

NOTHING FOR THE DISABLED WITHOUT THE DISABLED



**I Konnect**



News letter -September 2021

Sr.	Inside this issue	Page
01	A leaf from the Diary of the Chairperson	02
02	Projects updates & Project snapshots	03
03	Retrospective	04
04	Random reflections	08
05	Parents & Donors speak	10
06	Global Window	11
07	Bygones yet not bygones	13
08	Poem	14
09	Special mention	15
10	Birthday wishes	16
11	Stars of the month	17
12	Your Column	18
13	Chicken soup for the soul	23
14	Know your colleague	24
15	Quiz & Humor	25
16	Festive season	26

## 01 A leaf from the Diary of the Chairperson



**Dr. Mithu Alur**  
Founder Chairperson  
ADAPT

Dr. Alur has been in London, and has had several meetings with our International partners. Details of these will be shared by Dr. Alur in the next e newsletter.

On the 5th of September, commemorated as Teachers Day across India, in honour of the birthday of our first president, Shri Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, R.D. & S. H. National College & S.W. A. Science College, Bandra, in collaboration with WICCI, Maharashtra State Public Service Council celebrated World Literacy Day and international Day of Charity virtually on the zoom platform. Dr. Alur was invited to address the participants which included college students, lecturers, professionals from other areas and spoke on “All for One and One for All”

Unfortunately just after this session, we received the sad news of the sudden passing away of Mr. Keshav Desiraju, a close friend of Dr. Alur and Mr. Alur and a staunch ally of the disability movement. Mr. Desiraju, who was a co- editor of the book Healers or Predators, along with Dr. Samiran Nundy and Dr. Sanjay Nagral. Dr. Alur performed a pooja for him in London and we lit a diya in Mumbai.



The in service training programme for staff in research methodologies initiated by Dr. Alur with Dr. Ragini Sen has begun this month. This is a weekly session, held in two batches and will help tremendously with increasing the capacity of the staff to undertake the research studies planned under the guidance of Dr. Alur and Dr. Sen and the Institutional Review Board.

Dr. Alur also received another bit of sad news, that of another close friend and partner in two Indo Canadian Projects, Dr. Marcia Rioux passing away. She paid homage to her memory....

*My dear Ezra,*

*I was shocked and saddened about Marcia's passing away...I didn't know she was this ill...but comforting to hear that she had made a closure with her friends, family, and work. Ofcourse we all have to go sometime, but blessed are they who have been able to leave at peace with herself and the world around her.*

*I did some very path breaking work with Marcia.. I learnt a great deal from her intellectual, sharp mind and we laid the foundations of Inclusion in the subcontinent.... Together...and I know she was very proud of us and the fact that we and the Government...had passed legislation RTE and the Right to Education was passed making Education a right for all disabilities.*

*Besides all this we were both personally good friends and I found her to be the most globally sensitive to other countries needs and the most dynamic from all I met from Canada.*

*Please accept my deepest condolences Ezra dear...take care, we are here in London till 15tg October..*

*Stay safe and much regard...much love and pronams to the memory of someone I deeply respected and loved.*

*Mithu*

Dr. Alur has also been planning for two public events: Founder's Day and World Cerebral Palsy Day and has consistently provided inputs during the process of finalizing the new logo of the organisation.



### A Legal Initiative

India has the world's second largest legal professional market with more than 6,00,000 lawyers. In addition, there are around 1200 law schools in India with approximately 70,000 to 80,000 enrolments every year.

The pandemic has ensured that technology adoption is accelerated even in the legal area. An e Committee has been constituted by the Supreme Court of India to adopt and apply technology to make the justice delivery system more efficient. They envision a system that promotes access, inclusion, equity and efficiency of courts, while providing a base that other government and non – government institutions can build solutions.

Mr. Jamshed Mistry, Member, Board of Advisors and Head, ADAPT Rights Group, has introduced the ADAPT Rights Group to Ms. Ajuni Chawla a lawyer who has set up India's first digital, integrated legal network designed to enhance civic participation and connect citizens to legal professionals, decision makers and policy makers. This initiative aligns with the UN Development Goal 16 “working” towards community building and fostering access to justice in India.

The network will provide various platforms for sharing legal knowledge, innovation and empowerment. It is hoped that individuals and global innovators can collaborate and contribute.

The idea is to provide a web and mobile application that makes citizen participation easier and more meaningful.

The platform has been designed to include, among other offerings:

- A directory of lawyers who can be contacted
- Courses we may want to run
- Blog (s)
- Legal Empowerment programmes
- Jobs available
- Business partnerships (national and international)
- Repository of Documents
- Workshops
- Internship and Scholarships
- Legal publication

The application is targeted at:

- Civil Society
- NGOs
- Legal professionals and legal cells
- Legal innovators
- Research Organisation
- Government Agencies
- Policy Makers
- Corporate Start ups

This is an initiative that is planned in collaboration with ADAPT and is a new area that we will be venturing into. Stay tuned for further updates.

**OR..... Do you still think DISABLED?***Dr. Mithu Alur, 1999*

Personally, I am proud to be the mother of 22-year old spastic daughter, called Malini, who has just passed her Bachelor of Arts Degree. I have learnt a great deal from her; she is a person full of the joie-de-vivre, and has faced her severe disabilities with a smile. Her attitudes have affected me and many others deeply.

Professionally, I am an educationist – and have been instrumental in pioneering a new concept of education/treatment for the handicapped, under the roof of a special school setting, new in India, in 1972, which later, spread to different parts of our country. It has been an enlightening and enriching experience, where I have gained more than I have given. Cerebral Palsy, as we know, is caused by a brain lesion which is non –progressive and leads to impairment of functions in various areas. The damage causes abnormal patterns of movement, imbalance, incoordination, ranging from mild to severe. There may be associated intellectual retardation and sensory deficit and speech and communication difficulties. It presents a series of disorders far more complicated than those typical of most other types of physical disabilities and is therefore considered a multiple disorder.

The multivariant dimension of this serious condition necessitates a team of specialists, combining their disciplines and knowledge and coming together in the planning of the rehab programme. They include medical doctors, paramedical staff, consisting of physiotherapists, speech and occupational therapists, social workers, special educators, psychologists, and of course parents, now widely recognised as important members of the team.

The comprehensive services that have been created to serve this complicated and chronic condition are many.

Basically, the society is a technical organisation which has been fairly generic dealing not only with a complex neurological condition such as cerebral palsy, but also with other types of handicaps like muscular dystrophy, Down's syndrome, Ataxia telangiectasia and Polio. Of course, it is quite appalling and a scandal, that India has not yet been able to eradicate polio, which is today a major, crippling condition, with which are also involved.

The Society runs early infant clinics for diagnosis and management, child development centres in slums, special education centres, junior training centres, employment unit for adults, training centres for teachers, therapists, community workers, parents, doctors, etc.

It also has departments doing research and disseminating information, handling publication, press, community education, fund raising, liaising with Government and Corporate Sector and taking care of the administrative needs of what is today one of India's largest charities functioning.

Since each C.P. child or individual varies and many areas get affected, the person has to be considered in his or her totality, and a holistic approach worked out. A large team of specialist work together with the medical staff and of course parents are now widely recognised as important members of the tea.

To prevent secondary handicaps from developing, early detection and link up with family in the first two years, is what we try and do first. Sometimes, our parents “shop around” for a diagnosis, and cure, endlessly. The belief in faith healing, advice from gurus, strong and prolonged medication, surgery as a quick panacea, play a powerful part, prolonged the beginnings of treatment. To counteract this, we have launched many campaigns over the years through the media, workshops and seminars, medical meeting in hospitals. Many articles in national dailies, both in English and the vernacular, have been written, highlighting the importance of early detection.

I am pleased to say that after a decade of awareness campaigns, we have managed to get our children young. Children come as early as six months. Dr Vojta and his team have come from Germany and have helped train our therapists to diagnose development delays at a very early and difficult stage. The infants then go through intensive home management and later pre-school programme and are admitted to a nursery by 1 ½.

Counselling is a crucial area of my work. During the assessment period, my team and I would spend a long while with parents, getting to know about the family dynamics. What is the socio-economic level of the household? How many members of the family live together? Many of you know that, in India, we have large joint families. Parents-in-laws, uncles, aunts, grandparents all living together, a tradition we love. In a typical home, the mother-in-law dominates. Therefore, sometimes, we have to be rather adept in handling mothers-in-law too: Quite frequently, we would have to train aunts and grandmothers too, depending on who handles the child. For many reasons, rehabilitation in our country's culture is much more difficult than in the west.

While observing and assessing the needs of the family, we must never forget though, that parents are in a state of rude shock about their child: a time of acute crisis when they learn that their child is handicapped for life. As a well-known paediatrician has said, they are our “primary patients” they need immediate care and attention. Sensitivity, understanding, kindness are vital ingredients to be added to specialization. The aura of professionalism must be discarded when one is face to face with suffering. I am sorry to say, that, in the early '70s, this attitude to parents was completely new.

Treatment and Education, an electric approach is used. Bobath, Vojta, modified Peto, all have their place in our treatment plans.

Perceptuo-motor remediation, based on various exponents, is done by teachers and therapists together. The various special education problems are dealt with by trained teachers. The curricular and syllabi are geared to Indian needs. Children love celebrating Holi, Diwali and all the Indian festivals. The system has worked. To date, 4 of our students have obtained their Bachelor of Arts Degrees.

Post Graduate Courses for teachers and therapists from all over India were set up soon after schools. Consultants from UK, Leslie Gardner, Klaus Wedell, Sophie Levitt and many others lectured and helped to make it on par with western models, again geared to Indian needs. The main idea behind the training was to decentralize services and professionalize special education and I think we've achieved this. To date, more than 300 specialists have been trained all over the country, helping considerably in the spread.

Vocational Rehabilitation begins from the age of 13-15 for children from the non-academic streams. They move into a pre-vocational programme and, later into the Work Training Units. We have been functioning from sheds and porta cabins, now our employment centre – a joint venture between us. The Spastics Society UK, CEC is ready. This project will be called The Job Development Centre, and the main thrust will be to set up a model of employment services in the rural and district areas which can be replicated on a national level.

Research into low cost and indigenous aids goes on. We work closely with young engineers from technical institute in areas of bio-engineering, appropriate technology aids. The research department also indicates to us where new services are needed. A survey of 10,000 families gave us stunning results; that 63% of handicapped children come from very poor families, their net income is less than Rs. 1000/- or \$ 70 per month. It also showed that the largest concentration of handicap is in slums. Therefore, we moved towards one of Asia's largest slum, a place called Dharavi, made up of a migrant population, diverse backgrounds, religions caste, crammed together in sub-human conditions, no hygiene, no sanitation, and rampant with disease, sickness, brightening. In this slum background of thieving, fighting, gambling and stark cruelty lies our handicapped child. It's a very difficult scene to work with. This migrant population each day is confronted with tremendous obstacles for mere survival. They are a thoroughly exploited by local politicians, eager to catch their votes and therefore suspicious of “do-gooders” like us. We have to constantly repeat that we are not interested in joining politics or the next elections.

They are also dominated completely by slumlords or 'Dadas' who are great bullies extracting bribes for any favour done. The first thing we would have to do is woo the community. Through frequent home visits, we begin creating a rapport with the family “at risk”. We must also win over the 'Dadas' if our handicapped children is to be cared for. Then we would have to work out the family dynamics and find out who plays the pivotal role in the family.

Slowly, but surely, we must start teaching the family and community about handicapped children. The slum culture, its rules must be understood before we can begin our work.

Crutches, callipers, booth, mats for treatment, all would have to be provided by us, as the handicapped child will never be provided this, being considered a liability.

In the slum centres, our approach to the problems must be different, it should be simple, realistic and language we used must be Hindi or Marathi. The teaching is in the vernacular.

One of the basic aims of community rehab is to teach and train community workers, and our role should be become more supervisory rather than day-to-day management. Another main thrust of work would be changing community attitudes towards the disabled, building up family support systems, and alongside working with the child. This happens slowly and only when the family and community realize that the handicapped child does improve.

Rural Rehab: Our studies show that services for the multiple handicapped get even more complicated in the rural set up. In the rural area, caste is still rears its ugly head. For instance, leather cannot be touched by Brahmin or the highest caste, but only the lowest caste or the 'chandals' could work on it. Again, only when we can show that the handicapped can contribute economically will the status of the handicapped go up because only economic contribution counts.

Most crucial of all, our studies have shown that poverty is closely related to disability and majority of the people we serve, are of the lower socio-economic group and many of them, below the poverty line.

However, at no point of time, we have learnt that neither at the slum or rural level, can we change systems and traditions existing for centuries in India like the caste system, joint family dynamic, status of women, religious views of Hindu and Muslims, we have to work with it.

Acceptance, tolerance, are definite and essential keynote qualities we have to develop if we wish to serve our handicapped children in the remote corners of India. Rehab can only be considered in his own set up. His entire world cannot be changed.

India, being such a vast subcontinent, mammoth in its complexity, size, diversity, is beset with innumerable difficulties. Factors dominating are religion, illiteracy, joint family systems, casteism, rampant poverty and inadequate funding. The handicapped in this complex set up tend to be neglected, as in most developing countries. Numbers and statistics vary; our own and U.N. surveys show 10% of the population disabled – nearly 70 million; the world's largest democracy has the world's largest population of handicapped people.

These factors cannot be brushed aside, because if one has to work with the disabled in their own communities, they compound to make the problem, an acutely difficult one. Added to this, is the lack of awareness and low priority given to the disabled by the Government which still relies rather heavily on non-governmental agencies like us, to raise funds as well as provide services. When I first returned from England, in fact, wanting to begin services for spastic children, I can never forget that, a Minister asked me if I was talking about “plastics”. It was mixed feelings of trauma, sadness, anger of a parent intensely involved, which led me to get people together to form a society for spastics and alert the country about their needs. Since then, I see a welcome change in the attitude of the Government. They now provide more funds: they have been able to set up half dozen National Institutes all over the country. But neglect of the handicapped still is a very tangible reality. Usually, an attempt is made to obscure it, through the idealistic rhetoric of policy makers. However, until a proper Bill is passed by Government realizing that the disabled too are citizens with their own rights, and a Ministry for the Disabled with financial backing is created, the needs of 70 million people disabled will remain basically unserved on a macro level, and the physical stamina of philanthropists, social reformers, burn out.

## 03 Retrospective

Services, as I have describe, are now available in all major cities. Today, we have raised more than 300 lakhs in foreign exchange – it is still a drop. However, we intent to battle on.

I shall not rest until the disabled, in remote corners of my country are not served as well. So, the battle will continue and we will build up our ammunition, made of grit and determination.

The road ahead may be stormy, tempestuous, and we have miles to go, but as Confucius said...”a journey of a thousand miles begins with one single step...” Maybe, we've taken that single important step, but there are miles to go before I rest.

### Zooming around the world!

In recent times, the one word that echoes when people all around the world are asked about their daily tasks, is ZOOMING! This has become a phenomenon and perhaps is the most popular expression. It has created history in the technological world by providing interactive communications to people across all age groups and geographical, social, economic, religious, political and cultural barriers. Zooming has magically vanished all boundaries and made us all global citizens in true sense of the word.

Ask people from any part in India or the world - any child, senior citizen or a home maker will immediately identify with zooming. Zooming is associated with anything and everything that's happening in the world. Time zones don't matter anymore and people don't care about what they wear, working hours have gone for a toss and so rose the blood pressure of the big boss, sleep cycles went for a run, games and parties were happening for fun! Performing artists found a new platform and balcony concerts became the norm.

Zooming is bonding countries and people like never before, getting those childhood aunts and uncles together with us and family functions uniting people wherever the members may be in the world. Be it a wedding, house warming, birthday party, break up party, reunion, forever friends party, dance party, musical nights or anything else you can think of - zooming is the way around. We see our senior citizens, the most technologically challenged people zooming to connect, learn, relearn and be part of the contemporary world. An 80-year-old in India learns salsa from the finest artist in New York and a 5-year-old in Germany learns the Vedic hymns from a Sanskrit scholar in India.

It is perhaps the very first time in world history that children have not been physically in school for such a long time and yet learning continued. The teachers learnt the nuances of online teaching and did their best in imparting the lessons to them. The children are literally zooming in and out of classes having the comfort of their homes as well as the exposure to the outer world. It is indeed a fact that people have zoomed in and moved on with their lives as usual.

People came out with their creative best. There are interesting stories on how they conveniently camouflaged themselves in different ways over zoom. A visible, bright looking face with neatly combed hair and nice earrings is actually a combination of a crumpled worn out-shirt and even more crumpled torn pyjamas. It is just a matter of the angle in which the cameras were fixed and if they were by mistake to travel right from the head to their feet, it would feel like the home that had been spruced up on hearing the arrival of some important guests at a short notice, where the living room would gleam with super cleaned table covers and sofas, with the scent of room fresheners and fresh flowers, and on a detour to get a glimpse of the inner rooms, you see nothing less than a forest struck by a tsunami that had rummaged everything and looks as though it was a market for second hand goods.

Zooming has taught us ways to deceive by conveniently appearing to be present yet not present and to appear and disappear at the click of a button. The funniest incidents would be when children inserted pre-recorded voice notes to their profiles and put it on for proxy attendance. What is even more audacious and 'creative' some children captured their image with the uniform and put it as their profile picture, so the teacher believed that the child was present in the class. The best part was when people put off their cameras and went off to sleep while the speaker furiously spoke about the third world problems. For the ones who never wanted to be present, the excuse of the net conveniently going off and on (when things got a bit complicated!) was always there. People knew how and when to be visible as if they were all characters of the mythological stories with boons to appear and disappear whenever they wished.

Zooming kept the lights of creativity shining through the energies put in by the gamut of artists across various art forms showcasing their best performances using technology as their aid. Amazing sights of classical dancers synchronising their choreography to match steps with their counter parts at the other end of the world, delivering the most wonderful performances, became a norm. Zooming brought everyone closer by appreciating other

professions through exchange of interdisciplinary knowledge like never before. You could hear the greatest and wisest minds talk about the recent developments in their respective fields. People sought to gain knowledge on different subjects and appreciated one other.

Suddenly our lives were controlled by the power of zooming. The more you zoomed the better you connected with the outer world. The world of online platforms suddenly became a source to explore our hidden talents. People learnt different skills and became better version of themselves and the best part was that the learning happened at home.

Over the past one and half years the world has zoomed on to make life as normal as it could get and the more you zoomed the better you became. The familiar screen with 12 odd windows with animated expressions on people's faces became the defining image of the events held during the pandemic. It was as if people wanted to peep out of their window screens to touch each other and feel the warmth of each other as if they screaming for visibility, to be heard and to be noticed. One could zoom around singing, zoom barabar zoom O people, zoom barabar zoom for a better world, a world with no boundaries or differences, a world that belongs to one and all, a world where there is no discrimination, prejudice or injustice to anyone. To that perfect world let us all, Zara sa Zoom lein....

*by Madhavi Kumar*

## Parent's Point of view

एक माँ से टीचर तक का सफर

नीलम तांडेल द्वारा

मेरा बेटा जितेश हृदय रोग से ग्रहस्त हुआ था.(ब्लू बेबी). एक माह में ही उसकी ओपन हार्ट सर्जरी हुई जिसका प्रभाव उसके विकास पर पड़ा जैसा चलना आदि ...मुझे स्पास्टिक सोसाइटी ऑफ़ इंडिया का पता चला और मैंने जितेश का दाखला यहाँ करा दिया। यहाँ का वातावरण बहुत ही प्यार भरा और पॉजिटिव लगा । मैं भी टीचर्स को क्लास में सहायता करने लगी। जितेश चलने लगा और उसका विकास अच्छा होने लगा । यह देखकर मैं बहुत खुश थी

सन २००० में डॉ. अलूर मैडम ने Unicef प्रोजेक्ट में मुझे टीचर बनने का अवसर प्रधान किया और साथ ही ट्रेनिंग भी दी । मैं बहुत डरी हुई थी परन्तु सब स्टाफ ने मेरी सहायता की ।

जितेश का भी इन्क्लुशन हुआ और उसका दाखिला होली नेम स्कूल में हुआ । २००७ में १४ वर्ष की उम्र में जितेश को मैंने खो दिया मैं बहुत दुखी थी और घर पर थी । डॉ. अलूर ने मुझे फिर से बच्चों को पढ़ाने का मौका दिया और यहाँ आकर मुझे बच्चों को पढ़ाते हुए बहुत खुशी मिली। ऐसे लगा जैसे हर बच्चा मेरा जितेश है । मैं तहे दिल से डॉ. अलूर मैडम का धन्यवाद करना चाहती हूँ की उन्होंने एक माँ को टीचर बनाने में जो मुझे सहायता दी... और मैं २० वर्ष से इस संस्था में पढ़ा रही हूँ और गर्व महसूस कर रही हूँ ।

धन्यवाद

नीलम तांडेल



## Disability and Mental Health

If life during a pandemic has taught us anything, it is how precious and fragile health truly is. But when you are living with a disability, this is a lesson you didn't need COVID-19 to teach you.

The reality is that whether the condition is an injury or a physical or mental illness, living with a disability fundamentally shapes your life experiences. But accepting, and even embracing, one's disability as a facet of one's identity doesn't mean submitting to a defeatist mind set.

It is possible to accommodate your experiences with injury and illness into a healthy sense of self, enabling your disability to shape who you are. It begins, though, by understanding the relationship between disability and mental health.

There is a significant body of evidence that persons with disabilities are at an increased risk for suicide or suicidal ideation. However, the evidence also shows that it is not the disabling condition per se that most often leads to suicidal impulses.

Rather, it's the social constraints that so many people with disabilities regularly face that can lead to life-threatening depression. Research shows, for example, that people with disabilities encounter tremendous obstacles to "normal" social functioning that have little or nothing to do with the injury or illness itself. This includes barriers that are both structural and ideological.

Persons with visible disabilities, for instance, report that they often experience various forms of discrimination when out in public. This includes the tendency for strangers to use the high-pitched tones often reserved for infants when speaking to adults with disabilities, to speak to person's companion or attendant, rather than to the person him or herself, or to refer to persons with disabilities as "admirable" or "courageous."

In the workplace, the misconception that hiring a person with a disability would require prohibitively expensive accommodations, or simply that a person with an injury or illness would not be able to be as productive or reliable as a non-disabled employee, contributes to the disproportionately high rates of unemployment among persons with disabilities.

What this all boils down to is a social structure that prohibits the full participation of persons with disabilities. Physical barriers, pervasive stereotyping and the lack of labour participation are, in essence, a perfect storm, all too frequently setting persons with disabilities apart from the rest of society, limiting their choices, opportunities and engagement-and, in the end, contributing to an increased risk of depression and suicide.

Despite all the diverse challenges described above, life with a disability does not have to mean a life of unhappiness, isolation or loneliness. From college campuses to cities and communities across the nation, advocacy groups are helping to make enormous strides in educating the public and decreasing barriers to inclusion and participation. Life on a college campus, for example, can be profoundly isolating, particularly if you are one of the millions of students experiencing both physical and mental health challenges. Advocacy groups, however, can make all the difference when it comes to raising awareness and supporting inclusion.

Above all, persons with disabilities are increasingly thriving in the world, volunteering, engaging, and living full lives, even in the face of such structural and ideological barriers. Finding engagement and purpose are essential in overcoming isolating and combating depression, no matter who you are, whether you have a disability or not. We all need to feel needed, after all. And the best cure for loneliness is simply



not to be alone-to get out and about even when you don't necessarily want to. Interacting with humans and animals are perfect ways to get out of your head, and out of your funk, and rejoin the world. All this is not to suggest, however, that it's always easy. Having to work so much harder than non-disabled persons to enjoy the same level of opportunity and engagement is downright unfair. There's no getting around that.

But an even greater injustice would be for these inequities to deprive you of the life you want and deserve. To achieve it, though, you may need specialized support.

Unfortunately, because rates of unemployment are so high among the disabled population, lack of quality healthcare coverage is also a significant concern, particularly for those who may not qualify for Medicaid or Medicare. If you are among the uninsured or under insured, a nurse-managed healthcare clinic can be a wonderful resource for accessing affordable, quality care, including mental health care services.

In addition to accessing community health and social support services, exploring alternative therapeutics to promote both physical and mental health is essential.

There is a significant connection between disability and mental health, but that connection is far more complex than it might at first seem. It's rarely about the illness or injury itself, but rather about the social and ideological barriers that make full engagement in our communities so difficult. It's about having to fight for opportunities that non-disabled persons may take for granted. But the result is a rich, full and joyous life alongside of your challenges. It just means you may need to take special care and seek support when you need it.

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

## Inspiration

“The process that takes place when somebody sees or hears something that causes them to have exciting new ideas or makes them want to create something, especially in art, music or literature.”

The power to inspire someone is a strength that can never be underestimated. Inspiration is a force which makes people achieve feats he/she might never have even thought they could accomplish. So, the question is, “What does it take to inspire a person?” An experience? A person? A speech? A word? A single moment in time? Mine was an experience that happened when I was in grade IX and X.

My name is Sasha Gonsalves, I was a student in Learners' Academy and I am currently pursuing my Bachelor of Arts degree at St. Andrew's College, Bandra.

The most memorable experience during my school life was our trips to ADAPT. Our teachers talked about the trip for many weeks before announcing that we were finally visiting ADAPT. With my curiosity already piqued, I boarded the school bus with much anticipation.

On the way there, I remember happily chatting with my friends about the class trip and the things we would learn. However, little did I know the opportunities it would present and how my life was going to change. I was about to be...inspired.

After the bus ride and meeting the teachers at ADAPT, we were all assigned to various class rooms. I still remember the first task that was given to me. I had to teach a little boy, mathematics - a little addition and subtraction. I also remember vividly, what I was feeling. Excitement, mixed with nervousness. A lot of nervousness. I was afraid that I would do something incorrect, or that the child would not like me or he would not understand what I was saying. Thankfully, the teachers at ADAPT were understanding and guided us through this new process.

As time went by, we were assigned to different classes with children of different ages and had to perform various tasks. We were told to read to students, and sing with them. During the art and craft class we helped them to draw and colour pictures. The thing I liked most was interacting with them and getting to know them better.

As time passed, without me realising it, I got more comfortable. However, I was still a bit nervous, but with the help of the teachers at ADAPT, I learnt to get passed it and enjoy the experience.

It has been so long, years in fact, but these experiences inspired me in ways I did not know until recently. I plan to make a career in special learning. It is a field that I believe will help me to grow and become a better human being.

*Sasha Constance Gonsalves,  
former student, Learner's Academy*

## Letting Go

As you hold your baby, gurgling & laughing  
Enjoy each day  
knowing your hardest part is not far away.

Watch them crawl, walk & run  
Treasure each moment, involved in their fun  
The falls, the bruises, the bumps are many  
Relish them, these memories  
They will warm your heart aplenty.

School years are filled with hope & pride  
Seeing our kids learn & grow is a sure delight !  
Teaching them to always be kind  
Lasting friendships many will find.

Teen years are a battle of who is mightier  
Slammed doors, broken hearts, make them more quieter  
Take the right path, we try to guide  
If they don't, we let it slide.  
Knowing they must find their own way  
Life is tough, a lesson learnt will always stay.

The toughest part is yet to come!  
When university life lures them far from home  
We have done our jobs as best we could  
We must let go, shattered heart will be withstood.

With independence comes responsibility  
I hear you say  
Placate your heart as you near the day.

Give them their wings, & let them fly  
Be the wind that pushes them to a rainbow sky  
As they soar to conquer their dreams  
Be proud & know that you will always be a winning team!

*Written by Reshma Tanna.*

Dr Kalpana Suresh (Physiotherapist), has volunteered her services at our Skills Development Centre (SDC) Chembur and conducted Virtual Physiotherapy sessions for two months during the unprecedented Covid19 pandemic.



She also conducted online dance sessions for beneficiaries.



Her inputs helped our trainees maintain their fitness and mobility during the lockdown.

We thank her for her contributions, support and patience, during such trying times and we wish her all the very best in her future studies and endeavours.



Leena Gomes (2nd September)

Shubhangi Kamble (9th September)

Denissia D'souza (10th September)

Madhavi Dave (14<sup>th</sup> September)

Manju Thakur (26<sup>th</sup> September)

*From  
All at ADAPT*



# Sunita Malcotia



*Shy, demure unassuming and with tears at her beck and call our Sunita Malcotia is a woman of both substance and strength.*

*Her responsibility, integrity and work ownership is exemplary. She is a team player and is shy about taking credit for her work. But a job well done can never go un noticed and should not. So here we are cheering Sunita!*

*Her dedication and discipline are praiseworthy and her contribution to ADAPT makes her an ever shining star!*

*Keep shining Sunita!*



*Thank you*



## Why you'll enjoy Paralympics much more than the Olympics

Ibrahim Hamadtou from Egypt lost both arms in a train accident when he was 10. At Rio Paralympics 2016, he made his table tennis debut. To serve, he throws the ball in the air with one bare foot and hits it with the racket in his mouth. Watching him execute deadly smashes while playing with only one shoe and racket in his mouth – feels like watching a man showing a fist to his fate.



The event Ibrahim plays in is dominated by Ukraine's Viktor Didukh who recovered from cancer that left one leg amputated to win gold.

Can a man without hands shoot an arrow into a target? What about a woman with one leg limping over a high-jump bar? Can a man without legs lift 310 kg or women with no legs play volleyball? Want to see a woman who was run over by a truck, her body broken, pick herself together to compete in what she loves most: cycling? Can you believe there's a triathlon for those without hands and legs?



You will believe only if you see a man with no hands and one leg qualify for the final of breaststroke swimming alongside a man with literally no limbs whose gold is eventually won by a man with no hands. Want to see how a man who doesn't even have a palm, throws the shot-put or how brutal a game of wheelchair rugby can get, or how a woman with no hands can wield a sword and win a fencing gold medal?



Yes, there are names attached to each of the above. But I don't attach any because this is just a tiny sample of what has been on offer at Paralympics so far. But if you insist, let me attach a few to a handful of sensational incidents that can happen only at the Paralympics.

On the 15th anniversary of the car crash that changed his life forever, Italy's former Formula One racing heartthrob Alessandro Zanardi claimed silver in a wheelchair road race. This isn't the only Paralympic coincidence. Take Alex Zanardi of Italy who won gold at the Brands Hatch track in road cycling at London 2012, the same track he used to race motors before his accident.

Ever wonder how a man in a wheelchair can light the big Olympic cauldron with the Olympic torch? In Beijing 2008, Hou Bin of China stuck the Paralympics torch to his wheelchair and pulled himself and his wheelchair up using a rope with his bare hands to light the giant cauldron.

Did you have a tear in your eyes watching Italy's Gianmarco Tamberi go mad after winning a joint gold medal in high jump at Tokyo Olympics with Qatar's Mutaz Barshim? Gather your tissue box before you watch Bebe Vio – again of Italy – go berserk with jubilation after she won gold at Rio 2016 in wheelchair fencing. What's the big deal you'll ask? Well, Bebe Vio has no arms and legs.

One of the most beautiful sights in life is watching disabled athletes celebrate. If Olympians are happy, watch the Paralympians celebrate and you'll know what ecstasy must feel like. So what if they can't take a victory lap around the stadium or often can't see or hear the crowd cheering for them.

These and many incredible sights are playing live on a screen near you right now at Tokyo Paralympics 2020. I run out of adjectives to describe it because even calling the Paralympics sheer magic doesn't suffice.

Have you ever heard of this game called goalball played by the blind? Let me not describe it: Google and see the game to realise that it is an entirely new fun sport which you and I can play as well. We can also play another amazing game: blind football.



It is a game played on a smaller field with five players. Except for the goalkeeper manning a smaller goal, the other four players are blind. The boundary is boarded up to keep the ball in play and players utter a word to denote they have the ball. You'd think it'd be boring. But watch it and you'll know the pace and mad skills these blind players exhibit.

Faster. Higher. Stronger, that's the motto of the Olympics. The disabled can't usually be the fastest or highest, but to me, the sportspersons at the Paralympics are the strongest in the world. That's because most have overcome odds more Herculean than Olympians. Many indeed were headed for Olympic glory when an accident cut that journey short and pushed them, after much heartbreak, to the Paralympics. Like Sandra Paovic, a table tennis player who had competed in the 2008 Olympics, had an accident, and later won Paralympic gold on debut.

This is the first Paralympics I'm watching with focus and I realise I'm enjoying this more than the Olympics. In the Olympics, I mostly watch games involving Indian and refugee team events because these are players I am most emotionally invested in. Occasionally I watch events with boredom, more with a desire to know than for the enjoyment of it.

In contrast, the last few days I have been watching the Paralympics, because I have found it fascinating. After the Olympics ended, I began watching some of the Paralympic events of the past on their YouTube channel and I was instantly hooked. The reason is simple: I am not only watching players competing, but am watching some games I have never seen before and am amazed by how they are played and the rules involved. I feel like Jasmine on Aladdin's carpet, a whole new world of sports suddenly introduced to me.



Not many people outside the disability sector think about it, but ability is so fickle that it is disability that is our 'normal' state of being. And that's not only because it just takes a bad moment – a fall, a crash, a bang, etc. – to take some, most, or all of our abilities away. But because in truth even the best of us are only temporarily able-bodied i.e. we are non-disabled only for a short period of our lives.

Think of a newborn. She's practically disabled for years, physically and mentally. Most governments trust her to get married, drink or join the military only after she turns 18. Not all of those 18 year olds are in prime health, but even among those that are, disability will creep into them slowly but steadily.

Bad eyesight is one of the most common disabilities. I can barely see without my specs. Once you cross say 35 most of us enter the zone of disability for the rest of your life. Let's not even begin with those of us who are mentally deficient enough for a clinical analysis to label us disabled. And anyone who knows an old person knows the various levels of disability they live through.

Thus, through an average life, disability is the 'normal' state of our existence. Yet it is our ignorance that makes us look down upon those who we officially consider disabled, i.e., around 15% of the world's population or 1 billion people.

That is also where I believe the Paralympics are more important than the Olympics because Olympic capabilities are beyond the reach of the majority; they are like models with perfect figures whose shape I will never reach. But the Paralympians are more like me. I can relate to their broken body because mine is too, I can feel some of their mental deficiencies because I can see the many mental impairments I have.

Hence, even if you miss the actual Olympics, you shouldn't miss the Paralympics for the world. Don't watch it for the competition, watch it for the cooperation, for the smiles. Don't get me wrong, Paralympians are fiercely competitive, but each knows the other's difficulty so they are humbler than their able-bodied counterparts. The famed 'spirit of the game' that we celebrate as an exception in the games played by abled-bodied people, is a rule among disabled sports persons.

Paralympics is more colourful, more fun, more engaging because often the challenge is wondering how a disabled person would do something you and I take for granted. These people are the bigger winners because for me true victory is not defeating an opponent. It is about defeating the voice of defeat in your mind, rising up, and fighting the odds.



One of my primary reasons for watching the able-bodied Olympics is inspiration. I love the stories of struggle, the poverty to podium finishes, the literal blood, sweat, and tears that colour the medals, the agony, pain and eventual ecstasy for a handful. Being aware of issues with disability, I have always been uncomfortable with 'using' the disabled as tools to inspire me. But it is only while watching the Paralympics that I realised how I was being prejudiced in the garb of not being so. If being inspired is why I watch the Olympics, why can't it be the same reason I watch the Paralympics?

Hence, this time I am mining the Tokyo Paralympics 2020 for the Ibrahim Hamadtou, Viktor Didukh, Bebe Vio, Hou Bin, Alessandro Zanardi and Sandra Paovic of the world. I am digging into its soul to find that emotional lift that will keep me charged up even through the depression caused by the pandemic. And I shall wait for Paris 2024, this time more for the Paralympics, than for the Olympics.

*(Satyen K. Bordoloi is a scriptwriter, journalist based in Mumbai. He loves to let his pen roam the intersection of artificial intelligence, consciousness, and quantum mechanics. His written words have appeared in many Indian and foreign publications.)*

**World Mental Health Day** (10 October) is an International day for global mental health education, awareness, and advocacy against social stigma.



**SIGNIFICANCE:**

Research evidence shows that there's a dearth within the quality of care provided to people with a mental health issue. It can take up to 15 years before good quality medical, social and psychological treatments for mental illness are delivered to the patients that need them.

The stigma and discrimination experienced by people who experience mental health issues not only affects that person's physical and mental health, but also their educational opportunities, current and future earning and job prospects, along with their families and loved ones. This inequality needs to be addressed and we all have to take part in addressing these disparities and ensure that people with lived experience of mental health issues are fully integrated in every aspect of life.



**RELEVANCE TODAY:**

When WFMH was formed in 1948 the world had emerged from war and was in major crisis. We are yet again in the midst of another global crisis that is leading to widening health, economic and social inequalities.



The COVID 19 pandemic has further highlighted the consequences of inequality on health outcomes. The pandemic has affected people of all ages in many ways: through infection and illness, sometimes causing death bringing bereavement to surviving family members; through financial burden, with job losses and continued job insecurity; and with the physical distancing that results in social isolation.

The past months have brought many challenges: for health-care workers, providing care in difficult circumstances, travelling for work fearful of COVID-19 infection; for students, adapting to online education, with little contact with teachers and friends, and worried about their futures; for working laborers whose livelihoods are threatened; for the vast number of people trapped in poverty or in vulnerable humanitarian settings with extremely limited protection from COVID-19; and for people having mental health issues, many experiencing even greater social isolation than before. On top of all this is managing the grief of losing a loved one, at times without getting to say goodbye.



**THEME FOR 2021:**

The WFMH President Dr. Ingrid Daniels announced the theme for World Mental Health Day 2021 being 'Mental Health in an Unequal World'. This theme was chosen because the world is increasingly polarized, with the very rich getting richer, and the number of people living in poverty still far too high. Many people with a mental illness do not receive the treatment that they are entitled to and deserve.



Given past experience of emergencies, it is expected that the need for mental health services and psycho-social support will substantially increase in the coming months and years. Thus we need to act urgently. The heart of mental health awareness lies in understanding its importance:

**1. Identify the problem**

It is important to take time out to introspect and become self-aware of our thoughts. We're evolving beyond outdated notions and releasing the stigma of mental health so that it can be diagnosed and cared for. With the burden and fear removed from mental health issues, the battle becomes considerably easier.

It is necessary to recognize the symptoms that need to be addressed. Mental health symptoms have traditionally been divided into groups called either 'neurotic' or 'psychotic' symptoms. 'Neurotic' include those symptoms which can be considered as severe forms of 'normal' emotional experiences such as depression, anxiety, or panic. Less common are

'psychotic' symptoms which affect a person's perception of reality, and may include hallucinations. Mental health problems affect the way you think, feel, and behave. These are problems that can be diagnosed by a doctor, not personal weaknesses.

### 2. Share your pain

This day reminds you that you're not alone in whatever you're going through. We're not the only ones facing a hard time and it's uplifting to know that other people have gone through it and made it out to the other end. It reminds you that you can overcome your own pain.



### 3. Proper treatment

As our understanding of mental health grows, so does our ability to seek proper treatment. With the right therapist and necessary medication, you can function more efficiently. The more accepting we are and the more funding that's put into research and mental healthcare, the greater the global impact.

Lastly good mental health is not just the absence of diagnosable mental health problems, although good mental health can help people against development of such problems. Good mental health is characterized by a person's ability to function well in activities including: The ability to learn, the ability to feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions, the ability to form and maintain good relationships with others, and the ability to cope with and manage change and uncertainty.

Self-care is a lifestyle development that we all need to incorporate in our daily routines to look after our mental health. There are certain habits we can inculcate to nourish self-care such as:

- Talk about your feelings: it helps you share your burden and get new perspectives.
- Keep active: regular exercise boosts your self-esteem and helps in concentrating, sleeping and feeling better, & making your brain healthier.
- Eat well: your brain needs a mix of all nutrients to stay healthy and function well.
- Keep in touch: stay connected socially with your family, friends.
- Ask for help: none of us are superhuman. We all sometimes get tired or overwhelmed by how we feel or when things don't go to plan. If things are getting too much for you & you feel you can't cope, ask for professional help from a psychologist/counselor.
- Take a break: a change of scene or pace is good to rejuvenate. It could be a five minute pause from cleaning your kitchen, a half hour lunch break at work, or a weekend exploring somewhere new. A few minutes can be enough to de-stress you. Give yourself some 'me time'.
- Nourish your hobbies: what do you love doing? What activities can you lose yourself in? What did you love doing in the past? Doing an activity you enjoy boosts your self-esteem and can beat stress
- Accept who you are: we're all different. It's much healthier to accept that you're unique than to wish you were more like someone else. Feeling good about yourself boosts your confidence to learn new skills.
- Care for others: caring for others is often helps in keeping up relationships close to you. It can even bring your closer together and give purpose and meaning to life.



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*Written by  
Ms Antara Sapre  
Clinical Psychologist.*

### I am a Teacher

I was born the first moment that a question leaped from the mouth of a child. I have been many people in many places. I am Socrates exciting the youth of Athens to discover new ideas through the use of questions. I am Anne Sullivan tapping out the secrets of the universe into the outstretched hand of Helen Keller. I am Aesop and Hans Christian Andersen revealing truth through countless stories. I am Marva Collins fighting for every child's right to an education. I am Mary McCleod Bethune building a great college for my people, using orange crates for desks. And I am Bel Kaufman struggling to go Up The Down Staircase. The names of those who have practiced my profession ring like a hall of fame for humanity. . . . Booker T. Washington, Buddha, Confucius, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Leo Buscaglia, Moses and Jesus. I am also those whose names and faces have long been forgotten but whose lessons and character will always be remembered in the accomplishments of their students.

I have wept for joy at the weddings of former students, laughed with glee at the birth of their children and stood with head bowed in grief and confusion by graves dug too soon for bodies far too young.

Throughout the course of a day I have been called upon to be an actor, friend, nurse and doctor, coach, finder of lost articles, money lender, taxi driver, psychologist, substitute parent, salesman, politician and a keeper of the faith.

Despite the maps, charts, formulas, verbs, stories and books, I have really had nothing to teach, for my students really have only themselves to learn, and I know it takes the whole world to tell you who you are.

I am a paradox. I speak loudest when I listen the most. My greatest gifts are in what I am willing to appreciatively receive from my students. Material wealth is not one of my goals, but I am a full-time treasure seeker in my quest for new opportunities for my students to use their talents and in my constant search for those talents that sometimes lie buried in self-defeat.

I am the most fortunate of all who labour.

A doctor is allowed to usher life into the world in one magic moment. I am allowed to see that life is reborn each day with new questions, ideas and friendships.

An architect knows that if he builds with care, his structure may stand for centuries. A teacher knows that if he builds with love and truth, what he builds will last forever.

I am a warrior, daily doing battle against peer pressure, negativity, fear, conformity, prejudice, ignorance and apathy. But I have great allies: Intelligence, Curiosity, Parental Support, Individuality, Creativity, Faith, Love and Laughter all rush to my banner with indomitable support.

And who do I have to thank for this wonderful life I am so fortunate to experience, but you the public, the parents. For you have done me the great honour to entrust to me your greatest contribution to eternity, your children.

And so I have a past that is rich in memories. I have a present that is challenging, adventurous and fun because I am allowed to spend my days with the future.

I am a teacher ... and I thank God for it every day.

John W. Schlatter

*Contributed by Manju Thakur...*

**Name : Mrs. Sangeeta Jagtiani Vaswani**

**Department : Education**

**Years at ADAPT?**

**30 years of association**

**What brought you to ADAPT?**

**The challenges that children with special needs face in schools and the specific strategies that can help children drew me to this organisation**

**Who inspires you?**

**Varsha Hooja is the reason for my being in this field and Dr Alur unbeatable drive to stay routed and work for the cause tirelessly is the reason that I am still a part of her team and cannot wean out!**

**Where's your favorite place in the world?**

**Any place in the mountains**

**What are you passionate about?**

**My work in the field of disability and related fields**

**What's your favorite movie?**

**I see movies to kill time, no favourites**

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

**With anyone who is stress free (if there is someone who is stress free)**

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

**Switzerland**

**What's your favorite family tradition?**

**Celebration of Religious ceremonies**

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

**My Mum and Dad**

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

**Am a good listener and could be a good counsellor too !**

**Which is your favorite book?**

**The secret**

**At home we would find you doing.**

**Lazing ! !!!!! love it!**

**The best meal you have ever had is.**

**Simple dal rice and curd**

**Your most memorable moment at ADAPT.**

**When I was nursing my father in the hospital in 2010, Dr Alur has sent me an idol of lord Buddha as an appreciation for my work ! Felt good to be appreciated during the toughest phase of my life !**

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

**Sunny Bhambhani (my nephew who has two side to his personality – that of a highly spiritual person and the other of an media professional and managing both fronts so efficiently)**

**What would be the title of your autobiography?**

**My inner strength !**

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

**Always a teacher !**

**Name the first 3 things on your bucket list.**

**Visit Switzerland**

**Fly in a hot air balloon**

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

**I have two side like everyone – mine are extremes either am too harsh/hard or too soft, I cry very easily !**

**If you could rename yourself, what name would you pick?**

**Meher (God's grace)**

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

**POWER TO BECOME INVISIBLE**

**Which lines or lyrics sum up your view on life?**

**Tum se naraaz nahi zindagi hairan hu mein**

**.....**





# Riddles

1. David's parents have three sons: Snap, Crackle, and what's the name of the third son?
2. I follow you all the time and copy your every move, but you can't touch me or catch me. What am I?
3. What has many keys but can't open a single lock?
4. What can you hold in your left hand but not in your right?
5. What is black when it's clean and white when it's dirty?
6. What gets bigger when more is taken away?
7. I'm light as a feather, yet the strongest person can't hold me for five minutes. What am I?
8. I'm found in socks, scarves and mittens; and often in the paws of playful kittens. What am I?
9. Where does today come before yesterday?
10. What invention lets you look right through a wall?
11. If you've got me, you want to share me; if you share me, you haven't kept me. What am I?
12. What can't be put in a saucepan?
13. What goes up and down but doesn't move?
14. If you're running in a race and you pass the person in second place, what place are you in?
15. It belongs to you, but other people use it more than you do. What is it?
16. What has lots of eyes, but can't see?

As we all know, India is a diverse nation filled with tons of festivals that take place throughout the year. The month of September i.e. the 9<sup>th</sup> month according to the Gregorian calendar is considered to be one of most celebrated month. Its name comes from the ancient Romans. It comes from the Latin septum, meaning “seven.” It consists of a varied list of festivals. Some of them are so huge and widespread that the whole of India comes together in one accord, for example – Ganesh Chaturthi, Bandra Fair, etc. This month is a symbol of reenergizing one's spirit.

### Feast of Holy Cross Shrine

A prominent pilgrim centre in Central Kerala, the Holy Cross Shrine at Mapranam in Thrissur is noted for its annual festival- Exaltation of Cross. It is celebrated with great fanfare. The Exaltation of Cross is held from September 12 to 15 and octave (8th-day celebration) is on 21 September. The most auspicious day during the festival is on 14 September.

THE FEAST OF THE CROSS



The feast is celebrated all over the world on the same day. The historic occasion is celebrated with a host of festivities. Among the major events held here during the festival include the 'Thiritheliyikkel' which involves lighting of huge candles. The grand occasion is celebrated with a vibrant procession and fireworks.

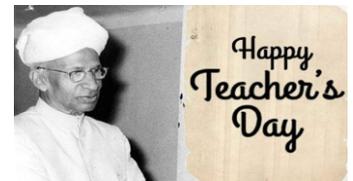
### Bandra Fair

Every year Bandra Fair is held for a period of one week in the Bandra suburb of Mumbai. It begins on the first Sunday of September, that's the Feast of the Nativity of Mary, Mother of Jesus, at the Mount Mary Church, Bandra. The tradition of celebrating Bandra Fair is estimated to be approximately 300 years old. It started when a statue of Mother Mary was found floating in the Arabian Sea somewhere between 1700 and 1760. According to a legend, this is exactly what a Koli fisherman had dreamt few years earlier.



### Teachers Day (5th September)

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was an Indian Philosopher, Academician, and Statesman. He has served as the first Vice President of India and the second President of India



He was famous for his work on Comparative religion, Comparative Eastern and Western Philosophy. He has also worked as a teacher in India and at Oxford University in the United Kingdom. Due to his commendable inputs in India's educational front, his birthday has continued to be celebrated as Teachers Day, since 1962.

He was awarded Bharat Ratan in the year 1954.

### Pithori Amavasya

It is observed on the day of No-moon day (Amavasya) in the Bhadrapada (August-September) month, according to the Hindu calendar. The mothers fast for the prosperity, health and long life of their children. Therefore, this day is also called 'Matrudin' which means 'Mother's Day'.

On Pithori Amavasya, mothers' worship sixty-four goddesses and in earlier times, these idols were made with Pith (flour). Hence this puja gets its name Pithori Puja.

In Pathare Prabhu community, a picture of Pithori Devi... Mandir, mother sitting with her children, is drawn with sandalwood paste on a wooden board. A lot of green leaves and flowers are put on the board. Ghee diyas are lit and surround the board.

The Prasad is elaborate with a variety of sweets. Rice Kheer, wheat flour ladoos, karanji, sweet puris called guravali, tavsali- cucumber sweet, umber (banana fritters) is served with aloo vadi, rice and dal.

The most important part of this puja is the 'unique roll call' that is taken by the mother. The mother places the sweets in a silver plate and after performing the puja, covers her head with her saree pallu and holds the silver plate on her head. All the children and youngsters line up.



The mother asks 'Athit kaun?' which means, "Who is present?" The children in turn answer giving their names. This ritual is called 'Vayan' and an assurance for the mother that all her children are healthy and safe.

Traditionally all mothers who perform this puja don't eat food unless they give VAVAN to their children.

Pind Daan and Pitru Darpan are some important deeds which are performed on this day.

### Hartalika Teej

This fast is observed mostly by married women, who worship Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati by preparing idols made with wheat or sand.



The puja is performed in the morning and the fast is kept by them for marital bliss and progeny.

Hartalika Teej Vrat is also called as Gowri Habba in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

### Vinayaka Chaturthi

Ganesh Chaturthi is also known as Vinayaka Chaturthi. It is a Hindu Festival celebrating the arrival of Lord Ganesh to earth from Kailash Parvat with his mother Goddess Parvati/Gauri. The festival is marked with the installation of Lord Ganesh's clay murtis privately in homes and public places.



Offerings and prasada from the daily prayers that are distributed from the pandal to the community, include sweets such as modak. Modak is believed to be a favourite of Lord Ganesh.

The festival ends on the tenth day after start, when the idol is carried in a public procession with music and group chanting, then immersed in a nearby body of water such as a river or sea.

### Ganesh Visarjan

The grand and fantastic idols of Lord Ganesh are worshiped for 10 days, followed by a mesmerizing immersion ceremony on the last day.



**Rishi Panchami** is the fifth day, the next day after Ganesh Chaturthi day in Bhadrapad month of the lunar calendar. It is a traditional worship of Sapta Rishi that's the seven sages.

In some parts of Kerala, the day is also observed as Vishwakarma Puja. In this varata, the people express respect, gratitude and remembrance of the great deeds of those ancient Rishis, who devoted their life for the welfare of the society. The fast is to be observed by women.



Rishi Panchami is also celebrated as Raksha Bandhan or "Rakhi festival" by some Dadheech Brahmins and also Agrawal and Maheshwari and Kayastha communities of Rajasthan. Sisters tie "Rakhi" or "Sacred Thread" and both brothers and sisters pray for the well-being of each other and vow to protect each other.

### Gauri Avahana and Gauri Pooja

Jyeshtha Gauri Avahana is a festival that is celebrated in Maharashtra during Ganesh Chaturthi. The Puja is divided into three phases-Jyeshtha Gauri Avahan, Jyeshtha Gauri Puja, and Jyeshtha Gauri Visarjan.

This puja is also known as Gowri Puja, which continues from September 12 to September 14. Gauri is considered Lord Ganesha's sister.



So, two additional idols are brought along with Ganesha on Ganesh Chaturthi.

Gauri Puja is celebrated for welcoming wealth and prosperity into life.

The rituals continue for three days, where the first day is Gauri Avahan where the Goddess is brought home and the second-day puja takes place and the third day is the 'Visarjan', which takes place with the idol immersed in water bodies.

Women wear new saris and traditional jewellery on this day. On the night they gather together and sing Mangala Gauri songs and play games. Zhimmaa and Phugadi are typical games played during this occasion. These songs have a traditional base and reflect the life style of Hindu married women.

### Gauri Visarjan

Gauri Visarjan is done immediately the next day of Gauri Pujan. It is done along with Ganesh Visarjan on sixth or seventh day of Ganesh Chaturthi.

Before Gauri Visarjan Aarti is performed and the Prasad of cooked rice mixed with curd and cooked fenugreek leaves is offered to the idol. This Prasad is then distributed amongst the devotees as the blessings of Goddess Gauri.



### Vishwakarma Pooja

Vishwakarma Jayanti is a day of celebration for Vishwakarma, a Hindu god, Vishwakarma is believed to be the son of Lord Brahma who created the holy city of Dwarka. He is known to have created palaces and weapons for several Hindu gods. He was called the divine carpenter as well as swayambhu, which means self-existent or to be created by one's own accord.



It is generally celebrated every year on Gregorian calendar date between 16 to 18 September which is on the last day of the Indian Bhado month, in solar calendar.

Vishwakarma puja is also celebrated a day after Diwali, along with Govardhan Puja in October-November.

### Anant Chaturdashi

This fast is observed on the Chaturdashi of Shukla Paksha of Bhadrapad month.

On this day the infinite form of Lord Vishnu is worshipped. After worshipping on the auspicious time on the day of Anant Chaturdashi, the Anant Sutra is tied on the hand.

In this Anantha Sutra, 14 knots are tied. It is a religious belief that 14 knots refer to 14 worlds. It is believed that men should wear the Anant Sutra in their right hand and women in their left hand.



### Pitru Paksha

The Pitru Paksha Shradh is a 16-day period. Shradha, originally a Sanskrit word, is combination of two words "Sat" meaning truth and "Adhar" meaning basis. So it means anything or any act that is performed with all sincerity and faith. It is said, "Shraddhyaa Kriyate Yaa Saa": Shradh is the ritual accomplished

It is a lunar cycle that takes place for 16 days that is devoted to worshipping the ancestors, seeking their blessings, asking for forgiveness for any wrong that one may have done to them, and helping them attain Moksha. The rituals of offering Pind Daan and Tarpan starts on the following day. Within this period, Hindus pay homage to their pitrus or ancestors who have passed on. A variety of foods and dishes are offered to dogs, cows and crows.

### Athachamayam Festival

Athachamayam Festival is closely related to Onam. Athachamayam celebrates the revolutionary victory of Raja of Kochi as the 10-day long Onam festival in Tripunithura near Kochi in the Ernakulam district of Kerala

The gala procession ceremonial parade showcases all art forms of Kerala (folk dances, elephant rallies, music, and dances) and colourful tableaux demonstrating local history, tradition, & culture is taken.



### Snake Boat Festival

Kerala also witness the thrilling boat races in the serene and picturesque back waters of Kerala. Both Payippad Boat Race and Aranmula Boat Race are celebrated as important festivals in September that are closely related to Onam. These races demonstrate the true essence of team coordination, bonding, and spirit. Long snake boats are driven by local people with absolute zeal & fervour. The people watching these races also showcase equal enthusiasm



### Neelamperoor Padayani

Among the traditional festivals in September in India, Neelamperoor Padayani holds a special significance for the Buddhists in Kerala. It is celebrated in the Malayalam month of Chingam and has a rich history of over 1700 years associated with it. Dances and rally of effigies of swans (locally known as Annam kettu) & other mythological characters including Bhima, Ravana, and Yakshi.



### Ladakh Festival

Ladakh festival is celebrated for a week in Leh Ladakh and its surrounding villages. As one of the most popular art festivals celebrated in India in September, this celebration is marked with a rally of cultural troupes, dancing, singing, and enacting scenes from the folklores. Local people wear colourful traditional Ladakhi attires and rejoice every bit of this gala celebration with solemn joy. Archery, polo, and masked dance are the main attraction.



### Ziro Festival

The breath-taking Ziro Valley of Arunachal Pradesh hosts one of the most popular music festivals in September – Ziro Festival. With more than 100 bands, folk troupes, and individual singers; this is one of the most renowned outdoor events in September and has everything to offer to music enthusiasts.



## 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. David
2. Your shadow
3. A piano
4. Your right elbow
5. A chalkboard
6. A hole
7. Your breath
8. Yarn
9. The dictionary
10. A window
11. A secret
12. It's lid
13. A staircase
14. Second place
15. Your name
16. A potato



*Onwards  
we march together*

*Thank You*