

NOTHING FOR THE DISABLED WITHOUT THE DISABLED



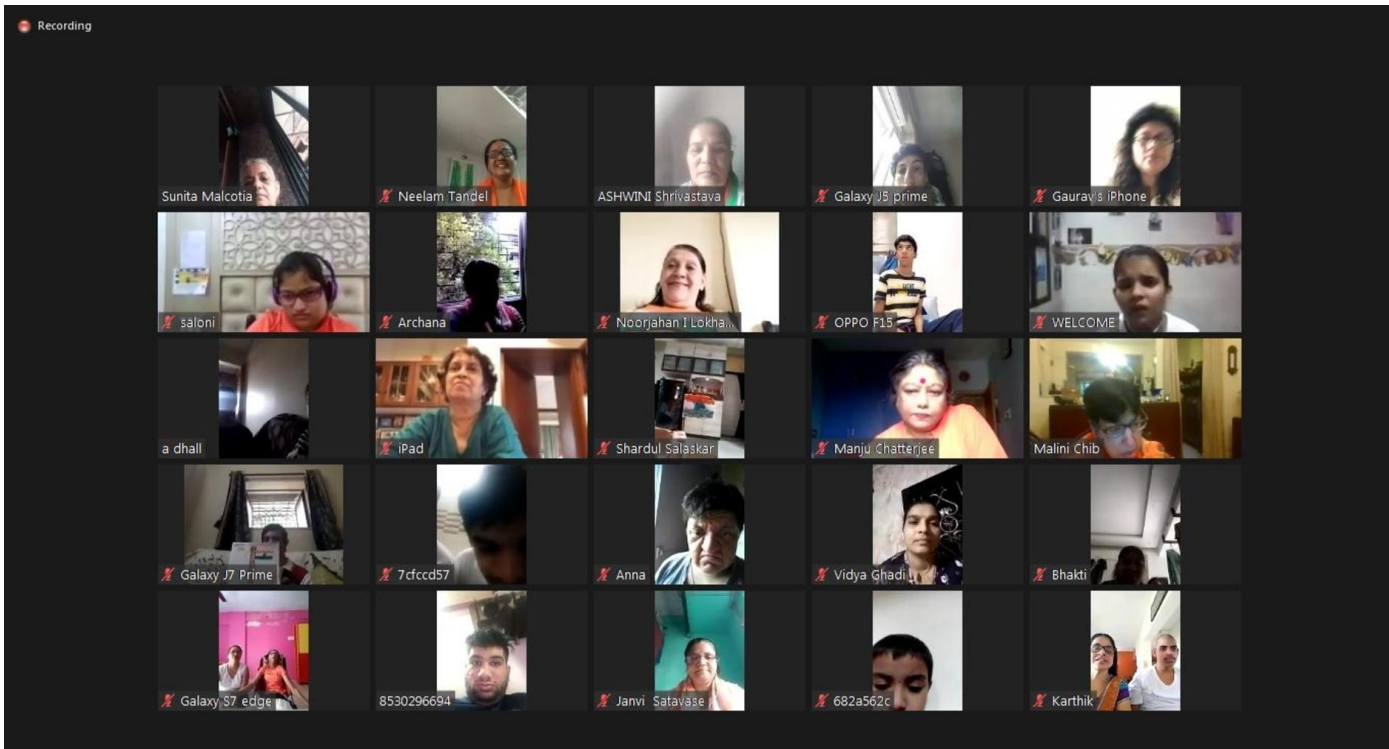
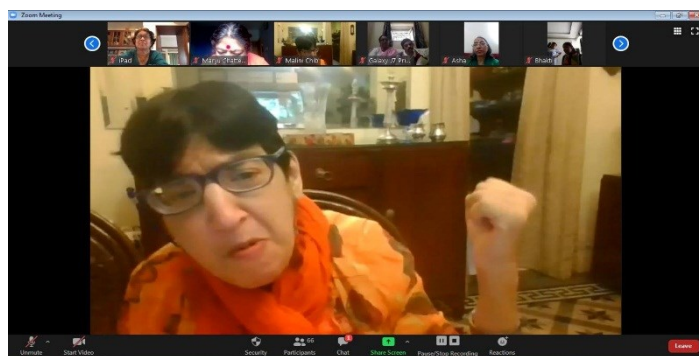
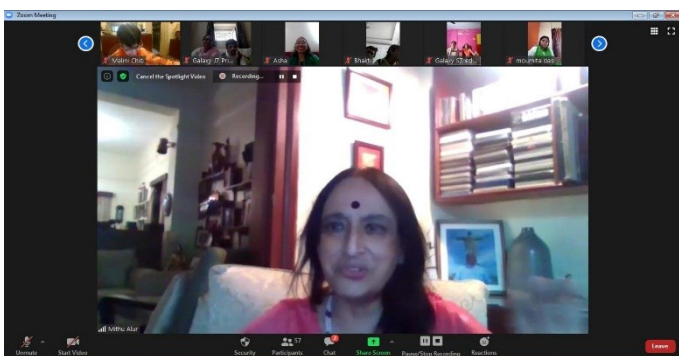
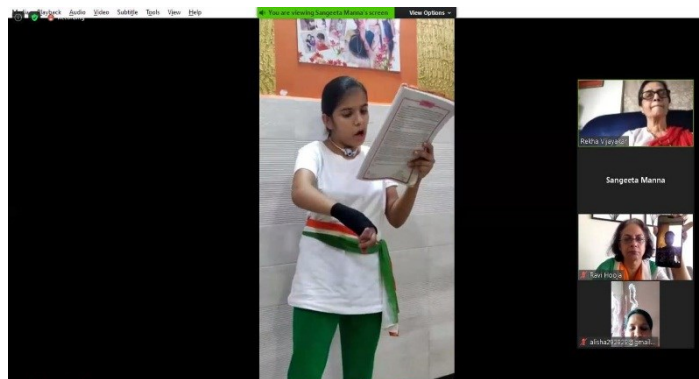
I Konnect



News letter -August, 2020

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	07
05	Parents & Donors speak	11
06	Global Window	12
07	Bygones yet not bygones	14
08	Poem	16
09	Special mention	17
10	Birthday wishes	18
11	Stars of the month	19
12	Your column	20
13	Mubarak ho!	22
14	Know your colleague	23
15	Chicken soup for the soul	24
16	Quiz & Humor	25
17	Festive season	26

01 A leaf from the Diary of the Chairperson



Independence Day celebrations with the Chairperson, Staff and Community.



Language development Classes

Covid plan of action moves from strength to strength everyday

"COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES FOR CEREBRAL PALSID CHILDREN IN INDIA - WITH BOMBAY AS THE MODEL OF THE FIRST PROGRAMME CREATED"

(A paper presented at 16th World Conference on Rehabilitation Japan in 1988 By Dr. Mithu Alur)

First of all, may I thank the Department of Pediatrics, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, Professor B.N.S. Walia, and Dr. Pratibha Singhi for inviting me to participate in this conference.

I am very pleased to be here in Chandigarh. Politically, Punjab has been very much in the news, and many of us have felt deeply for the terror-struck people of our country here and felt like doing something that would alleviate suffering. Unfortunately, we've been able to do very little, but feel for it. Today, I am pleased at least to be here in Chandigarh and I hope I can contribute in some small way.

I feel particularly privileged to be here with Professor Ken Holt who is an extremely well known figure in our field. Your books were text books for us when I was a student in the Institute of Education in University of London. In fact we have your books in our library, which we frequently refer.

The title of my paper is "Comprehensive services for cerebral paralyzed children in India - with Bombay as the model of the first programme created".

A word about the slides you are to see - because of lack of time, I will not be able to explain each one, but I promise you they'll be fairly relevant!

My involvement with handicap over 22 years has been both professional as well as personal.

Personally, I am proud to be the mother of a 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 both 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, in coordination, ranging from mild to severe. There maybe 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 multivariate 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 ofcourse parents now widely recognized 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 organization 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 Telangiectasis, sympathy, arthrogryphosis. and Polio. Ofcourse, 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 we 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 units 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, leasing with Government and Corporate Sector and taking care of the administrative needs of that 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 and a holistic approach worked out. A large team of specialist work together with the medical staff and of course parents are now widely recognized as important members of the team.

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 the beginnings of treatment. To counteract this, we have launched

many campaigns over the years through the media, workshops and seminars, medical meetings 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 6 months. Here you see Pam Stretch, my Deputy from U.K. who has pioneered services in India, for 14 years, evaluating a child. Dr. Vojta and his team have come from German and have helped train our therapists to diagnose development delays at a very early and difficult stage. Here is a 25 years old with me having an educational evaluation on the Ruth's Griffiths Scale. The infants then go through intensive home management and later pre-school programme and are admitted to a regular nursery by 1½

Counseling 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 socioeconomic level of the household? How many members of the family live together? Many of you will know, that, in India, we have large joint families. Parents-in-law, uncles, aunts, grandparents all live 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, rehab 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 pediatrician 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 eclectic approach is used. Botath Volta, modified Peto, all have their place in our treatment plans. Modified Vojta which actually Pam Stretch is doing research on and calls it Intrinsic Development or I.D. Perceptuo-motor remediation, based on various exponents is done by teacher and therapists together. The various special ed. 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! I shall ofcourse be dealing with this area of work in depth in my second paper. 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 the schools. Consultants from U.K., 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 programming 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 U.K., C.E.C. 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 institutes 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 the 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, frightening! 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 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 the community about handicapped children. The slum

culture, its rules must be understood before we can begin our work.

Crutches, calipers, boots, 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 the 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 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 multiply handicapped get even more complicated in the rural set up. In the rural areas, casteism still rears its ugly head. For instance, leather cannot be touched by the 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 either at the slum or rural level can we change systems and traditions existing for centuries in India; like the caste system, joint family dynamics, status of women, religious views of Hindus 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 engaged.

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 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 a 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.

Services, as I have described, 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 intend 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...." May be, we've taken that single important step, but there are miles to go before I rest.

अपना जीत

भैरवी आज फूली नहीं समां रही थी, उसके बेटे जीत को अचीवमेंट अवार्ड जो मिला था। जीत के साथ सब उसे भी बधाई दे रहे थे। तभी उसकी सास मंदा ने बधाई देते हुए कहा, "भैरवी आखिर तेरी मेहनत काम लायी है, अपना जीत भी आज इस मुकाम पर पहुँच गया है। कितने सारे लोग आये हैं।" वह कुछ न बोली हलकी सी मुस्कान के साथ सास को शुक्रिया कह कर उनके पैर छू लिए। सास ने उसे आशीर्वाद दिया वीर के बारे में पूछा और बिना भैरवी से आँखें मिलाये आगे चली गई। लेकिन भैरवी ने उनका अचानक नज़र चुराना नोटिस किया और उनके शब्दों "अपना जीत" पर गौर करने लगी।

तभी वीर का फ़ोन आया "कैसा चल रहा सब ? माँ आई या नहीं ?" फ़ोन पर वीर ने पूछा "हां वीर सब बहुत ही शानदार है बस तुम्हारी कमी है। तुम ठीक हो ना ?" भैरवी ने नम आवाज़ में पूछा। उसके पति वीर जो किसी काम से शहर के बाहर गए थे आज के खुशी के मौके पर शामिल नहीं हो सके थे। भैरवी ने मन में कहा "कितने अरमान थे उनके भी जीत के इस अचीवमेंट के समारोह में आने की, मगर कोई बात नहीं फ़ोन तो किया"।

मंदा जीत के पास पहुँची तो जीत व्हीलचेयर से ही झुक कर उनके पेअर छूने का उपक्रम किया। दादी ने जीत को कस कर गले से लगा लिया। "दादी देखो मेरा अवार्ड, थैंक यू आने के लिए आओ मेरे दोस्तों से मिलो" चहकते हुए जीत मंदा को अपने दोस्तों से व मेहमानों से मिलाने लगा। भैरवी कुछ ही दूर से अपनी सास को जीत से प्यार से मिलते हुए देख कर भावुक हो उठी। वह अपनी सास के शब्दों "अपना जीत" पर विचार करने लगी और अतीत में खो गई।

वीर और भैरवी की शादी के दस साल बाद तक बच्चे नहीं हुए थे तो भी उनके प्यार में कभी कमी नहीं आई थी। लेकिन घर में सास के ताने आये दिन भैरवी को सुनने पड़ते थे। बावजूद इसके वह हमेशा खुश ही रहती थी। घर आये हर मेहमान का वह दिल से स्वागत करती थी, सभी रिश्तेदार उससे खुश रहते थे।

एक दिन वीर ने उससे पूछा "तुम इतना कुछ सह लेती हो और फिर भी खुश रहती हो, कैसे ? माँ तुम्हारे बारे में अक्सर शिकायत करती रहती है लेकिन तुम! तुमने कभी कोई शिकायत नहीं की, क्यों?"

"अब शिकायत करके क्या फायदा तुम हो न मेरे साथ फिर मुझे किसी बात की कोई कमी भी तो नहीं है। बस तुमने कहा इसलिए नौकरी भी नहीं की घर पर रह कर कई एक्सपेरिमेंट्स कर लेती हूँ, खाने के, घर सजाने के, बागवानी के और इन सब में मुझे कुछ ज्यादा याद ही नहीं रहता किसने क्या कहा। शाम को ऑफिस से आ कर जब तुम अपने काम का हिस्सा समझ कर मुझे सब बातें बताते हो, तो दिन भर की थकान वैसे ही दूर हो जाती है। अब तुम ही बताओ कुछ और कब सोचूँ ?"। भैरवी ने चहकते हुए प्यार से जवाब दिया। वीर उसकी गोल बड़ी-बड़ी आँखें देखता रहा और मुस्करा दिया।

"बस यही वो मुस्कान है जिसने मेरा दिल जीत लिया है" भैरवी ने कहा तो वीर बोल उठा तुम भी ना कमरे के बाहर तो सुघड़ बहु हो और कमरे के भीतर फ़्लर्ट करती हो। हमारी कोई नई शादी थोड़ी हुई है पुरे दस साल हो गए और तुम हो की अब भी वैसे ही बचकानी हरकतें करती हो"।

"अब जाने दो तुम भी ना, कब समझोगे ? सुन लो गौर से तुम्हारे साथ तो ज़िन्दगी भर फ़्लर्ट करती रहूंगी मैं"। और दोनों जोर से हंस पड़े।

वक्त व हालातों के साथ भैरवी को समझाते करने आ गए थे। लेकिन उस शाम वह थोड़ी बैचैन थी। "वीर आज तुम थोड़ा जल्दी आ जाओ मुझे हॉस्पिटल जाना है" उसने वीर को फोन पर कहा तो वीर ने घबरा कर पूछा "सब ठीक है ना, माँ और तुम"।

"हाँ-हाँ सब ठीक है तुम घर आओगे तो बताउंगी" कह कर उसने फ़ोन रख दिया और तैयार होने लगी।

सास को लगा आज फिर ये दोनों कोई फिल्म देखने का प्रोग्राम बना रहे तो उसने भैरवी को कई सारे काम बता दिए। भैरवी ने वीर के आने तक सब काम ख़त्म किये और वीर के आने के बाद चाय पी कर दोनों घर से निकल गए।

"बता भी दो क्या बात है, मुझे थोड़ी घबराहट हो रही है"।

"तुम मुझ पर विश्वास रखते होना बस मेरे साथ चलो"। दोनों अपने फ़ैमिली डॉक्टर से मिले और भैरवी की जांच के बाद वह वीर से बोली "बधाई हो आप पिता बनने वाले हैं"। वीर ने भैरवी की तरफ देखा तो उसने शर्म से नज़रे झुका ली।

वीर ने उसे गले लगा कर कहा "पहले ही बता देती मुझे घबराहट में देखना अच्छा लग रहा था क्या तुम्हें ? नाँटी कहीं की"। दोनों ने घर आ कर मंदा को खुश खबरी सुनाई तो मंदा की खुशी का ठिकाना न रहा।

आज तुमने मुझे खुश कर दिया बेटा अभी कुछ मीठा बनाती हूँ, बहु का मुहं मीठा तो करवा दू इस खुशी के मौके पर। आखिर दादी बनने वाली हूँ मैं। अब बताउंगी सब मोहल्ले वालों को हमारे घर भी पोता आने वाला है"। कह कर मंदा किचन में

चली गई।

भैरवी सास का यह रूप देख कर दंग रह गई बोली कुछ नहीं वीर को देख कर आँख मार दी। वीर उसकी इस हरकत पर सकपका सा गया बस मुस्करा कर सोफे पर बैठ गया।

धीरे- धीरे सास के व्यवहार में परिवर्तन सा आ गया वह भैरवी को ज्यादा काम नहीं करने देती। पड़ोसियों से गपशप कम करके वह बहु के कामों में हाथ बंटाने लगी। भैरवी भी खुश थी क्योंकि उसकी वजह से ही माँ बेटे में जो कई बार तकरार हो जाया करती थी वह अब समाप्त सी हो गई थी।

उस दिन अचानक भैरवी के पेट में दर्द उठा तो मंदा ने घबरा कर उससे कहा "मुझे वीर का नंबर मिला कर दे मैं उसे बुला लेती हूँ " लेकिन भैरवी को जैसे कुछ सुनाई नहीं दे रहा था वह दर्द से कराह रही थी उधर मंदा उसका फ़ोन ले कर पड़ोस के शिखर को वीर का फ़ोन मिलाने चली गई। जब शिखर ने दरवाजे के बाहर से भैरवी का कराहना सुना तो मंदा से कहा

"आंटी, भाभी को हम लोग हॉस्पिटल ले चलते हैं रास्ते में वीर पाजी को फ़ोन कर देंगे " मंदा ठहरी पुराने ख्यालों वाली, उसने कहा "वीर नाराज़ हो जायेगा, और उसकी पत्नी को कोई पराया पुरुष हॉस्पिटल ले कर जाए यह तो मुझे भी ठीक नहीं लगता "।

"लेकिन आंटी आप देखिये तो सही भाभी की हालत, वीर पाजी को आने में ही एक घंटा लग जायेगा, आप समझने की कोशिश करिये " कह कर शेखर ने वीर का फ़ोन मिला कर अपनी माँ को घर से बुला लिया और सब बता दिया। शेखर की माँ ने भी मंदा को समझाने की कोशिश की किन्तु उसने ना कर दिया।

वीर ने फ़ोन नहीं उठाया, तो शेखर ने फिर कहा "वीर पाजी शायद किसी मीटिंग में होंगे तो फ़ोन नहीं उठा रहे हैं आंटी, आप माँ को भी साथ ले चलो मैं अकेला थोड़ी ले जा रहा हूँ भाभी को हॉस्पिटल "

शेखर की माँ ने भी भैरवी को दर्द में देखा तो उन से रहा नहीं गया मंदा से बोली "तुम क्यों अपनी बहु की व उसके बच्चे की दुश्मन बन रही हो। शेखर ठीक ही तो कह रहा है हॉस्पिटल में सब जानते हैं हम अच्छे पड़ोसी हैं। अगर समय पर हॉस्पिटल नहीं पहुंचे तो कहीं कुछ लेना का देना न पड़ जाए फिर यह बात हो जाएगी पड़ोसियों ने मुसीबत के समय मदद नहीं की"।

लेकिन मंदा थी की अपने फैसले से टस से मस नहीं हुई।

अब भैरवी से रहा नहीं गया "माँ मुझे हॉस्पिटल जाने दो , आंटी सही कह रही है, अभी तो मेरे डेलिवरी को तीन हफ्ते बाकी है और पानी भी निकल रहा है। मैं नहीं चाहती मेरे बच्चे को कोई प्रॉब्लम हो। और फिर डॉक्टर ने भी यही हिदायत दी थी की कुछ भी बात हो तो तुरंत हॉस्पिटल आ जाना। अब वीर फ़ोन नहीं उठा रहे तो उनका इंतज़ार नहीं कर सकते। उन्हें मेरा नाम बता देना, शेखर के साथ जाने के लिए मैंने जिद की थी , प्लीज़ माँ मुझे जाने दो यह दर्द असहनीय हो रहा है " एक ही सांस में दर्द भरी आवाज़ में रुक रुक कर भैरवी ने अपनी बात ख़त्म की और शेखर की माँ से शेखर को टैक्सी बुलाने के लिए कह दिया।

मंदा पहले तो कुछ नहीं बोली फिर अनमने मन से उनके साथ हॉस्पिटल जाने के लिए तैयार हो गई। चलते हुए उसने फ़ोन भी ले लिया और वीर के फ़ोन का इंतज़ार करने लगी। सोच रही थी 'आज अगर मुझे फ़ोन करना आता तो शेखर को बुलाने की ज़रूरत ही नहीं पड़ती और इस तरह वीर के बिना बहु को हॉस्पिटल नहीं ले जाना पड़ता'।

डॉक्टर ने भैरवी की हालत देख कर ऑपरेशन करने की सलाह दी और वीर को जल्द बुलाने की बात कही। अब भैरवी तथा मंदा दोनों ही घबरा गए। शेखर ने कहा "भाभी वीर पाजी के ऑफिस का नंबर है क्या आपके मोबाइल में "। यह कह कर वह खुद ही नंबर दूँदने लगा। और इस तरह वीर तक यह बात पहुंची तो वह आनन-फानन में सब काम छोड़ कर ऑफिस से हॉस्पिटल की तरफ बेतहाशा सा बाइक दौड़ाने लगा।

वीर सर आपकी पत्नी की हालत नाजुक है, इनकी एमनियोटिक थैली फट गई है जिससे काफी पानी बह गया है, अतः बच्चे को कुछ भी हो सकता है"। डॉक्टर से यह सुन कर वीर घबरा गया और ऑपरेशन की सहमति देते हुए कुछ पेपर्स पर हस्ताक्षर कर के ऑपरेशन थियेटर के बाहर बैचेनी से चक्कर लगाने लगा।

मंदा अब भी वीर को देख कर डर रही थी क्योंकि उसके बगैर बहु को हॉस्पिटल ले आई थी वह। तभी वीर ने शेखर को धन्यवाद दिया कि वह भैरवी को वक्त पर हॉस्पिटल ले आया और उसे सूचना दी।

जब डॉक्टर ने लड़का होने की बधाई दी तो सब के मुरझाये से चेहरे खिल उठे। सब गले मिल कर वीर को व मंदा को बधाई दे रहे थे। वीर ने जब डॉक्टर से कुशलता के बारे में पूछा तो डॉक्टर ने कहा "अभी तो सब ठीक है किन्तु एक महीने बाद इसकी फिर से गहराई से जांच करनी पड़ेगी तभी कुछ कह सकते हैं"।

जीत जब एक महीना हुआ तो डॉक्टर ने बताया "जन्म के वक्त हुई दिक्कतों की वजह से उसे सेरेब्रल पाल्सी हो गया

और जीत को सेरेब्रल पाल्सी का मोनोप्लेजिया (Monoplegia) प्रकार हुआ है। भैरवी व वीर ने इस प्रकार का नाम पहले कभी नहीं सुना था, अतः वीर ने थोड़ा और विस्तार में इस बारे में पूछा तो डॉक्टर ने कहा " सेरेब्रल पाल्सी (cerebral palsy) में सेरेब्रल का अर्थ मस्तिष्क के दोनो भाग तथा पाल्सी का अर्थ किसी ऐसे विकार या क्षति से है जो शारीरिक गति के नियंत्रण को क्षतिग्रस्त करती है। यह मस्तिष्कीय क्षति बच्चों के जन्म के पहले, जन्म के समय और जन्म के बाद तीन वर्ष तक कभी भी हो सकता है इसमें जितनी ज्यादा मस्तिष्क की क्षति होगी उतनी ही अधिक बच्चों में विकलांगता की गंभीरता बढ़ जाती है। जैसा की मैंने बताया आपके बेटे को मोनोप्लेजिया है, इस श्रेणी के अंतर्गत आने वाले प्रमस्तिष्कीय पक्षाघात में बच्चे का कोई एक हाथ या पैर प्रभावित होता है। जीत के दायें पैर पर इसका प्रभाव होगा अतः उसके दायें पैर की ग्रोथ धीरे व कम होगी जिसकी वजह से उसके चलने में बाधा उत्पन्न हो सकती है "। यह सुन कर भैरवी ने रोना शुरू कर दिया, रोते हुए वह बेहोश होते-होते बची। डॉक्टर ने कहा "आपको इस सच्चाई को स्वीकार करना ही पड़ेगा तभी आप अपने बच्चे का व खुद का खयाल रख पाएंगे"।

वीर ने घर आ कर जब मंदा से यह सब कहा तो मंदा सुन्न रह गई और बहु से कई दिनों तक बात नहीं की। भैरवी की दिनचर्या में बदलाव आ गया वह अब अधिक समय जीत की देखभाल में बिताने लगी और डॉक्टर से बात करके थैरेपी के लिए ले कर जाने लगी। उसने हालातों से फिर एक बार समझौता कर लिया था।

मंदा को बहु का रोज़-रोज़ घर से बाहर जाना खटकने लगा था और वह भैरवी पर रोक-टोक लगाने लगी। मंदा ने जब से जीत की विकलांगता के बारे में सुना तो वह जीत से भी कम ही खेलती। पड़ोसियों के द्वारा पूछे जाने सवाल के जवाबों से बचने के लिए पड़ोस में भी आना-जाना कम कर दिया।

एक दिन अचानक मंदा ने भैरवी को रोकते हुए कहा "तूने ही बच्चा पैदा किया है क्या? तेरे तो सिर्फ एक ही बच्चा हुआ है। हमने चार-चार बच्चे पैदा भी किये और पाले भी हैं, वो सब सही सलामत हैं। लेकिन मजाल है यूँ घर से बाहर कभी गए हों। तेरा ये रोज़-रोज़ घर से बाहर जाना मुझे पसंद नहीं है, रिश्तेदारों के घर आने पर तेरा घर से बाहर रहना ठीक नहीं लगता है। मुझे से उन्हें ज़वाब नहीं दिया जाता अब। और हाँ सुन ! मुझे मत सीखा बच्चे के बारे में। रोज़-रोज़ कहीं नहीं जाएगी तू" मंदा ने सख्ती से अपनी बहु को हुकुम दिया।

"लेकिन माँ जब मेरा जीत साल भर का हो कर भी ठीक से चल नहीं पा रहा है तो डॉक्टर की सलाह से थैरेपी लेने में हर्ज़ ही क्या?"

"मैंने कह दिया ना की तू इसे ले कर कहीं नहीं जाएगी। आज आने दे मेरे बेटे को तेरी शिकायत नहीं की तो देख लेना"।

"उन से पूछ कर ही तो मैंने जाना शुरू किया था और अभी तो सिर्फ आठ महीने ही हुए हैं जीत के बैठने में काफी फर्क पड़ा है, वह सहारे के बीना बैठने लगा है, ईश्वर ने चाहा तो यह अपने पैरों पर खड़ा भी हो जायेगा। उससे भी बड़ी बात वीर को भी यह देख कर खुशी हो रही माँ। मुश्किल से तो उम्मीद का दिया जला। आप क्यों नहीं समझ रही हो इस बात को"। इस बार भैरवी ने थोड़ा सख्ती व निवेदन के मिक्स भाव से अपनी सास को जवाब दिया तो मंदा का गुस्सा तेज़ हो गया, वह पैर पटकते हुए अंदर चली गई।

भैरवी ने एक गहरी सांस ली और जीत को गोद में ले कर धीरे से घर के दरवाज़े को खोला और बाहर निकल गई।

शाम को घर में अजीब सा माहौल था कोई किसी से बात नहीं कर रहा था। सब ने खाना खाया भैरवी जब सब काम निबटा कर अपने कमरे में आई तो वीर के मायूस चहरे को देख कर एक बार तो दया से भर गई फिर सास की बात याद करके दिल को सख्त किया और किसी भी सवाल का ज़वाब देने को तैयार हो गई। भैरवी को अब आदत सी हो गई थी ताने सुनने की। लोगों का उस पर बल्ले लगाना एक आम सी बात हो गई थी। जैसे वही जिम्मेदार है अपने बेटे की विकलांगता के लिए।

पहले तो वीर कुछ नहीं बोले, जीत के साथ बातें करने लगे। फिर धीरे से बोले "भैरवी माँ ने कहा की तुम्हें तलाक दे दूँ और दूसरी शादी कर लूँ ताकि एक स्वस्थ बच्चा पैदा कर सकूँ "। भैरवी सामान्य होते हुए बोली " तो यह कौनसी नई बात है। यह उनका फैसला है, मुझे तुम्हारा फैसला सुनना है वीर। वैसे मैंने भी एक फैसला लिया है, अब मैं इस घर में नहीं रहूँगी "। वीर सकपका सा गया यह सुन कर लेकिन अपनी माँ के बारे में सोच कर कुछ नहीं बोला।

भैरवी ने कुछ ही दिनों में किराए का घर ले लिया और वीर को न चाहते हुए भी माँ घर का छोड़ना पड़ा। वह दो भागों में बंट सा गया, माँ के बहुत से काम अब भी उसे करने पड़ते थे। माँ अब भी उसे भैरवी से व जीत से दूर रखने के बहाने दूँदती रहती। भैरवी ने उसे समझाया "माँ के पास उनके दूसरे बच्चे हैं लेकिन हमारे पास केवल हमारा एक ही जीत है। इसे ज़िन्दगी में एक इंडिपेंड इंसान बनाना ही मेरा उद्देश्य है। तुम इसमें मेरा साथ दोगे तो भी ठीक है नहीं दोगे तो भी ठीक है"। कह कर भैरवी ने जीत की तरफ देखा जो मासूमियत सी मुस्कान से दोनों की तरफ देख रहा था। "देखो उसकी मुस्कान, बिलकुल तुम्हारी जैसी है बिलकुल वैसी जिस पर मेरा दिल फ़िदा है और हमेशा रहेगा "। यह सुन कर वीर को अपनी गलती का एहसास हुआ जीत के

पांच साल का होने के बाद तक भी वह जीत की विकलांगता को स्वीकार नहीं कर पाया था। ऊपर से मज़बूत दिखने वाला वीर अपनी माँ के तानो से कमज़ोर सा हो गया था। किन्तु अब उसने भैरवी का साथ देने का फैसला कर लिया था।

तभी म्यूजिक के शोर से भैरवी अतीत से वर्तमान में लौट आई और सोचने लगी, जिस सास ने बचपन में जीत को दादी का प्यार देने से इंकार कर दिया था वही आज उसे "अपना जीत" कह रही है। यह सोचते हुए भैरवी की आँखों में आंसू आ गए जिन्हें उसने सब से छुपाने की कोशिश की। तभी उनकी फॅमिली डॉक्टर ने उसे रोते हुए देख कर कहा "भैरवी क्या बात है ? तुम आज भी रो रही हो। आज तो तुम्हें खुश होना चाहिए और खुद पर गर्व होना चाहिए तुमने अपने बेटे को खुद के पैरो पर खड़ा होने में दिन-रात एक कर दी और आज तुम्हारी मेहनत रंग लाई है। तुम्हारे बेटे को अचीवमेंट अवार्ड मिला है। "

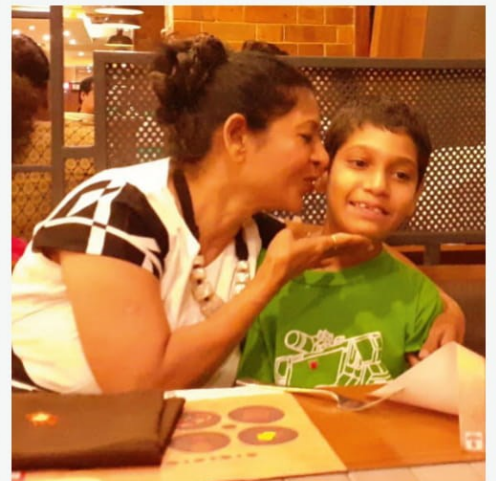
"नहीं बस वीर को मिस कर रही हूँ , काश वो भी यहाँ होते तो अपनी आँखों से यह सब देख कर मुझसे भी अधिक खुश होते ।" कह कर उसने संयत होने का प्रयास किया। "आपका आभार डॉक्टर जो समय पर आपने हमें सब जानकारी दी जिससे हम जीत को अर्ली इंटरवेंशन के ज़रिये आवश्यकताओं के अनुसार उसके विकास पर कार्य कर सके ।"

वह डॉक्टर के गले लगते हुए बोली "वीर का साथ नहीं मिलता तो पता नहीं मेरा जीत आज यहाँ पहुँच पता भी या नहीं। उनका भी अथक प्रयास रहा है जीत को विभिन्न तरीके के उपकरण व सुविधाओं को तलाशने व उपलब्ध करवाने में । इसमें आपका मार्गदर्शन व प्रोत्साहन बहुत काम आये है। लोग कुछ भी कहे लेकिन सचमुच में मेरा जीत बेहद भाग्यशाली है, मेरे जीत की जीत हुई है ।"

- सुजाता वर्मा

Parent's Point of view

The morning of 24 February 2005 was a turning point in my life - as I had given birth to twins after 14 years of marriage. I was overjoyed on receiving my twins. Mukund was a quick learner and very intelligent. He is very vigilant and gets to know if a person is talking about him to someone else. He used to study in a normal school till the age of four, but later he started having convulsions and fits due to which his brain was affected. He then started to go to SRCC school in the morning and to Deel school in the afternoon for speech therapy but he was told that he needed more attention and so he took admission in the Sadhana School where he studied for 5 to 6 years. He is a very naughty and adamant child and always does what he likes even though someone will stop him from doing it. He liked swimming and cried when someone told him to leave the pool but as years passed by, a phobia entered in his mind and now he does not like swimming. He likes to board aeroplanes, trains and buses and spends time by watching television and playing cricket. After studying in Sadhana he started studying in ADAPT, Colaba, as the fees at Sadhana were high and he could only be there for half a day. As years passed on, his convulsions increased and his body and mind started getting affected. He is showing a little progress in ADAPT and has started eating finger food on his own and we hope that his convulsions will stop and he becomes normal soon. Mukund has greatly influenced our lives and filled it with happiness. Mukund being a special kid - has inspired me to become a special kind of person and I believe that God doesn't gift special kids to special parents. He takes ordinary, imperfect people and gifts them with his greatest treasures and therein, he creates special parents.



Written by...

Mrs Kiran Anil Patel mother of Mukund of a student studying in NIOS at ADAPT Colaba and has cleared the A level this year with good results...



A Clarion call

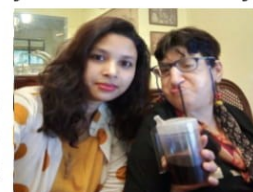
By Malini Chib

While the current situation of global health crisis due to COVID-19 threatens all members of society, people with disability are the worse hit due to attitudinal, institutional and environmental barriers that are reinforced in the COVID-19 response. The problem for people with disabilities in the present situation of the country's lockdown doesn't stop with food and other everyday supplies, the problem ranges from medical visits to access to medicine and caregivers among others.

The government has issued guidelines and instructions for the safety of people with disabilities including giving access to medicine, provision of passes to caregivers and other essential needs to cope with the lockdown. But there is lack of practical demonstrations of the same and the actual implementation of the issued guidelines needs long-term preparedness and mass awareness on disability, among many others. *The Times of India* has recently shared a story of how the response team made by the Government failed to understand sign language used by people with hearing and speech impairment. The challenges faced by disabled people and their families due to COVID-19 have largely been ignored.

Amidst this devastating crisis, nobody bothers to take a look at disabled people and how they are surviving. Only a handful of disabled people like me are living at home and can have my meals cooked by people who work for me and my mother round the clock.

Well it is tremendously challenging and demanding. Some of them need help with their daily living functions and cannot do without human help. It is irksome to have a helper with you 24x7 but it's vital for survival. A carer and a disabled person cannot afford to maintain social distance as the disabled person needs minute by minute help.

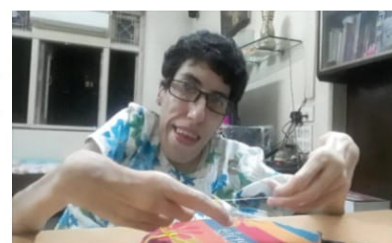


Malini with her carer

I know many disabled people who live on their own and are reliant on members of the community to come in to do their work and leave. Even in my case, while I have a carer, my mother still puts in her utmost effort in supporting me. Ever since the lockdown, I have been overanxious and my heart is filled with curiosity and intrigue about disabled people living and surviving on their own.

Here are a few examples:

Zenia Malegamwala, from ADAPT, who has Arthogryphosis Congenial Multiple Complex disability and uses a wheel chair shares her experiences, "The lockdown completely deprived me of going out of the house, as I stay on the second floor of a building which has no lift, and am completely dependent on helpers to take me up and down two floors. Now with no helpers allowed, due to the Coronavirus scare, I have become house bound. I live with my parents, who are quite old and though they look after my needs throughout the day, lifting me up and down two floors, is quite impossible for them".

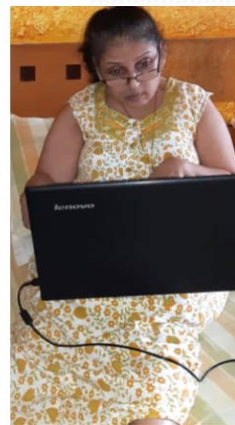


Farhan Contractor, from ADAPT, who has a severe cerebral palsy (CP) sharing his lockdown experience said it was very difficult for him as he was left without his helper for the first five days of lockdown. His sister tried reaching the Ministry but to no avail. Luckily, the carer managed to go to his place later. "I am totally dependent on her as she



does all from feeding to movements for me". He also shared that being stuck at home for the last three months was a very difficult experience and going out after months of lockdown with a mask on was tiresome as mask makes breathing difficult.

Ruma Kirtikar, is a 55 year old woman with cerebral palsy. She is staying at Thane with her sister and her husband. She recalls, "I am stuck at home since 22nd March 2020. I am aware that everyone is facing same problems but now the government has started unlocking some areas, still I have to stay at home because of my disability. It seems it is more dangerous for us going out in COVID-19. I don't know how long this is going to remain. I am getting scared now that after this problem gets over, will I be able to walk when I go out? Since last 6 months, I am at home. I am independent at home but what about when I step out of the house? We are not sure when. It may be after one more month or six months or maybe after a year, God knows."



I can't even go to my own flat as there are cases found every 2 or 3 days. My hair has grown longer and it needs to be cut, for that even I can't go, though the salons are open. In our house, after unlocking only my sister goes out though she is turning 60 this December, my brother-in-law goes out rarely because he is 65 and I am 55 but still I can't go because I am disabled. I don't know when the vaccine will come and this will end. Now a days, I am getting more scared thinking if I get Corona then what? Because for certain things I need help, I hear that after going to hospital, patient's families are not allowed to meet them. It is very scary. Now I can't even travel independently. I need help. I wish this Corona goes soon."



Nilesh Singit, a severely disabled man says that because of the pandemic he did not do his thrice a week dose of exercise. This has really affected his body and makes his body extremely tense and rigid.

Lucas Baretto, having polio says that his legs are gets swollen because he can't go out or travel during lockdown which he used to do early and be fit.



These challenges faced by people with disability once again highlights that in order to successfully overcome such challenges, more persons with disabilities must be included in all decision-making and plans to manage the current COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. This implies that information and guidelines provided by government to prevent infection and how to act in case of illness must be made easily available in accessible formats. And lastly, restriction measures should be adopted taking into consideration the needs of disability. It is important to remove barriers that the group faces in accessing health services and hygiene products.

Due to our inability to say or act, we remain voiceless and powerless unable to voice our opinions and thoughts. Society needs desperately to change. Society should be open to listen to different kind of voices, only then society will change and include the marginalised and disabled people.



Malini with her mother, Dr. Mithu Alur

ADAPT

My initiation into the ADAPT fold, came at a time when I was mourning the loss of my mother who passed away after a brief illness in 1999, at the age of 70 and now as I myself approach the age I think it bears reflection.

I wished to do something meaningful, and several years earlier, I had occasion to visit the setup at Bandra, when I read about the new centre that had opened at Bandra Reclamation. I was amazed at the number of children in attendance, as I had not been exposed to disability. I presume this was because everything being inaccessible disability was invisible, except for a few brave visually impaired persons, who made their way through crowded streets hoping their white cane would keep them from being pushed aside by the crowds at the railway station.

So, in 1999 quite by chance, (or was it destined?) I happened to see an advertisement in the newspaper for an opening at ADAPT (formerly The Spastic Society of India) and I decided this was it. I was delighted to be selected and my first day was a revelation to me.

As I mentioned earlier, my experience with disability was limited to my grandparents whom I read the paper to and helped with minor jobs. So it amazed me to see the way that the teachers handled so many children with such love and ease, and there I was so afraid engage with them lest I hurt them in any way. Initially I was overzealous and kept pre-empting the needs of the persons whom I interacted with and later realised that this was not the right way. It appeared to them that I was condescending and so I had to restrain myself and only help when asked. This took a bit of time for me, as my actions were spontaneous and I had to hold myself back.

My biggest anxiety was interacting with persons whom I could not understand verbally. The more stressed I got about this, the more difficult I found it to follow their conversation, and asking them to repeat was very embarrassing for me. Finally, I put aside my stress and found that I could understand more easily, my conversations with Sushma got longer and I was so relieved to know that I was holding myself back because of my apprehensions.

After that hurdle had been overcome, I was more at ease with everything and I enjoyed the friendship of all my colleagues. I especially enjoyed our conferences and meeting up with all our partners, welcoming them as they arrived at the airport. Amena and myself waiting for them with a name placard and finally the delight when they emerged!

The conferences were planned meticulously by Dr Alur and when they were hosted at the Centre, she looked into every little detail regarding their accommodation and their comfort, that besides planning the conference schedule and topics of discussion. She is truly incredible and I admire her energy and passion. Her team of Varsha and Ami were her stalwarts, not to mention Mr Alur who quietly made very significant suggestions.

Our one day conference on Access was a memorable one, as it was hosted by the Taj at the Crystal room and as the Taj was hosting the event we decided that there would be no fee for attendance. We were overwhelmed by the response and I must say that the staff of the Taj rose to the occasion and catered to the significant increase in numbers. It was a great success and Adapt made considerable headway subsequently, in promoting accessible transport, and accessibility to public places and buildings.

I fondly recall the get togethers after the conference, with much planning and sometimes spontaneous too. On one occasion at our conference in Cochin I remember everyone was invited to a dinner at a restaurant and I decided to use my wig. Strangely though, I was not recognised and it was really amusing to meet persons I knew, shaking hands with me as if I was a stranger.... I had to introduce myself! Later, when everyone was in good spirits everyone had a go, trying on the wig! It was hilarious. Unfortunately, I am not aware if any one did take photographs of this camaraderie!

My tenure with Adapt was something I hold close to my heart. It opened up a whole new world to me, and I treasure the close friendship I had with all whom I met and interacted with, I am happy to say that I am still in touch with them, even though it is not nearly as often as I would have liked as so many have moved on, as have I.

It was with sadness that I bid Adieu to this significant part of my life as I could not do justice to the job, because of family commitments and my aging father. But Adapt will always be a part of me. I try to keep abreast of all the events and giant strides that are being made, overseen of course by Dr Alur.

Cheers to that!

Diane Saldanha, *Former staff member of ADAPT*

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*

ADAPT & Oracle zoom event was a success!
A live Kathak performance by renowned artiste

Ms Nilakshi Rai

was enjoyed by our MNCC members and
they are asking for more!

Supported by

ORACLE



Facilitated by

CAF Charities Aid Foundation India

Mita Nundy Community Center

Welcomes you to

an event brought to you by ADAPT

Supported by Oracle and facilitated by CAF

**On 27th August'20 (Thursday)
at 4:00 PM**

ON ZOOM

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83242726676?
pwd=RlgOODhhWnFJelZ5Wkhoc00yVEtpZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83242726676?pwd=RlgOODhhWnFJelZ5Wkhoc00yVEtpZz09)

Meeting ID: 832 4272 6676

Passcode : adapt



Kathak by Nilakshi Rai





Sheetal Sawant (7th August)

Sunita Malcotia (14th August)

Kavita Rajput (14th August)

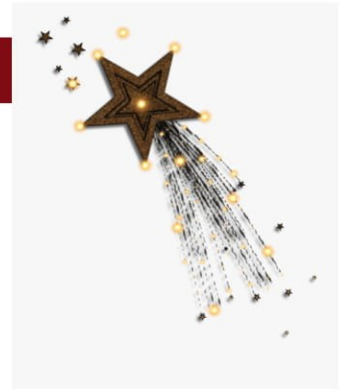
Prabha Shankar (15th August)

Ameno Catherine Rolnu (21st August)

Ruchika Shinde (27th August)

From
All at ADAPT

Shining Star



Chembur Shining!

Sangeeta Manna! You are dazzling! So brilliant! Do efficient! She gets full marks for her performance in managing zoom events and her ready acceptance for taking on and delivering whatever is assigned to her perfectly. She is a wonderful member of our team and we are proud of her!



Omrika is shining bright both for her team spirit and her coordination with other centers for online teaching. Any task given to her is happily undertaken but she sparkled and warmed all our hearts when she went to the Chembur Center to video shoot Babaji unfurling the flag! Not just that she carried treats with her for all present there. What a lovely gesture. You make our hearts swell with affection and pride!



Moumita our star video maker! She is executing ideas like a pro! Her video making is coming of age and she is excelling in her skills of teaching and training too! Moumita you are doing a super job, continue with your creativity and hardwork!



Mamata Mukherjee ! The soulful creator. Who does magic with clay and color and fabric and fire ,She has carried on brilliantly with her very tough task of online crafts and arts sessions. But she is doing stupendous work with outstanding results!

Keep shining our bright stars! Thank you!

My Lockdown Stories

For me, this beat-the-virus game began in late February by which time the footfalls of Covid-19 had already been getting louder. Vaguely apprehensive of the impending trouble, I decided not to travel to my home town - Bangalore and barely missed being locked down in that beautiful city.

Coronavirus evokes images of some invisible demon in a sci-fi horror movie running mad to catch the Homosapiens to slay them all...Or a hydra-headed monster on a killing spree, multiplying at a furious pace and sending off its clones in search of man, everywhere. Be on your guard; outpace it, outsmart it. That alone seems like the mantra for survival.

I often had a triumphant chuckle while sipping my sundowners during the lockdown days, when I read about some of my friends who were stuck in other cities owing to a vacation which they had decided to take out of the blue – and this against all good counsel from yours-truly. But all good things do of course come to an end. As my Bharat entered into Lockdown 2, my stock of well – stocked groceries had also dwindled and so had my spirits, forcing me to live in a self-imposed regimen of strict rationing as it seemed that every movement out of home was being strictly monitored by Modi-Man himself.

Old is gold

For a home-worm and a word-cum-bird lover like me, lockdown poses no Himalayan problems. With a large expanse of the mangrove-green patch outside, avian-friendly trees in the otherwise unfriendly neighbourhood, a wide stretch of road for a walk, and the view of the Arabian sea across beckoning me to spend hours looking at, it is, in a sense, even a blessing. But one thing where I lost it to corona was books. With the online supply chain snapped, I couldn't buy my 'save-for-later' books from Amazon or Flipkart. By temperament I am not given to reading any book a second time (excepting Jeffrey Archers' Tagore and Bill Watterson's – Calvin & Hobbes). To overcome this handicap, I had to dig into my old collection, dust it off, and ended up striking gold! Among the few that I picked up, was one that I had bought – but had hardly read - was Victor Hugo's Les Miserables. So, after the initial setback, I was in a position to thumb my nose at Covid-19 again!

Corona blues

But this novel coronavirus is a wily creature breathing down your neck, ready to grab you at every turn. There were occasions when in this see-saw battle, this vicious monster had an upper hand and scared the daylight out of me. As soon as a lockdown was announced - at the grocery store and the markets close to my place - the lack of adequate safety protocol against the virus was appalling. Let alone most of the people were without face masks and some were freely mingling, shaking hands and hugging each other. But the bigger shock comes when a young and athletic man in sportswear with unkempt beard and long unruly whiskers extending beyond his face comes and almost bumps into my son...he is coughing, sneezing and blowing, and wiping his nose and face with an overused handkerchief I am scared; and angry: both at him and at the grocery store owner for not drawing the foot circles of 6 ft space which would have prevented him from moving beyond that circled space. Why is he not even wearing a face mask...for his own and for others' sake? I feel like taking up cudgels with him. But better sense prevails. No use. The verbal diarrhoea it would trigger will aggravate rather than mitigate any potential risk. Fuming and fretting silently, I snuggle to my left and try to keep distance to the extent possible. The grocery stocking and shopping becomes an ordeal overwhelming me with fears, quite convinced that the sly fiend has outwitted and out-run me...and rather too early in this life-and-death game.

Another incident – that on hind-sight today makes me smile... *In our house, what really makes or breaks us, is our washing machine and a longstanding issue came to a boil. It was over the very complex and divisive matter of whether to use the Normal Wash or Delicate.*

It wasn't about the machine; it was about raw power and control and a tussle between my Teenage Son and a mom – who thinks who knows it all - myself. My son insisted clothes be put in 'Delicate Wash,' while I insisted on 'Normal'. Being confined to our respective rooms meant my son felt this war was his to win, and he put my clothes in Delicate Wash.

Having seen evidence of hardy and well worn garden clothes not being cleaned properly as a result of one wash, I did not agree. I brought out several stories of how certain clothes remained not too properly cleaned, but that yet did not move him. And then, like all wars, this one ended in steely silence. There was no armistice, but then, when has there been a workable one in so many decades? It was like those Israel-Palestine or Indo-Pak peace summits and accords, where the silences were louder and more menacing than all the guns and bombs and IEDs.

Guess who?

It is now the fag end of lockdown 3. Despite strictest rationing, and my promise not to venture out of the house anymore, my grocery supplies now wears a sullen, vacant look. Countrywide, the Covid-19 toll is mounting. The denouement seems nowhere near yet. The migrants' woes gnaw at the heart's core. Did the government bungle it all? Should we have been wiser and done things a few weeks before the first lockdown...like Kerala? But then we had other weighty matters to deal with perhaps. Even if late, should we have done it with more thought, better planning and foresight? While these questions now rankle and haunt, the spirits tend to droop and I see this *shaitaan* virus having the last laugh.

Finally, who wins: Corona or you and me? Well, your guess is as good as mine.

But here's to lockdown 4!

Arundhati Bose Verma

Congratulations to
Gulab Sayed,

Our Covid Warrior who received the
"Dr.Baba Saheb Ambedkar Bahu Uddheshiya Magaswargiya"
from the Samajik Seva Madal in Dharavi appreciating her work as a
Corona warrior and helping people during the lockdown.

The ADAPT family is proud of you.



Name: Omrika Rohra

Department: Education & Training

Years at ADAPT?
2 years 7 months

What brought you to ADAPT?

Google and some Divine Intervention!

An Online search for an organization- to devote a few hours to some social cause-led me to the Skills Development Centre. Ganesh Chaturthi was being celebrated that day (Thursday 24th August 2017) and I waltzed into SDC not realizing it was a holiday. BabaJi was manning the Reception area that morning and after a hearty chat, was warmly invited to stay for the invocation Prayer which was about to begin. And so this journey began...

Who inspires you?

No one person in particular. Inspiration occurs spontaneously, without intention. It sneaks up on you anytime, anywhere...moments from the outside world as well as within that move you!

Where's your favorite place in the world?

On the sea shore, or in front of a fireplace

I am passionate about:

Cleanliness, Honesty and the Outdoors!

What's your favorite movie?

Shawshank Redemption & the Lion King stand out right now...

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

Nobody.

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

Norway, to witness the 'Northern Lights' spectacle

What's your favorite family tradition?

Spit-braai and the Annual get together of the Tribe from across the country to bring in Christmas and the New Year.

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

My Parents, Paternal Grandmother

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

That I actually have a sense of humour! , and can also cook up a mean seafood paella in a potjie (pronounced 'poikie') the traditional way! A potjie is a 3- legged cast iron pot traditionally used by Dutch settlers and was introduced to Africa in the mid 1600's

Which is your favorite book?

I read widely- from Anne of Green Gables, to works of Brian Weiss , prose poetry and philosophy by Khalil Gibran to 'Pearls before Swine' comic strips.

At home we would find you doing. Cleaning/ cooking/ reading/ plant-chats/ and during Lockdown- a bit of drawing /sketching and stargazing.

The best meal you have ever had is.

A hearty Chicken soup- after a sudden weather change during a mountain stroll.

Your most memorable moment at ADAPT.

I can say working at Adapt has been-by far - the toughest and most challenging job that I have held! More like a rollercoaster ride! Everyday unfolds with new memories in the making...

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

Charlie Chaplin, he would have lots to say am sure! Or Johnny Depp (as his character Capt. Sparrow)

What would be the title of your autobiography?

It could be.. "ROOTS" or. something with the word 'Odyssey' in the title..

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

I was too busy being a child and can't recall giving it any thought...

Name the first 3 things on your bucket list.

- Learn the Waltz
- Play a musical instrument
- Study further

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

I have lived in a skiing village resort in Tyrol Austria and can ski quite well!

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

"...Whats in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet..."

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

None

Which lines or lyrics sum up your view on life?

Right now... 'Staying Alive' by the Bee Gees.
On a more serious note, it has to be Mother Teresa's "Anyway" Poem, and the African principle of 'Ubuntu'



Who You Are Makes A Difference

A teacher in New York decided to honor each of her seniors in high school by telling them the difference they each made. Using a process developed by Helice Bridges of Del Mar, California, she called each student to the front of the class, one at a time. First she told them how the student made a difference to her and the class. Then she presented each of them with a blue ribbon imprinted with gold letters which read, "Who I Am Makes a Difference."

Later, the teacher decided to do a class project to see what kind of impact, recognition would have on a community. She gave each of the students three more ribbons and instructed them to go out and spread this acknowledgment ceremony. Then they were to follow up on the results, see who honored whom and report back to the class in about a week.

One of the boys in the class went to a junior executive in a nearby company and honored him for helping him with his career planning. He gave him a blue ribbon and put it on his shirt. Then he gave him two extra ribbons, and said, "We're doing a class project on recognition, and we'd like you to go out, find somebody to honor, give them a blue ribbon, then give them the extra blue ribbon so they can acknowledge a third person to keep this acknowledgment ceremony going. Then please report back to me and tell me what happened."

Later that day the junior executive went in to see his boss, who was noted as being kind of a grouchy fellow. He sat his boss down and he told him that he deeply admired him for being a creative genius. The boss seemed very surprised. The junior executive asked him if he would accept the gift of the blue ribbon and would he give him permission to put it on him. His surprised boss said, "Well, sure."

The junior executive took the blue ribbon and placed it right on his boss's jacket above his heart. As he gave him the last extra ribbon, he said, "Would you do me a favor? Would you take this extra ribbon and pass it on by honoring somebody else? The young boy who first gave me the ribbons is doing a project in school and we want to keep this recognition ceremony going and find out how it affects people."

That night the boss came home to his 14-year-old son and sat him down. He said, "The most incredible thing happened to me today. I was in my office and one of the junior executives came in and told me he admired me and gave me a blue ribbon for being a creative genius. Imagine. He thinks I'm a creative genius. Then he put this blue ribbon that says 'Who I Am Makes A Difference' on my jacket above my heart. He gave me an extra ribbon and asked me to find somebody else to honor. As I was driving home tonight, I started thinking about whom I would honor with this ribbon and I thought about you. I want to honor you."

"My days are really hectic and when I come home I don't pay a lot of attention to you. Sometimes I scream at you for not getting good enough grades in school and for your bedroom being a mess, but somehow tonight, I just wanted to sit here and, well, just let you know that you do make a difference to me. Besides your mother, you are the most important person in my life. You're a great kid and I love you!"

The startled boy started to sob and sob, and he couldn't stop crying. His whole body shook. He looked up at his father and said through his tears, "I was planning on committing suicide tomorrow, Dad, because I didn't think you loved me. Now I don't need to."

Helice Bridges
From law-of -Attraction -Haven



1. Who was the president of the Constituent Assembly that held the 'Independence Meeting'?
2. Who was the viceroy of Independent India?
3. Name the first woman minister of Independent India.
4. What does the navy blue wheel that appears in the Indian national flag stand for?
5. Since when India had been recognized as a republic?
6. Who was the last Governor General of Independent India?
7. How many eventual presidents signed the Declaration of Independence?
8. Until when India remained a Dominion of the Crown?
9. The first Indian National Army was founded by...
10. In 1997, the year of 50th anniversary of Indian Independence, the US Senate passed a resolution, designating it as a National (US) Day of celebration of...

August is the eighth month of the year in the Gregorian calendar and its predecessor, the Julian calendar. The month of August was originally named Sextilis in Latin since it was the sixth month in the ancient Roman calendar. The name of the month was changed to August in honor of Augustus Caesar in 8 BCE.

Raksha Bandhan

On Raksha Bandhan, sisters tie a rakhi (a beautifully crafted and decorated thread) on the right wrist of their brothers as a reminder of love and protection. The brother vows to take care of his sister, and in return offers her gifts and sweets. The festival is a wonderful way of bringing the family closer together. Many women also tie rakhis on their close friends and neighbors as a sign of caring and harmony in their social lives.

Krishna Janmashtami Govinda Festival

The festival of Janmashtami commemorates the birthday of Lord Krishna, the eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The festival is also referred to as Gokulashtami, or Govinda in Maharashtra. Lord Krishna is revered for his love, compassion, playfulness and wisdom about how to live life on Mother Earth. The flute-playing god is also associated with the arts, particularly music and dance.



Hindus believe that Lord Vishnu incarnated as Krishna to bring hope and free the earth from despair caused by the tyranny of evil rulers. One such tyrant was Kamsa, who ruled Mathura in northern India. He imprisoned Lord Krishna's parents, as he'd heard a prophecy that their eighth child would destroy him. However, when the divine baby was born, Krishna's parents were magically released. His father fled with him to the nearby town of Gokul, where he was safely raised by foster parents who were gopas (cowherds). There, he wooed the village gopis (milkmaids) with his flute-playing. His eternal love affair with one of them, Radha, is very popular in Hindu mythology.



Dahi Handi is celebrated every Year the day after Krishna Janmashtami. It involves communities hanging an earthen pot filled with dahi (yogurt) or other milk-based delicacy, at a convenient or difficult to reach height. Young men and boys form teams, make a human pyramid and attempt to reach or break the pot. As they do so, girls surround them, sing with music, and cheer them on. It is a public spectacle, and well organized historic tradition of Hindus, with media attendance, prize money and commercial sponsorships. The event is based on the legend of the Krishna stealing butter and other milk products as a baby (he is also called Makhan chor), the community hiding the products by hanging them high out of his reach, but he finding creative ways to reach what he wanted.

Navroz / Parsi New Year

Navroz or Nowruz is a 3000-year-old Parsi festival which stands for the renewal of tradition and nature. Since it marks new beginnings and doing away with the old, it is also known as Parsi New Year or 'Pateti'.



While the Parsi New Year is celebrated on the first day of the spring equinox in the Middle East, for most Parsis in India, it is celebrated in the second half of the year. This year, the festival will be celebrated on 17 August.

Celebrated by the Parsi community, followers of Zoroastrianism, the festival is celebrated with huge fervor. 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 go around and visit their near and dear ones on a blessed day, 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 74th Independence Day this year. The occasion marks the nation's Independence from British rule on 15 August 1947. Most of the festivities take place around the Red Fort in Delhi, where the first Indian Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru unfurled the Indian flag. There's a flag hoisting ceremony, speech by the current Prime Minister, march of the Indian Armed Forces and paramilitary forces, kite flying, and cultural programs.



Jhapan Mela

This is a special event held in Bishnupur in tribal regions of western Bengal, Jhapan means a stage set up to exhibit tricks with snakes. And that's exactly what happens at the Jhapan Mela. Snake charmers, called Jhampanias, bring king cobras and other snakes in cane baskets and perform astonishing acts with them. The festival, which is largely of tribal origin, is celebrated in honor of the serpent Goddess Manasa, the daughter of Lord Shiva. She's worshiped for good rainfall and fertile land. It takes place on the last day of the Bengali month of Shrabon/Shravan (mid August).



Tarnetar Fair

The Tarnetar Fair is centered around the temple of Triniteshwar Mahadev (a form of Lord Shiva) in Gujarat and was originally held to facilitate the search for a spouse by members of the surrounding tribal communities. It's evolved into a spectacle of men and animals dressed up in colorful traditional attire, dare-devil stunts, folk dances, carnival rides, and handicraft stalls. The fair starts the day before Ganesh Chaturthi.

Bonderam Festival

Bonderam is Celebrated, in Panjim in Goa, on the fourth Saturday of August every year, this traditional flag festival originates from disputes over property in parts of the village. Flags were put up to mark boundaries but rival groups knocked them down. These days, the festival makes a parody of the past with mock fights and a carnival with street parade.

Ganesh Chaturthi

The spectacular 11-day Ganesh Chaturthi festival honors the birth of the beloved Hindu elephant-headed god, Lord Ganesha. The start of the festival sees huge, elaborately crafted statutes of Ganesh installed in homes and podiums, which have been specially constructed and beautifully decorated. At the end of the festival, the statues are paraded through the streets, accompanied by much singing and dancing, and then submerged in the ocean.



The festival begins on Shukla Chaturthi which is the fourth day of the waxing moon period, and ends on the 14th day of the waxing moon period known as Anant Chaturdashi.

Ganesh Chaturthi, was celebrated as a public event since the time of Maratha King Shivaji, but a Sarvajanik (Public) Ganesh idol was installed first by Bhausaheb Laxman Javale.



Lokmanya Tilak changed the festival from a private celebration to a grand public event "to bridge the gap between Brahmins and non-Brahmins and find an appropriate context in which to build a new grassroots unity between them".

Lord Ganesha is also worshiped in Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Afghanistan and Nepal

Onam

The biggest festival of the year in Kerala, Onam is a traditional 10-day harvest festival that marks the homecoming of the mythical King Mahabali. People decorate the ground in front of their houses with flowers arranged in beautiful patterns to welcome the king. The festival is also celebrated with new clothes, feasts served on banana leaves, dancing, sports, games, and snake boat races.



Muharram Festival and Taziya Procession

Muharram is the first month of the Islamic calendar. The general meaning of the adjective muharram means "banned, barred, forbidden, illegal, illicit, impermissible, prohibited, unlawful, unauthorised, unpermitted". It is one of the four sacred months of the year during which warfare is prohibited. Muharram is celebrated as the advent of the Islamic New Year by participating Muslims around the globe. It is regarded as a pious and important festival by the community. ... Muharram also marks the anniversary of the battle of Karbala, where the Islamic prophet Muhammad's grandson Imam Hussain Ibn Ali was killed. It takes place during the first month of the Islamic calendar. On the tenth and last day of the festival, known as Ashura, Sunni Muslims take taziyas (coffins of the dead, and in this case replicas of Imam Hussain's shrine) out in procession during the evening.





*Onwards
we march together*

Thank You

ADAPT Mission Statement:

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

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 become contributing citizens of India.

Solution to the Puzzle :

ANSWERS

1. Dr. Rajendra Prasad
2. Lord Mountbatten
3. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur
4. the wheel of law
5. January 26, 1950
6. C R Gopalachari
7. 2
8. Until 26 January 1950
9. Capt Mohan Singh
10. Indian and American democracy