

NOTHING FOR THE DISABLED WITHOUT THE DISABLED



I Konnect



News letter - August 2021

Sr.	Inside this issue	Page
01	A leaf from the Diary of the Chairperson	02
02	Projects updates & Project snapshots	04
03	Retrospective	06
04	Random reflections	13
05	Parents & Donors speak	14
06	Global Window	15
07	Bygones yet not bygones	16
08	Poem	18
09	Special mention	19
10	Birthday wishes	21
11	Stars of the month	22
12	Your Column	23
13	Chicken soup for the soul	24
14	Know your colleague	26
15	Quiz & Humor	27
16	Festive season	28



Dr. Mithu Alur
Founder Chairperson
ADAPT

Research: Eight new research studies have been designed under the guidance of Dr. Mithu Alur and Dr. Ragini Sen and are reported under the projects section of the July and August editions of I Konnect.

A training programme in qualitative methodology is planned in September with Ms. Devangana Bhat to enable staff to approach the studies scientifically. Dr. Alur and Dr. Sen had a pre workshop meeting with the team to initiate the programme.

Dr. Alur addressed the Research Forum at Pravin Gandhi College of Law (PGCL) Mumbai at a Webinar on Exploring Research Possibilities in Social Sectors, an event supported by the Lions Club. The students of PGCL, who have been brought in by Advocate Jamshed Mistry, will intern with the ADAPT Rights Group.

Appraisal Forms and Social Audits: Dr. Alur has finalized seven forms that will be used for parents, teachers, therapists, heads, finance and admin, SDC and MACIS. Two additional forms for donors and ancillary staff are being developed.

Parent Support Groups: Dr. Alur has initiated the process of setting up Parent Support Groups with Dr. Pravina Shah and has met with staff to share her vision for these.

Performance Management Systems: Dr. Alur has had several meetings with Mr. Mahesh Ranade on revisiting and fine tuning the Performance Management System for ADAPT.

Inclusive Employment: She is now working on strategies for livelihood and inclusive employment, facilitating the skilling eco system.

Financial Management: Dr. Alur has continued to streamline the finances and guide the team in fiscal prudence.

Independence Day: The first physical event at ADAPT since the lockdown was imposed, was the Independence Day celebrations. Covid was at an all-time low in Mumbai and Dr. Alur decided to visit all centers and hoist the flag and also our spirits by her presence.

The day began with Dr. Mithu Alur and Ms. Malini Chib unfurling the flag at the Colaba Centre. Dr Alur addressed the staff and shared that she had set up the services in 1972, when disability was neither known nor recognised in the country. She explained the nature and scope of the work of the organisation. Mr Nikhil Chib, Trustee spoke of the need to work together. Others shared what independence meant to them and all present joined the Chairperson in the singing of the National Anthem.

Dr. Alur, Ms. Chib and Dr. Sen then travelled to Chembur, which had seen devastating destruction due to the cyclone, and torrential rains where the wall had collapsed and the basement flooded, damaging both, property and equipment. The terrace was bedecked with the colours of the flag. Dr. Alur and Ms. Chib, unfurled the flag and Dr. Alur addressed the staff.

The celebrations culminated at Bandra with a short cultural programme. Film Star Aamir Khan recited Where the Mind is without Fear online for us and it warmed our hearts.

01 A leaf from the Diary of the Chairperson

Renowned dancer Anusree Bonnerjee performed on the beautiful classic number of Tagore 'Praan Bhoriyee Trisha Horiye' and what a scintillating performance it was.

Dr. Alur addressed the staff and urged all to reflect on how we could make our services better and bigger and to move beyond material gains. In her key note address, Dr. Alur said that all were aware that the 15th of August was a celebration of political freedom. She asked all to reminisce on the past and look at the sacrifices that were made, the strength and power that brought all together to unite this challenging country, with so many differences, so much diversity, religions and political affiliations. It was a bigger strength, the divine strength that drove everyone. One needed to also look at the larger framework of where the organization was embedded, the cultural and spiritual framework, which drove everyone. So one needed to move away from classrooms, therapy rooms, research, skills development and think and reflect on the larger framework. She added that she was extremely proud of her staff however introspection was needed.

The social fabric of the country was morally eroded. There was objectification, self-advancement, ambition, dominance. That was not patriotism. She felt that a patriot was a person who went beyond the self and acted for the good of the country. So all the staff were patriots. She asked how this could be sustained. The only way to sustain the human values was to leave behind a model for the country, and that is why she wanted all to go beyond their classrooms and therapy rooms, to network and go global.

She urged all staff to pledge to serve India. There was a very long way to go, the disabled were still treated as lepers, there were stories of the disabled being tied to beds as parents needed to go to work. There was a lot of apathy and indifference towards the disabled, and that is what everyone was working for, working beyond themselves, not for one's own selves. She asked all, as the flag was raised, and national anthem was sung, to pray so that they built a more caring India, an India that cared for the underprivileged, for the needy, the marginalized.

Dr. Alur also threw a lunch for all staff members. A delectable, sumptuous spread of Bengali delicacies were served. Joyous day it surely was. We had a lovely time connecting and celebrating together after a long time.



Impact of disability awareness workshops on attitudes of medical students

There are existing taboos and negative attitudes towards disability. This was addressed by Dr. Mithu Alur, Pamela Stretch and other leading educators and health professionals. However a lot more needs to be done. The aim of this study is to expose the professionals and the community to the social model of disability to bridge this existing gap in society.

The pre-test test post-test design will be used to conduct the study on approximately 200 medical undergraduate students. The students willing to participate in the study would be divided in two groups: the control group and experimental group. The experimental group will attend workshops of 16 hours, spread over 30 days. The course would include online recordings and live sessions. A pre and post questionnaire would be filled by the participants to understand the impact of the workshop on the attitudes of these students toward disability.

Being Conducted by Dr. Namita Nair

India's progress vis-à-vis the Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals

The aim of this study is to ascertain the progress made by India in relation to the SDGs, specifically Goal 4 which is to *"Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning"*

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have now been replaced by a set of 17 goals called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), to be achieved by the year 2030. According to the UN Sustainable Development Network, India ranks 115 out of 162 countries on the SDG Index; hence it is important to look into India's progress in including its disabled population in the programmes to achieve the SDGs.

The targets set to measure the achievement of this goal are:

- By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations and
- Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

The study will rely on secondary data such as documents, reports, reviews of government programmes. The analysis of the above will yield an understanding of the barriers being faced in the attainment of Goal 4 of the SDGs and the gaps between the programmes set up to achieve the goals and the actual implementation at the ground level.

Being Conducted by Mrs. Varsha Hooja

Critical examination of India's progress vis a vis SDGs Goal 8

The aim of this study is to critically examine and understand the progress made by India in extending services for persons with disability with reference to goal 8 of the Sustainable Development goals (SDG's). Goal 8 intends to *"Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all."*



The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set in 2000 were not inclusive. These have now been replaced by a set of 17 goals called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to be achieved by the year 2030. Goal 8 aims at decent work and employment for all and specifically mentions disability. The question is whether India has taken corrective steps to move towards economic growth for all its citizens, particularly persons with disability. According to the UN Sustainable Development Network, India ranks 115 out of 162 countries on the SDG Index; hence it is important to look into India's progress in including its disabled population in the programmes to achieve the SDGs.

The targets set to measure the achievement of goal 8 internationally are:

- By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disability and equal pay for work of equal value.

The methodology used will be secondary research such as documents, reports reviews of government programs and literature review.

The analysis of the study will help in understanding the challenges being faced in achieving Goal 8 of the SDGs for India. The study will also identify the gaps between the programmes initiated by the government to achieve goal 8 and the actual implementation at the ground level.

Being Conducted by Mrs. Madhavi Kumar

An Anecdotal Narrative Study of 100 post graduate Master Trainers of The Community Initiatives Inclusion Course (CII) from 20 countries of the Asia Pacific Region

It has been 20 years since ADAPT's Community initiatives in Inclusion course began in partnership with the Women's Council U.K. The CII course had commenced in 2001 at the local level and was a three month course. Over the years, it move on to include participants from all over India and then from Asia Pacific Region. From a three month course it became a six month course and finally a 6.5 month course. Implementation reports were introduced from 2011.

375 participants representing 20 countries from the Asia Pacific Region have been trained and the aim of this study is to study the impact on the course in the first 10 years i.e. from 2001 to 2010

and the impact the course had on 100 participants and the 20 countries in 10 years i.e. from 2011 to 2020. The impact of the course will be looked at in terms of relevance to services provided for people with disabilities in different countries, the practical difficulties in implementing the action plans and the changes that need to be brought about in the curriculum to improve it.

Being Conducted by Mrs. Sangeeta Jagtiani Vaswani.

A Holistic Assessment of Children with Special Needs.

By Mithu Alur, June 15th at the Child Guidance and Counselling Seminar, Bombay.

I work for children with special needs, as well as able bodied children who are socially disadvantaged, coming from the slums of Dharavi, reputed to be the Asia's largest slum and I am presently doing my doctoral research at Dharavi on the under 5's, where we have set up an integrated demonstration model of able bodied and disabled children for anganwadi workers, but I'll come to that later.

Over the past 25 years, I have had the opportunity to study in some detail, the assessment of children with special needs. Although my discipline is special education, I have been fortunate enough, after about ten years of teaching, to get further training in assessment and evaluation from Mr. Leslie Gardner, who was the Senior and Principal Psychologist of the Spastics Society of UK, and pioneered services for children with special needs in UK for over 30 years. Mr Gardner was also responsible for setting up the Department of Assessment and Family Services here in the Indian Spastics Society, through funding we received from the ODA. I was fortunate over a period of 5 years, to be trained by him in making Educational Evaluations for children above 5 and making a judgement about the Developmental Quotients of children under 5. The main aim was not so much as to get an IQ figure or slot children into some numerical pigeon holes, but to get an understanding of their capacities, their rates of learning and what their potential may be expected to be in the future. In the beginning, time went in observing Mr Gardner and reading the appropriate material he set out for me, then testing began together with him. Then I moved onto testing independently with him observing what I was doing, a terrible period as he was most particular about every detail of testing such as there being no sound or distraction for the child, a proper comfortable posture for the child and setting up a suitable communication feedback appropriate for each child. When he was fully convinced that I could handle this independently and I had learnt the first lesson of not having any stereotype or bias about a child, I was allowed to move onto doing independent evaluations! A difficult but most exciting five years of learning with a hard taskmaster!

The Nature of the disabilities

Moving onto the children I have worked with as many of you know, cerebral palsy which is caused by a brain lesion is non-progressive and leads to impairment of functions in various areas. It presents a series of problems far more complicated than those typical of most other types of physical disabilities.

Each and every cerebrally palsied individual differs and unless the C.P. person is considered in all his or her totality, rehabilitation programmes cannot be effective.

Cerebral Palsy does interpose special problems for education and psychology as there are usually combinations of problems which interfere with learning. It is even more important to know the child's potential as early as possible. It is important to know how much the child can learn from the experience he or she has been exposed to, and what is his or her rate of learning going to be. This is closely allied to his capacity or his mental level. It is also critical to ascertain when making a judgement about whether there are other factors that may influence his or her performance, such as emotional anxiety, perceptual difficulties, lack of proper stimulation, movement restrictions.

We have been working with children often described as "intelligent minds in disobedient bodies". Basically they have been children with physical disabilities or children with mild to moderate mental retardation: children with cerebral palsy, polio, arthrogryposis, spina bifida, TB meningitis, muscular dystrophy.

To get a deep insight into their functioning, into the multivariant disorders, it is a well-established fact that a group of experts are needed to study the difficulties. This holistic approach is essential to get a total picture and to design the intervention. This cannot be achieved hurriedly or over one or two sessions but needs a period of time in unstressful situations, which could be structured or unstructured.

Transdisciplinary Team Approach

Due to the complicated difficulties CP presents, a large team of experts have to work together. They are the paramedical staff consisting of the therapists, physio, speech and occupational, special educators, psychologists and social workers and an important member of the team, the parents. For the success of the intervention or management, the team has to work cohesively and in harmony in a transdisciplinary rapport...thus creating a holistic approach. The idea is that each expert gets an idea of the child's functioning and comes together to contribute to the Intervention Programme.

Early Detection:

There has been substantial research now done about how critical are the first five years for the child's cognitive, social and emotional development, and whatever experiences the child is exposed to in the early years, be they good or bad, rich or impoverished, will mould it's personality for the rest of the child's life. An enriched environment becomes essential for a good and healthy growth to take place, and this includes a child's home as well as school. Both teachers and parents, who are the managers of the child's development, need training and a systematic build-up of knowledge concerning the needs of the growing child. It is now an accepted fact that just as the body needs food as nutrition and nourishment for the child's physical growth, so too does the mind need nutrition and nourishment for its mental growth and development.

To introduce normalization in a situation fraught with trauma and prevent secondary handicaps from developing, it is essential to begin work with mother and child from as soon as possible. We begin diagnosis as early as ten days and begin work with the mother. This is, in the beginning the realm of the paramedics or therapists.

It is vital for the success of a rehab programme to begin the management programme as early as possible. We have come a long way from the days of Little et al, and now we say that if any C.P. child is not given the right exposure, is not properly handled, not given proper inputs, early infant stimulation, because of his inability to explore his environment effectively, he may start lagging behind.

The early years and its management becomes even more critical as due to the restrictions and limitations on the child's movements, the quantity and the quality of experiences gets impoverished, making the child experientially damaged and at high risk of getting secondary and tertiary deformities which may cripple him further.

The Task of Physical Evaluation

One of the first services to be started therefore was early detection.

We began diagnosis as early as ten days and begin work with the mother. This is done by the paramedics or therapists.

The therapists have been working with babies over 18 months under the technical guidance of Pamela Stretch. Miss Stretch herself received training in diagnosis of babies through the renowned neurologist from Czechoslovakia, Dr Voita. He showed how it was possible to detect a baby, a few weeks old (3-4 weeks) having what is known as a Central Coordination Disturbance and testing its Postural Reactions according to an international measurement devised by a neurologist. The paramedics or therapists at the Centre have been trained to detect early abnormalities. Known as a kinesiological examination consisting of 7 postural reactions the child is tested in seven different positions and based on the responses seen, a developmental age is achieved. This is then matched with the chronological age of the child. Depending on the number of abnormal reactions seen, the extent and severity of the affection can be gauged.

This enables the physiotherapist to prepare a checklist of the development and appropriate programme for the child. The rationale for this being that in a very young child, it is essential to give him or her as normal a background in movement as possible, in order to provide a stable reference point before the abnormal

patterns are established and sensory input altered. Therefore, early intervention plays a very crucial role in disabled children; a complete developmental analysis is a prelude to any type of treatment.

In the first year, over 200 polio children availed this facility along with others comprising of children with cerebral palsy, T.B. meningitis, infection, palsy, congenital deformities and other neurological and physical conditions, children with respiratory problems, premature babies from the hospital wards in our service in Dharavi.

Parent Support System:

The link up with the family is most important.

It is important to remember that in the early days, our patient, who is an infant, is not aware of what has happened to him or her. It is the parents who are caught in a quagmire of trauma. Their grief, their bewilderment and confusion about what is going to happen to their child, in short, their tragedy, must become our primary concern. Skilful counselling become our primary concern. Skilful counselling where parents are frankly and tactfully told the truth about the prognosis of their child and are made to feel a part of the team, will help.

They must also be educated and trained about this multivariant nature of cerebral palsy. Sometimes, parents believe in faith healing, advice from gurus or strong medication as a quick panacea. One of the mothers related how she lost her life savings by an extortionist.

During the assessment period, a long time is spent learning about the family dynamics and we are used to dealing with parents-in-law, aunts, grand-parents.

Treatment should begin immediately, preferably in the first 2 years, with specialist and parents working in close partnership, through good programmes in Early Infant Stimulation, Home Management building up Self Help Groups. When the parent sees his child beginning to respond to a good management team, the acute nature of his own grief begins to lessen, his involvement in a programme is vital because as an active participant, she or he also begins to feel better emotionally and psychologically, essentially feeling that he is doing something positive for the betterment of his child.

The Task of Educational Evaluation

Around 1 and 1/2 to 2 years of age, the child would come to me. I use the Ruth Griffiths Scale: this is naturally done through observations the child's interactions and responses to a variety of play equipment suited to his or her age.

The task of evaluation becomes difficult sometimes because of the serious physical limitations of the children concerned: if the tester fails to take the physical limitations of the person concerned into consideration, there is a danger of gross mislabelling taking place.

In the early stages, the child is observed in the 5 areas of functioning laid out by the Griffiths Scale. The baby is observed keeping in mind the developmental milestones and again over three or four sessions with baby and mother, we get a picture of its strengths and weaknesses. The assessment done by the therapists are a valuable background information. The social worker's inputs, the family's circumstances and the family dynamics helps build up a holistic picture of our child.

The baby is then admitted with the mother to our playgrounds, where further observations will take place as he or she play with other children. 3 or 4 sessions are held through a play.

By the time the child is 2 or 3, he or she is ready for a little more formal testing. Our main problem can be that

both tools of communication may be damaged ... the child may have no speech, not be able to write. Years ago, the skill and experience in testing C.P. children had not developed and this is why misconceptions abounded regarding their intelligence. Their inability to communicate or manipulate the tasks due to poor hand function often to lead the examiner label the child as mentally handicapped as well.

The job of ascertaining an intelligence quotient was, in early years strictly designated to psychologists. Nowadays, it is seriously believed that no child can be labelled in a once and for all evaluation. A handicapped child (or any child for that matter), finds a testing situation a stressful one, being bombarded with all kinds of tasks by a strange person, and may not perform to the best of his or her capacity. Therefore, several situations are created (informal ones), where a child's performance can be observed while he is relaxed and emotionally at ease.

With the physical limitations imposed by C.P., it often becomes necessary to make adaptations or adjustments. Concessions will have to be made for his or her motor handicaps, lack of adequate experience, communication difficulties.

At the outset, I begin to make a mental note of the child's communication skills; his or her hand function and how has it been affected. If a child cannot hold a pencil, he cannot be asked to copy designs; with poor motor control verbal tests may have priority. If the child has good hands and poor speech, performances tests are appropriate. Usually if a child has athetosis, extensive involuntary movements, the child finds it easier to gesture with a nod of his or her head or scan with his eyes, while the examiner asks the questions and points at possible answers. It is not difficult for a child to gesture which objects are the same and which are different, similarly, with colours, shapes and sizes. Some attainment tests can be used if they are multiple choice in nature, e.g. arithmetical problems or general information questions. It is important to know if the child is bluffing, or really knows the answer. Some children can quickly indicate, some may just make a sound similar to the answer; some may just point or look with their eyes. Sometimes, some children have problems of scanning and do not look too closely at the answers, then, I usually ensure that the child slows down and does not point hastily without looking. Sometimes, certain situations of testing have to become a teaching cum assessment operations, when a child may have to be trained to focus, scan the task from left to right, from up to down, before attempting to answer. Rubber stamps, flash cards are other tools used during testing.

The most important thing is to remember not to stereotype. I myself have suffered from this. Seeing a child profoundly severe, not being able to balance or sit up I have often panicked and formed a temporary bias, thinking that surely the child will not be intelligent. Many times the child has doggedly carried through an hour and half stint, showing a superior intellectual ability. Once I was teaching a child painting in an English school. Give example

Testing children with needs skillful modification. Each situation is individually suited to the child's strengths and weaknesses. Each test and subtest has to be selected carefully. I usually have a battery of suitable test materials, facilitating me to indicate to the teacher whether the child is falling below average or showing average or above average potential.

The categories are roughly as follows :

- AVERAGE: 95-105: LOW AVERAGE: 85-95 :
- DULL Normal: 70-85: ESN (M): 50-70 SSN (S): 0-50
- and in the upper ranges HIGH AVERAGE: 105-115
- Superior; 120+

Tests Used:

Several psychological tests have been developed for the assessment of exceptional children. Some of these have grave limitations as far as C.P. children are concerned. However, there are a few that have been in use for

several years all over the world and have been accepted as yardsticks for fairly scientific type of measurement for children suffering from C.P.

Among these are the following :

Ruth Griffiths Scale : for infants 0-2 years
for older children 2-8 years
Merrill Palmer: 3-5 years
Columbia Mental Maturity Scale: for 5 -15 years
Ravens Matrices : 5-10 years

Others are the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, the Illinois Test for Psycholinguistic Abilities; the general intelligence scales most widely used with the children are the Weschler Intelligence Scale and the Stanford Binet, Hindustan Binet.

Besides these, there are personality tests which could be administered like

Attainment tests to measure language, comprehension, reading, and writing, which teachers are using, are :

- Schonell Group Reading Test
- Southgate Reading Test
- Neale's Reading Ability

Tests for specific learning difficulties like for perceptual difficulties we have been using in the classroom are Frostig tests, Arthur Benton, Bender Gestalt, some checklists from Jean Ayres.

The goal of testing is to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the individual and this information is significantly crucial to design an effective pedagogic planning for the teachers.

According to Cruickshank, Hallahan and Biu,

"Quantitative results of intelligence evaluations are helpful if done accurately, but are at best limited in their usefulness with cerebral palsied children and youth; qualitative assessments which bridge psychology and education are significant and can lead to realistic educational planning for handicapped persons".

A specific I.Q. does not provide the educator with very much meaningful information.

Mental age is a useful concept in comparison with attainment ages, such as reading, arithmetic and spelling. As for I.Q. scores, these have their uses, provided they are not regarded as infallible and fixed forever and completely scientific, e.g. to regard a child with an I.Q. of 101, as brighter than a child of I.Q. 99, is ridiculous, but most observers would see the difference between let us say a group of children with I.Q.s around 110 and another group with I.Q.s around 90. (Gardner 1978)

Tests are usually a useful starting point in our thoughts about a child with difficulties, or with an exceptional talent, and a guideline to the kind of help he or she is likely to need over the next couple of years. We must not be mesmerized by I.Q. figures - nor must we ignore them. (Gardner 1978)

I've been working for disabled children and their families for 25 years with the Spastics Society. I have been involved with mainstreaming children with moderate and severe physical disabilities for a while now. The children in most of the cases have spent 10 to 15 years in our special schools which have provided an intensive academic input leading them onto the Maharashtra Board's School Certificate Examination. This has so far been a highly successful model, and we have been able to integrate 32 children into mainstream education. By the time they are 16 to 19 years of age, the children have successfully done the SSC Examinations, passed out of these schools and moved onto Junior Colleges and later into Universities, gaining higher degrees. Today

profoundly severe children with disabilities work side by side with normal children and intellectually hold their own. We have been amazed how well they have fared academically obtaining Bachelor of Arts or Science degrees, as the case may be, and some even moved onto Post Graduate levels.

The experiment has provided valuable insight and experience, proving that children who are intelligent but physically handicapped, can be integrated into higher studies. The experience has provided for my colleagues and me, a valuable framework within which, to move to our current goal of mainstreaming at the pre-school level.

Current research shows that there has been a shift towards integrating children with disabilities into existing normal schools. This has evolved over twenty years. First of all, with a greater awareness developing about disabled children, and secondly, a strong move towards normalization of experiences. The changes and developments, which have led to the integration of disabled children into mainstream education, have taken place over a period of some twenty years.

As this gained pace, people began to question the efficacy of special schools.

There has also been a definite shift away from the medical model and the medical definition, of defining children as epileptic, cerebral palsied, mentally retarded, which did not help pedagogic planning, to a more functional and social description of children with educational differences.

Words used for integration are 'special needs', 'resource rooms', 'opportunity classes', 'integration', 'mainstreaming' and more recently 'inclusive education'.

The new language was seen to be inherently important in the planning and delivery of educational provisions. This change evolved over a period of two decades, partly as a result of pressure lobby from parents as well as professionals. This new language has also come into use in Parliaments in many of the industrialized countries.

The need to assess a child's strength rather than his or her weaknesses has been stressed in recent years so that one: a) moves away from the deficit model; b) uses the strengths to compensate for the weaknesses; and c) maintains motivation by promoting the strengths while working on the weaknesses.

However, it is for us to study the innovations only within the context and needs of our own country, as Western models should not be implemented without modification to our own socio cultural needs. Presently, I am engaged in research to explore what kind of a paradigm for mainstreaming children into existing schools will be needed, which is culture specific.

As part of the process of helping disabled children to be a part of society, it was seen to be important, to change the language associated with disability. In an effort to dispel the stigma associated with the labels of the past, the old language which labelled handicapped people as 'lame', 'defective', 'cripple' was abandoned and replaced by the new post modern language whereby youngsters with disabilities were described by broader more general terms such as children with special educational needs.

The current trend in the West in the last two decades as far the disabled is concerned has been a move away from special schools. There is much more awareness now about children who are different. There has been a change in nomenclature. No longer are the handicapped separated and categorized as "epileptic, blind, deaf, spastic or mentally handicapped". They come under a broader definition and are known as "children with special needs". This umbrella term favours the approach that it is not factors "within" the child that disallows the child to function with other children, which was the old medical model but causes and factors "within" the environment. Researchers and professionals are of the opinion that there are enabling factors in the environment which can help normalize the life of a child with special needs, and believe in the concept that children who are different, must be given a chance to grow up with the rest of their community.

If the environment is not adjusted and modified according to the needs of these children, they remain out of it. They are then segregated into special schools away from their peers. Research shows that this can be harmful and detrimental.

Recent research suggests that early integration has a significant and positive effect on the developmental progress of children with disabilities and children who have been enrolled in early integrated programmes demonstrated higher levels of social play and more appropriate social interaction.

Segregation teaches children to be fearful, ignorant and breeds prejudice. Barriers of fear, prejudice and ignorance which ultimately lead to discrimination and a refusal to accept handicapped people as full members of Society tend to be removed if children are integrated early.

With this in mind we have begun the Dharavi project.

We have 100 children. A first batch of 30 children have been integrated, able bodied and disabled children, 15 are disabled - 8 with cerebral palsy, 2 with meningitis, encephalitis, 3 with polio, 1 speech impaired and 1 delayed milestones with severe mental retardation, basically all these children are mild.

The hospital gave me 2 rooms in which we have put toys and play equipment. The only difference between the anganwadi and these rooms are that these rooms are much more colourful with plenty of charts all around and the toys are all on a lower level for each child to get at. As far as the handicapped children are concerned, only two of them have needed a special seat. The rest are basically mild to moderately disabled and are able to move around freely. Another difference between the existing anganwadi and this model is that there is a toilet for all children.

The mothers group has been involved and they are learning how to handle their child. We were amazed how many normal children came. Of course they had heard about our work and seen us around for 9 years. This is the first opportunity in normalization of experience for the 15 handicapped children and being accepted by their peer group.

They play together quite oblivious of the differences that exist. The first question asked by all visitors "Who is disabled".

In conclusion I can say that planning for better learning for the child is the important aim and tests must be subservient to this.

An environment should be provided where there is plenty of exposure to learning situations and where the child will learn by examining, discovering.

The aim of education is to influence children to becoming thinking, autonomous, sensitive people (Plowden Report).

Good teachers should relate their practice to basic theories of child development. Teaching is more effective if teachers find out more about the learner from observing him or her in action and talking to the learner. A good assessment, enabling one to make a judgement by observing a child over a period of time, combining knowledge of both the sciences of education and psychology is needed.

As Priestman has said teachers can regard themselves as gardeners, watching development, ready to feed the growth, ready to prune, restrain or weed according to the need, attempting to help the child achieve his or her maximum potential.

The pandemic threw all our lives into disarray.....When the news hit us, it was all doom and gloom! It is so easy to focus on calamities and it was hard for even the most optimistic among us to stay positive. Of course, we needed to, and should continue to, take this virus seriously.

There was constant negative messaging, and all we heard or saw on television was the havoc the virus had wreaked. There were no antidotes, no vaccines available. How could one retain our positive attitudes and march forward with determination and hope?

Fortunately, we had technology and soon became zoom and google meet experts! Services went online and that kept us occupied and zoom calls with friends, families, colleagues kept us going.

When I went back to work in the midst of the pandemic, when most others could not, I felt so much better...however I missed the chatting, bumping into parents, beneficiaries, colleagues, walking up the ramp together, missed sharing the food, missed the camaraderie, missed working together, missed being there for one another, lifting morale, being lifted by others.....bringing home the fact that it was not material possessions but the contact with others and the companionship that was most important and critical in our lives.

The pandemic also gave us the time to focus on things we had not had time for. I decided to take up meditation and the benefit of this has been tremendous. I learnt to take an inventory of all that was accomplished, learned or was grateful for. It helped remind me that everything that was happening was not bad or depressing, reinforcing my belief that together, we will get through this.

- Varsha Hooja

Donor's Point of view



Hi Bhavana,

SBI Funds Management Pvt. Limited has been partnering with ADAPT since 2014-15, primarily in the form of their vehicle needs. We sincerely respect and revere the commitment of the NGO towards society and our differently abled kids.

Wish them all the success in their endeavours.

Best Regards,
Namrata Mittal, CFA
Investments,
SBI Funds Management Pvt Ltd.
(A joint venture between State Bank of India
&
Amundi Asset Management)



The social, medical and interdependence model of disability.

In today's postmodern era there has been a new approach to disability. It is believed that there are four models. These are the medical, individual, charity, administrative and the social model. I believe another model should be added and this is the interdependency model.

Interdependency Model

Traditionally, in the medical model of disability, disabled people needing assistance with daily living needs are regarded as *dependent being*, a burden on the family. With this image of themselves, disabled people are passive, unable to make decisions. All decisions are decided for disabled people by non-disabled people who think they know what is best. Disabled people live in a kind of fear of speaking up, as they think that they might not receive the appropriate care they need if they speak against any system. Disabled people are not given any responsibilities for their own lives. Non-disabled people make all the decisions.

This further curtails our right to act as citizens. I feel disabled people are too closeted and overprotected by these organizations disallowing independent thinking. The result is that disabled people get disempowered and become passive non-decision making people.

I agree with Jenny Morris when she writes that both the disability movement and the development of a theory of disability has not benefited disabled people enough, due to the invisibility of the personal experiences of disabled people. I somehow identify also with Crow (1996) who feels that our impairment and our experiences become our autobiographies, which will be extremely helpful in the contribution of knowledge. I feel that it is only by writing about our personal experiences we as citizens can give an insight to others and move towards changing society and making it more disability friendly.

I think another model which could be combined is the interdependence model. Everyone is interdependent on each other as well as on society. Disabled people do have emotions although they may not have great bodies, they too can care emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. The world cannot survive without these qualities. I believe that the interdependency model is an offshoot of the social model, whereby both the non-disabled and disabled are interdependent on one another and benefit from each other. This becomes possible only in a situation when non-disabled people reach out and allow themselves to get to know us.

- Malini Chib

**COINCIDENCES.....NAH
CELESTINE PROPHECY.....YEAH!**

James Redfield's super bestselling spiritual book 'Celestine Prophecy' is about the startling discovery that all the mysterious, sudden, serendipitous, synchronised so-called coincidences that occur in our lives are actually destiny's truth. Allow me to indulge in some cerebral adventures and present my personal journey with my own (with due respect to the author James) life-changing 9 insights about my rendezvous with ADAPT, my most precious, adorable, loving, special family! I believe this is a special gift from Nina, my late sister in whose memory my younger brother Dhaval and myself set up our 21 year old NGO Nina Foundation. Don't miss my creativity as all insights begin with the alphabet "N" an ode to Nina's mystical ways of spiritually guiding me!



Neenu Kewlani!

Neenu's photograph in Mid-day newspaper accompanied by an article detailing her struggles to access public places in her wheelchair caught my attention in 2001.

We had recently launched Nina Foundation, our NGO and I was editing One World, sharing information amongst the spinal cord injured disabled community to live a full life and achieve their dreams.

I made some calls to friends in the media (all landline, as no mobiles existed!) and succeeded in obtaining Neenu's landline number.

I called and we exchanged pleasantries and noted her Mahim home address. Being a visiting faculty at a management institute in Bandra, spontaneously spiritually guided more likely; post one of my lectures, I bought chocolates on the way and surprised Neenu at her home. Serendipity indeed! She introduced me to the advocacy work for accessibility and the beautiful world of ADAPT.

Dr. Nina Mehta!

Neenu organised a meeting at ADAPT Bandra centre soon thereafter where the entire team was present. On seeing me immediately Vandana Garware smiled and said 'You are Nina's sister? The homeopath doctor? I was all smiles and I nodded my head vigorously -saying 'yes, yes'. There was complete bewilderment and it surprised both of us that she was referring to another Dr Nina Mehta, also a homoeopath practicing in Chembur... very much alive. Also the fact that Nina and I don't resemble at all. This serendipitous dialogue cemented my 21 year old association and complete dedication to ADAPT with my mind, heart and soul- selflessly!

NJDC Convocation!

Neenu involved me with all access related audits, visits, meetings, reports, articles and Vandana involved me with ADAPT's Job Development Centre in Chembur. She invited me in early 2002 for their convocation as their Chief Guest where for the first time I met Padma Shri Dr Mithu Alur, warm, soft spoken, extremely eloquent, articulate, with a brilliant mind and very courteous. I interacted and presented my maiden book 'Nano Thoughts on Management' that day. I humbly acknowledge that Dr Mithu Alur has been and is my mentor from whom I continue to learn about disability and our rights, by whole heartedly participating in ADAPT's several initiatives. Having common academic research interests, for a UNDP-CII-AICTE-MDI case study project as faculty, editor & Associate Dean for my college Vandana came to my rescue and suggested that I develop this case for Microsign a company in Bhavnagar, Gujarat and gave full support. We have also co-authored and published a research paper along with my student on Social Infrastructure.

Nomination for NCPEDP Shell Helen Keller Award!

Vandana Garware nominated me quietly and Dr Mithu Alur endorsed as Founder of ADAPT for this prestigious award in Dec 2002 as a Role Model in the field of disability. Dhaval and I travelled to Delhi and we had the privilege of visiting Raj Bhavan meeting, interacting with our wise & highly knowledgeable president Dr Abdul Kalam, entirely facilitated by Late Javed Abidi. I was also offered the opportunity to give an acceptance speech on behalf of all awardees (including Poonam Natarajan, whom I met for the first time) and it was a moment of joy and pride to have Dhaval, Dr S Y Bhojraj, Mr G Shanker, Nitin Goyal (all travelled specially for me from Mumbai, Chennai and Gurgaon to Delhi) applauding along with the dignitaries- one of my finest speeches completely inspired by Nina, I believe.

NCPEDP nomination from India for an international Women With Disabilities Conference in Nonthaburi, Thailand in March 2003.

ADAPT's link that was established with NCPEDP and Javed involved me both at the national and my first international conference, which was in Nonthaburi. Definitely not a mere coincidence. I had never travelled abroad before this internationally and Nina had so far accompanied me for a consulting conference in Chennai where my chief draw was personally

meeting and listening to creativity Guru and prolific author Edward de Bono. Here I courageously flew alone in the face of SARS epidemic at its peak and was exposed to the international disability sector and how completely disabled friendly Thailand was including being exposed to wheelchair accessible vehicles, hotels, educational institutions Buddha temples and more. ADAPT & NCPEDP continue to be my mentors for involving me in the national disability rights movement.

NASEOH Award nomination by ADAPT in 2004.

My second national award and once again nominated by Vandana and Dr Mithu Alur of ADAPT. Synchronistically titled the NASEOH award to be a role model. This inspired me to spend equal time and effort in writing, speaking and involving myself in advocating not only for friends with spinal cord injury through Nina Foundation but also utilise my knowledge, connects and wisdom for all disabilities due to my Management background.

National Task Force on Education!

Dr Mithu Alur invited and involved me for my first Government of India's Task Force on Education in 2012. It was both a wonderful and prestigious experience merging my management consulting and educational experience as well as exploring creative ways to include disability in the education sector. By participating, reading research reports and listening to other members I believe I was aghast to know how little inclusion existed and the enormous body of work and action on the ground at the national level Dr Mithu Alur and ADAPT team are responsible for. The young generation of PWDs have the opportunity in primary, secondary and post graduation degrees due to our RTE Act. Besides immeasurable dignity, confidence and the self esteem both for them and their parents, family and entire community.

NJDC job fair at ADAPT Bandra.

In 2004-5 I was requested by Dr Mithu Alur and Vandana to get involved in your very first job fair for the disabled being organised in Bandra. I involved my management students, mentored and guided them regarding needs and requirements for working in the corporate sector and voila it was a wonderful win-win experience for ADAPT and the future leaders as students to be sensitised about diversity and inclusion at the workplace.

Newspaper photograph of Neenu, Nilesh, Farhan and myself auditing the BEST bus in Mumbai!

My link and connection with ADAPT started with a newspaper (me spotting Neenu's photo in Mid-day) and permanently got sealed by this visual which was carried by Times of India a record 9 times over the years, including the front page. The advocacy efforts by ADAPT's team to make public transport and public spaces wheelchair accessible all gained momentum, visibility and push due to this 'caught unawares' photo that was widely published.

I have so many wonderful fun memories having bonded with at ADAPT family-Malini, Varsha, Rekha, Dr Sitanshu Mehta, Bhavana, Shobha, Sangeeta, Sujata, Diane, Anita Prabhu, Farhan, Zenia, Jasmina, Leena, Manju, Toshan, Bom Bahadurji, Anna, Amena, Catherine, Arundhati, Malka, Lucas, and many, many more. I look forward to making some more soon! It was a moment of prestige when Dr Mithu Alur graced our international basket ball camp at Mumbai University indoor basketball court at Kalina on 3rd Jan 2019 as our honourable chief guest. It is a milestone for me personally, where I finally got the opportunity to express my deepest gratitude and publicly acknowledge Dr Mithu Alur's exemplary leadership and being my beacon and Fount of All Knowledge in the disability sector!

Malini.....I do remember your offer to host a dancing party at Bombay Gym which somehow has not yet materialised....hope this happens in 2021 and we can all sit outdoors in the green lawns soaking in the fresh air!

By Dr (Ms.) Ketna L. Mehta, PhD

Founder Trustee & Editor, Nina Foundation

ketnam@gmail.com





उमर कि ऐसि तैसि

अटल बिहारी बाजपेई

घर चाहे 'कैसा' भी हो.....
उसके एक कोने में.....
खुलकर हंसने की जगह रखना..

सूरज कितना भी दूर हो.....
उसको घर आने का रास्ता देना..

कभी कभी छत पर चढ़कर..
तारे अवश्य गिनना.....
हो सके तो हाथ बढ़ा कर.....
चाँद को छूने की कोशिश करना....

अगर हो लोगों से मिलना जुलना.....
तो घर के पास पड़ोस ज़रूर रखना..

भीगने देना बारिश में.....
उछल कूद भी करने देना.....
हो सके तो बच्चों को.....
एक कागज़ की किशती चलाने देना..

कभी हो फुरसत, आसमान भी साफ हो....
तो एक पतंग आसमान में चढ़ाना.....
हो सके तो एक छोटा सा पेंच भी लड़ाना..

घर के सामने रखना एक पेड़....
उस पर बैठे पक्षियों की.....
बातें अवश्य सुनना.....

घर चाहे 'कैसा' भी हो.....
घर के एक कोने में.....
खुलकर हंसने की जगह रखना...

चाहे जिधर से गुज़रिये.....
मीठी सी हलचल मचा दीजिये..

उम्र का "हर एक दौर" मज़ेदार है
अपनी "उम्र" का मज़ा लीजिये...

ज़िंदा दिल रहिए जनाब.....
ये चेहरे पे उदासी कैसी.....
वक्त तो बीत ही रहा है.....
"उम्र की ऐसी की तैसी.....!;

— *Atal Bihari Vajpayee*

Welcome

We are very happy to welcome two new members to our Board of Advisors.



Mr. Jamshed Mistry

Counsel, Supreme Court of India and Binary High Court & Founder, International Legal Alliance.
He will also Chair the ADAPT Rights Group.

Dr. Ragini Sen

Executive Director,
Quality Assurance and Research, APPI.



Cyclone hit Mumbai and it hit us hard in Chembur....

Our Chembur enter suffered serious damage to the building infrastructure due to the devastating cyclone and continuous torrential rains in Mumbai.

Our boundary wall collapsed and the water from an adjacent overflowing 'nullah' flooded the basement to upto 12 ft high . This deluge caused immense damage to assets and Loss of property. The basement housed our water pumps, therapy units, a cafeteria to train the beneficiaries, computers, deep freeze unit ,elevators and so much more.

Also trees fell damaging vehicles meant for staff and people with disability, Cables and wires were destroyed. Repair work has begun and we are raising funds to meet the costs.

Our Bandra center too was affected badly. The auditorium had to be shut down due to water seepage and water logging issues. Our acoustic system is damaged and would need a total change. A necessity for our dance and music based therapies and of course our events. Our first floor in Bandra too suffered due to the cyclone, damaging the badminton court and a few class rooms and destroying cables and pipelines.





Sheetal Sawant (7th August)
Kavita Rajput (14th August)
Sunita Malcotia (14th August)
Dr. Dhurv Mehta (14th August)

Catherine Ameno (21st August)
Nidhi Maria Joseph (22nd August)
Sonal Sharma (26th August)

From
All at ADAPT



Kishore and Pankaj



have been serving ADAPT in the times of Pandemic by being behind the wheels and doing their duty most selflessly and with total dedication.

They actually worked even on Sundays and without any cribbing or expectations.

In their hearts, they realised the tough situation ADAPT was in and they went all out to help wholeheartedly And that's what makes them stars ! Bright shining ones!

We thank them both and wish them the best in their lives...



Thank you



This month your column is a surprise, it is available as an attachment, a very special a very visually delightful photo essay!

Pictures that tell a story!

Love speaking through the lens of our very own Nilesh Maniyar!

Each picture has a soul which would surely reverberate in a memory, emotion, or thought.

They are still but one can perceive rather feel the fluidity of the captured movement....testifying the love Nilesh you have for this place.

A heart beating in each frame!

It is accompanied by poetic text meant to pull on your heart strings....

Thank you so much.

MY MOTHER...

This is a truly BEAUTIFUL piece please read this at a slow pace, digesting every word at leisure...do not hurry....this is a treasure...

For those lucky to still be blessed with your Mom, this is beautiful

For those of us who aren't, this is even more beautiful. For those who are moms, you'll love this.

The young Mother set her foot on the path of life. "Is this the long way?" she asked.

And the Guide said: "Yes, and the way is hard. And you will be old before you reach the end of it. But the end will be better than the beginning." But the young Mother was happy, and she would not believe that anything could be better than these years.

So she played with her children, and gathered flowers for them along the way, and bathed them in the clear streams; and the sun shone on them, and the young Mother cried,

"Nothing will ever be lovelier than this."

Then the night came, and the storm, and the path was dark, and the children shook with fear and cold, and the mother drew them close and covered them with her mantle, and the children said,

"Mother, we are not afraid, for you are near, and nothing can harm us."

And the morning came, and there was a hill ahead, and the children climbed and grew weary, and the mother was weary.

But at all times she said to the children, "A little patience and we are there." So the children climbed, and when they reached the top they said,

"Mother, we would not have made it without you."

And the Mother, when she lay down at night looked up at the stars and said, "This is a better day than the last, for my children have learned fortitude in the face of hardness.

Yesterday I gave them courage. Today, I've given them strength."

And the next day came strange clouds, which darkened the earth, clouds of war and hate and evil, and the children groped and stumbled, and the mother said: "Look up. Lift your eyes to the light."

And the children looked and saw above the clouds an everlasting glory, and it guided them beyond the darkness. And that night the Mother said,

"This is the best day of all, for I have shown my children God."

And the days went on, and the weeks and the months and the years, and the mother grew old and she was little and bent.

But her children were tall and strong, and walked with courage. And when the way was rough, they lifted her, for she was as light as a feather; and at last they came to a hill, and beyond they could

see a shining road and golden gates flung wide.

And Mother said,"I have reached the end of my journey.

And now I know the end is better than the beginning, for my children can walk alone, and their children after them."

And the children said, "You will always walk with us, Mother, even when you have gone through the gates."

And they stood and watched her as she went on alone, and the gates closed after her. And they said: "We cannot see her but she is with us still.

A Mother like ours is more than a memory. She is a living presence....." Your Mother is always with you....

She's the whisper of the leaves as you walk down the street; she's the smell of bleach in your freshly laundered socks; she's the cool hand on your brow when you're not well.

Your Mother lives inside your laughter. And she's crystallised in every teardrop.

She's the place you came from, your first home; and she's the map you follow with every step you take.

She's your first love and your first heartbreak, and nothing on earth can separate you'll. Not time, not space... not even death!

Contributed by Manju Thakur

Name : Mrs. Veena Dhaifule
Department : Production Head

Years at ADAPT?
 More than 19 years

What brought you to ADAPT?
 My son Kiran Dhaifule, who was a Down Syndrome child, made me bring here, to develop him and to make him stand on his own feet.

Who inspires you?
 Of course Dr. Mithu Alur, for her tremendous good work for the special and under privileged people. I always feel if she can do it why not me.

Where's your favorite place in the world?
 Nothing special, but surely to enjoy the beauty of the nature.

What are you passionate about?
 Creating new things, and to share my knowledge to those who need it or my trainees.

What's your favorite movie?
 KALHONAHO by Dharma Productions

Who would you like to swap places with for a day?
 · My friends and enjoy the day.

If you could visit any place in the world, where would you go?
 World's most beautiful place SWITZERLAND.

What's your favorite family tradition?
 To cook delicious traditional food according to the festival for my family members and friends.

Which 3 individuals, living or dead would you like to eat dinner with the most?
 My parents, younger brother and my son KIRAN (All of them who have left me and gone)

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

Which is your favorite book?
 Still like to read COMICS

At home we would find you doing.
 Cooking, Cleaning or Resting

The best meal you have ever had is.
 Non Vegetarian food cooked by my mother.

Your most memorable moment at ADAPT.

When my son used to dance with all the celebrities at our Annual shows, make it lively. Celebrities used to admire, give him lots of love and blessings, at that time I used to feel very proud and thankful to ADAPT that, I brought him at the right place for his training.

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

What would be the title of your autobiography?
 A Special Mother

As a child what did you want to be when you grew up?
 A Good Human Being

Name the first 3 things on your bucket list.
 To learn Classical Dance and A good Artist,

What is the one thing we don't know about you?
 I hate people telling lies.

If you could rename yourself, what name would you pick?
 I am happy with my name VEENA given by my parents with lots of love and blessings.

What would you choose: Power to become invisible OR Power to read people's minds,?
 It will be nice if I could read people's mind to be on safer side.

Which lines or lyrics sum up your view on life?
 “ Never cry for the person who hurts you,
 Just smile and say, Thank you for giving me,
 a chance to find, someone better than you.....”

APJ Abdul Kalam





Riddles

1. What has to be broken before you can use it?
2. I'm tall when I'm young, and I'm short when I'm old. What am I?
3. What month of the year has 28 days?
4. What is full of holes but still holds water?
5. What question can you never answer yes to?
6. What is always in front of you but can't be seen?
7. There's a one-story house in which everything is yellow. Yellow walls, yellow doors, yellow furniture. What color are the stairs?
8. What can you break, even if you never pick it up or touch it?
9. What goes up but never comes down?
10. A man who was outside in the rain without an umbrella or hat didn't get a single hair on his head wet. Why?
11. What gets wet while drying?
12. What can you keep after giving to someone?
13. I shave every day, but my beard stays the same. What am I?
14. You see a boat filled with people, yet there isn't a single person on board. How is that possible?
15. You walk into a room that contains a match, a kerosene lamp, a candle and a fireplace. What would you light first?
16. A man dies of old age on his 25 birthday. How is this possible?
17. I have branches, but no fruit, trunk or leaves. What am I?
18. What can't talk but will reply when spoken to?
19. The more of this there is, the less you see. What is it?

India is a land of diverse religions, heritage, culture, and traditions and the true reflection of this variety is seen through varied festivals, celebrated across the country. While most of the places in the country enjoy monsoon in August, the plethora of charming festivals in August in India help people enjoy the rain splashes all the more.

From the boat races to music and yoga feasts-and Independence Day, August has quite a few festivals, which are high on spirit, fun and vibrancy.

Bonderam Festival

This is an annual Goan festival which is celebrated every year on the fourth Saturday of August. It is a traditional flag festival which started off from the disputes over property in various parts of the village. There were flags used to mark boundaries till the rival groups knocked them down. In the present day, they make a representation of that incident by hosting mock fights and street parades. The vibrant parades are hosted by the locals to enjoy a great time, making a parody of the incident which happened years ago.



Chakradhar Samaroh

This is a 10-day classical music festival which happens on an annual basis during the Ganesh festival. This soothing celebration takes place to honour the King and musician Chakradhar Singh of Raigarh which is known as the cultural capital of Chattisgarh. He is known for writing many books on music and dance and also introduced a new form of Kathak.



Onam

This is a 10-day long harvest festival which is celebrated in Kerala with much vigour. The festival is known for celebrating the homecoming of the mythical King, Mahabali. During this festival, the locals decorate the entrance of the houses with flowers arranged in a beautiful manner. Alongside that, it is celebrated with other festivities like buying new clothes, and a plethora of dishes served on a banana leaf. Snake boat race and dancing are special attractions.



Nehru Trophy Snake Boat Race

This is a thrilling boat race, organized at Punnamda Lake in Alleppey in Kerala, where thousands of men row snake boats and compete with each other. This is an enthusiastic sport which showcases great zeal of bonding, coordination and team spirit and eventually marks the commencement of 10 days long Onam festival in Kerala. Another popular event of the same kind is Aranmula Snake Boat Race. This thrilling boat race takes place on Pampa River in Alleppey and marks the end of the festival of Onam.



Athachamayam Festival

Celebrated along with the Onam festival, Athachamayam is one of the most iconic cultural festivals in India, that rejoices the heroic triumph of the royal king of Kochi. This is one of the most vibrant festivals in the month of August in Kerala, where local people wear a traditional outfit and participate in folk dance and music. Elephant rallies and colourful tableaux showcasing local tradition, art forms, and culture are also seen during the festival.



Nag Panchami

Among the age-old Indian festivals in August, Nag Panchami holds a special significance. This is one of the most unique festivals, where snakes are worshipped. On an auspicious day of the lunar month of Shraavana, Nag Panchami is observed in full glory and pomp in rural parts of India and Nepal. This festival is followed by Jhapan Mela- a tribal festival, where Goddess Manasa is worshipped. Jhapan Mela is a rural fair demonstrating various tricks with snakes and is observed in the interior parts of Vishnupur and Bankura districts of West Bengal. Snakes are carried in procession to the temple and devotees dance to the music of been or snake charmer's flute.



Raksha Bandhan

On the full moon day of the month of Shraavana, which corresponds with August, the glorious festival of Raksha Bandhan is celebrated throughout India. It honours the love and bonding between a brother and a sister. The sister ties the rakhi- a sacred thread around the brother's wrist and prays for his long life and well-being while the brother takes an oath to protect her lifelong. The sister performs aarti and applies tilak before tying the thread, while the brother gives gifts and sweets in return.



Teej

The Goddess by the same name is worshipped by Rajasthani women with full enthusiasm. This is one of the music festivals in India. Featuring absolute grandeur and glory, Teej is rejoiced in every part of the pink city, with traditional songs, dance, music, carnivals and local food. Here, native woman dress-up in green traditional outfits, wear bangles and mehndi and carry Goddess Teej in golden palanquin across the city. The rally is accompanied by decorated elephants, camels, and horses. This one tops the list of most amazing festivals of India that you must celebrate with the locals. Teej special sweet dishes like ghewar and malpoa are prepared in every household.



Madras Week

22nd of August is the foundation day of the city of Madras, now Chennai. To honour and celebrate the same, the entire week is celebrated with grandeur and pomp in the city. The entire city is decorated with lights and flowers and various tours, fairs, shows and recreational events are organized for tourists and locals.

Tarnetar Fair

Another spectacular August festival is Tarnetar fair, held near the temple of Triniteshwar Mahadev in Gujarat. The fair was originally organized as a searching place for a spouse for tribal communities. This is a typical rural fair, where one can see and experience brave stunts, magic shows, tribal dance and music, camel rides tattoo stalls, merry go rounds and local food and handicrafts shops.



Krishna Janmashtami and Dahi Handi

This festival is celebrated at a grand scale in India and some parts of the world to commemorate the birthday of Lord Krishna. The day is also called the Gokulashtami in some places and in Maharashtra it is known as Govinda. This is one of the joyous occasions celebrated with much vigour and there are kids who dress up like Krishna to narrate his life story. The Dahi Handi is where the clay pot is filled with curd and hung over with a thread. Young boys make a human pyramid and hit the pot with a stick.



Parsi New Year/Pateti

Pateti or Parsi New Year is celebrated in July-August of the Gregorian calendar. This timeline is based on the Shahenshahi calendar, also known as the imperial calendar.

Pateti or Parsi New Year marks the establishment of the Persian Calendar by the Persian King Jamshed. The Zoroastrians, who mainly lived in Persia, were forced to leave their motherland when the Islamic armies invaded. Celebrated by the Parsi community, followers of Zoroastrianism, the festival is celebrated with huge fervour.

People decorate their homes, wear new clothes and furnish the houses and community spaces with fresh flowers like roses and jasmines. Parsis also like to pay a visit to the holy Fire Temple, seek forgiveness for their sins and pray for prosperity on the day of the festival, promoting peace and solidarity in families. Devotees also offer milk, flowers, water, fruits, and sandalwood to the sacred fire.



Food also plays a great part in the festival. As people visit their near and dear ones, traditional foods and delicacies are prepared on this day. Parsis always keep certain auspicious items at home, including their sacred book, a picture of Zarathustra, mirror, candles, incense burner, fruits, flowers, a goldfish bowl, sugar, bread, and some coins.

Independence Day

India celebrates its 75th Independence Day this year. The occasion marks the nation's Independence from British rule on 15 August 1947.

On 15 August, the Prime Minister hoists the Indian flag on the ramparts of the historical site of Red Fort in Delhi. Twenty-one gun shots are fired in honour of the solemn occasion. In his speech, the Prime Minister highlights the past year's achievements, raises important issues and calls for further development. He pays tribute to the leaders of the Indian independence movement. The Indian national anthem, "Jana Gana Mana", is sung. The speech is followed by a march past of divisions of the Indian Armed Forces and paramilitary forces. Parades and pageants showcase scenes from the independence struggle and India's diverse cultural traditions. Similar events take place in state capitals where the Chief Ministers of individual states unfurl the national flag, followed by parades and pageants. Until 1973, the Governor of the State hoisted the National Flag at the State capital. Since 1974, Chief Ministers of the respective states have been allowed to hoist the national flag on Independence Day.



Flag hoisting ceremonies and cultural programmes take place in governmental and non-governmental institutions throughout the country. Schools and colleges conduct flag hoisting ceremonies and various cultural events. Governmental and non-governmental institutions decorate their premises with paper, balloon decorations, hang the portraits of freedom fighter on their walls and major government buildings are often adorned with strings of lights. The Indian diaspora celebrates Independence Day around the world with parades and pageants, particularly in regions with higher concentrations of Indian immigrants. In some locations, such as New York and other US cities, 15 August has become "India Day"

Muharram

The second most sacred and holy occasion of Islam is Muharram. Just like Ramadan, Muharram also depends on the date of moon sighting and is also called Muharram-ul-Haram. It is the first month of the Islamic Year or the Hijri calendar that has 354 or 355 days. As per the Islamic beliefs, Prophet Muhammad, who was considered to be a messenger of God, called the month of Muharram as the 'sacred month'. It marks the day when Hussain was left in the desert without food and water and was killed mercilessly by the enemies.



The history of Muharram dates 1443 years back when Prophet Muhammed and his companions were forced to move from Mecca to Medina on the first day of Muharram in Circa 622 AD. As per the legends, he was forbidden from spreading the message of Islam in Mecca. The day Ashura is observed on the 10th day of Muharram to mourn the death of Imam Hussain, the son of Hazrat Ali and the grandson of the Prophet. He was martyred in the Battle of Karbala on the day of Ashura in 680 AD. Muharram is different from other Islamic festivals as this is a month of mourning and praying and no celebrations take place. This month is particularly important for Shia Muslims. While Shia Muslims mourn the death of Hussain by forming a chain and beating themselves, which is known as Tatbir or Qama Zani, the Sunni Muslims spend their day by observing fast and chanting "Ya Hussain" or "Ya Ali".

Contributed by Manju Thakur

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. An egg
2. A candle
3. All of them
4. A sponge
5. Are you asleep yet?
6. The future
7. There aren't any - it's a one-story house.
8. A promise
9. Your age
10. He was bald.
11. A towel
12. Your word
13. A barber
14. All the people on the boat are married.
15. The match
16. He was born on February 29.
17. A bank
18. An echo
19. Darkness



*Onwards
we march together*

Thank You