

NOTHING FOR THE DISABLED WITHOUT THE DISABLED



I Konnect



News letter -July 2022

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Dr. Mithu Alur
 Founder Chairperson
 ADAPT

Dr. Alur's new vision and mission: ADAPT to become an International Multiversity!

The ADAPT International Multiversity for Special and Inclusive Education

Good news! We are moving to become a University under an Act of Parliament!

ADAPT has been in the field of education for the last 50 years dealing with people with special needs. In the 60's, very little existed in the way of services and with help from all quarters, government, public and private, Dr. Mithu Alur set up an organisation called The Spastics Society of India, now called ADAPT, (Able Disabled All People Together). An innovative intervention combining education and treatment under an educational setting rather than a hospital setting, was developed.

This was called the transdisciplinary approach. New methods of teaching and detection of learning difficulties were introduced in the country in 1972. The National and International Resource Centre for Inclusion was set up. This model has been replicated Pan India in 29 States of India.

Training and pedagogy on an International Level was started by Dr. Alur. A flagship course in the Asia Pacific Region called 'Community Initiatives in Inclusion' Course, was set up, supported by one of the oldest Charities, The Women's Council, UK. This course has been on for 20 years, spreading the message of inclusion in 20 countries in the Asia Pacific Region.

These countries are Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Maldives, Malaysia, Mongolia, Iraq, Jordan, Vietnam, South Korea, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Tajikistan, Tonga, and for the Tibetan Community.

New modules were set up for the Government of India's Education For All programme of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (earlier known as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

We have trained over 5000 stakeholders over the past five decades.

The services have impacted 300 million stakeholders.

We are now moving to becoming a University.

We now have the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) in India, which gives all children including disabled children a fundamental right to eight years of education. RTE incorporates a broader and more holistic view for all children, and has far reaching implications for policy, curriculum and classroom pedagogy – all elements of a good Inclusive Education (IE) practice. Inclusive education is not only about disability issue, but an educational quality issue. Inclusion goes to the heart of *reformative action and means quality education* moving to universal education or EFA. Here the belief is no child is a failure and Every Child Matters. Inclusive Education makes *education accessible to all*.

However, there is a huge lacunae that needs filling. Teachers do not know 'How To' include children with disability. There are 1.5 m. schools in the country and around 60,000 Children with Disabilities (CWD's) in regular schools. The need to make general educational system inclusive is critical. Training especially of *regular teachers* is imperative for Inclusive Education to happen. To strengthen regular teachers a compulsory module on inclusive education is to be added in all teacher education programmes. *Training should be continuous, existing schools need to be transformed with 'a whole school approach*.

The need of the hour now, is transformation of education and teacher preparation. In view of the Indian legislations RPWD Act (2016) and RTE Act (2009), and in order to close the gap between the UNCRPD mandate and the situation on the ground, there needs to be convergence between the special and general school system.

The ADAPT International Multiversity for Special and Inclusive Education will be a multidisciplinary, international institution of higher learning that offers post graduate and doctoral programmes, with high quality teaching, research, and community engagement with equal emphasis on teaching and research so that it is a research intensive University.

The Multiversity will focus on the Transdisciplinary Model which is based on a Social Model of Disability. It will have the autonomy and freedom to move gradually from one category to another, based on their plans, actions, and effectiveness. The University will not have any rigid, exclusionary categorization, but will be admitting both fee and non- fee paying students.

The Accreditation System will be developed to use appropriately different and relevant norms. Training of Teachers, Parents, Therapists, Persons with Disability, Government officials, the community at large will be addressed.

A unique, transdisciplinary approach to provide rehab and treatment services like physio, occupational and speech therapy, social and psychological counselling and remedial education will be taught under one roof. This approach is path breaking, breaking barriers between education and therapy and cutting down the 'walls' that exist between departments.

The latest treatment protocols of Neurodevelopmental Therapy (NDT) and Sensory Integration (SI) therapy called the eclectic approach together with demonstration centres will be shared within the framework of the social model.

Vision Statement

Valuing all students and staff equally. Increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from the cultures, curricula and communities within the social model. Restructuring the cultures, policies and practices so that they respond to the multidiversity of students within the current social model.

The University will have the autonomy and freedom to move gradually from one category to another, based on their plans, actions, and effectiveness. The University will not in any natural way have any rigid, exclusionary categorization, but will be admitting both fee and non-fee paying students. The Accreditation System will develop and use appropriately different and relevant norms.

The Multiversity will run Open Distance Learning (ODL) and will, over a period of time, will be developing a Hybrid Model in partnership with our constituent hubs for a large student enrolment perhaps in thousands for the creation of vibrant multidisciplinary communities which are inclusive.

The Multiversity will initially offer five Master's Degrees:

- Masters in Inclusion
- Masters in Early Childhood Care and Education
- Masters in Community Development in Inclusion
- Masters in Vocational Rehabilitation
- Masters in Management, Legislation and Policy in Disability

It will also offer Diploma Courses in the following:

- Use of Transdisciplinary Approach in the Management of Multiple Disabilities
- Disabled People's Organisations and The Social Model of Disability

The process has begun. We have submitted a Detailed Project Report to the State Government. This will be tabled in the Winter session of the State Legislature. Academic and other highly professional staff and doctors are already attached to the organisation.

Watch this space for further developments!

International collaborations

In London, Dr. Alur has had several conversations and meetings with members of The Women's Council, U.K to discuss the Asia Pacific Course that is supported by The Women's Council, U.K., the Community Initiatives in Inclusion (CII) that is to be held in January 2023. The course had not been held this year due to the pandemic. Other discussions focused on the Inclusion Matters Course scheduled for the end of August and the satellite hubs.

Dr. Alur has discussed the ADAPT International Multiversity for Special and Inclusive Education and the Golden Jubilee celebrations with Mr. Richard Heald, UK India Business Council.

Mr. Ninian Perry, Creative Director, Paragon Music, Scotland, was apprised of the events being undertaken as a part of ADAPT's Golden Jubilee celebrations. Mr. Perry has held interactive workshops for our children and staff and showcased their talents in inclusive performances earlier and Dr. Alur has invited him and his colleagues to perform at the Golden Jubilee celebrations.



Cerebral Palsy

What is Cerebral Palsy(CP)?

'Cerebral' means the disorder is related to the brain and 'palsy' means paralysis or weakness of muscles. It is a condition that affects balance, movement, muscle tone and coordination. CP is the most common neurological condition amongst infants and children that is caused due to brain damage.

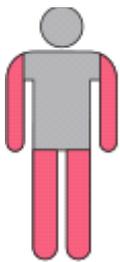
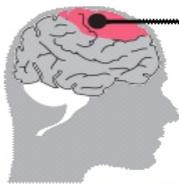
Did you know?

Any damage to the brain cells is irreversible. So, when a part of the brain is underdeveloped or damaged at birth/ early infancy, it leads to **permanent damage in the brain.**

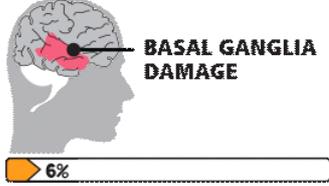
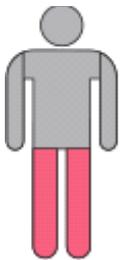
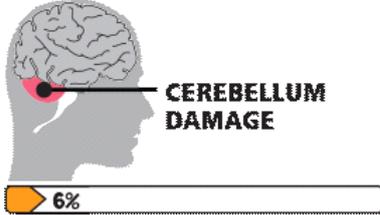
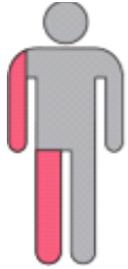
What causes the brain injury? Can it be prevented?

- Poor brain development in the womb
 - Regular ultrasound imaging and other medical tests during the pregnancy can reduce the risk of not noticing the underdeveloped brain
- Maternal infections or medical conditions (that may have negatively impacted the unborn)
 - Intimating the doctor immediately after noticing the first signs and symptoms of infection/ medical illness and adequate medical treatment for maternal infection, may reduce the risk of damage to the baby.
- Hypoxia or Disruption of blood flow to the developing brain (Anything that deprives the baby of oxygen during birth like delay in C-section, umbilical cord stuck around the baby's neck)
 - Planning a C-section when recommended, monitoring fetal heartbeat in the last weeks of pregnancy, etc can reduce the risk
- Genetic conditions (Medical conditions that are caused due to defect or absence of genes)
 - Identifying genetic conditions prevailing in the family can help couples decide if pregnancy should be avoided. Other screening tests may identify risk of genetic conditions in early pregnancy.
- Ingestion of toxins or drugs during pregnancy (Consumption of alcohol, drugs or other abusive substances during pregnancy)
 - Avoiding smoking and consumption of toxic substances by pregnant women may reduce the risk associated with it.
- Damage to the head or skull during delivery (Forceful use of forceps or a vacuum extractor)
 - Handling the forceps or vacuum extractor with better precision and care can reduce the risk of head injury during birth
- Complications related to premature delivery(Delivery before 9 months may have associated risks)
 - Regular doctor visits, healthy diet, adequate weight gain, infection control by maintaining hygiene, reduced stress, etc may help in reducing the risk of premature delivery.

What are the types of Cerebral Palsy?

By Body Part	By Brain Injury Location
 <p>Quadriplegia</p> <p>All four limbs involved. Trunk, neck, facial and oral muscles may be involved.</p>	 <p>MOTOR CORTEX DAMAGE</p> <p>70 - 80% of individuals</p> <p>Spastic cerebral palsy</p> <p>This type causes muscles to appear stiff and tight.</p>



By Body Part	By Brain Injury Location
<p>Triplegia Three limbs involved. Trunk, neck, facial and oral muscles may be involved.</p>	 <p>Dyskinetic cerebral palsy Also known as athetoid cerebral palsy. This type is characterized by involuntary movements.</p>
 <p>Diplegia Both lower limbs are involved. Upper limbs and trunk may be involved</p>	 <p>Ataxic cerebral palsy This type is characterized by shaky movements and affects a person's balance and sense of positioning in space.</p>
 <p>Hemiplegia One side of the body involved; that is the same side upper limb and lower limb involved.</p>	 <p>Mixed cerebral palsy Brain is injured in more than one location and the symptoms experienced may be presented from multiple types of CP.</p>
<p>Monoplegia Only one limb is involved, mostly one upper limb.</p>	

Quick Facts:

- Cerebral palsy is a **group of neurological disorders** and disabilities, not just one condition, and **can have secondary effects on multiple systems of the body.**
- About **80 percent** of children with the condition have **spastic cerebral palsy**, which causes increased muscle tone.
- Cerebral palsy is **more common in boys than in girls.**
- **More than half of children** diagnosed with cerebral palsy can walk independently.

A Tale of two women

- Dr. Mithu Alur

I was only 23 when I gave birth to Malini. It was traumatic, a torturous birth after 14 hours of labour. The doctor kept saying something was wrong. It turned out that the umbilical cord was wrapped around Malini's neck. And the effects of a few seconds of lack of oxygen (anoxia) lasted a lifetime.

Fortunately, my husband and my family were supportive. Though Malini gave me lot of trouble, she wouldn't stay with anyone, I hardly went anywhere.

As Malini grew up, we had to face the fact that our country did not have the basic necessities to support disabled children or adults, for that matter. My husband, who had a base in the UK, thought it was best to move there. It made a big difference. London was equipped to deal with Malini's needs. We lived relatively comfortably. Then, we returned to India.

The situation was just the same. I decided that there needs to be a change – a change in people's attitude towards the disabled, before anything else. Adjustments were small in the beginning. There was no need for a drastic change in the content of a school's syllabus. Change had to be in the way it was taught and delivered: through typewriters then, and computers now.

In the UK, I trained to be special educator. And so I set up the Spastics Society of India. I was just 29 years old. Fortunately, for me, Indira Gandhi helped a lot. She gave me the premises to set up the Society and my patron, Nargis Dutt, a wonderful woman. After her death, Sunil Dutt took over. He was just as good.

I became so involved in my work that I felt invisible. I would forget myself. Work captured my imagination. The organisation became my family. As a result, Malini and my son Nikhil, grew up on their own. I believe one doesn't need to be bound to their kids. Children don't always need mothers around. You need to be there for first five years, give them your complete attention. Of course I did have the support of a joint family and we spend our holidays together. Today, both my children are extremely bright, confident and emotionally strong.

In 1976, I got divorced. I am still friends with my husband. If a divorce was amicable, this was it. We lived separate lives, engrossed in work, and so the decision was mutual. After that I don't know where I found the courage to set up more schools. It never occurred to me, I had no money or resources. There must have been a divine power working. I had only one focus: breaking attitudinal barriers.

If I had to do it again, I wouldn't. I know the pitfalls, and how the framework of the country is disabled.

However, it has been wonderful life; of meeting sincere, honest people. I have never met people who have come and gone. Everyone stayed on. I feel privileged to share my life with such warm, affectionate people.

Today, I consider my biggest achievement as Malini's double Masters. Yes, it is her achievement, but it is the biggest thing that has happened to me as a mother.

My second husband, Sathi Alur, works with the Society as an honorary advisor. Being a CA and lawyer, he gives financial and legal advice.

What I like about him is that has a very broad outlook towards life. He never asks me what is for dinner. I guess that's why our marriage works, even though he is an NRI. Ours is a marriage of ideas. I am totally against the conventional idea of marriage. I believe in the marriage of ideology – a spiritual marriage.

More about the Spastics Society of India.

The Spastics Society of India aimed to alert the nation to the needs of children with cerebral palsy. The Society set up the first special school in India at Colaba in 1972. It started with three students. Malini, Farhan and Imitiaz. As

the school grew, more facilities started, including a teacher training college, a therapist training programme, and a skills development unit. Soon, similar schools were set up in Kolkata (1974), Delhi (1977) Bangalore (1980) and Chennai (1985).

In 1989, the Society set up two national level projects: the National Job Development Centre in Chembur to promote research, assessment, training, work experience, socialisation and placement of disabled adults. And the National Centre for Research and Training in cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities at Bandra. Today, resource facilities for those with cerebral palsy are available in over 50 per cent of the states in India.

After working on segregated education for so many years, the Society's focus has shifted to inclusion. The aim is to construct an inclusive community where all children who face barriers to learning due to social disadvantages, gender or disabilities, are included.

A government of India survey found that a staggering 98 per cent of persons with disabilities were outside the ambit of services.

MALINI CHIB

I will be 40 this year, a 40-year-old disabled woman. My disability? I find it difficult to walk and talk. I have cerebral palsy. When people meet me for the first time, they think I am dumb; incapable of thinking. They don't know that my speech and communication are receptive and expressive. I can receive information but I find it difficult to express myself. Nowadays, people say that is not a problem, just a different way of communication.

This new approach is called the Social Model, according to which a disabled person is not looked at as someone with a dysfunction, who needs to be fixed and fitted into the norm. Instead, society and its environment need to change, to become aware of differences and be inclusive.

When I reflect on my life so far, I realise I have been very fortunate to live in two cities, London and Mumbai. When I was young, there was very little for people with my type of disability in India. So I was taken abroad by my parents. I spent three and a half decades of my life going back and forth between continents. I continue to do so. This makes me a hybrid of sorts, a curious mixture of east and west.

I live at home in Mumbai. I run the house when my mother travels. I love the city, but can't be myself due to the lack of access for the physically challenged. I am isolated from others. People find the disabled awkward to talk to and interact with. Pavements are not accessible for wheelchair users. I remain imprisoned. I can only go out escorted in a car from one point to another. In London, due to the even pavements, I can zoom out on my electric wheelchair, anywhere. The supermarket, bookshops, chemist, parks, galleries, restaurants, universities, offices, you name it, I am there! The whole city is accessible and wheelchair friendly.

But when I was doing my second Masters' in Information Management, I studied at the University of North London in Holloway Road. I was allotted a two-room flat there. It was a horrible place. The college was in Ladbroke House, Islington. My journey to Ladbroke house involved two buses from Arcade (my hall of residence).

It took me a while getting used to the buses. For the first few months, friends or parents helped me. Everyone was overprotective. I was not comfortable with this. They had their own lives too. I had mastered crossing the busy roads of central London. Why couldn't I get in and out of buses by myself? I felt frustrated. I could never meet anyone spontaneously. I decide to do something about this.

The first barrier to overcome was my mother, who refused to let me go on the bus alone. I worked out a strategy. I said, 'Why don't you come with me? Pretend you are not connected to me. See how I get on and off; if people around me help me' She did it 10 times, and each time she saw that everyone helped me.

Finally, I was allowed to go on my own. Travelling alone was terrific. People said, "Is she alone?" "How can she be alone?" By the time they figured it out, I reached my destination. I indicated to the driver that I needed the ramp.

There is a special space on the bus to park wheelchairs and prams. It was scary, but I got used to it. I started going everywhere on my own, visited bookshops in Charring Cross; roamed around old haunts; met friends; went to the theatre. Once, after a meeting, I took four buses to reach; couldn't believe what I had achieved. I had overcome my mobility and motor problems. I was in a wheelchair, but I was everywhere like anyone else. I didn't have to rely on drivers and cars.

Another barrier I overcame was communication. I now use the sms. It has revolutionised my life. I communicate instantly, with anyone. Initially, I felt cell phones were not for me; they were too fidgety. Seeing my friends connect so fast, I learnt to do it despite my poor hand function.

The advantages were a million fold. Once I got off near Tavistock Square after taking three buses, and sent an sms to a friend to say I am in the area. "Let's meet", I said. My friend was so surprised to get this, she came out of her office to find me. She could not believe it. These ordinary experiences are new to me.

I am grappling with things I may not be able to change, like people's attitudes. Most people, especially in India, view me as a child. They think I should remain at home. Even employment seems far removed; offices don't provide the basic requirement of a toilet for the disabled. In India, public toilets are always very dirty and have a step leading to them. My wheelchair does not go in. Though I have a double Masters' from London, I can't work because of the toilet! It seems unreal but it is true.

That is why I feel more at home in London. I am free to move around on my own. People's attitude is positive. They value the disabled as people, and look at me as someone who they want to get to know.

Most people here think the disabled are a liability, a burden. What does a woman of 40 do? Normal, ordinary things. Why am I so special? I can live, contribute to society. People ask me, "Can you live alone?" "Can you have a relationship? Can you manage life as an adult?"

I know I will be always divided. Part of me will always go back to England to recharge, to feel that I am just another person, accepted for who I am, without much questioning and stares about my disability. But a part of me will always long to feel I am a first class citizen in India, who contributes to its progress.

I consider myself a special school survivor. I started my secondary school from the Centre for Special Education. After eight years there, I went to Thomas – Delarue in Kent, UK for two years to do my GCSEs. I came back to attend St. Xavier's College for five years. After my degree, I enrolled at the Oxford Polytechnic for a course in publishing. I thought I had finished with formal education, but living in the stimulating environment of the Institute of Education, the urge to study came over me. I enrolled to do a Masters' in Women's Studies. It was a new beginning for me, personally and intellectually.

For the first time, I was in an educational environment that saw me as a student first, and looked at my disability later. I realised I was not challenged to my full potential. At a special school, the disabled are too nurtured. Everything we do is superb and perfect. Decisions are made for the disabled by the non-disabled. The attitude towards a disabled person is pity. So disabled people tend to be passive, unable to make decisions. Special schools often focus too much on the functional ability of a disabled person, instead of looking at him/her as a citizen with the same rights as a non-disabled person. You are obliged to your teachers because your knowledge of the outside world is limited. You are not given responsibilities. Till recently, everyone, including those whom I barely knew, called me Molly instead of Malini, and considered me a child. They did not take my opinion seriously. Everything I did was 'wonderful' and 'brilliant'. This inhibits independent thinking, and curtails our right to act as citizens. The disabled are disempowered.

We are into our 50th year!

We are into our 50th year!

And we will celebrate our Golden Jubilee on the 2nd of October 2022. We are preparing for the grand event and are very excited about it. We have been busy with many activities in the Golden Jubilee year.

What a phenomenal journey it has been, moving from 3 students in 1972 to impacting 300 million! We are going all out to spread awareness and sensitise schools, colleges and corporates.

A brief on the ongoing School Contact program where the tool of storytelling is being used very successfully.

Spearheaded by our Founder Chairperson, Dr Mithu Alur, we at ADAPT (formerly known as the Spastics Society of India), have been actively involved with the process of inclusion of the differently abled and marginalized groups in society.

As part of our Golden Jubilee year celebrations, we have facilitated partnerships with schools. The partnership involves participation and involvement in events and activities, designed to create a better understanding of the inclusive space for all and working together towards enabling a more equal society.

Our first event under this initiative is a “Storytelling for Change” event in schools. These specially designed sessions for secondary school students (Stds 5- 7), involves an activity in the schools with an expert storyteller cum facilitator conducting a 1 hour interactive storytelling session.

The customized stories and content created by Ms Sudipta Dhruva of ‘Storytelling Works’ is based on the theme of inclusion and has picture panels as visuals and an interactive segment and worksheet, to allow for greater engagement and involvement. Ms Namaha Mazoomdar, a storyteller with dance and theatre training conducts the sessions.

The participants of these sessions are then, as “Inclusion Ambassadors,” required to spread further awareness within the school through conducting activities and engagements designed by them.

A culmination event conducted during the International Inclusion Week (End September 2022) will have representatives from the school come and share their work.

The ongoing activity has had partnership of 15 mainstream schools of Mumbai with over 3000 participants at the sessions. A further outreach to Asha schools (Army schools) in other states, using a digital format of the activity is in the process.

Activity Feedback

1. Billabong High School, Santacruz

It was a wonderful session conducted by Ms Namaha. All the students loved it. It was definitely an add on to their knowledge.

Thank you so much

Ms. Akansha (Admin Head)

2. Beacon High School

Principal Mrs Jamali mentioned that the attending teachers were very happy with the activity. She was keen that more such inclusive activities be done and said she would ensure that the follow up activities in school to spread inclusive behavior would be conducted. Having partnered with Adapt through the past many years, she was also very happy that this time around Adapt had come to their school for this interaction rather than the other way around.

3. Kentriya Vidyalaya no 3, Colaba

ADAPT द्वारा आयोजित स्टोरीटेलिंग कार्यक्रम विद्यालय में आयोजित किया गया, जिसमें कक्षा ६ और ७ के लगभग १२० बच्चोंने भाग लिया। कार्यक्रम बहुत ही शानदार और शिक्षाप्रद था, बच्चोंको काफी नया सीखने को मिला और बच्चोंने भी उत्साह पूर्वक इसमें भाग लिया।

विद्यालय कार्यक्रम संयोजक का आभार प्रकट करता है कि उन्होंने विद्यार्थियों के हितार्थ विद्यालय में यह कार्यक्रम आयोजित किया ।



Given below is a facebook post by one of our partner schools, Purushottam High School

“A very interesting session for the above topic was organised. 650 students attended the session. Miss. Catherine gave a brief introduction of ADAPT - Able Disabled All People Together. Founded by Dr. Mithu Alur in 1972, the organisation promotes inclusion by bringing able and disabled people together, bringing about a beautiful change in the society. Miss. Namaha began the session by an interactive narration of a story. One story included a boy suffering from Down’s Syndrome, who had a photographic memory and showed how a little change in our behaviour can change someone’s life. Students also filled the worksheet given very enthusiastically, participated in the activity and also wrote a 'promise' note. Through today's session students learned how we can bring a change in our society”.





Why elevating leaders with disabilities is so crucial to disability inclusion? According to Return on Disability, only 4% of businesses are focused on expanding their offerings to include disabled people. Clearly, business has a long way to go in rectifying society's persistent discrimination of the disabled community. That has to change, this activist says as Disability Pride month gets underway.

The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead once declared, “A great society is a society in which its men of business think greatly of their functions.” Reflecting on the initiatives pledged at the World Economic Forum last month, Whitehead's words certainly ring true. From decarbonizing the global economy to investing in health equity, the summit demonstrated the potential power of business to drive positive societal change.

But while businesses have been vocal in their support of environmental and geopolitical initiatives, disability firmly remains the poor relation of ESG commitments. Over 1.3 billion people across the world live with some form of disability.

ACCESS DENIED

This refusal to account for 15% of the global population is due in part to the dearth of disabled talent in positions of senior leadership. In May 2021, Tortoise Media found that no executives or senior managers within the FTSE 100 have disclosed a disability in company reporting. Denied access to the decision-making process, it is no wonder that the disabled community remains overlooked in commercial and policy offerings.

Such a staggering failure to recognize the diversity of both customers and colleagues does not harm the disabled community alone. According to research by the Purple Pound, disabled consumers are estimated to be worth \$336 billion per year to U.K. businesses. Globally, this figure is even more glaring: The disabled community and their family and friends represent \$13 trillion of disposable income worldwide. For business, catering to disabled consumers is no longer an invitation- it is a necessity. Failing to account for the disabled population poses a risk to a company's brand, employee base, and capacity to innovate. In fact, the World Economic Forum estimates that a disability-inclusive business strategy promises 28% higher revenue, double net income, 30% higher profit margins, and strong next-generation talent acquisition. With such a significant return on investment, inclusion is now a commercial imperative.

To provide the most for—and in turn, gain the most from—this significant demographic, it is crucial that disabled voices are put at the center of business strategies. To achieve this, companies must provide inclusive development opportunities for their disabled talent. Such efforts will be impossible without adequate data to assess company performance and develop streamlined progression pathways. Robust research and reporting is essential to help businesses identify and act on the needs of their disabled employees and consumers. This year, Page Group's Steve Ingham launched disability surveys of his 8,500 staff to share problems and solutions. The CEO, who became paralyzed after a skiing accident in 2019, wants other companies to adopt a similar transparency in admitting and addressing barriers to inclusion within the workplace.

Reflecting on his research initiative, Ingham stresses that “inclusive workplaces, where people with disabilities feel actively supported, valued, and offered the right tools to thrive, are imperative. But the only way we are going to get better at creating these environments is by committing to disability-workforce reporting and continually talking, asking questions, and listening to our disabled workers.” While companies may fear that recording their accessibility challenges could leave them vulnerable to public criticism, understanding this data should instead be considered a crucial first step toward improving both workforce performance and brand credibility.

BREAKING THE STIGMA

Equally, those in positions of authority must be vocal about their own disability, or create a workplace culture that encourages others to do so. Just as with other DEI targets, role models will be crucial in driving disability inclusion. Without outspoken advocates, a vicious cycle develops whereby a lack of transparency dissuades junior staff from disclosing their own conditions. And this in turn maintains the tedious pattern of shame and conformity that is preventing both organizations and their employees from reaching their full economic potential.

Sara Weller, the nonexecutive director of broadband giant BT, is a prime example of those who are using their authority and their lived experience of disability to challenge stigma in the workplace. After being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2009, Weller initially assumed that a disabled leader would be substandard for business, resigning her position as the managing director of Argos. Conscious that this perception was influenced largely by toxic preconceptions of “good” leadership, she now uses her position to champion the unique strengths that disabled



employees bring to the workplace: “The best firms now see the unique ability, rather than disability, of their disabled employees and treat disability as an opportunity not an obligation. These companies understand that a truly inclusive culture provides them with a competitive edge to better engage talent and serve customers.” Indeed, Weller's commitment to harnessing the potential of disabled staff extends far beyond rhetoric: BT has pledged to ensure that disabled people make up 14% of its workforce by 2025, and 17% by 2030.

As these executives demonstrate, the business world must reimagine the traditional perception of disability as “unable” or “less than” to instead foreground the alternative worldview and skillset that disabled candidates possess. Seen as such, disability acts almost as a corporate superpower, allowing businesses to boost customer awareness, innovation, and ultimately profits.

In a bid to capitalize on this untapped market, the global disability collective I founded (The Valuable 500) has launched a mentorship to propel disabled talent into positions of leadership. The program, which was announced at Davos, will pair 75 candidates with a C-suite mentor to support them in overcoming the barriers that traditionally prevent disabled employees from progressing beyond middle management. In turn, the executives will gain a practical insight into both the inclusion gaps within their business-line strategies and the lived experience of their disabled employees and consumers. With early adopters of the scheme, including Deloitte, L'Oreal, and P&G, the business world has indicated a cross-sector commitment to pursue the possibilities of the disabled market. At last, disability inclusion could be set to become everyone's business.

Caroline Casey is a disability activist and founder of the Valuable 500, a global business collective dedicated to disability inclusion.

'A picture is worth a thousand words, but a memory is priceless.'

As I reflect on my days at ADAPT (originally the Spastics Society of India) I am filled with joy. As I close my eyes the time spent there in my early work life brings a smile on my face. Nothing is lost to posterity, instead it's alive and kicking. I realise that my learnings there have textured the fabric of my mind.

In 1983, while I awaited my MA (clinical psychology) results, I was called for an interview at the Navy Nagar School which had been established by Mrs Mithu Alur in 1973 with three children.

When I entered the cabin of Mrs Alur, she smiled and asked me to sit down. She looked at me lovingly as she shut the file which held my certificates. She said, "You have done well academically, but can you sing and dance?" I was unprepared for this, but thanked my degree in dance to confidently say, "Yes, I Can." Little did I know that my keen interest in dance, music and drama would be valued and help me bring smiles on the faces of the children?

I lived in North Bombay and would take a 7:01 am slow to Churchgate every day. I would reach Churchgate Station at 8:15 am and run across to Eros Theatre where the Blue Bus would be waiting to ferry us to the school at Navy Nagar. The bus would drop the staff at 3:45pm in time to catch the 4:07pm Andheri slow back home. The travel though hectic, I never felt fatigued or fed - up, instead I would be charged to leave on the 7:01 slow again the next day. The centre had a charisma which came from the combined force of electrifying colleagues, exciting students and a daily dose of new endeavours to create a healing space for the children.

I recall my first student Zubin, an autistic child who had cerebral palsy. He was obsessed with the colour blue. His chair, glass, plate was blue. He would spend hours gazing at the Blue Bus and to get him to have better eye contact different tasks had to be designed so that he would look up, focus and attend. I recall making a light board where when a switch was pressed, a light bulb would shine and he would go into an ecstatic state, focusing and attending to the task which would come up. Once during a play session, the leg of a chair struck his right toe. In spite of the pain, he didn't bat an eyelid. Zubin taught me that tolerating pain was easy, when you didn't pay attention to it. My first Aha! Learning to say, "It's No Big Deal! Life is the Best Teacher!"

Srihari had tongue thrust and so food would spill out of her mouth. I would have to roll the chappati with a little sabji (cooked vegetables) and push it gently at the side of her mouth so that her molars could chew well. Today I am grateful that she was given to me for duty. My next Aha! Learning was from her. 'To never take anything for granted, especially not your body.'

My years at ADAPT (SSI) were filled with joy as I never saw my children cry or weep. They were happy and showed team spirit. There was a genuine concern for others and times when the children would gather around and giggle at a joke. My next Aha! Learning came quickly, "Laughter has power to heal, Give it a chance to be around you!"

I remember a trip to Goa with the senior school children and my colleagues. We had to take care of their smallest discomforts and I learnt my next Aha! Lesson on non- judgment from Nilesh Shah. All the children were standing in a circle on the beach and playing with the ball. All of us were having fun when we, the teachers realised that a large crowd had gathered on the side lines. Some of us felt upset and reacted to the murmurings of the crowd at the disabilities of the children. One of my colleagues shouted at the crowd, "This is not a Zoo that you keep staring at the children." Nilesh came to us on his crutches and smiled, "Why should it matter what people think? I looked at him. My anger vanished and pride took its place. It was in that moment I learnt the important lesson of 'Acceptance and Forgiveness as Life is too short to harbour hurt, pain or hate.'

There have been innumerable such moments but the one which I still recall with love is at the opening performance of the JDC at Chembur. The drama 'Ashtavakra' was performed and the fun that everyone experienced was unforgettable. I remember doing a puppet show with my colleagues for our chief patron Sunil Dutt who had visited the JDC on a special day. My Aha! Learning centred around knowing that you may be academically qualified, but if you are not emotionally endowed to express fun and frolic, success is meaningless!

The opening of the ADAPTt centre at Bandra was another milestone in the centres' time -line. My fifteen years of being as a psychologist, therapist, parent counsellor and lecturer on the teachers training program have been unforgettable. They are etched in my consciousness forever.

Each day I spent at the centre were my best, where I learnt work ethics, team spirit and to live moment to moment. I truly believe that each citizen anywhere in the world must volunteer at a DIFFERENTLY ABLED school to be ABLE!

My children have taught me that to feel empowered is easy, accept and not reject your weaknesses and work on your strengths, to respect your body, not judge it and laugh through difficult times, because nothing lasts forever!

My best Aha! Learning has been and I take inspiration from it is, "When Life throws boulders, BUILD BRIDGES!"

by Dr. Trupti Jayin

The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities.

Disha (Early Intervention and School Readiness Scheme)

What is the scheme about?

1. It is an early intervention and school readiness scheme.
2. Children in the age group of 0-10 years are eligible.
3. Provision of therapies, trainings and providing support to family members.
4. Day-care facilities to Persons with Disability for at least 4 hours in a day.
5. Batch size: 20 Persons with Disability.

Scheme Description

This scheme aims at setting up Disha Centres for early intervention for Person with Disability (PwD) in the 0-10 year age group covered under the National Trust Act, through therapies, trainings and providing support to family members. Registered Organization (RO) should provide the following minimum facilities in their Disha Centre:

I. Day Care

RO should provide day-care facilities to PwD for at least 4 hours in a day (between 8 am to 6 pm) along with age specific activities. Day care should be open for at least 21 days in a month. The minimum attendance required for a PwD in the Disha centre is 15 days per month for the National Trust to fund the PwD.

Batch size of a Disha centre is 20 PwDs and a maximum number of PwDs allowed is 30% extra of batch size i.e. 26. ROs are encouraged to apply again if they have sufficient number of PwDs for the new Disha Centre.

The RO needs to maintain a ratio of 1:1 for LIG (Lower Income Group, including BPL) and above LIG PwDs (which will be paid seats). Payment for the above LIG seats could be received by RO from parents, guardians, family members.

The ROs should also get in touch with paediatricians or experts in similar field to seek help in getting more PwD enrolled in the Disha centre.

For more Information contact: thenationaltrust.gov.in



Our loss is Canada's gain!

Namita Nair

Director of Paediatric & Adult Neuro Rehab Centre



Namita has decided to move to Canada. Namita is brilliant at her work, and her very pleasant personality and charm make her not only dependable but a wonderful person to work with.

Intelligent, capable, creative, dedicated, passionate and always forthcoming in helping others, made Namita among the brightest stars of ADAPT. Namita went beyond her call of duty, and she gave her best to many other areas at ADAPT, other than therapy. A professional like her will be a golden asset to any organisation. Beneficiaries, staff and parents will miss and remember her with love.

Namita, heartiest congratulations and we wish that you keep touching many more lives and fill people with hope, like you have been doing at ADAPT and may success take you to all those heights you have dreamed of.

Farewell to Denissia D'souza, Physiotherapist

A wonderful therapist who has worked with care and professionalism with our beneficiaries. She was not only good at her job, she also infused fresh approach and energy in her work and got results.

Thank you for your services.

Best wishes for your future endeavors.



*Wishing you
All the best*





Dr. Maneeta Sawhney - 5th July
Ms. Tsuknungtula (Atu) - 14th July
Ms. Malini Chib - 17th July
Ms. Veena Dhaifule - 22nd July
Ms. Theresa D'costa - 23rd July
Ms. Amina Marker- 26th July
Ms. Annamarie Shepherd - 26th July
&
Swami Mounanada - 31st July

Upcoming Birthdays:

Sheetal Sawant (7th August)
Kavita Rajput (14th August)
Sunita Malcotia (14th August)
Dr. Dhurv Mehta (14th August)
Catherine Ameno (21st August)
Nidhi Maria Joseph (22nd August)
Sonal Sharma (26th August)

From
All at ADAPT

Corporate Social Responsibility - Meaning, Need and its Evolution

The practice of CSR or Corporate Social Responsibility as a paradigm for firms and businesses to follow, has evolved from its early days as a slogan that was considered trendy by some firms following it, to the present day realities of the 21st century, where it is no longer just fashionable but a business requirement to be socially responsible. This evolution has been necessitated both due to the myriad problems that we as a race face, which has changed the environment under which firms operate, as well as a realization among business leaders that profits as the sole reason or *raison d'être* for existence can no longer hold good.

The reason why companies must look beyond profits is also due to the peculiar situation that humanity finds itself in the second decade of the 21st century. Given the political, economic, social and environmental crises that humans as a race are confronting, corporations have a role to play since they contribute the most to the economic well being of humanity and in turn influence the political and social trends.

Corporate Social Responsibility or CSR makes for eminent business sense as well. when one considers the knock-on effect that social and environmental responsibility brings to the businesses. For instance, corporations exist in a symbiotic relationship with their environments (the term environment refers to all the components of the external environment and not to ecological environment alone), where their exchange with the larger environment determines to a large extent, how well they do in their profit seeking endeavors.

The evolution of CSR as a concept dates back to the 1950's, when the first stirrings of social conscience among management practitioners and theorists were felt. The writings of Keith Davis starting in the 1950's and continuing into the 1970's, speak of the need for businesses to engage in socially responsible behavior and to ensure that society as a whole does not lose out in the process of profit making behavior by businesses. CSR as a concept was starting to be taken seriously by the time the 1970's dawned and through the tumultuous decade when big business and their minions were accused of several misdemeanors pertaining to rampant disregard for the environment and society as a whole.

One can trace the anxieties of activists and management theorists during this time, as they feared that the rapacious behavior of businesses and corporations ought to be checked if a semblance of social responsibility was to be maintained. Of course, both sides started to stick to their positions and this resulted in the debate over CSR getting shriller during the 1980's. I conclude the article with two quotes that illustrate the need to think beyond the ordinary and at the same time remind ourselves of the responsibility we have towards succeeding generations: The first one by Albert Einstein where he said that “problems cannot be solved from the same level of consciousness that created them” and the second one which says that “We have not inherited the Earth. We have merely borrowed it from our children.”

- An article by Prachi Juneja, reviewed by MSG

The Golden Jubilee celebrations began at Colaba with Dr. Alur's lecture entitled '*Establishing Equal Opportunities, Social Justice and Human Rights in India and the Asia Pacific*' at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, which was attended by donors, professionals, parents, disabled activists, volunteers, staff and students at TIFR, paramedical staff and students, nursing staff, and well wishers from across the world as the event was beamed on line as well.

After the bleak lockdown of two years our centres re-opened on June 13th 2022 with great enthusiasm and excitement amongst the beneficiaries and teachers. There has been a steady increase in admissions of both children with and without disability at all our centres

Some of the events and activities of the past 2 months are described below:

Colaba

With the schools fully reopening and the children coming back in person the whole center beams of enthusiasm and positive energy. We have 45 children in the nursery class and 16 children with disabilities attending the pre-vocational and NIOS classes

International Yoga Day was celebrated with all our children with great enthusiasm. It was a delight to see how diligently little children followed the instructions given.



International Yoga Day celebration

The senior staff at the center attended the orientation for the school contact programme. Staff members are actively participating in this and sharing information about our services in the mainstream schools where this is being conducted.

The academic session started with class wise parent meetings, where the schedule for the term as well as the time table was explained.

Weekly transdisciplinary team meetings of educators, therapists, counsellor, social workers and heads have met up weekly to discuss each and every child so that comprehensive care plan is provided to each beneficiary based on his / her needs and abilities.

In-service training discussed documentation in google forms and the ten domains.

Volunteers:

Keeping with our mission of sensitizing the youth we have volunteers from schools and colleges helping us through the year. This academic year we had volunteers from Navy Children School as well as special educators who had come to gain experience.

The center is also frequented by visits from the donors and academic institutions. The CSR team of HPCL visited our centre and spent time interacting with the beneficiaries.

Students from Sophia College interacted with the beneficiaries to gain insights for their project on designing clothes for persons with disability.

Bandra

A "Welcome Back to School" party was organized by the "Shakti" group of women who are a part of the HPCL team. Interactive games were organized by the ladies followed by singing and dancing to the beats of Bollywood music. They generously also donated toys, puzzles and stationary for our beneficiaries. The healthy snacks provided by them were relished by all. Our children had made Thank You cards which were appreciated by the ladies of the "Shakti" group.

International Yoga Day was also celebrated at the centre with Ms. Sujata Verma demonstrating simple yoga postures and pranayam exercises to all the children and staff. Beneficiaries repeated the exercises and indeed felt refreshed after the session.

A farewell party was organized for the Std. X beneficiaries who have done extremely well in their SSC Board Exams. The hard work and determination of Yash Damodar, Marya Khan and Aaron Rebello is commendable as they scored distinction despite Covid-19 and lockdown.

Our young adults came along with their parents and their Thank You speech for our dedicated teachers and volunteer left everyone teary eyed. ADAPT team wishes these young graduates all the best and a great future with success in all that they do!

Visits to Bandra centre: Visitors and volunteers to the Bandra centre are first given an orientation about the history of ADAPT and the breadth of the mammoth work done by Dr. Alur. Through a Volunteer Engagement Program, students from different colleges come to the centre to volunteer their time and expertise. This is the most effective way of spreading awareness and sensitizing the youth of our country to disability and the rights of people with disability. At present, we have college volunteers from Mithibai College, National College, SNDT and S.K. Somaiya College assisting in art and craft, making teaching aids, and assisting in music and dance classes under the supervision of the class teacher.



A volunteer working with a beneficiary

The following were the visitors at the centre:

16 students of the Department of Human Development of SNDT, pursuing Early Childhood Care and Education are doing their field work at ADAPT. They will be conducting academic and art lessons in our classrooms under our teachers' guidance and mentorship.

A demonstration was given by employees from Dextrowave Devices, an assistive Tech Start-up from IIT-Madras Research Park. They demonstrated a head wearable device that can assist persons with upper limb disabilities to interact with computers and smart phones with simple head movements. This device has been built by them.

A parents meeting was held with the transdisciplinary team. Parents were welcomed to a new academic year where Heads, teachers, therapists and the social worker spoke about their respective departments and the importance of parents as partners in the holistic development of their child.

Ice Cream Day celebrations: Love for ice-cream is universal! And we celebrated this love with our beneficiaries by talking about the history of ice creams, the different types, flavours, ingredients and health benefits. The talk ended with of course everyone relishing an ice-cream cone.



Rakhi making with our student volunteers from National College, to celebrate the upcoming festival of sibling love. These will be used when we celebrate the festival in the centre on August 10th

The fashion design students of Sophia College, SNDT and Sasmira College visited the centre to understand the clothing needs and difficulties of children with Cerebral Palsy. As a part of "Adaptive Clothes" project, they will be designing clothes for our beneficiaries that are easy to wear. This will culminate in a ramp walk on World Cerebral Palsy Day with our children.

There was a visit and orientation program for all new parents from the four centres of ADAPT.

Chembur

World Youth Skills Day: The Skills Development Centre celebrated World Youth Skills Day by hosting a few activities in our freshly painted cafeteria in the basement. The programme began with an introduction by a Trainee. The following activities were planned for the day:

- An Interactive quiz where trainees had to 'Guess the profession'
- Table setting: Trainees had to lay a table according to the image provided
- Professional Photographer Mr Rohit Choudhary shared his expertise and gave a session on Photography,
- Cake decorating session: Trainees decorated cupcakes (sponsored and baked by staff). As part of our fundraising initiatives, trainees purchased them for home as well.
- The event ended with a ramp walk by trainees.



Learning photography on World Youth Skills Day

Cinegence Media - Placement Training, Borivali: Staff visited Cinegence Media and met with their team, checked the infrastructure for our trainees and found it to be accessible and the staff very polite.

Meeting with Director National Career Service Centre for Differently Abled, (NCSC). This is a Government of India (Ministry of Labour and Employment). The meeting was a first step towards collaboration leading to assessment of eligible candidates for their current 1 year training programmes in:

- Automobile repairs
- Electronics consumer related repairs to fans, microwaves, washing machines
- Advanced Dressmaking
- Book binding and Printing
- Screen Printing

NCSC visit to SDC: Assessment Interviews of 14 shortlisted candidates were carried out. 11 Trainees were found to be suitable for training, which should begin in August 2022

Visit by MIND ASSETS - Careers for Persons with Disabilities, a recruitment agency providing free services to persons with disabilities. They requested for a tie up with ADAPT for placement assistance for our suitable candidates.

Visit by parents of all ADAPT centres as a part of the orientation programme.

11 trainees showcased their skills and interacted with staff in the activity of Rakhi making at Kalpatru Synergy-Andheri. An exhibition was also held.

Trainees interacted with 6 Senior Staff of Worley, in a day of activities showcasing skills and therapy.

FICCI and NIIT collaboration: ADAPT has collaborated with the Federation of Indian Chambers of commerce and Industry' and NIIT - for Courses in Computers for Persons with Disability.

Collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII): This will include sharing of knowledge on software for data management and interest mapping, funding of some training initiatives (by corporates), through the CII and ADAPT's participation in Job fairs arranged by CII

Dharavi

The centre re opened with 12 children with disability and 40 without. The admission process continues and our numbers are rising.

International Yoga Day Program was celebrated.

Home Science students of SNDT have been placed at our centre for observation and conducting lessons in Pre- Primary classes.

Hope for All Foundation visited our centre and spent time interacting and playing with our beneficiaries..

Story telling program was conducted in Jamia Umar School, Dharavi, under the School Contact program.



Hope for All Foundation volunteers with the beneficiaries

Mithu Alur Centre for Inclusive Studies

The period of the lock down was an ideal time for teachers to upgrade their skills and deepen their understanding of inclusion and the strategies that would help them address all differences in their classroom. Dr. Alur used this opportunity to design a six- week online course entitled 'Inclusion Matters'. The course is delivered in five clusters: Exclusion of Disabled People, Special Education, Inclusive Education and Inclusive Employment: Vocational Rehabilitation and focus on Policy.

The first course had 35 participants from 5 States in India (Punjab, Nagaland, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra).

The second course, supported by The Women's Council, UK and ADAPT had 33 participants from 10 countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India- Mumbai, Nagaland, West Bengal, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and the Tibetan Government in exile).

The third course is scheduled to begin on the 29 of August.

Outcome of the Inclusion Matters Course

The Mithu Alur Centre for Inclusive studies (MACIS) was approached by a participant from the Inclusion Matters Course from the Tibetan Community to conduct a short online workshop on Inclusion and Inclusive Education.

88 Pre-Primary and Primary teachers, of which 75 were women, from 7 mainstream schools and 1 special school across 4 states (Dehradun, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Karnataka) attended the online programme.

We hope that this workshop will be the beginning of a long term collaboration and will support the Hub being set up at Dharamshala. A follow up workshop is scheduled next month and another one for parents is being planned.

Staff Orientation

In keeping with the ethos of the organisation, a 5 day orientation cum in service training programme was held when the academic session commenced in June.

The orientation focused on the 10 Domains addressed by Dr. Alur and shared the culture, systems and documentation procedures followed at ADAPT as well as the researches undertaken, new developments and projects.

The medical, social and transdisciplinary models, disability etiquettes, use of appropriate language, classroom management techniques, sustainability were discussed. Films on the above amplified the topics discussed. Dr. Alur's vision for the ADAPT International Multiversity for Special and Inclusive Education and the progress made was also shared.

After a month of observations and teaching, the new staff presented case studies of their students. This served as a refresher for the older staff.

Parents Orientation Program

An all parents meeting was organised at all centers when we re- opened after the pandemic and lockdown. The rules and regulations were reiterated and the support and cooperation of the parents was sought.

An orientation programme was conducted over 3 days, for parents with the aim of sharing the depth of Dr Alur's work, the services offered, the reach and the ethos of the organisation. 25 parents attended this programme and visited all the centres of ADAPT.

Sessions included the history of the organisation, the 10 domains, sustainability, and the move towards establishing a Multiversity. Dr Pravina Shah met with the group to share details of Parents Support Groups.

Name : Rukaiya Mithaiwala

Department : Therapy

Years at ADAPT?

One year

What brought you to ADAPT?

ADAPT's history and legacy was something that I was always in awe of while I was a student and it was something I genuinely always wanted to be a part of.

Who inspires you?

My Father

Where's your favorite place in the world?

Anywhere with a beach

What are you passionate about?

My Work

What's your favorite movie?

Schindler's list

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

I don't think I'd be happy giving someone else the control over my life for even a day

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

Italy

What's your favorite family tradition?

Sunday night dinners

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

Dr. Benjamin Spock, David Tennant, Alfred Hitchcock

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

I can cook

Which is your favorite book?

Currently, The song of Achilles

At home we would find you doing.

Watching TV shows

The best meal you have ever had is.

Spaghetti bolognese

Your most memorable moment at ADAPT.

When I had to present in front of the team for the first time

What would be the title of your autobiography?

Day one

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

A Doctor

Name the first 3 things on your bucket list.

Skydiving, have my own therapy centre, dinner at a Michelin star restaurant

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

I hate mangos

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

I'm happy with the name I have

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

Read people's minds

Which lines or lyrics sum up your view on life?

Somewhere over the rainbow, Way up high, And the dreams that you dreamed of, Once in a lullaby.



Congratulations

*Heartiest congratulations
to
Vidya!*

*We rejoice in her motherhood!
A sparkling new jewel, a baby boy joins
ADAPT's family!*



Congratulations



*to
our*

SSC graduates



Yash Damodar : 90.00%

Marya Khan : 87.80%

Aaron Rebello : 79.20%

14 Chicken soup for the soul

When it comes to staying young, a mind-lift beats a face-lift any day. -Marty Bucella

There are three little words that seem to precede any sort of advice I get these days. "At your age," my son says that I should not jog or I could break bones. "At your age," his girlfriend says I can "get away" with wearing anything but mini-skirts. Frankly, I never really cared to jog or wear mini-skirts at any age, but especially at my age, I don't like to be told what I can or can't do.

So imagine my dismay when my optometrist told me that at my age, I should update my eyeglass prescription to trifocals. "At your age," he told me, "it is fairly common."

I don't know if I want clearer vision. Maybe it's a tool of denial, but at my age a little bit of nearsightedness can be kind when I look in the mirror. I don't see the deepening wrinkles and increasing gray. My backside isn't sagging. I just need some new underwear.

Pointing out personal safety, my optometrist prevailed. The vision technician helped me choose some new frames. I am sorely out of sync with today's fashion because I leaned toward thin, wire-rimmed granny glasses. They were cheaper. The girl frowned and handed me some thick, dark angular frames. I slipped them on and she beamed.

"Those eyeglasses make you look twenty years younger," she said seriously. I peered closely into the mirror. She was right! I barely recognized myself. I straightened my back, feeling confident and, well, youthful. Why is it that I suddenly felt twenty years younger? I was taught that what was inside counts. External effects shouldn't matter. But by golly, these eyeglasses had a strange and positive effect on me.

"What you wear really does affect how you see yourself," she said, grinning at her own optometric pun. On the way home. I decided to shop for a new outfit to go with my new glasses. My usual style did not go with these contemporary frames and I chose summer capris in sunny colors. I found myself trying on open-toed sandals instead of practical flats. Since my toes were going to be displayed to the public, I got a pedicure for the first time in years.

Why had I quietly aged into dreary-looking clothing? I went through my closet and saw that an old woman had slowly moved in. There's nothing wrong with comfortable clothes, sweatpants, elastic banded jeans, thick holiday sweaters and easy slip-on shoes in brown and black. But wearing them made me feel like I was cocooning. Maybe, like a butterfly, it was time to emerge for my second life. I reminded myself that I didn't have to skimp on my own clothing budget now that there were no more school clothes to buy for the kids, no prom dresses or graduation suits. Maybe it was time for me to dress for a successful second half of my life.

Today, alongside the comfy clothes, there are pretty silk dresses, linen suits, colorful skirts and fun shoes. And because I need a good reason to wear these outfits, I go out to new restaurants, concerts and social gatherings. In the past, I'd decline partly because I never had anything to wear. I used to say, "Why buy anything? I never go anywhere."

My favorite new outfits include zippy new exercise clothes. Hiking shorts. Yoga pants. Swimsuits. At my age, Lycra is more like a medical prescription. New clothes in general help you feel youthful inside and out. They are more important than we know. After all, Mark Twain once said. "Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society."

"Aren't you glad you updated your prescription?" my son asked. "You're getting out more." He's right. I love my new vision on life and new clothes.

And at my age, I just might go jogging in a mini-skirt with my new eyeglasses. Okay, maybe I won't. But I can if I want to. I just happen to have a more suitable outfit that matches this fabulous new prescription.

-Lori Phillips-



It is with great sorrow that we share the news of the demise of Jas Bahadur Thapa who served the cause for over 70 years on 31st July 2022.

Fondly called Babu, he was a genial soul and will be sorely missed!

R.I.P. Babu

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



*Onwards
we march together*

Thank You