

NOTHING FOR THE DISABLED WITHOUT THE DISABLED

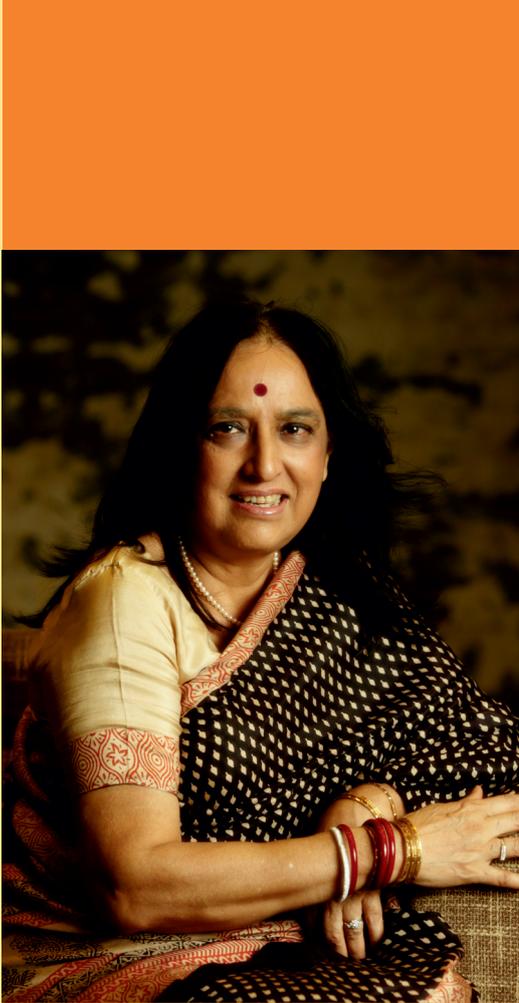


**I Konnect**



News letter -January, 2021

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*Come the New Year  
and  
our Chairperson is on a mission to infuse new  
energy in all areas.*

*Dr. Mithu Alur focussed on documentation and  
created a whole new archive at the Bandra  
Centre.*

*Standard Operating procedures were looked at  
with a fresh eye.*

*She is also guiding us for the Annual show,  
which this time would be a virtual one!*

*Dr. Mithu Alur has also been busy with  
planning for the eventual reopening of the  
centers mindful of the government orders and  
safety protocols.*



### The ADAPT-ONGC Collaboration

Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC), has, till last year, supported ADAPT's mission to promote inclusion through education, therapy and skills development.

This part sponsorship of our services in the community, helped us continue to provide quality education and treatment as needed, to children in our Community Centre Karuna Sadan, enabling us to prepare our pre-school beneficiaries for inclusion into regular, mainstream inclusive schools in their neighbourhood.

The project also included activities to encourage parents to educate their children with disabilities, motivating them to participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and address the existing attitudes and prejudices towards disability.

The staff at Karuna Sadan follow the 10- point Enrichment Programme developed by our Founder Chairperson, Dr. Mithu Alur under the International Research project with Unicef entitled ' Inclusive Education Practice in Early Childhood'

The Enrichment Programme focusses on 10 domains, namely:

1. Visual Perceptual Training Programme
2. Language Programme in English and Hindi
3. Pre-Reading/Number and Writing Programme
4. Creative Activities
5. Music and Movement
6. Free Play
7. Dramatics
8. Yoga and Prayers
9. Ethics
10. Sports and Playtime

Individual Education Plans or IEPs are drawn up for each beneficiary and the play way method is used to promote educational, physical, socio-emotional growth. As is the practice introduced by Dr. Alur, all festivals are celebrated at the centre.

Individual and group therapy sessions are provided to every beneficiary under the project. Parents are also trained to carry out the same programme at home.

### Resource Support

Beneficiaries with special needs in mainstream schools were provided speech therapy, physiotherapy and educational remediation and visits were made to their schools to meet their teachers. Individual needs-based sessions were provided at home by the community workers.



### ***Other Activities***

Beneficiaries clad in white participated in ADAPT's Annual Sports Day. The March Past squad paraded smartly followed by the torch bearers. The Sports Oath was taken and the races commenced.

We have also had a research study on nutrition conducted with the Indian Dietetics Association who also held sessions on micro nutrients that could be introduced in the diets of our beneficiaries.



*Our Young Achievers at Annual sports meet*



*Awareness program on leprosy and skin related disease for parents*

Creating Awareness in the community on disability, inclusion and other social issues is an ongoing process. Awareness program on leprosy and skin related disease for parents A talk was organised by a resource person from Bombay Leprosy project to create awareness on skin related diseases and their prevention and care. 80 people attended this programme and they found it very informative and useful.



*Body profile analysis by the Dietician to design individualised diet guidelines for parents*

We were very supported to also have an active and lively participation from ONGC in our community and cultural initiatives and are grateful to ONGC for their support. We hope this will continue in the coming years as well.

**Forgotten Millions: a case of cultural and systemic bias**

By Mithu Alur

Alur, M. (2007) *Forgotten millions: A case of cultural and systemic bias, Exclusion In India*; Article published in the 'British Journal of Learning Support' Special issue on Cultural Perspectives on Women, Girls and Inclusion, Nov. Vol.22, No.4, Pg. 174-179.

**Introduction**

Values and beliefs underpinning social mores of a society can be invisible barriers to inclusion. Faulty practices policies and laws which are exclusionary also act as barriers. In a society enveloped in attitudes dominated by superstition and myths, ignorance and prejudice it is difficult to know how to go about breaking these entrenched barriers. A contextual and cultural analyses is a good way to begin unraveling. This is how I begin this chapter exploring the subtle underpinnings ...the socio cultural, socio-economic, political and systemic institutionalized laws that work as barriers in the Indian subcontinent, causing exclusion in the educational field. The Chapter begins with a quick overview of the cultural and contextual analyses of the Indian situation which affects education focusing on some of the hidden issues that come in the way of inclusion and concludes with an analyses of the way forward for changes to take place.

In my work, I have worn several hats both that of a practitioner involved in the delivery of services where there was none, as well as an academic involved in national level policy changes on a macro level. I began my work as a teacher of special education for 25 years and then moved onto inclusive education after my doctoral research on policy. I have been lecturing to post graduate students and others from various Universities and countries both national and international. I have also been involved in advocacy and reformative action within the Indian Government's educational system. I hope to bring in some of these experiences into this chapter.

**Indian culture**

India is a country of great contrast and hugely diverse cultures. Some of the barriers that come in the way of learning are socioeconomic, socio-cultural, gender disparity, lingering social malaises affecting the girl child such as female foeticide, child marriages and dowry, political apathy and indifference and a failure of the system to address issues resulting in exclusion on the ground level.

India with an area of 3.3 million sq. km is a subcontinent... the second most populated country in the world, with over one billion inhabitants. 70% of India is in the rural areas. Poverty and large income disparities are dominant features as in most developing countries.

Yet, the strategy for alleviating poverty across practically every developing nation has remained essentially the same for the past several decades. There are many impediments to poverty reduction: shortage of development funds, poor governance, ineffective programs, lack of policy implementation and others.

Being a large and varied country there is no one way of life practiced by everyone. There are 14 official languages in India. Hindi is the national language and primary however English enjoys associate status and is the most important language for national, political, and commercial communication.

Food, clothing, religious beliefs and social structure differ from place to place. They have all shaped the different cultures of India and also made the Indians adapt to new ways of life. Nevertheless, there are some features of Indian life that are common among most people throughout the country. Family ties are important. Many families continue to live as traditional extended families. In a typical extended family, three generations live in one household.

India is literally a melting pot of different religions. Religion is very important to the people. It is a major part of the entire Indian tradition. For the majority of Indians, religion takes over every aspect of life, from commonplace daily chores to education and politics. Hinduism is the dominant faith, practiced by over 80% of the population. Besides Hindus, Muslims are the most prominent religious group and are an essential part of Indian society.

**Poverty**

Seventy percent of India lives in the rural areas. After Independence, the urban population has grown rapidly and there is a large influx into the cities as a result of rural-urban migration. Each metropolitan city has about 40 to 50 percent people living in the slums or squatter settlements. My work has been in these areas where we encounter dire poverty. Over 200 million people are in the tribal belts. On one hand, the Government talks about 'Education for All' by the turn of the century, on the other, by failing to provide even the basic essentials to the poorest of the poor, it is ensuring that education will always be a very low priority in the race for survival. People in the slum often earn just enough for their next meal and even asking them about education seems to anger some of them.

In stark contrast 15% of India's population, nearly 150 million people have purchasing power parity equivalent to the Western economy.

India is often called the youngest country in the world. 50% of its 1.1 billion population is under 25. Its education agenda is the largest

in the world. To put this into perspective, the population of Europe is 35 million. We have 525 million under the age of 25. The challenges therefore are huge.

- There are large numbers of children out of school;
- 70% of the Indian population earns less than \$1 a day.

On the positive side:

- India, along with China is an economic powerhouse
- We are the second largest scientific brain power in the world
- We have the highest number of graduates in the world
- Some say that our citizens settling abroad are no longer a 'brain drain' but a 'brain strength'.

Social sector investments however are not adequate for the size and scale of India's social problems. The trickle-down effects of economic progress in urban areas are not sufficient to keep up with the 15-20 million increase in population annually in India.

This has had an impact on the disabled who are poor and powerless. The population is migratory people coming to the city looking for a livelihood and employment. As a leading writer describes:

Kalyani Sen Menon (2007) writes: 'Women and children suffer unspeakable humiliation and pain on a daily basis even as livelihoods become geographically inaccessible. The teachers responsible for educating these children call them 'jhuggi-jhonpdi ke bachche' (children coming from the slums). They either have the training nor the attitudes necessary for serving the children who have suffered the trauma of displacement.

### **Socio-cultural issues: Gender discrimination**

In much of the country, a female new-born is not usually greeted with joy, given the strong and persistent preference for sons. For a poor family, the birth of a girl child can signal the beginning of financial ruin and extreme hardship. According to a recent report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF 1999) up to 50 million girls and women are missing from India's population as a result of systematic death of the girl child. Infanticide and sex-selective abortion yield a more skewed gender ratio. In most countries in the world, there are approximately 105 female births for every 100 males. In India, there are less than 93 women for every 100 men in the population. All this adds up to a lopsided and "unnatural" female to male sex ratio in Indian society. Based on the 1991 census, there are 92 females to every 100 males in India; in other Asian societies where there is no direct sex selection or indirect sex-based preferential treatment, the female to male ratio is 105 to 100.

The accepted reason for such a disparity is the practice of female infanticide in India, prompted by the existence of a dowry system which requires the family to pay out a great deal of money when a female child is married. Gender-bias is quite strong in socially impoverished areas particularly among the Muslim community.

Let's get beyond numbers to the cultural beliefs and practices pertaining to females in India. This anti-female bias is by no means limited to poor families. Much of the discrimination is to do with cultural beliefs and social norms. The implication is that by avoiding a girl, a family will avoid paying a large dowry on the marriage of her daughter. Diagnostic teams with ultrasound scanners which detect the sex of a child advertise with catchlines such as spend 600 rupees now and save 50,000 rupees later.

These methods are becoming increasingly available in rural areas of India, fuelling fears that the trend towards the abortion of female fetuses is on the increase. According to UNICEF, the problem is getting worse as scientific methods of detecting the sex of a baby and of performing abortions are improving. The consequence of female infanticide and, more recently, abortion is India's awkwardly skewed gender ratio, among the most imbalanced in the world. The ratio among children up to the age of 6 was 962 girls per 1,000 boys in 1981, but 20 years later the inequity was actually worse: 927 girls per 1,000 boys.

Infanticide is illegal in India (though never prosecuted), and laws are also in place to stop sex-selective abortions. But in some places, national rules don't hold enough sway to overcome local religious and social customs - which remain biased in favor of sons over daughters. Salem district, a mostly rural part of Tamil Nadu, has a longstanding reputation as a deathtrap for baby girls. Nearly 60 percent of girls born in Salem District are killed within three days of birth, according to the local social welfare department. In Salem 0 signs posted in towns reinforce the societal message: "Pay 500 rupees and save 50,000 rupees later," a suggestion that aborting a female fetus now could save a fortune in wedding expenses in the future.

According to the UN Development Program's Human Development Report, an Indian female infant is 16 percent less likely to survive than a male infant. From age 1-4, a female child's death rate is 50 percent higher than that of a male child. She is less likely to go to primary school and much less likely to go to secondary school. She is half as likely to be economically active as a male. If she makes it into the workforce, she will earn on average \$1442 per year, about 38 percent of a male worker, but her ability to find work outside the home is greatly circumscribed by custom and lack of jobs.

Amid such stubborn statistics, activists are at work to counter the forces of tradition. A focus of their work: improving the standing and self-image of women themselves.

These norms themselves must be challenged if this practice is to stop. Though the government has battled the practice for decades, India's gender imbalance has worsened in recent years. In pockets of India where female infanticide persists, the practice is rooted in a complex mix of economic, social, and cultural factors.

### **The Girl Child and discrimination**

Because girls require substantial dowries for marriage, then join their husband in his family's household they receive less nourishment, education, access to health care and emotional support than boys. Dowry murder -- wives murdered because their families cannot meet demands for additional dowry payments -- occurs more often than is publicly acknowledged, with many kerosene killings passed off as kitchen accidents.

"Factors like dowry, imbalance in the employment sector whereby the male is seen as breadwinner, and societal pressure to abort female fetuses conspire to increase the antigirl bias," says Ajay K. Tripathi of the Advanced Studies in Public Health Programme, of the Institute of Health Systems in Hyderabad. Government and the medical profession, he says, need to put more resources - and more political will - into strengthening and enforcing the laws.

Social conditioning influences the thinking that the girl child should not be encouraged to think independently, articulate or express her opinion, participate in decision making with reference to her own choices or with reference to family decisions prevailed.

As compared to boys who are seen as an investment for the future carriers of the family name, girls have a diminished social identity and status and are deprived of the rights to develop their personalities through education, social exposure and participation in community activities. Girls are kept at home in order to look after the younger siblings, when the parents are at work. Parents feel that it is futile to educate girls as early marriages are a tradition and "one doesn't need an education for that". (a comment made by a father who was interviewed). (UNESCO 1998)

Being viewed as a liability who needs to be disposed off in marriage, she faces the risk of not being educated or alternatively, not being sent for higher education. There is also an economic implication here – expenditure on her education is seen as a waste; expenditure on her marriage becomes a priority.

Child labour is widely prevalent. Children worked along with their parents. Older siblings took on the responsibility of their younger siblings: many forced to drop out of school at a young age.

In one of our research studies in Tamil Nadu a young girl in class grade IX was about to discontinue her education as she was getting married that summer. She was 14, the marriage had been arranged by her parents. After marriage, it would only be with her husbands and in laws permission that she could continue, a very rare chance in this instance. Some children had dropped out of the education system after they had failed in a class, a couple of times. Some had been shunted off to the village every couple of years, when the mother had another baby, hence, not being able to attend school regularly, finally dropping out of the system.

Whilst policies exist, low enrolments and high level of drop-outism, the low literacy rates of girl children underscore the massive failure to ensure equal access to education for girl children. It is only through education that one can expect to target the twin evils of prejudice and discrimination.

The situation of the girl child with disabilities becomes even more acute. Various factors impinge upon the girl child with disabilities at various stages of her life. The vicious circle of disability, poverty and caste primarily impose prison walls on the girl child with disabilities, illiteracy, superstition and class then reinforce these. Threat to their physical well-being and safety causes a concern in parents and care givers; this again, results in social exclusion. (Alur,1999)

Findings from the impoverished community of Dharavi and their beliefs regarding their disabled child were recorded. Alur (2003) states that 'a lack of awareness, ignorance about their disabled child, a lack of any counseling support led the parents to believe that having a disabled child was a retribution for past sins'. The disabled child, due to lack of services, suffered from a lack of socialisation leading to isolation for mother and child. The family and the siblings remained stigmatized and confined by this blinkered way of thinking because of cultural ideologies that were ingrained in the community. The children remained in the invisible mould in which they had been cast. People in a survival culture did not seek any change for their child with handicap but were unquestioningly accepting. Stigma, taboo, prejudice, fear, ignorance.

Disability was looked upon as a curse's result of past deeds, an embarrassment, an individual tragedy, a 'daughter-in-law' problem, a personal not a State responsibility, to be hidden away. In the Hindu religion research in the community indicated that families saw having a disabled child as a question of my karma, a result of past deeds, an 'individual responsibility'. an individual construct of a personal tragedy theory that has been written about by several writers ... a cultural entrenchment which had been shaped over the years. The community's faulty negative attitudes had reinforced it. A fatalistic attitude, where the belief is who can do anything? 'It's my fate and I have to bear it' 'it's my fault' ... 'Some day God will forgive them and their child will be normal again' (said people from the community)

Discussing the wider social fabric of Indian society the kind of message that came through Guilt, stigma and fear dominates families. It was a limitation of our culture. This had a gender bias where women were made to feel that it was their fault. For mothers, the study indicated a new dimension of the gender bias and the low status of women that exists in India and from all accounts their lives appeared to be a story of harassment and persecution.

Shah and Sovani, 2003 writes that a new and very marked trend in favour of girl children was also seen in their recent research... Girls were seen as potential homemakers and carers of children, and for that reason it was considered crucial that they get an education.

Some parents expressed an even more expansive view, making the argument that times had changed, and all girls must be educated. They expressed the view that in terms of arranged marriages the education of girls was a criterion. In the event of ill treatment by their husbands or in-laws, they believed that education would stand the girl in good stead, helping her get a job and become independent. Since the woman was the primary caregiver for the children, she would be able to educate the children, and save money otherwise spent on tuition. Most of the mothers were uneducated themselves, and regretted this. They did not want their daughters to face the same fate. The few fathers who came for the interviews expressed strong support for their daughters' education, citing similar reasons. (Shah & Sovani 2003)

With reference to their plans for the children after primary school, parents believed that girls should have a basic education but that there was no need for specialised or higher education since they would be homemakers, and not pursue a career. They argued that girl children would work in the future only if there was a dire need to do so.

### Women with Disability

Women with disabilities experience a high incidence of abuse – physical, emotional and sexual. Since most disabled women are hidden away in homes, this often happens within the family. Their dependence on families inside and exposure to blatant discrimination outside homes deprive them of their dignity and self-confidence. Furthermore they are subjected to violence in all its forms. They remain hidden, locked in their isolation (Subberwal Ranjana In Baquer and Sharma, 1997: 191). Alur writes (1999)

Her education, health and well being are part of institutionalized neglect and non-support They are not allowed to go out of their home confines. Again, the fear of unwanted pregnancy also provokes them to go in for removal of the uterus, which has its own health implications.

In disadvantaged communities where there are no private toilet facilities, it is almost impossible for women with disabilities to access public toilets which are user-friendly.

Chib (2006) writes:

*'In India, the concept of a toilet is dirty. Public toilets are always kept dirty and have a step leading to it, therefore my electric wheelchair can't go in. So although I am qualified with a double Masters from London, I can't because of the inaccessible toilets. It seems unreal but true.'*

Huemann (2007) writes:

*'when I arrived, I found that the Ashoka Hotel (in New Delhi) had no accessible bathrooms. I worked strongly with the Government and got it done. Little things are as important as big things. Small things that sfrequently concern you affect other people too. For me it is living the ideology. I feel that if you relax and let one thing go, you let other things go. It is about being inclusive and listening to people sharing diverse experiences. People need to be empowered and each individual needs to feel that they can benefit from this. People see in me the willingness to fight for what I believe in''*

Women with disabilities receive no sex education and are therefore left unempowered in relation to their bodies, and are unable to protect themselves against sexual abuse. "It is strongly supported that women with disabilities regardless of age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientations or class are assaulted, raped, abused at a rate two times greater than non-disabled women" (Sobsey, 1988, 1994; Cusitar, 1994; Stimpson and Best, 1991; Disabled Women's Network, (DAWN), 1988).

As Chib (who is disabled and a woman of forty, founder of ADAPT (Able Disabled All People Together) a Rights and Entitlements Group writes from India,) writes

*'I am still grappling with things that I may not be able to change...and that is people's attitude. Most people, especially in India still view me as a child they are taken up by my form and think I should remain at home.'*

*'Most people think that disabled people are a liability and a burden. What does a woman of forty do? The normal and ordinary things like traveling. Why am I so special? I can live and contribute in society. People often ask me....'Can you live alone?' 'Can you have a relationship?' and basically 'Can you manage life as an adult'? I am just another persno. I want to be accepted for just being who I am, without too much of questioning and stares about my disability...t also a part of me will always long to feel I want to contribute to be a citizen...if I am allowed to (Chib, 'A Woman Disabled in India')*

Writing on a more humorous note, Chib (1996) writes in 'No sex please you are disabled'. *'most non-disabled people who have never met a disabled person before do not know what to do or say when they meet a disabled person. In England there is a famous radio programme*

*called 'Does She Take Sugar In Her Tea?' people always tend to ask the person who is with the disabled person if she wants any sugar in her tea, rather than the disabled person herself. When they talk to me, they adjust their voices as if they are talking to a child. Questions are directed at the helper instead of me. The person who I am with is always asked, 'Can she understand everything?' 'Yes, she can. She's doing her MA.' 'How nice.' 'That's good.' The conversation comes to an end.*

Chib goes on to say,

*It's crazy but on one hand society thinks that disabled people should lead normal lives, but on the other, when it comes to the crunch of having an intimate relationship with a person who is disabled, they yet scared and pretend that the problem isn't theirs. The thought of having an intimate relationship with someone who is different does not even cross their mind. Disabled people are kept at a distance, as the so-called 'normal' think that becoming involved with a disabled person would be an onerous situation.*

*Most men care for their image and what society thinks of them. Men must always prove to themselves that they are macho, they would be considered wimps if they went around with a disabled woman. Again, it's the social awkwardness of being seen with a disabled person. People rarely go beyond a particular relationship format.*

*In India most marriages are arranged by parents. Disabled people in this negative, highly discriminating culture would not even be considered when parents are choosing a partner as they think that their son will not be looked after, overlooking the spiritual and emotional support a disabled person can give, and as for sex, the disabled can't have sex.*

Most people are afraid of the unknown. They stereotype disabled people as they think that they have to be taken care of. Usually rehab workers, and I have grown up with too many, feel that they are doing their bit for society by spending a couple of hours working with a disabled person every week. Sex remains a taboo subject for them too. Professionals and parents have an aversion to talking about sexuality and the disabled adolescent and avoid any kind of conversation about topics pertaining to love sex, marriage, and intimacy. The subject is usually brushed off with a remark - 'It doesn't concern you...' Or, they would say in astonishment- 'what, disabled people want sex too?' Disabled people should be contented with what they have and not want more and more.

We've got to be content with the stereotype that prevails, 'no sex please you are disabled.'

### **Not in the political manifesto:**

Disability studies and women's studies have ignored the needs of women with disabilities. They have also been ignored by the women's movements and by the disability activists.

While the National Commission for Women was set up as a national level statutory body to review the constitutional and legal safeguards for women and has taken several initiatives to discharge its statutory functions including law and legislation; custodial justice; sexual abuse of the girl child, redressal, etc. and the history of women's activism since the '20s has been impressive, yet women with disabilities have been ignored by the women's movement leading to their marginalization and victimization.

Women with disabilities remain excluded from programmes and provisions for women. They are not a part of any political party's manifesto.

Women with disabilities have been at the bottom rung also of research, state policies and of the rehabilitation professionals. The disabled Indian woman is deprived, first, because she is disabled; secondly because she is a woman and lastly, if she belongs to a low caste, the caste hierarchy itself leads to further discrimination.

The position of women in India places them among the most oppressed in the world. Women with disabilities will remain the most neglected group of our society unless we wake up now and work towards a better understanding of the multiplicities of discrimination heaped upon them over the centuries. These multiplicities of problems condemn the women with disabilities into a twilight zone of non-being. (Alur,1999)

### **Policy and discrimination and systemic barriers The Right to education: Universal Education**

Policy is not made in a vacuum..... Policy reflects a wider broader socio-economic, socio-cultural, historical, political and ideological framework in which it gets embedded. It involves the whole educational system, as well as, professionals working within the system, rather than simply the needs of individual children (Barton and Tomlinson 1984;65-80). There are linkages between policy and practice. A well-known policy analyst suggests that policy is about what 'governments choose to do and what they choose not to do' (Dye 1984:3). Policy can also be 'failure to actor deliberate decision not to act' (Hogwood and Gunn 1984:20).

Through my doctoral research entitled 'Invisible Children: A Study of Policy Exclusion', I examined a Government of India pre-school policy known as the Integrated Child Development Scheme or the ICDS, which targeted the poorer sections of society. Although it meant to be for 'all' children, it did not actually on the ground level include any child with disability. The result is a massive exclusion leaving 4 to 5 million under 5 disabled children out of existing services (Alur,1998) A Government of India source revealed that only 10% of people with disabilities are being covered (GOI,1989).

Some of the findings that emerged from the study were that various factors have excluded children from education. University education in India has been growing faster than primary education. Failure to adopt the right strategy, more specifically, the large birth rate, consequent rapid growth of population which continually increased the size of the problem and the inability of Government to raise the financial resources needed to support this massive programme of Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE) have led to large number of child population being left out of education.

The Right to Education Bill was a step in the right direction to address the anomalies that exist. A high level Committee called the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) Committee comprising of State education ministers, educationists, activists, experts and some eminent and high profile people from civil society from across the country was reconstructed. The purpose of the Bill was to make sure that 'all' children get elementary education and the poor are not denied. The concept of common school system and neighbourhood inclusive schools was a highlight of the Bill.

Many of us put in a great deal of work and effort into drafting of the Bill providing valuable inputs and expertise for inclusion of underprivileged and marginalized children from the poorer sections of the rural, tribal and urban slum areas, into schools. For over a period of two years, there was much deliberation and consultation on the process of operationalisation of the Bill to ensure that every child gets quality education at the elementary level. However once again the Government has gone back on its promises and put the bill on the backburner.

In fact, it has gone one step further and discarded the responsibility for making the Bill an Act on to the States. The States have been given the freedom to do so within their own broader parameters. If the Central Government cannot find resources for guaranteeing free and compulsory elementary education, then how would the State Governments, which are even more strapped for resources, be expected to do so?

With the States also facing a resource crunch, the Centre is not in a position to provide funds to the States and it has decided to delay the implementation of the legislation. The sources say that very rarely a Bill was put in "cold storage" after it is passed in Parliament and not forwarded to the President for his assent.

The Government's decision has sent shock waves among academicians and educationists. Krishna Kumar, Director of the National Council of Educational Research and training writes...

'Anyone familiar with the larger picture of children's welfare with the larger picture of children's welfare can guess what will happen now. An already neglected sector will slip farther away from national level attention. Patchwork solutions such as project-based funding, invitation to private and voluntary agencies to alleviate the misery of the poor, and para-teachers will be tried out. A great chance of systemic rebuilding will be squandered away' (Kumar 2006, 'Ensuring elementary education for all' in *The Hindu* 2007)

'It is not uncommon for parents to readily pool all their savings and earnings and mortgage possessions to educate their children' (Tilak 2007 'Torturing tiny tots' in *The Times of India*)

After Independence according to researchers and educational analysts, while the achievements of four decades have been impressive, the failures are also shocking. The tilt towards higher education resulted in the neglect of primary education and universal education still remains an unfulfilled dream. Amartya Sen (2006) writes 'the existing primary school system is crying out for radical reform'.

While studying the history of education of disabled children, we find that this is one group that still suffers massive exclusion. The major barriers are systemic in nature due to which implementation strategies have not been worked out. Piecemeal services by NGOs have taken the place of concerted State involvement which has happened in most countries. Today, due to the State's non-involvement a staggering number of ninety eight percent of India's disabled people does not receive any care from the Government (GOI 1994). There is a dichotomous situation where two departments of the Government, namely, the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Education are responsible for children with disabilities. This causes an ambiguity. Ill-defined policy objectives, not clarifying that 'all' means disabled children as well. Implementation strategies for the inclusion of these children therefore are not worked out, which leads to the non-inclusion of disabled children from the programmes. In the wider context, the findings indicate that the national policy concerning disabled children lacks cohesion and does not give clear directives for the implementation of inclusion to take place. The wider malaise in the country, is a lack of a strong ideological commitment to include children with disabilities in all services. The Government's conceptualisation of disabled children is full of ambiguity and confusion: governmental reliance on voluntary organisations to deliver services ensures a micro-level coverage and indicates a lack of philosophical commitment to the integrated education of disabled children.

Yet, several Acts of Parliament have been passed which stresses the importance of including children with disability. The Persons with Disability Act is a landmark legislation passed in 1995 stating that children with disability should be included into regular schools. This has been reinforced by the fact that the 93rd Amendment to the Constitution which was passed in December 2000 and which states that it is mandatory for children with disabilities to be included into regular schools. However, although now legislation is in place, the practice of inclusion, namely, implementation strategies of how to include children with disabilities have not been worked out.

The disabled are sadly a very poor powerless group of people weak politically... huge in numbers... the disability constituency runs into 50 to 100 million people, but forgotten put aside as they are the poor of this country not politically strong. Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and their concentration on the delivery of services has moved the issue away from a rights approach, leading to a disempowerment and depoliticisation.. This has taken the matter out of the public domain, making it a politically weak group and

placing it within a charity framework. Therefore the disability group despite being a very large constituency round the country remain acutely marginalized. None of the political manifestos of the political parties have ever addressed this problem involving 50 million people and families mainly in the poorer areas of country's rural, tribal and urban slum sections. Proper representation of the disabled as a whole group in the policy making arena, has therefore not taken place. Parliamentary representation has not taken place. With an apathetic indifferent political system children with special needs have therefore suffered years of institutionalized discrimination.'

Today's politician's being only interested in political power, are not interested in serving this nameless, faceless, depoliticized, powerless poor. They are a vote bank but because they are silent political powers are not aware of their numbers nor have they been touched. Unlike the Dalits, Scheduled Class and Scheduled Tribe and the Other Backward Minorities who have strong political backing, the disabled group do not have a constituency.

Consequently education for all will very well remain an empty promise on the part of the Government of India, if there are no plans for operationalisation of policy into practice for the inclusion of children with disabilities. These hidden barriers are coming in the way of including children into mainstream programmes.

India is moving towards becoming an economic giant and with China becoming the two most important countries in the world. However we will not be truly globalised, until we also extend the benefits of development beyond the 30% who enjoy it to the 70% of people including the disabled who don't enjoy it.. As far as disabled women and children are concerned, facing a society where they are oppressed by negative social attitudes and feelings of guilt, stigma, taboo, further compounded by a systemic failure of the government to address their needs... the girl child and women with disabilities face a lonely, painful day to day struggle with oppression and marginalization... out of education... out of employment,.. out of the environment....invisible people....the forgotten millions.

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## Reading a Necessary Discipline.....

Be it a physical classroom or On-Line classes, we cannot deny the necessity to discipline our children. Amongst many disciplines reading is a necessary discipline in a growing child. Reading to a child can be as early as three to six months of child's age. When a child learns to focus on objects, then it is time to take a book in your hand. Reading needs to be interesting. Interest in reading depends on the reading material but more so on the reader. When reading to a child, a reader needs to use voice modulation, expression and emote as required. And this is irrespective of age. Even an adult will read only what interests him. Hence, needless to say, a baby will read something that inspires him. What inspires the baby to read is a task that the parents need to explore. All habits are formed as the baby grows and as introduced by the adults surrounding him. Hence the right time to inculcate good habits and values in a person is his childhood. With so many advantages to its credit, reading has to be inculcated in children at a very young age even before the baby can hold the book in hand. Reading enhances the child's ability to comprehend various concepts with immense ease. It develops critical thinking skills in children by making them think.

Reading improves the child's vocabulary, command on the language, and communication skills. More importantly, good reading skills are directly related to good writing skills. Parents need to be aware of the need and benefits of reading to inculcate the reading habit in their children. Pictorial reading is very interesting irrespective of age. A colourful picture stimulates the inquisitive brain in a baby and it goes on even in adulthood. The more you read a picture, the more it arouses the learning instinct in a child. By the age of three years the child is ready to comprehend and relate to pictures along with simple descriptive words. He correlates words with pictures. And that is the beginning of reading! A nursery rhyme book is very interesting for toddlers. By the age of five, children just look at the picture of the rhyme and recite the same. This is reading with association. This association of words later develops into recognition of words. The onus of sustaining interest in reading is equally shared by parents and teachers. The adults need to take a book in their hands and read. The skill of reading a story is as important as the skill of telling a story.

Thereafter, reading becomes a part of the child's personality trait. It may be the age of computers and internet, once 'reading' gets into person's system it just sets in. 'Reading hobby' is a man's companion for ever.

*by Reshma Tanna*

## Parent's Point of view

Iqra's mother, Mrs. Khan had a lot to convey, “It has been very difficult to manage Iqra at home. She was missing being at the Centre. Every day I had to talk to her and falsely promise her that soon we will be in Bandra. The loving teachers are missed by Iqra. Khuda kare school jaldi khule.”





## Accessible Workplace

There is no doubt about the enormous benefits a diverse workforce can bring to organizations. Hence, for inclusive employment to happen and accessible workplace is a pre-requisite. For that purpose, we are going to give a short overview.

### 1. Physical accessibility should be of topmost concern.

A freely accessible workplace is incredibly important for the employees who have disability. It helps them move around, get their work done and enjoy the time spent at the workplace.

- Including railings and handrails that can accommodate both right- or left-handed access and use ramps, lifts instead of, or in addition to stairs is very important. The lifts should be spacious enough for the wheelchair to turn and adjust easily.
- Provide lever handles instead of door knobs, or install doors that can be opened with an elbow or with any parts of the body with ease for entering and exiting easy for people with limited dexterity or people carrying a laptop or a cup of coffee.
- Space: Leave plenty of room between workstations for wheelchairs or mobility equipment to get through from all angles. Just because a workstation or office is accessible from one side does not mean it will work from all angles or be the most convenient. Likewise, accessible toilets that accommodate people with disability are imperative.
- Installing modular furniture, adjustable desks, chairs and other types of furniture throughout the office is needed; employers can help to ensure that all employees have access to comfortable and accessible equipment.
- Lower Shelving: Shelves at improper height can not only be inconvenient but becomes a workplace hazard if someone has to strain to reach and access them. Hence shelves should be placed at a height where everyone, especially people with low movement can reach out to with ease.
- Provide blinds or curtains on windows to reduce glare on computer screens.
- Specialized drinking cups, mugs and adapted straws should be provided to help employees maintain their ability to drink independently.
- The design or the way the notice is put up on the notice board should be able to convey to all the employees' sensory abilities. This include different mode (pictorial, tactile) of information. Or the notice should put up in a way that is compatible with the variety of devices used by people with sensory limitations.
- Install multi-sensory safety alarms (auditory; visual), and large-print instructions for emergency and safety equipment.
- Organization should invest in the right assistive technology so that disabled employees will be able to carry out their job responsibilities with much ease. Some common assistive technology aids include color-coded keyboards, specialized screen reader software and assistive listening devices etc.
- Finally, consider the flooring that is installed below employee workstations. Ideal flooring for people with disabilities includes non slip surfaces and easy maneuverability.

Therefore, the physical design of the buildings from floor plan to all appliances should take into consideration all the seven principles of universal design that are “equitable use, flexibility in use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, simple and easy to use, size and space for approach and use and low physical effort”.

### 2. Attitudes: Going beyond physical accessibility Accessible

The workplace does not only deal with physical access and assistive devices but also to areas like attitudes. It indicates an environment in which respect, equity, and positive recognition of differences are all cultivated, and the social and institutional response to disability poses no barrier to a positive employment experience.

- Fostering an inclusive workplace culture involves valuing people's abilities instead of limitations.
- Employees' mental and physical health and well-being need to be of utmost importance for a happy and productive workplace.
- It is essential that all employees are familiar with the affirmed commitment of their organization to being disabled-friendly. For this purpose, sensitization programmes on the organization's commitment an inclusive workplace is imperative.

To conclude, an accessible workplace is extremely important to boost employee morale and for productivity. Accessible workplace is something that all organizations can strive for and achieve.

*Contributed by Tsuknungtula, Tsewang under the guidance of Ms. Malini Chib*

**Confused Mother To Professional (Unforgettable Journey)**

In India, being a mother was not an option or choice, it comes eventually, at least it happened with me. Well, I am talking about 2003 as when I look back in my journey, I feel I was quite stupid to get married, pregnant and suddenly have a child at the age of 24 years. I had just finished my graduation and had enjoyed two year of work as a Marketing Executive, when suddenly my marriage was arranged and like a normal Indian girl, I was pregnant in first year of my marriage and on the 18th March 2003, my son got delivered to me. When I saw him, I had the mindset of a typical mother wherein I thought parenting is easy and my journey as a parent will be same as every other mother, but to my pleasure God had different plans for me.

The second day of my child's life, he struggled to stay alive and I had a new word in my dictionary, "Premature child" and my confused journey started as new ways of parenting different abilities unfolded in front of me. Me and my baby travelled from Aurangabad-Pune-Nairobi (Africa) and then to Mumbai, meeting many doctors and therapists everyday; learning new words about my baby: spastic, hypoxia, asphyxia so on. I was not knowing my baby had cerebral palsy till 2005, when I got the doctors diagnosis paper in my hand saying "Cerebral Palsy- Spastic Diplegia". Very soon after, my baby and I were abandoned by my husband and in laws I had to get up to get myself trained as I knew that If I don't stand up and learn for my baby, I will be facing injustice in many spheres of life.

ADAPT (formerly the Spastic Society of India) is a well-known name and was very popular and I didn't have other appealing, strong options so choosing the Teacher Training Course emerged as the thing I had to do. I had read about Dr. Mithu Alur and Malini Chib, so I was quite excited and sure that a well-educated parent's organization will help me sail my boat safely in dark waters of life. I remember my first day, standing outside the gates of ADAPT. I was pleased to see such a vast building present to serve our children and the very positive vibes assured me that I was at the right place to learn how to handle my child. As I met Mrs. Deepshikha Mathur and Dr. Sharmila Donde, their interaction was convincing and I was assured and motivated to learn and go beyond the window of cerebral palsy and learn about all different abilities. The interview and admission made me commit to myself that I will learn about all different and hidden abilities which I had never heard of before.

My training started with the very first step of parenting i.e acceptance. On the very first day of my training, so many mothers working for children showed me the way to acceptance. Inclusion was the best word in my dictionary now as I loved to see interactions between children of all abilities. The vast literature available in the library was like a treasure for a parent like me, so many studies, Dr Alur's articles, inspired me to learn more in depth and opened new avenues. Training at ADAPT was a beautiful combination of practical and theory with expert lecturers and visits to different places. I had made friends again and they are still my companions. ADAPT helped me regain the confidence I had lost and helped me become a good parent. Training helped me come out of my nutshell and now it was my time to explore.

My son and I both started our journey at ADAPT again and this time my son was a student in ADAPT and I was in the training department working as an Administrative Officer. My first job after a big cyclone of events in my life told me that I was capable of something. We talk about empowerment of mothers, now it was my turn to realize how Dr Alur's vision had really empowered me. First day of my work and my son's school, it was difficult for me to leave my son but when Amena Latif came and took him and warned me not to come in his class. I knew my life is being divided now as a professional and as mother.

It was difficult to work with the team from whom I had learnt and to look after the same course from which I had been trained. It is quite easy to be a student then to stand in front of the students and more so, because I had to work under Mrs. Varsha Hooja whom I knew for her precision and strictness. I learnt all my documentation skills from her. I remember her saying "Why do you use small letters in place of capitals? Now when I correct my schools papers, it's simply imitation of Varshadi.

My colleagues were Dr Sharmila Donde, Zenia Malegam, Aarti Sriram and Ruma Kirtikar. I also happened to work with the school staff because of my son. I remember speaking with Sangeeta Jagtiani less as a Principal, more as lecturer for the course. Anita Prabhu was also a delight to work with as she always had a smile on her face and she was very particular to her point and her stress on accessibility rights was simply fabulous. Dr Shabnam Rangwala is a well-known therapist and she taught me all therapy related issues dealing with cerebral palsy. I remember Rajshree Patkar

used to make posters with the right message. I still struggle for that precision in my school. Unforgettable is Abdul the peon, who used to work for us, he was very talkative, caring and was doing all the jobs with a smile. It was complete team work in ADAPT and everyone was dependent on each other and well connected.

I remember Dr Alur stressing on team work always. We had a very good system of informing everyone if there was any new development in our work and this promoted an exchange of views and a feeling that all members were concerned about each other.

We had 11 students for the teachers training course and most important was to train young minds to be good professionals so we had free communication between students and teachers. There should be no barriers for learning and motivating teachers to be proactive and not passive. This was a big task for me and I did it successfully with help of Dr. Sharmila Donde. Lecturers like Damyanti Thapa, Rita Vora, Dr Avinash Desouza, Ritika Sahni were always a delight for me to arrange as while interacting with them always taught me new points to add on my knowledge. Once Dr Sharmila Donde told me I had to give lecture for the course and subject was very near to my heart, parents empowerment. It was a tough time, as listening is always easy but conveying our matter in the right manner was very difficult but with a lot of motivation, I delivered my first lecture and now there is no looking back and I can speak on any topic.

Dealing with the University and the Rehabilitation Council of India was also a big task and I learnt how to interact with them under the guidance of Mrs. Varsha Hooja. I remember travelling to Kalina, VT and interacting with them. This made me learn a bit on how to handle government issues and to my pleasure ADAPT work has been so precise that the government officials always praised us.

While working in the training department, I had a good interaction with Malini Chib. She is an ideal for me as I always want every child to reach or surpass her achievements and heights. When I had seen her movies like Molly etc, I could understand the struggle Dr Alur had gone through while raising Malini, who has made all mothers proud by her achievements. I learnt to raise a voice for myself from Malini. After interacting with Malini I have learnt to like myself, enjoy the moment. It is very pretty when you see Malini smile and explore all avenues irrespective of thinking whether she will succeed or not. After meeting Malini, my life with my son became joyous and proud.

Dr Alur's initiative of starting CII (Community Initiatives for Inclusion) is a perfect exchange program of different views about different abilities. I was amazed to see how women are learning and working passionately overseas. My views about inclusion gained roots in my mind after a brief interface with the participants. My introduction to the Resource Material CAPP happened during this course. It became my dream goal to work at the grass roots level and promote change, which is required to happen at elementary level. While helping in the administration of this course, I happened to interact more with Dr Alur. Initial inhibition was there as I was quite shy in sharing my views with her but Dr Alur made me comfortable by her affection and kindness and it grew into a strong bonding with her. When I shifted to Aurangabad, Dr Alur invited me for lunch and enquired about my work plans and encouraged me to spread inclusion. It became a sweet memory and whenever I face barriers in my work, I go back to this memory and get inspired to fight back.

Learning and working at ADAPT gave me a goal in life now all words related to different abilities are in my dictionary and there is no confusion. ADAPT made my vision of working for education, parents' empowerment and inclusion, clear. I have now started my work in slum areas, like I had seen Gulab Sayyed working in Dharavi. It's difficult to point out the impact of ADAPT as it can be seen in every work I do. When I started working as Project Director of the Vihang School for multiple disabilities I had to follow ADAPT's footsteps and I often tell Varshadi that my school is a mini version of ADAPT because that's where I have learnt and lived. I thank Dr Mithu Alur and her team for empowering many parents like me and giving us a mission of life.

THANK YOU

**by Ms Aditi Shardul**  
*Project Director VIHANG SCHOOL*  
*Trustee, Savitribai Phule Mahila Ekatma Samaj Mandal Trust*

## Unending Love

I seem to have loved you in numberless forms, numberless times...

In life after life, in age after age, forever.

My spellbound heart has made and remade the necklace of songs,  
That you take as a gift, wear round your neck in your many forms,

In life after life, in age after age, forever.

Whenever I hear old chronicles of love, its age-old pain,

Its ancient tale of being apart or together.

As I stare on and on into the past, in the end you emerge,  
Clad in the light of a pole-star piercing the darkness of time:  
You become an image of what is remembered forever.

You and I have floated here on the stream that brings from the fount.

At the heart of time, love of one for another.

We have played along side millions of lovers, shared in the same  
Shy sweetness of meeting, the same distressful tears of farewell-

Old love but in shapes that renew and renew forever.

Today it is heaped at your feet, it has found its end in you

The love of all man's days both past and forever:

Universal joy, universal sorrow, universal life.

The memories of all loves merging with this one love of ours –

And the songs of every poet past and forever.

- Rabindranath Tagore



Gulabjan Sayed (17th January)

From  
All at ADAPT



## Bijoy Thapa

Bijoy is one of the senior most - not only in terms of age but also in terms of his experience - employees of ADAPT. He is an extremely dedicated and sincere worker...always working in the background with a golden silence. Bijoy looks half his age and is amongst those rare people who will prefer to take the 4 floors of staircase rather than the lift... And he does it with the ease of somebody having an agile physique.

Once a task is given - one can rest assured that it will be seen through and completed without the need for any follow up.

Apart from his regular success in his work, his outstanding contribution to the organization and being a critical member in the task force of lockdown and for several related reasons has made him an invaluable member of ADAPT and for that we are truly thankful for his support.

Wishing him best always!!!

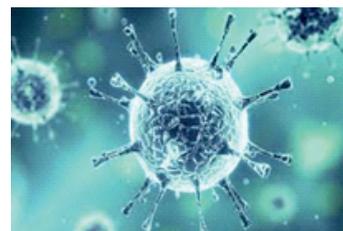


*Thank you*

### Made in China...

It was February 2020...we were getting some news about a novel virus lingering around the globe. Though my cupboard is full of goods made in China, when dining out, first choice was always Chinese Cuisine. But never before did I know much about Wuhan, the most populous city of China. Wuhan and Corona suddenly got global recognition.

Meanwhile globally governments took the decision on preventive measures.... 20 seconds hand wash with soap and water...use of alcohol based sanitizer..wash hands again and again.. With Lockdown... use of masks..hand gloves and social distancing has become the present law of the land.



Since March 2020 India and the world around, is under Lockdown. Work places, shops, malls, saloons, schools, colleges ...all essential services are shut. Yes, then came the order from office, please work from home??? Since then and till date my laptop is sitting on my lap. Two week Lockdown was planned in phases....we are counting...Lockdown 1, Lockdown 2, Lockdown 3, Lockdown 4.....the counting is on...The Lockdown has locked us in our houses. Everybody has sad stories and so do I...feels like being in jail. So many don'ts no meeting friends...no walks...no gyms...but there is also a bright side to this order. I have been receiving calls from friends and acquaintances from all over.. I too joined the chain and have been talking to friends far and near with variety of responses of awe and wonder. City has seen its ancestors..monkeys merrily jumping around. We at Evening Glory Powai, have been honoured to have leopard in our complex. And the complexity of our surrounding got enhanced. With a cocktail of fear, apprehension and a dash of excitement, we were enjoying the Lockdown.

Houses inside out get intoxicated with alcohol based sanitizers. The kitchen and home discipline has also changed. No maids...OMG! the heart and soul of the house is banned from entering the house. Zadu-pocha...bartan...kapda... the order was passed and a new schedule was prepared by the lady, boss of the family. I was no exception. It took a while to adjust the zadu in the hand. Ultimately managed using my Kathak skill. A new activity is added. I otherwise loved to zoom on laya and tal. But these ZOOM Meetings are at the mercy of the internet and its connectivity. In one of the meetings my first of course, I suddenly saw myself on the screen and I almost screamed!! I did not know that it was video conference. I saw myself as a wet crow amongst the well groomed colleagues. Any way office work gets done on-line only after in-line house work gets done.

During this time of Lockdown, houses have become homes in true sense. Mother, father, sons, daughters, and aaji, the grandmother are all locked in together and spend time together. E-schools, is a concept that emerged from Lockdown situation. Children got an unlimited sanction and licence to sit in front of mobile and laptop screens. Political leaders, business tycoons, corporate are worried about static economy of the country. The Lockdown had locked businesses big and small, no production no sales, no jobs no income...a new negative economical ecosystem was emerging. Colourful cloth masks are being manufactured by many small



smart units...following the slogan 'Make In India'...Great thinking..Of course I jumped at the online offer.



After prolonged and extensive deliberations it was decided that in the Lockdown 4, liquor shops will be opened nationwide. There was excitement all over. Covid-19 was totally ignored



We were all waiting for this day, with relaxed Lockdown, so many 'can't do' are now 'can do'..yes a happy situation. But the underlying message is...the onus of good health is absolutely on every individual. All the while we were under the pressure of Lockdown. And that was our 'Suraksha Kavach'. You are out of the kavach...now your safety is your responsibility...let's take care..

Certainly the present pandemic emergency has created havoc all through the world. But as it is said, that every negative experience does have a positive effect. Let's be positive and go back to our roots. Remember your grandparents, respect and follow their tips. The Corona devil will certainly disappear gradually. Pandemics will come and go....keep 'Aaji ka batwa' hanging on the wall.....

by Rekha Vijayakar

*Malka Jandon was blessed  
with a second grandson!*

# Congratulations

*to the proud grandparents*

*Malka & Kush*

*and parents*

*Aman & Priyanka.*



Name : Mamata Mukherjee

Department : Textile and Ceramics, SDC

Years at ADAPT?

9 years completed

What brought you to ADAPT?

My experience and skill sets and the desire to make positive contributions.

Who inspires you?

I draw inspiration from people who I have grown to observe very closely. I must admit that my father inspired me the most. He always had a smile on his face and a sense of humour, no matter the kind of ups & downs he faced.

Where's your favorite place in the world?

There is no fixed place yet, but I am attracted to destinations with natural beauty and where the local culture and communities are living in harmony. One such place that comes to my mind is Ladakh, India.

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about learning something new every day and in turn sharing some of my learning with my students.

What's your favorite movie?

It is hard to say, but I do like watching Satyajit Ray films.

Who would you like to swap places with for a day?

If you could visit any place in the world, where would you go?

Egypt and Kashmir

What's your favorite family tradition?

Favourite family tradition is to go on a holiday together or to celebrate a festival with lots of good food.

Which 3 individuals, living or dead would you like to eat dinner with the most?

My grandfather, father and daughter.

What's your secret talent that no one knows about?

Well, a secret should remain a secret, right?

Which is your favorite book?

Sudha Murty's Old man and his god.

At home we would find you doing.

Cleaning, Cooking, relaxing and gardening.

The best meal you have ever had is.

My mother's and grandmother's home cooked meal.

Your most memorable moment at ADAPT.

It is difficult to narrow down on one moment, but it is definitely when students come back to share experiences of how well they are doing. As a teacher, it is very rewarding to hear them doing well in their personal and professional lives.

You have your own late night talk show; who do you invite as your first guest.

What would be the title of your autobiography?

The journey from being a daughter to a mother to a WOMAN.

As a child what did you want to be when you grew up?

A teacher

Name the first 3 things on your bucket list.

- 1) To have a separate work studio
- 2) To travel to as many places as possible
- 3) To organize an art exhibition on my own.

What is the one thing we don't know about you?

if you could rename yourself, what name would you pick?

I am quite happy with my name.

What would you choose: Power to become invisible OR Power to read people's minds,?

Read people's mind.

Which lines or lyrics sum up your view on life?

"Jodi tor dak shune keu na ashe tobe ekla cholo re" \_ Rabindranath Tagore



### 1. Service With A Smile

A man wrote a letter to a small hotel in a midwest town he planned to visit on his vacation. He wrote:

I would very much like to bring my dog with me. He is well-groomed and very well-behaved. Would you be willing to permit me to keep him in my room with me at night?

An immediate reply came from the hotel owner, who said, I've been operating this hotel for many years. In all that time, I've never had a dog steal towels, bed clothes or silverware or pictures off the walls.

I've never had to evict a dog in the middle of the night for being drunk and disorderly. And I've never had a dog run out on a hotel bill.

Yes, indeed, your dog is welcome at my hotel. And, if your dog will vouch for you, you're welcome to stay here, too.

Karl Albrecht and Ron Zenke, Service America

### 2. Are You Strong Enough To Handle Critics?

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again because there is no effort without error and shortcomings, who knows the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at best knows in the end the high achievement of triumph and who at worst, if he fails while daring greatly, knows his place shall never be with those timid and cold souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

Theodore Roosevelt

### 3. The Magic Of Believing

I'm not old enough to play baseball or football. I'm not eight yet. My mom told me when you start baseball, you aren't going to be able to run that fast because you had an operation. I told Mom I wouldn't need to run that fast. When I play baseball, I'll just hit them out of the park. Then I'll be able to walk.

Edward J. McGrath, Jr. "An Exceptional View of Life"

### 4. Risking

Two seeds lay side by side in the fertile spring soil.

The first seed said, "I want to grow! I want to send my roots deep into the soil beneath me, and thrust my sprouts through the earth's crust above me.... I want to unfurl my tender buds like banners to announce the arrival of spring. ... I want to feel the warmth of the sun on my face and the blessing of the morning dew on my petals!"

And so she grew.

The second seed said, "I am afraid. If I send my roots into the ground below, I don't know what I will encounter in the dark. If I push my way through the hard soil above me I may damage my delicate sprouts ... what if I let my buds open and a snail tries to eat them? And if I were to open my blossoms, a small child may pull me from the ground. No, it is much better for me to wait until it is safe."

And so she waited.

A yard hen scratching around in the early spring ground for food found the waiting seed and promptly ate it.

### MORAL OF THE STORY

*Those of us who refuse to risk and grow get swallowed up by life.*



# Riddles

- 1) I have keys, but no locks. I have space, but no room. You can enter, but you can't go outside.
- 2) A man shaves several times a day but still has a beard.
- 3) What disappears as soon as you say its name?
- 4) This belongs to you, but everyone else uses it more.
- 5) How many letters are in the alphabet?
- 6) What gets bigger the more you take away?
- 7) What can never be put into a saucepan?
- 8) What runs but never walks, has a mouth but never talks, has a head but never weeps, has a bed but never sleeps?
- 9) Heavy it is but reverse it's not?
- 10) The more you take, the more you leave behind.
- 11) It is an insect, and the first part of its name is the name of another insect.
- 12) You throw away the outside and cook the inside. Then you eat the outside and throw away the inside.



January is the first month of the Gregorian calendar consisting of 31 days. Have you ever wondered how January got its name? It is named after the Roman god of doors, Janus.

Because this month is the door to the year; it represents all beginnings and possesses the ability to see all things past and future.

As Buddha said, "No matter how hard the past, you can always begin again." There are several festivals and important days that are celebrated in January. India is a land of diversity with different cultures, events, and festivals. As a secular country, India has a list of important days to celebrate festivals in January.

### **Pattadakal Dance Festival, Karnataka**

It is a magnificent dance festival that is organized every year at Pattadakal, a world heritage site in Karnataka. The site was once the capital of the Chalukyan rulers. This is an annual dance festival celebrated in the Pattadakal group of temples, which were built during the 7th century AD. This festival focuses on the ancient dance forms of the land.



### **Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday**

The birthday of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru of the Sikhs, is celebrated on the 5th of January every year. Guru Gobind Singh Ji was the 10th Sikh Guru of Nanak. On this auspicious day, Gurudwaras are beautifully decorated and special prayers are organized. It is common for large processions to go through markets in India on Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti. People sing devotional songs during the procession and share sweets and a cold drink or a sharbat.



### **National Kite Festival, Ahmedabad, Gujarat**

The onset of the harvesting season in the state of Gujarat is celebrated by flying kites of various sizes and colors in the sky. Kite competitions are also held and lip-smacking Gujarati dishes are savored by the people. You can find rokkaku fighting Japanese kite, American banner kites, sculptural Italian kites, flying dragon Chinese kites and so on.



### **Bikaner Festival, Rajasthan**

This festival is organized every year by Department of Tourism, Rajasthan Government. Here, several magnificently decorated camels are displayed. Many competitions such as the camel race, camel dance, camel beauty pageant, etc. are also held. Exotic delicacies like camel milk sweets, camel milk tea, and other local dishes are presented.



### **Lohri, Punjab, Delhi**

Lohri is celebrated in most parts of northern India. The festival marks the end of the winter season in India. On this day, the friends and family members assemble together, sing Lohri songs and enjoy special food items like popcorn, peanuts and jaggery. Lohri night traditionally falls on the longest night of the year known as the winter solstice. Lohri festival indicates that the biting cold of the winter is ending and happy sunny days are arriving.

**Pongal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh**

In the various states of South India, the festival of Pongal is considered as very auspicious and celebrated with great pomp. This 4-day festival marks the end of the harvest season. To mark the festival, the pongal sweet dish is prepared, first offered to the gods and goddesses (goddess Pongal), followed sometimes with an offering to cows, and then shared by the family. Festive celebrations include decorating cows and their horns, ritual bathing and processions.

**Makar Sankranti, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Bihar, West Bengal**

The Makar Sankranti festival marks the start of the harvest season in India. It is generally celebrated by preparing sweets and wearing new clothes. The festival also marks the onset of spring season in India. This day, also known as Maghi, is a major harvest festival and is dedicated to the sun god Surya. On this day, devotees take a holy dip in rivers like Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery.

**Vasant Panchami/Saraswati Puja, North India and West Bengal**

This festival is celebrated as the starting of the spring season in India. On this day, the idol of the Goddess Saraswati is worshipped. Wearing of bright yellow color clothes is considered to bring good luck. Moreover, traditional feast is prepared for the festival wherein the dishes are usually yellow and saffron in color. In northern states of Punjab and Bihar, people celebrate it as a festival of kites. In Rajasthan, people wear jasmine garlands on the day of the festival.

**Republic Day**

It is celebrated in entire India. On this day, a ceremony is organized in the Rajpath, New Delhi. The President of India unfurls the National Flag followed by the grand Republic Day parade. On Republic Day, flag hoisting ceremonies and parades by armed forces and school children are held in different parts of the country. One of the main functions of the Republic Day Parade is to pay tribute to the martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for the country.





*Onwards  
we march together*

*Thank You*

## ADAPT Mission Statement:

ADAPT's mission is to influence and change public policy in order to create an inclusive, accepting, disability friendly India by demonstrating and promoting the philosophy of inclusion through model innovative techniques guided by the key principles and

## Vision:

ADAPT's (Formerly The Spastics Society of India) vision is to establish rights and entitlements for children and youth with disability, to introduce policy and legislative changes combined with reformative actions so that all existing services of education, health, welfare and employment are inclusive and to ensure that

# Solution to the Puzzle :

## ANSWERS

- 1) Computer keyboard
- 2) A barber
- 3) Silence
- 4) Your name
- 5) There are 11 letters in "the alphabet."
- 6) A hole
- 7) Its lid
- 8) A river
- 9) TON
- 10) Footsteps
- 11) Beetle
- 12) A ear of corn