

NOTHING FOR THE DISABLED WITHOUT THE DISABLED



I Konnect



News letter -March 2021

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Dr. Mithu Alur
Founder Chairperson, ADAPT

Dr. Alur has developed the new 3 R's for professionals, namely Retraining, Relocation and Redeployment of time. In keeping with the above, she has:

- Initiated human resource development through weekly sessions to enhance the knowledge and presentation skills of staff on the ten domains of our work as reflected in her book, “The Birth that Changed the Nation” (Retraining).
- Moved all services online during the pandemic (Relocation).
- Ensured that all staff now multi task and take on additional responsibilities and ownership. (Redeployment of time).

With the commencement of the partnership project with the Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives (APPI) entitled The Mithu Alur Centre for Special Education and Inclusive Education, our Chairperson, who is the Director, Quality Assurance and Operations, has been guiding and working with Dr. Ragini Sen, Executive Director, Quality Assurance and Research and Mrs. Varsha Hooja, Head, Pedagogy, on finalising the formats for documenting the demographic details and social profiles of all our beneficiaries and for measuring the impact of the services being provided under the Project, continuing the Quality Assurance that has been the hallmark of ADAPT. She has also held several meetings with the team to apprise them of the different components of the project.

In addition, Dr. Alur has held planning meetings through the month on the budget for the forthcoming year, staffing requirements, training and capacity building programmes and re allocation of administrative duties.

March is the month that celebrates International Women's Day and Dr. Alur's guidance and inputs were invaluable for planning the virtual event to commemorate this day.



RAYMOND

Raymond & ADAPT come together to empower the disabled and needy, Since its inception in 1925, Raymond has been synonymous with trust quality and excellence. An indigenous brand we Indians are very proud of. Maintaining a 95 year track record of excellence is no mean achievement.

We are happy that Raymond has decided to partner with us in our service to the poor and disabled. ADAPT as an organisation is a benchmark of excellence and trust in providing quality services to the disabled since 1972. We welcome this support wholeheartedly and will endeavour to strengthen our relationship.

The grant from Raymond will be utilised for Education and Skills Development of our beneficiaries.

Keep watching this space for further details of this Project.

INTEGRATION AND POLICY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION IN DHARAVI SLUMS**Mithu Alur and Madhuri Pai**

For the last five years, at a local level in Dharavi, the Spastics Society of India (SS1), is integrating children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) into community schools or in other special schools. In spite of the initiative, tremendous amount of advanced preparation, manpower and support provided for this program, it has met with only limited success. It is felt that comprehensive strategic planning is required to mobilize the community for an upward integration project. A policy decision regarding implementation is necessary for the success of the program.

Keeping in mind the research experiences and policy formulations relevant to community education, we feel the following conditions must be satisfied for an effective intervention programme:

- Positive attitudes and expectations
- Teacher support in meeting the needs of the children
- Necessary resources to support the service

To fulfill these conditions, a number of programmes would have to be undertaken:

- The first step is identification of children with SEN. This can be accomplished with the help of the available network of community health and anganwadi workers.
- Community awareness programmes to explain why integration at various levels is required, resource implications, social obligation etc.
- Parents' education to make them aware of the problems of segregation, their rights, roles and responsibilities.
- In-service training of teachers to help them meet the needs of SEN children. A modular approach linked with a higher diploma, may be a helpful incentive.
- Direct support to children through one-to-one interaction for varying periods of time, therapy, co-ordination regarding aids and appliances, personal problems like adjustment, counseling and/or other special educational problems etc, should be made available.
- Developing a uniform policy regarding mainstreaming. Common goals with regard to the school's responsibility towards overall development of children, equal opportunities, possibility of vocational training and future employment must be set.

Extensive research and our experience of the last twenty years in the field of special education shows that without such a document, the schools role in the process of integration remains unclear, confusion occurs and the interests of the SEN children are overlooked.

We have further found that:

- Assessment, monitoring and record keeping must be done by an independent agency familiar with SEN children as well as the difficulties faced by the school authorities.
 - Staff development must be carried out by the support professionals. A multi dimensional training including school- based training, training of interest groups, coordinators, non teaching staff must be undertaken periodically.
- Curriculum and resource planning is a crucial step. Special teaching methods and approaches, in-class support, co-operative teaching, resources for special equipment, tackling issues related to disability must be given special attention.

We are acutely aware that the area of special education has rapidly undergone changes in India. Although we have not been able to keep pace with the advances in the developed countries, we appreciate that policy development can't be a stagnant, one time effort. It has to be reviewed periodically.

We have learnt about the potential of children with disabilities and the power of optimism held by their parents and teachers, indicating that this optimism will continue to achieve a positive change.

As a first step towards development of a comprehensive policy for integrated education, we have collected background information on Dharavi.

SIZE:

Dharavi is reputed to be the largest slum in Asia covering approximately 175 hectares (Ha) of land. It is situated in the centre of Greater Bombay between the western and harbor railway lines and the link road to the north. The land is owned principally by the Municipality (104 Ha), private ownership (43 Ha), and Government land (28 Ha).

POPULATION:

The population is extremely heterogeneous, comprising different castes and tribal and ethnic groups from all over India. The local State language is Marathi but many others like Telegu and Hindi are also spoken.

The total population of Dharavi is estimated at 400,000. It is difficult to estimate with any degree of absolute accuracy as it is estimated that around 20% of the population comprises of migrants who are floating in and out of the slum (SS1 Survey 1986, and ICDS 1988).

As India has the largest child population in the world of over 300 million, about 22 % of the developing world population according to the 1981 census of India, it is not surprising that there are large numbers of children here.

HOUSING:

The housing in Dharavi comprises of squatter settlement, pavement dwellers, chawls.

The dwellings in the settlement are made of a variety of materials, and there are open drains between the closely packed huts called chawls. As it is an established slum there are pan tile roofs to keep out the monsoon rains, but in general the houses are flimsy, extremely small and overcrowded. A typical hut is a small room of 10 ft x 10 ft. with a family of five living there. (reference M. Alur - The World Congress of Disability, Japan, 1988 and Chandigarh 1989).

Sanitary conditions are practically non-existent, and water is quite scarce. However, housing is currently being redeveloped with small blocks of flats being built and slum-dwellers relocated. (Ref. BMC 1993). This promises to be a slow process taking up to twenty years, although World Bank and Government of India have taken up slum reconstruction schemes in a large scale.

Majority of the workforce at Dharavi belong to the unorganized sector of what is known as "C" and "D" category workers with a salary scale not exceeding Rs. 1500/- per month. They are engaged in trades such as broom making, rag picking, tanning, and leather work, fishery, and many are tailors, and domestic servants, such as cooks, drivers, sweepers; other skilled labour include plumbers, electricians, and carpenters.

HEALTH CARE NUTRITION:

Due to the filthy environment and low level hygiene and nutrition, there is a high rate of infection and is explicably linked to conditions of poverty.

DISABILITY RATE:

The major crippling disease in the area is polio. Analysis of distribution of disabilities shows that 36.8% suffered from physical disability, polio being the chief common cause (Prevalence and Incidence of Childhood Disabilities in Bombay, 1986). 8-10% of families have a disabled child. The 1981 census established that there were high levels of disability in India finding at least 12 million with 1 disability. However, we have found this to

be a very conservative estimate as our data and WHO survey has estimated disability in India to be in the range of 10%.

The SSI's existing service in the slum: KARUNASADAN

A hospital- based Community Rehabilitation service was set up in 1985 to reach out to the large population of disabled living in the slums of Dharavi.

The centre (Karuna Sadan) is located in the Urban Health Centre of Sion Hospital. Karuna Sadan has expanded to provide the following services to approximately seven hundred and fifty disabled people:

- Prevention,
- Immunization,
- Nutrition and health care,
- Early identification of disability,
- Assessment,
- Pre School Education,
- Therapy and treatment,
- Early stimulation,
- Provision of aids and appliances,
- Training courses,
- Home management and parent training,
- Family counselling,
- Training of community health workers and Anganwadi workers,
- Community awareness programmes,
- Regular courses for MBBS students,
- Certificate course for anganwadi workers.

KARUNASADAN PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION:

Three pre-school groups were originally started because some children needed the input of special education after therapy. In addition, there were some children unable to walk very far whose mothers or carers could not carry them long distances to other facilities.

Children with mild handicapping conditions were referred to the local school system. Children with other disabilities such as loss of vision or hearing were referred to the appropriate service. Children suffering from malnutrition are referred to the ICDS along the corridor.

Many able-bodied children are unable to attend school regularly as often they are expected to help at home, particularly if they are girls, and those children who for one reason or another were unable to integrate in mainstream school were accommodated in the SSI pre-school project.

MOTHERS AND CARERS:

A characteristic of the project was that mothers remained with their babies to learn how to deal with the child's disabilities, and prevent secondary or tertiary handicaps and offer stimulation and physical care. Many of the women had severe problems associated with the living conditions and attitudes in the family. Several hours a day were spent queuing for water, and there were other children to look after, majority of women were working and contributing to the family income. Siblings regularly accompanied their disabled brother or sister and joined in play and activities.

The SSI project has provided counseling for women about a great many problems surrounding their child's disability and their personal circumstances. Often, they are rejected by their husbands or families, particularly in-laws, or insulted by neighbors who think that they have bad karma and must have been punished for misdeeds

in an earlier existence. Family violence is commonplace, and the problem of family limitation are complex involving religious beliefs and the role of sons in the family. The pressures of having female children in a society where, even at the lowest level there are demands for dowry payments, places economic burdens on the families.

In general, the project has adopted a holistic approach to the child and the family. Locally recruited community workers are trained by the SSI and pay community visits to advise on home management.

In the past, Anganwadi workers have also been provided training In the field of disability.

THE PRESENT SITUATION :

In 1993, there were serious riots in Bombay involving conflict between Muslims and Hindus. In Dharavi, some houses were destroyed and slum dwellers killed. This event had a severe effect on the local population, as many Muslims previously living in relative harmony with their Hindu neighbors moved to live in other Muslim areas considered safer. This process has changed the profile of the population and has affected the use of welfare services. However, local experts feel that slowly confidence is returning.

Due to the civil disorder and lack of stability in the slum, SSI decided to restrict the service to early detection, therapy, home management and referrals. In order to continue the education, we requested the Government of Maharashtra and BMC to ply public buses and bring the children to the SSI's existing schools. This had a two-fold advantage. The disabled children are gaining confidence and training in independent travel and community awareness about disability is also increasing. It is a common sight now to see people helping a young disabled child to board the bus or get-off or someone carrying the school bags or even the conductors being sensitive to the disabled.

The less severely disabled were integrated in the local schools. A questionnaire mounted recently to ascertain the performance of the children, showed that the children are doing extremely well integrated into larger more formal set ups. To study the reactions of parents to integrated education, we mounted a sample study in the catchment area of the existing service. The data is obtained from families in the following areas:

- Ambedkar Nagar
- Kunchi Khore
- Kumbharwada Road
- Nabhi Nagar
- Indira Nagar

In Dharavi, the Nagars are present as ethnic groups, religion or people speaking similar language. In the present case, almost the entire sample can understand and more than 74% can speak Hindi. The data is collected by the community health workers familiar, with the area. A very short questionnaire was administered in Hindi and answers were recorded by the Community Health Workers (CHW). Data was collected from 101 families.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE :

From the earlier studies in the area, we know that Dharavi slum area has one of the highest concentration of disabled - up to 7% in some pockets. A large variety of income generation activities. Very high population density. The family size and income level in the area was :

TABLE I FAMILY SIZE :

3	4	5	Up to 10	More than 10	A.N.A.
1	26	21	24	27	2

Total 101

Large as well as the small families are distributed in Nagars. No preference was indicated.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL:

In spite of the facilities for primary education, spread of adult literacy programmes, access to municipal schools etc. majority women in the area are illiterate.

TABLE 2 - EDUCATIONAL LEVEL :

	MEN	WOMEN
Illiterate	35	63
Literate	20	15
Up to VII	20	7
S.S.C.	24	16
Graduates		

TOTAL : 101

INCOME LEVEL:

In almost all households, all adults are involved in some form of income generating activity, but of our sample, six families (6%) are totally dependent on the mothers' income as the man refuses to share the financial burden or is unemployed. Five of these women were holding one job and moonlighting at home to supplement the income.

TABLE 3 - FAMILY INCOME :

less than 1000	1000	2000	3000	Above
6	40	31	22	2

Total 101

It must be kept in mind that most families in the area fall well below the poverty line (per capita income Rs. 300/- p.m.) due to large family sizes.

DISABILITY:

Incidence of polio-related disability in the area is very high, so much so that some families equate disability to 'polio'! In our survey, 8 persons with physical disabilities were reported. There is no indication of the nature and extent of disability. According to our data collectors, this number does not include deaf children or those with mental handicap. An attempt was made to study the family profile of disabled in the area. It was found that :

There are five disabled children below five years of age, two between seventeen and twenty years while one person is twenty four.

None of the disabled is attending school. Two adults sell utensils and the third is a vegetable vendor.

There is one person hailing from a large family of 14 members, two from ten members, three have a family of five and the remaining two disabled children are from small nuclear families of four members.

All families are extremely poor, with three families having an income less Rs. 1000/- p.m. or between 1000 and 1500. Only the two large families reported an income of more than Rs. 2000/

Educational level of parents follows the general trend in the area.

	Father	Mother
Illiterate	-	3
Literate	2	2
Up to VII	3	3
S.S.C. & Above	3	
Graduates		

TOTAL : 101

Two families with disable children have reported that they 'will not' send children to our school.

In our brief study, 10% of the parents have expressed their wish not to send children to our school. The characteristics of these families are:

- Low income < 1000 in most cases.
- Illiterate mothers except two who have studied up to IV. Even the percentage of illiterate fathers in the group is higher than average.
- Surprisingly, five mother are not working. One father is at home while the mother earns a living.

REASONS GIVEN :

- No one to bring the children to school - 7
- Child - 21/2 years is too young to go to school -One.
- Child will not stay without mother – One
- Other school is closer – One
- Do not want integration of able bodied and 'polio' children - One (These parents are both illiterate, are in the profession of selling brooms, earn less than Rs. 1000/- p.m. and have five people in the family)

CONCLUSION :

An overwhelming and enthusiastic response to the possibility of sending children to the possible SSI school is indicated from this quick study. A more careful research design and analysis, will be necessary before deciding the type and nature of service. However, the data does seem internally consistent.

Other features of the study are :

- There are Balwadis in all Nagars - every neighborhood.
- Parents feel that educational effort in Balwadies is half.
- Balwadies are unclean.
- Children can run away return home if the school is too close!
- 'English speaking' experts from outside the slum can give better education.

Keeping these results in mind we are now in the process of developing an appropriate curriculum for integrated education in the slums. We hope that we can take a modular approach so that the model is versatile and dynamic and could in principle be adapted to any environment irrespective of its geographical location.

True Beauty is Found in a Woman's Strength

But having lived long enough with a whole lot of women in my life, I can honestly say that's not the beauty I am drawn to. That is not to diminish the value of the physically beautiful women in our lives. Trust me, they really do have their own challenges, often insecure like every one of us and are capable of possessing the same traits that display the truest form of beauty.

The definition of beauty in Merriam-Webster Dictionary is this: *the quality or aggregate of qualities in a person or thing that gives pleasure to the senses or pleasurably exalts the mind or spirit*. The assumption in our culture is that the definition is speaking of a quality that is physical, but that's not what it says. The definition reads "qualities . . . that gives pleasure to the senses or exalts the mind or spirit."

What brings me pleasure or inspires me in both mind and spirit is watching a woman of strength in action.

A woman who is steeled to confront the challenges she is facing or standing with those she loves.

Strength is defined as this: *the quality or state of being strong; capacity for exertion or endurance; power to resist force; a legal, logical, or moral force*. It sounds impressive, doesn't it? And many days, unachievable.

But strength is not living in the state of perpetual endurance, power, and moral force. Strength is discovered in the desperation of hopelessness, it resides in the seasons of grief; it lives in the land of disappointment. Never are we to allow ourselves to believe the only show of strength is when we dismiss the pain of life. It is walking through the pain of life that our strength is created.

It is foolishness to believe the blows of life that hit will have no impact. They will hurt, need time to heal, and will leave scars. But we must remember that strength will be found in the process and scars are there as a reminder of the strength you gained.

When betrayal has come from someone you love, you will learn strength. When you lose your job or your financial challenges create an undertow, you will learn strength. When your child has run headlong into dangerous places with people who you know will bring harm, you will learn strength. When you think you have no more to give, on the horizon there will be found strength.

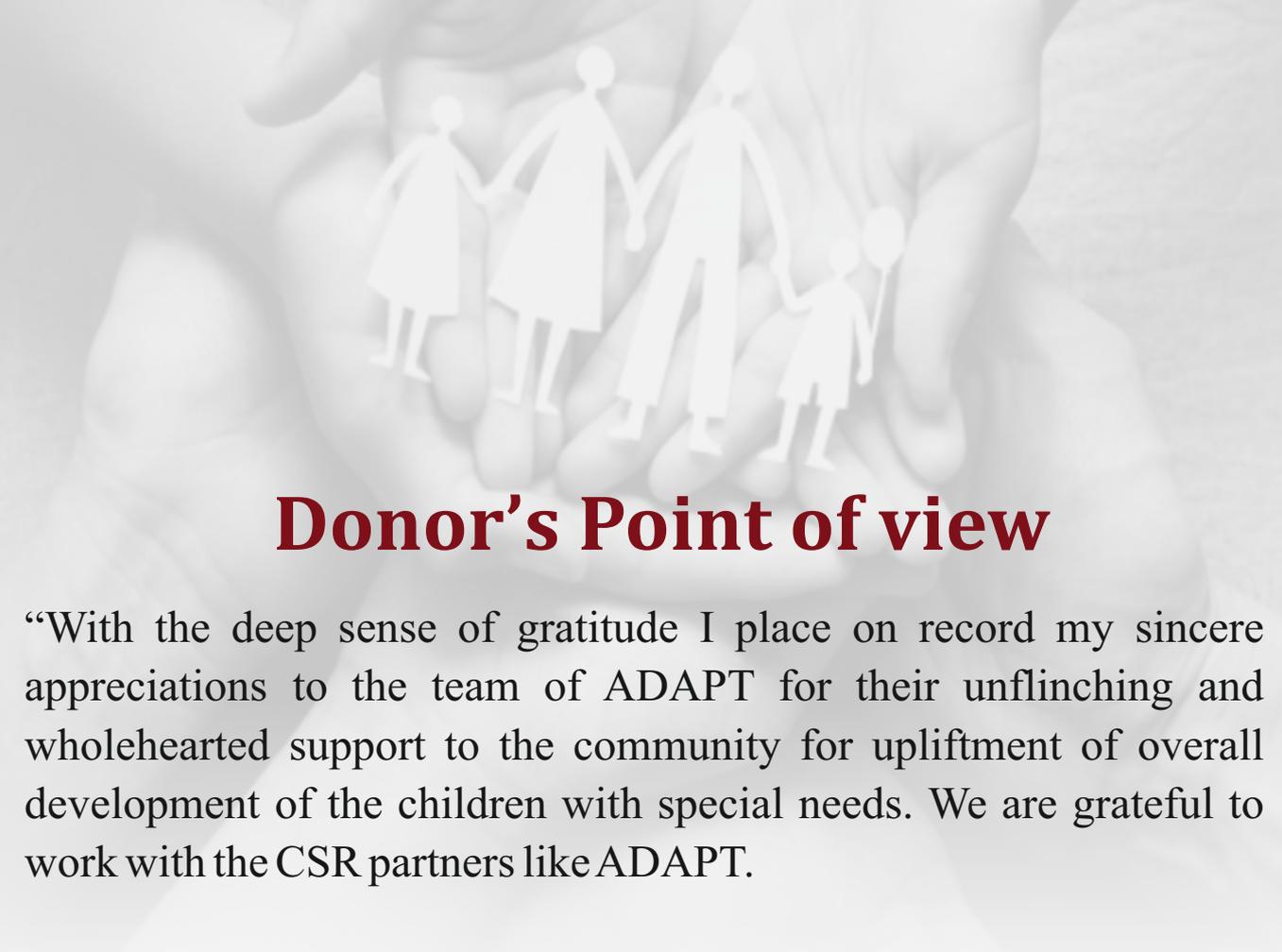
It does not come easily; it is almost never instantaneous.

Real strength requires time. Real strength requires real life. Real strength is gained through life's experience and is perfected when you reach the other side. In those days where it feels impossible, I can assure you that in time you will reach the other side.

There is nothing more beautiful than a woman of strength who has already traversed a difficult life road then reaches out to one who is just beginning. There is nothing more beautiful than a woman with life scars who cradles another who is receiving the blows that create them.

There is nothing more beautiful than a woman of strength who offers hope because she has found it, to one who is caught in the undertow of finances or job loss. There is nothing more beautiful than a woman of strength who will love their child unconditionally even through their questionable life choices.

The understanding and compassion in the eyes of a strong woman will create in others hope. It makes others believe there is life after. Strength is the truest quality of our real beauty and the one that should grace every cover of every magazine. It would come in all shapes and sizes, with perfect skin and without. Unlike the physical qualities of the ladies who pose for these covers, it is one that we all can possess. It is also beauty that will forever "give pleasure to the senses, exalting both the mind and the spirit." It is a beauty that will never fade.



Donor's Point of view

“With the deep sense of gratitude I place on record my sincere appreciations to the team of ADAPT for their unflinching and wholehearted support to the community for upliftment of overall development of the children with special needs. We are grateful to work with the CSR partners like ADAPT.

I wish ADAPT team happiness and success in future.”

From 



No Sex Please, You're Disabled

When I told a friend that I was writing a piece on sex and disabled people, she was surprised. She had been working for the welfare of disabled people in the city for a number of years but the thought had never ever crossed her mind.

'Can disabled people have sexual urges?' she whispered.

'Of course we can' I said.

'But how?' she asked.

'Just like anyone else, silly' I replied.

I proceeded to tell her what I was in the US early this year I had picked up a book about sex and disabled people, entitled *Enabling Romance*. The book, written by Ken Kroll and Erica Levy Klein, gives us a detailed account of how it is possible for all kind disabled people to have sex. The book refers to a multitude of disabilities- Spinal Cord Injuries: Polio: Multiple Sclerosis: Muscular Dystrophy: Neuromuscular disabilities: hearing and visual impairments, are all mentioned. The reader is provided with a variety of techniques and numerous examples of disabled people engaging in 'the act' are cited.

The authors are a mixed couple. Erica is non-disabled and Ken is on a wheelchair as a result of a car accident. After meeting several times, they fell in love and decided to get married. Early on in their relationship, Erica went into a bookshop and asked for a book on sex with disabled people. The shopkeeper looked at her, like my friend she was shocked, she had never heard or thought of the topic. So Erica and Ken decided to write a book about not only their own experiences of other couples. Tom and his partner, Randi, are one such couple. Tom, an avid rock climber, slipped and fell thirty feet down from a mountain during a climbing expedition one weekend. This left him completely paralyzed and robbed him of his ability to speak, read and write. Tom only communicates with a yes-no finger system, a smattering of sign language and a limited repertoire of facial expressions. Tom and Randi met in a rehabilitation hospital, where Randi worked as a registered nurse. Their nurse/patient relationship bloomed into a cozy friendship. Randi soon began writing to him, and visiting him. Initially Randi was afraid to people questioning her motives but she got along with his family really well, and soon their relationship and soon their relationship deepened. Randi proudly claims that Tom likes to wear sexy underwear

The book also introduces Jay who has to wear artificial legs. All; through her childhood, her mother gave her a complex and told her that she would never have a relationship or get married. One day, she had been driving on the motorway, she was not wearing her artificial legs and her car ran out of petrol. She was rescued by a lorry driver. The lorry driver carried her and deposited her home, thus began a long relationship that led to marriage.

'Can I ask you a personal question?' my friend said.

'Yes,' I replied.

'Have you experienced 'it?' she whispered.

'No,' I said a little sheepishly, since between both of us, I was the expert on the subject.

I explained what I thought the problem was. Although personally I can only speak theoretically about the subject, I have met and talked to disabled people who have had sex. 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 often kept at a distance, as the so-called 'normal' think that becoming involved with a disabled person would be an onerous situation.

I went on to add that if one sees a couple where one partner is disabled, it would usually be the man who would be disabled rather than the woman. An able-bodied man is rarely seen courting a disabled woman. 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. Typically, men want women in bed and the same woman to look after their other needs like clothes, food and social schedules. Generally a woman is required to be glorified mummy, the only difference is that sex is woven into the relationship whenever it suits them.

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.

My friend nodded and laughed. She agreed with me whole heartedly and reminded me what we had studied at Xaviers' in psychology classes. Sex is a basic physiological need that even animals indulge in. So why should disabled people refrain from sexual intercourse? 'I guess', she mused, 'getting into new relationship is scary for both partners, and if one partner is disabled then it's even more scary'.

'Yes I agree with you', I confirmed, 'but I also think that disabled people have to make an extra effort in making the non-disabled partner feel at ease in having a more intimate relationship. Disabled people should be well—groomed and should be more loving and caring toward their partner instead of being demanding.

With that my friend and I parted concluding that it will take a long haul before sex and disability become compatible. Meanwhile, we've got to be content with the stereotype that prevails, 'no sex you are disabled.'

by Ms. Malini Chib

A small seed to a tall tree

I go down the memory lane, not just 18 years of MBA Foundation, but 13 more years, when I joined the Spastics Society of India (SSI) in 1991, thanks to Akhil, my son; in fact my journey in this field is all dedicated to him!!

Akhil was 15 years of age and we were in Delhi, when I was groping in the dark for a proper rehabilitation for him. When I heard about NJDC from his special educator, Ranjana Das, I visited in my next trip and simply fell in love with the place!! My husband, Bala met Mithudi (Dr Mithu Alur) and she just told him, send your wife and son to me, I will take care!! These were her words and in the days to come, she became our Mother Theresa !!

While Akhil was in NJDC, Mithudi personally took his assessment and told me that he would require more of schooling as he was yet not ready for Vocational Training.. Joining NJDC as a volunteer in Chembur, while Akhil was being educated in their special school in Bandra, was just a pass time for me initially; but very soon, I got initiated by Mithudi to take charge of Computer Training division.

Then there was no looking back for Akhil and me.. He evolved into a confident young man from a crying child and was taking lessons in NIOS. Besides Mithudi, there were Varsha, Shobha and his own teacher Sudha and Occupational Therapist Medha, who took special care in his development on a daily basis.

I left my part-time job with CII and joined SSI. I learnt to train students with different disabilities- visually impaired, speech & hearing impaired, borderline mentally challenged, youngsters with cerebral palsy or those with learning disabilities, etc.. Different teaching methodologies were tried by me to reach out to them ... I got an opportunity to accompany Malini Chib for a seminar in California, which gave me a first hand experience of taking care of a person on wheel chair; I must say, she looked after me and kept assuring me that she can take care of herself!!

Soon I developed contacts in the corporate offices (thanks to my earlier job in CII), where these trainees could get internship on completion of the course.. of course, I had to counsel the parents, to assure them that their wards can overcome their difficulties, given a chance.. This was a huge success and resulted in my name being nominated by Mithudi for the **Helen Keller Award on Dec 2nd, 2000, from the hands of the then Chairperson of Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, Smt Sonia Gandhi.**

During this time, I was also made the Director of the Chembur centre, NJDC, with responsibilities of management of the whole centre and finding job opportunities for the trained youngsters.. Jobs for these youngsters trained in different skills was an uphill task as no one wanted to even try them out in assembly line or train them further for any suitable skill in their units. Even more surprising was the fact that even the parents with family businesses were not ready to keep their wards in their workplace. They were happy that they were being taken care elsewhere. How to help these youngsters get a regular job outside began to haunt me... the award weighed heavily on my shoulders; I realised they needed continued occupation to keep them active with enthusiasm and gain self worth.

During my discussions with Bala, I shared these frustrations... His response surprised me. He said, when we wanted something for Akhil, Mithudi and SSI came to our rescue; it has brought out the best in him; made him a confident young man! Why don't you think of some opportunity for these youngsters who are trained in different skills; an opportunity for them to work, earn and live with self respect.

Birth of MBA Foundation: Very soon, things fell in place like a Chinese Puzzle.. While Bala started getting the legal framework and registrations ready, Veena Aunty offered her extra flat for use. MBA Foundation was registered in Dec. 2001, and we decided to inaugurate on 15th January, 2002 (Shankaranth) . Trainees were 7 girls who were coming out of SSI and I had to find a teacher. Probing a little, I came across Jayshri Patil, who was in

need of a job. She was ready to join immediately as a volunteer from January 1st, to understand the youngsters.. I knew I had the right person with the right attitude.. Parents, were overjoyed that their wards wouldn't laze at home.

The Chairperson of SSI, Dr. Mithu Alur (she had completed her doctorate by then on Policy from London University), our **Mother Theresa**, agreed to inaugurate our centre!! She had 3 huge centres (in Colaba, Bandra and Chembur) working concurrently in a community centre in Dharavi.. But her modesty and excitement that her mentee was opening a centre for these youngsters was incomparable!! This centre was named **Gods Smiles!**

She wished us well and told me that we should not segregate people with disabilities. Many exciting things were discovered during the next 2 years; more students joined and we were learning at every step about the diversity in the trainees; somewhere along the lines, though I continued to assess, classify and make Individual Action Plans, I realized that they were much more than that.. They were individuals with their own point of view, emotions, likes and dislikes, like any of us !!! But it took time for them to come out of their shell and work with confidence.. Given the freedom of expression, within the framework of rules, they blossomed as never before!! We even found the parents' attitudinal changes for the better!

Life with Self Esteem & Dignity, being the mission statement of MBA Foundation, was being realized as these young people moved on to making new products and we started getting orders through our contacts, parents and so on.. the family expanded with more young trainees and special educators.

Now, there was no looking back.. during the 2 years, we met many parents, some from SSI and some from other similar institutions, we realized the need for a residential care, especially after the parents' demise or when they were unable to take care of their wards, due to old age, illness, etc. Thus started our quest for a life care facility and what all it will need..

Soon, we started our residential centre in Powai and then in Gorai too.. By now, Akhil had become inseparable from the activities of the organization and he too was growing with his awareness activities by leaps and bounds. More trainees from Powai, residential beneficiaries and volunteers added more positive vibrations. RCI certificate course was also started soon..

Side by side, our training towards corporate jobs continued in association with NASSCOM, and nearly 90 students were placed in different jobs – computer operator, accounts assistant, data entry, call centre, bakery, restaurant, housekeeping, etc., etc.

We were able to get a plot in Airoli and with the help of many well wishers and philanthropists, we got the building ready and shifted all our activities from Chembur, Powai, Gorai and Thane to this place. Many incidences posed question marks, but we always followed what Mithudi had taught us.. to be honest in one's work and move towards the goal..

INCLUSION TAUGHT BY HER LEADS OUR WAY TOWARDS A LIFE WITH SELF ESTEEM & DIGNITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES..I sum up by saying that today Akhil is a successful marketing manager in Self Esteem Foundation for Disabled (an associate section 25 company of MBA Foundation), where 60% of employees are differently able. Even in our office and residential facility, our staff is inclusive !!

Bala left us as we were shifting to Airoli, which dwindled my spirits... I always had him leading the way for me.. But God shows the way and we got good people to carry on the torch, which was lit up by Bala and Mithudi on January 15th, 2002..

Thus a quest for our son's future took us on this great journey, planted and nurtured by none other than Dr. Mithu Alur.. When Akhil got married, she came all the way from Colaba to Powai with Malini to congratulate him and us!!

By Meenakshi Balasubramanian

Not.

by Erin Hanson

You are not your age,
Nor the size of clothes you wear,
You are not a weight,
Or the colour of your hair.
You are not your name, -
Or the dimples in your cheeks,
You are all the books you read,
And all the words you speak,
You are your croaky morning voice,
And the smiles you try to hide,
You're the sweetness in your laughter,
And every tear you've cried,
You're the songs you sing so loudly,
When you know you're all alone,
You're the places that you've been to,
And the one that you call home,
You're the things that you believe in,
And the people that you love,
You're the photos in your bedroom,
And the future you dream of,
You're made of so much beauty,
But it seems that you forgot,
When you decided that you were defined,
By all the things you're not.

Make disability visible is the objective of our social media campaign. Our Goodwill ambassador who also heads our Social Media Committee Ms Kalki Koechlin wrote a brilliant script which was translated on celluloid with the help of Ms Mytri and her team guided by Ace film maker Ms Shonali Bose and all production inputs came from Mr. Nilesh Maniyar which elevated the film to another level. We cannot thank them enough.



Mr Nilesh Maniyar, Ms Shonali Bose, Ms Kalki Koechlin

Film has been shot and is on the editing table taking a final shape.

Our alumni have performed in the film and we thank each one of them.



Ms Mytri

Thank you to Our Stars



Nidhi Gosalia Sonal Konkane, Nuzhat Hamdare
Ashok Gupta, Drashti Velani



Faizan Patel



Amit Patel & Nidhi Gosalia



Ali Jagani



Drashti Velani



Ashok Gupta



Sonal Kokane
Nuzhat Hamdare



Sameer Sheikh

Happy Birthday

To You

Malik Bhanwadia (4th March)

Arundhati Bose Verma (10th March)

Amena Latif (19th March)

Rohini Kulkarni (26th March)

Sangeeta Manna (27th March)

From
All at ADAPT

Happy Birthday

to

Dr Mithu Alur

our leader and inspiration





June de Sousa

June, the lady with a disarming smile is more than just a pretty face! Integrity is her second name.



She is an honest soul, totally committed to her job. An intelligent mind with an elephants memory...

Ever helpful June, keep shining bright !



Thank you

Farewell

to

*Ms. Arundhati Bose Verma
as she leaves us to focus on her son
and his Education...*

You will be missed...

We wish you happiness and success always!

With love from all of us at ADAPT...



Let Her Fly

Should women be paid for housework?

Conservatives hold that family relationships should not be commercialized but Feminists state that for too long women's labour has been devalued, that only by putting a monetary value on housework will women get the respect they deserve.



I tend to hold with the conservative view that bonding and relationships should not carry a monetary tag. But I also recognize that all too often the multiple roles women play in families— cooking, cleaning, looking after kids, elders, managing finances - go unrecognized, unappreciated.

Of course its important to bring respect to women's work but is finance the way to do it? I would think its more important to ensure women are mandatorily given more time for leisure, to pursue their own interests.

How about a weekly day off from housework. If men can get a day off from a factory or corporate workspace don't women deserves the same? Others in the family can take over for a day while the woman of the house meets friends, visits parents, sees a film or takes a walk in the park.

Better still give her a couple of hours freedom daily. Me-time to spend as she wishes. She might choose to upskill, learn music, dance, take up a hobby, or simply laze around reading magazines. Surely she's earned that as a right after slogging for the family for hours.

Giving women unencumbered time and space would release their creativity in multiple spheres. Though traditionally women's creativity has flourished around homemaking— cuisine, embroidery, knitting, batik, handicrafts - given an opportunity they rise to the top in spheres dominated by men – as scientists, doctors, corporate heads.

Making housework a paid profession would perpetuate women's role as care-giver, nurturer. To shift women from being unpaid labourers to becoming paid labourers is no emancipation and will certainly not help women develop to their full potential.

by Meher Pestonjee

Name : Zenia S. Malegamwala
Department : Library, Bandra

Years at ADAPT?
13 years in ADAPT as an office Member.

What brought you to ADAPT?
Earlier I was a student of ADAPT. After that I have joined ADAPT's office

Who inspires you?
My Family

Where's your favorite place in the world?
Jammu & Kashmir & Switzerland

What are you passionate about?
Dancing, sitting on computer & Art & Crafts (Beading & Crochet)

What's your favorite movie?
Harry Potter Sessions 1-5, Jurassic Park, Lion King part 1, Koi Mil Gaya, Sound of Music, Advantages of Marlin, Raising Dion Season 1 & Krrish part 1

Who would you like to swap places with for a day?
I often dream that I am a Shiamak Davar's dance instructor, where I can physically walk, run and teach dancing. I would like to trade places with a dance instructor for a day.

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

What's your favorite family tradition?
Navroz, Parsi New Year

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

What's your secret talent that no one knows about?
I recently have started doing Crochet work and feel am quite good at it

Which is your favorite book?
None

At home we would find you doing.
Sitting on computer or Dancing

The best meal you have ever had is.
Dhansak

Your most memorable moment at ADAPT.
Meeting Bollywood Celebrities

You have your own late night talk show; who do you invite as your first guest.
Hrithik Roshan or Shiamak Davar



What would be the title of your autobiography?
My journey through life

As a child what did you want to be when you grew up?
Shiamak Davar. He is my idol. He has inspired me to work hard and taught me that nothing is impossible.

Name the first 3 things on your bucket list.
1) If I would have lift in my building I would have love to go for a walk or stroll with my mom in the evening time
2) Spending time with my schools friends
3) Spending a whole Day or 3-4 hours with Shiamak Davar

What is the one thing we don't know about you?
A Thief (Stealing nice working pens)

if you could rename yourself, what name would you pick?
None, my name is the best

What would you choose: Power to become invisible OR Power to read people's minds,?
I would choose to read people's minds to figure out what they think when they see a differently-abled person. Then accordingly I can work to help them understand how to include differently-abled people in society and treat them as equal.

Which lines or lyrics sum up your view on life?
*Yeh Mat Kaho Khuda Se,
Meri Mushkilen Badi Hain,
Yeh Mat Kaho Khuda Se,
Meri Mushkilen Badi Hain,
Yeh Mushkilon Se Keh Do,
Mera Khuda Bada Hai...!*

Translation:
*Don't tell this to God that your troubles are big...
Don't tell this to God that your troubles are big....
Rather, tell the troubles, my God is Great.*

Sung By: Asmita Basnet

I remember a mini-Paradigm Shift I experienced one Sunday morning on a subway in New York. People were sitting quietly — some reading newspapers, some lost in thought, some resting with their eyes closed. It was a calm, peaceful scene. Then suddenly, a man and his children entered the subway car. The children were so loud and rambunctious that instantly the whole climate changed.

The man sat down next to me and closed his eyes, apparently oblivious to the situation. The children were yelling back and forth, throwing things, even grabbing people's papers. It was very disturbing. And yet, the man sitting next to me did nothing.

It was difficult not to feel irritated. I could not believe that he could be so insensitive to let his children run wild like that and do nothing about it, taking no responsibility at all. It was easy to see that everyone else on the subway felt irritated, too. So finally, with what I felt was unusual patience and restraint, I turned to him and said, "Sir, your children are really disturbing a lot of people. I wonder if you couldn't control them a little more?"

The man lifted his gaze as if to come to a consciousness of the situation for the first time and said softly, "Oh, you're right. I guess I should do something about it. We just came from the hospital where their mother died about an hour ago. I don't know what to think, and I guess they don't know how to handle it either."

Can you imagine what I felt at that moment? My paradigm shifted. Suddenly I saw things differently, I felt differently, I behaved differently. My irritation vanished. I didn't have to worry about controlling my attitude or my behavior; my heart was filled with the man's pain. Feelings of sympathy and compassion flowed freely. "Your wife just died? Oh, I'm so sorry. Can you tell me about it? What can I do to help?" Everything changed in an instant.

De-briefing of this story

How quickly we judge others! How quickly we make up our minds about a person! Because of this we cannot know the real truth. But when we hear someone's real story, the truth behind who they are, and where they've come from, and what they've experienced – we can understand and appreciate them better. Therefore let us create a paradigm shift of listening to others before judging them.

"A Subway incident that will make you better at Relationships" can be used to share importance of

1. Listening to others
2. Stop judging
3. Mind-set shift

by Stephen Covey



Riddles

1. **First I am dried, then I am wet. The longer I swim, the more taste you get. What am I?**
2. **I am a box that holds keys without locks, yet they can unlock your soul. What am I?**
3. **I have four wings, but cannot fly, I never laugh and never cry; On the same spot I'm always found, toiling away with little sound. What am I?**
4. **What can be stolen, mistaken, or altered, yet never leaves you your entire life?**
5. **Until I am measured, I am not known. Yet you miss me, when I have flown. What am I?**
6. **Take one out and scratch my head, I am now black but once was red. What am I?**
7. **What has no hands but might knock on your door, and if it does you better open up?**
8. **What do you throw out when you want to use it but take in when you don't want to use it?**
9. **What rocks but does not roll?**
10. **I have no eyes, no legs, or ears, and I help move the earth. What am I?**
11. **What is unusual about the following words: revive, banana, grammar, voodoo, assess, potato, dresser, uneven?**
12. **What runs all around a backyard, yet never moves?**

The month of March reminds us to take action on our thoughts and inspirations. A time of advancement and forward movement propelling us into the future. March is named for the Roman god of war, Mars. In the early Roman calendar, March (or Martius) was the first month of the calendar year. As March brought the first day of spring with the vernal equinox, it was the start of new beginnings. March may be named after the Roman god of war but in reality it's one of the happiest months on the calendar. Flowers are budding, chocolate is on sale, and its major holiday is just one giant party, with no gifts and minimal stress. ... But that's just the beginning of all the reasons to love March.

Festivals of India in March.

India is a land of various cultures and religions that means a number of celebrations around the year. March marks the beginning of spring and Summers; and the end of the Winter season. Holi is one of the major festivals in the northern areas of India, will be celebrated on March 29 this year.

Along with this, Maha Shivratri, Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati Jayanti, and Parsi New Year are some of the significant observations in the month of March. Have a look at the list of Indian festivals in March 2021.

Kurampala Padayani - is a type of ancient theatrical ritual folk art form that is performed to appease goddesses at Bhadrakali temples in central Kerala. It features traditional percussionists, masked dances, and mythological characters. In the evening, devotees observe penance before the ritual and roll on the ground with thorny canes wrapped around their bodies. The festival is held once every five years and will next take place from February 23 to March 5, 2021, at the Puthenkavil Bhagavathy Temple in Kurampala.



Phool Dei-Phool Dei festival is a reverence paid to the gods for the good crop year and is an auspicious folk Harvest festival of Uttarakhand, which welcomes the spring season in the state. The festival is celebrated on the first day of the Hindu month, Chaitra. Young girls enthusiastically participate in the festival. Phool Dei is all about flowers and springtime. In some places, the festival is celebrated as carnival and the celebration goes on for a month.



Young girls gather together and go to every house in their village/towns with plates full of rice, jaggery, coconut, green leaves, and flowers. Moreover, these girls put forward their wishes for the prosperity and well being of households while singing a special folk song. In return, they are presented with blessings and gifts like sweets, jaggery, and money. The wishing and blessing part also include placing flowers and rice on the doorsteps of the houses by the young girls.

Magh Mela - The Magh Mela is promoted as the "Mini Kumbh Mela". It takes place every year at the same place as the Kumbh Mela at the confluence of the holy Saraswati, Yamuna, and Ganges rivers. Similar to the Kumbh Mela, hordes of pilgrims and sadhus (Hindu holy men) come to bathe in the water and cleanse their sins. There are many important bathing dates in January and February, but in March the most important is the Maha Shivratri on March 11, 2021.



Kumbh Mela - One of the largest religious gatherings in the world, the Kumbh Mela brings Hindu holy men together to discuss their faith and disseminate information about their religion. Holy men and pilgrims also take a dip in the river on auspicious days to cleanse themselves of sins. The festival is celebrated once every 12 years in Haridwar, Uttarakhand with 2021 being the next year in the cycle. In 2021, the festival began on January 14 and will end on April 27.



16 Festive Season

Chapchar Kut - Chapchar Kut is a harvest festival named after bamboo that has been cut and is drying for burning and subsequent cultivation. The traditional bamboo dance performed by women (while men sit on the ground and beat bamboo sticks against each other), called Cheraw, is a big part of the festival. Different styles of tribal dance performances take place amidst symbol clashes and beats of drums. There's art, handicrafts, concerts, flower shows, and food as well.



International Yoga Festival - The International Yoga Festival is a must for anyone interested in yoga! With more than 2,000 participants from over 80 countries, it's grown to become one of the largest yoga gatherings in the world. The festival offers yoga classes from world-class teachers, evening discussions with some of India's leading spiritual leaders, and other events including vegetarian cooking classes and Indian classical dance workshops.



Maha Shivratri (March 11th) - Maha Shivaratri, the Great Night of Shiva, is when Lord Shiva is believed to have performed his cosmic Tandava dance the source of the cycle of creation, preservation, and destruction. Devotees worship Lord Shiva on this occasion to gain release from this cycle of death and rebirth. Most of the festivities take place throughout the night when vigils are maintained at Shiva temples. Devotees begin fasting at sunrise, swim in the holy Ganges river, offer prayers at the temples, and chant devotional songs. Many people also eat bhang, a substance derived from cannabis. There's a street procession in Varanasi.



Bhavnath Fair - This ancient festival, deemed to be a mini Kumbh Mela, begins at midnight on Maha Shivaratri when naga babas (naked Hindu holy men) seated on elephants ride with great fanfare in procession to the temple for worship. Lord Shiva is believed to visit the shrine on this occasion, along with the spirits of other important saints and spiritual masters. The sadhus later gather next to the temple and perform an intense frenzy of devotional dance, music, and martial arts.



Myoto Festival (March 20-30th) - If you're interested in a traditional tribal festival off the beaten track, don't miss the Myoko Festival of the Apatani Tribe who reside in North East India. It includes rituals for prosperity, fertility, purification, and sacrifice performed by the village shaman or priest, and many interesting cultural elements such as folk performances and processions.



Holi (March 29th) - Holi is commonly referred to as the "Festival of Colors." During the main event, people exuberantly throw colored powder and water all over each other, party, and dance under water sprinklers. Bhang (a paste made from cannabis plants) is also traditionally consumed during the celebration. Holi is a very carefree festival that's great fun to participate in if you don't mind getting wet and dirty.



Shigmo (March 30th) - Shigmo is the state of Goa's version of Holi. It's a Hindu festival that's filled with bright decorations, parades, singing, dancing, and colors. One traditional dance that's often performed is the Ghode Modni martial arts horse dance. The festival starts the day after Holi and concludes on Gudi Padwa, also known as Hindu New Year.



16 Festive Season

Shigmo takes place from March 30 to April 13, 2021, all over Goa. Street parades start in Ponda and follow to other towns. They feature floats depicting Ramayana and Mahabharata scenes, drums, and folk dancing.

Konkan Velas Turtle Festival - Newly hatched, endangered Olive Ridley turtles take their amazing march into the sea at the annual Turtle Festival. As well as this, you can also sample traditional Indian village life by stopping over at local home-stays in the area.. The Sea Turtle Festival typically takes place from early March to May. in Velas Village near Ratnagiri.



Arattupuzha Pooram (March 26) - Yet another Kerala temple festival, the Arattupuzha Pooram is a particularly large elephant pageant featuring around 60 elephants bearing brightly colored silk parasols. It's one of the oldest temple festivals in Kerala. Legend has it that on the day of the festival, 101 gods and goddesses from the neighboring villages visited Sree Ayyappan, the presiding deity of the Arattupuzha Temple.



Kodungalloor Bharani (March 17th) - During Kondungalloor Bharani, thousands of sword-wielding oracles, both male and female, swarm the temple premises. The oracles run in around a trance and proclaim their communion with the Mother Goddess. Meanwhile, devotees strike the temple rafters with sticks and hurl offerings over the roof and onto the quadrangle. It's one of the quirkiest festivals in India. The festival takes place from March 17 to 18, 2021 at the Kodungallur Bhagavathy in Kerala.



Attuvela Mahotsavam - In contrast to many of Kerala's temple festivals where the focus is on elephants, the Attuvela Mahotsavam is a delightful water carnival. During the festival, a procession of warmly illuminated canoes carries huge temple replicas through the water towards the temple. They're accompanied by lots of colorfully decorated small canoes and temple percussion music. The Attuvela Mahotsavam Festival takes place on March 13, 2021 at the Elankavu Sree Bhagavathy temple in Vaikom.





*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 practices of inclusive education, employment, social justice 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 youth and adults with disability are mainstreamed and employed so that they too can

Solution to the Puzzle :

ANSWERS

1. Tea
2. A piano
3. A windmill
4. Your identity
5. Time
6. A match
7. Opportunity
8. An anchor
9. A rocking chair
10. An earthworm
11. Take the first letter of each word and place it at the end.
It will spell the same word backwards.
12. A fence