdf

Abilympics

In 2016 the Board of the NAAI, National Abilympics Association of India, invited Sarthak to take over the management of NAAI. Given the synergy between the two NGOs, Sarthak accepted the additional responsibility. Since then, Dr. Aggarwal is also the Secretary General of the NAAI. The mission of NAAI is "Excellence in Skilling". It organized competitions of Vocational Skills on Regional and National basis. National winners are being trained to participate in the International Abilympics, Russia, in 2021. Sarthak-NAAI are in discussion with Gol to bid

to host the 2024 international Abilympics, in India. It will be a landmark in the annals of Indian PwD. http://sarthakindia.org/file/NAAI_Abilympics.pdf

Institutional Vision

As most organizations, business or social, Sarthak began with Dr. Aggarwal as its Founder. His Vision is to build it into a national institution, to last beyond his active working life, and serve PwDs, in perpetuity. Sarthak already has, a professional organization, with Centre Managers, in the field, and specialist Functional Heads, at the Head Office. In addition to the Organization Structure, it also has IT based Systems and Processes. It is creating a talent pipeline, for continuous expansion, and succession to senior positions including, eventually, that of the CEO.

Karmayogi

Dr. Aggarwal began his working life, like most people, as a Karmachari, one who works with the expectation of monetary rewards & perquisites. He has evolved into a devoted Karmayogi, one who works and inspire others to work, for PwD, as its own reward. His values have inspired not only Sarthak employees, but also all stakeholders of Sarthak to serve with great dedication.

Sarthak Mentor and National Advisory Board

Sarthak works under the guidance of Mentor and Management Guru Padma Bhushan Dr. MB Athreya, Phd (Harvard), and esteemed board members namely Krishan Kalra, President, NAAI and Former President, AIMA, Ranjan Chopra, MD, Team Computers, Sandeep Bhargava, CEO & Founder, Leap Edtech, Dr. Sudhir Gupta, former director of Cygnus Medicare Private Limited, SK Gupta, Former DDG, Department of Telecommunication, GOI, Siddhartha Rastogi MD, Ambit Investment Advisors Pvt Ltd, Atul Bhatnagar, Former COO, NSDC, and state advisory board members of 15 states.

COVID-Adversity to Opportunity

With the onset of nationwide lockdown, Sarthak transformed all physical setups to digital platforms for rendering selfless service to persons with disability across India. During COVID Era, Sarthak provided vocational skill building training to 4500+ PwDs and sustainable job opportunities to 3000+ PwDs. Under the vertical of Early Intervention online therapies were rendered to more than 300+ Children with spe-

cial needs. Medical health workers and frontline

Along with these initiatives, Sarthak also launched

■ CapSarathi- Mobile Application for Person with disability. It aims at reaching to every nook and cranny across India and providing information, services and support to people with disability (PwD) at a click. (<https://sarthakindia.org/Capsarathi>)

■ Sarthak Management Information System Development- To maintain, track and analyse data-

base of 19 centres in a structured manner.

■ Global ELMS

Awards and Accreditations

More than a decade dedicated to inclusion of People with Disabilities, with various developments and landmark initiatives got recognized at many platforms.

■ Recently, felicitated by megastar Shri Amitabh Bachchan during Kaun Banega Crorepati Season 12-Karamveer Series (<https://sarthakindia.org/KBC>)

■ Felicitated by National Skill Development Corporation and Skill India with special mention award under category for empowering specially abled people.

■ Felicitated by GT Sabera Award under the category of Change makers

■ Felicitated by Capgemini for promoting innovation in skilling of youth with disabilities.

■ Certificate of Appreciation and Participation in World Skills Asia- Abu Dhabi 2018.

Sarthak Global Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities

Honorable Chief Minister of Haryana, Shri Manohar Lal Khattar generously allocated land in Gurugram for our dream project - Sarthak Global Resource center for Persons with Disability where all services to persons with disability could be extended under a single roof. Let it be Health and Education Services for Children with Special Needs, or Vocational Skill Building and sustainable Employment for Youth with Disability. Along with this, various other services like Vision in the Dark, Accessible Auditorium, SMART Centre, Sensory Park, Centre of Excellence for Employment, Centre of Excellence for Skill Building, Centre of Excellence for Early Intervention & Inclusive Education and Centre of Excellence for Technology, Innovation & International Collaboration will be the part of the center (<https://sarthakindia.org/sgrc>) All these services and programs would be provided at 6 different floors of the building. For each floor construction and development, we estimate the cost at 2 Crores. Thus, the total requirement will be Rs. 14 crores. The appeal regarding the SGRC support has also been supported by Megastar Amitabh Bachchan <https://youtu.be/4PdML6iSzT8>

We request individual, corporate and government officials to step forward and support Sarthak in building Global Resource center for Persons with Disability

For more details about Sarthak, visit www.sarthakindia.org
Donate today and join the cause of empowerment of people with disability <https://sarthakindia.org/donation>
For more details, drop an email to ceo@sarthakindia.org or call us at 011 42004238