



December 2014



Thinking Aloud

A Truly Inclusive Society
- Jay

Podium

Interview with **Samir Ghosh** - Director,
Shodhana Consultancy,
Pune and International
Consultant with the
World Bank

We Recommend

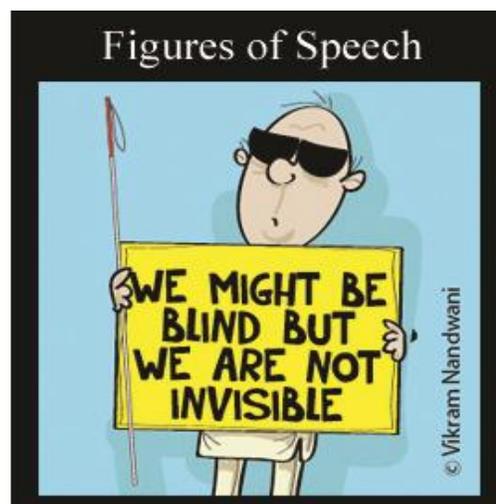
Articles & Videos

Standing Ovation

Deepalaya - Delhi

Dear Reader,

According to official figures, about 2.21% of the total population of the country consist of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), which constitute persons with visual, hearing, speech, locomotors and mental disabilities. While India has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD), PwDs continue to face many difficulties in the labour market when looking to develop employable skills and in gaining meaningful employment in conditions of decent work among other concerns which also includes lack of education and training or lack of financial resources. However, all is not completely grim. India Inc, NGOs and other key government and non-government entities are working towards creating an environment conducive for the sustainability of PwDs in the country. This is also indicative from the recently held UNESCO International Conference which not only promoted the rights of PwDs, but also suggested “that to move forward, one must harness the power of information and communication technologies - to reach the unreached, to facilitate their participation in political, economic, social and cultural life, to widen access to information and benefits. This requires stronger action by governments, greater awareness within societies, and mobilizing the innovation of the private sector.”



The theme for ET this month is on empowering the disabled in India.

As we say goodbye to 2014, here's wishing all our readers the very best of the New Year 2015!

In **Thinking Aloud**, Jay echoes the need about creating an inclusive nation in every aspect. One such segment is the

issue of work opportunities for PwDs. The national picture indicates that over 27 million people are inflicted with disabilities, with about 31% from the urban environment! On the flipside, the government does propose new measures. To ease the official requirements of certification of disabilities, they propose to issue an unique Disability Identification Card for PwDs. Meanwhile, corporates today are also willing to build and nurture inclusive workplaces through the appropriate use of technology and to enable those with disabilities to perform their jobs with adequate training & support.

On the **Podium**, Mr. Samir Ghosh, Director, Shodhana Consultancy, has been working on the disability issue since the inception of Shodhana. On the Podium, he states that although PwDs constitute about 10% (WHO estimates) of the global population, this section of the population is not involved in the overall developmental process of the country. The programme planning for PwDs is a complex process due to the uniqueness of the disability category, and therefore careful consideration should be made towards their accessibility to education, skill training to ensure a livelihood. Mr. Ghosh highlights the various laws and frameworks currently used as reference points for describing and defining disability in India suggesting that it would also be helpful if the country can mirror some of the international practices to empower the disabled in the country.

In the **We Recommend**, we have extracted some links from the plethora of data and information that the Web has to offer. This section looks at good examples of how India Inc has helped to provide a conducive environment for the employment of PwDs coupled with some research reports on disability published by the ILO.

In **Standing Ovation**, we feature Delhi based Deepalaya, an NGO aimed at improving the lives of underprivileged children especially that of girls. Deepalaya has provided various facilities and services for their cause ranging from establishing schools which impart quality education at low costs, vocational training, healthcare units, programmes for the differently abled people and other programmes for the empowerment of women.

In **Figures of Speech**, Vikram voices for the disabled.

As always, we value your opinion, so do let us know how you liked this issue. To visit our previous issues you can visit the Resources section on the website or simply [Click Here](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Linked In](#) & [Google+](#) - where you can join our community to continue the dialogue with us!



Thinking Aloud

A Truly Inclusive Society - Jay

In recent times there is much being said about creating an inclusive nation. Whether it is bridging the rural-urban divide or providing a greater voice for professional women in the workplace, and accepting new sexual mores in today's age, votaries for these causes are visible & vocal. However, an area of darkness that needs to be urgently addressed is the issue of work opportunities for PwDs.

On a macro scale the national picture is indeed quite grim. Census reports indicate that about 2.21% of the aggregate population is inflicted with disabilities. That's over 27 million people with physical challenges as per

government sources, comprising of 20.3% with locomotive disability, 18.9% who are hearing impaired, 18.8% with visual difficulties, 7.5% with speech impairment, 5.6% who are mentally retarded, 2.7% with mental illness & 7.9% who have multiple disabilities. Consider further that 31% of these numbers are from the urban environment where one would expect greater avenues for opportunities. Yet, this has been a neglected cause.

The government does propose new measures. To ease the official requirements of certification of disabilities for various governmental support (& other non-governmental purposes), they propose to issue an unique Disability Identification Card for Persons with Disabilities. This smart card would have complete information about the individual to serve a variety of uses. While such a step is welcome, what is genuinely needed is not just support but a change of attitude. The famed tennis star, Martina Navratilova said it well that, 'Disability is a matter of perception. If you can do just one thing well, you're needed by someone.'

Can we see this fact? That we are all good at something and that everyone can be a contributor - in some form or the other, at some place or the other – in a meaningful manner. All of us draw meaning in our life through contributing to economic activity. The government provides reservation in public sector units but in an era of private sector growth, the onus is much more on the private sector to harness the different talents of PwDs.

There has never been a better period in history than now for such affirmative action as Technology can be leveraged like never before. In fact, the theme of the United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities, December 3rd, this year - 'Sustainable development: The promise of technology' - echoes this reality that a committed employer can use appropriate technology to enable those with disabilities to perform their job, with adequate training & support. The good news is that with the awakening of the social conscience of large corporates, firms today are eager & willing to build and nurture inclusive workplaces. There are sterling examples from Corporate India, be it from the Hospitality Sector (Hotel chains like ITC, Marriott, Taj, etc. and Quick Service Restaurants like KFC, Pizza Hut, etc.) or IT firms (like TCS, Accenture, etc.) and many other large businesses.

The task is now to take this further to many other firms who may not be large in size but must believe that staffing in their firm can be imaginatively done rather than with conventional thoughts. Are the Human Resources professionals prepared to truly create an inclusive workplace by advocating this challenging principle and creating a business case for hiring the PwDs? This is no easy task – but a worthwhile quest nevertheless.

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Podium

Mr. Samir Ghosh - Director, Shodhana Consultancy, Pune and International Consultant with the World Bank



Mr. Samir Ghosh currently works as Director, Shodhana Consultancy, Pune and is an International Consultant with the World Bank. He has also worked as a Consultant to UNICEF, Aga Khan Foundation India, Government of India and various State Governments. He has also undertaken various projects and research studies for several national and international organizations both in India and abroad. He has written the Maharashtra State Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities and State Policy for Persons with Disabilities for the Governments of Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan which received international acclaim. He is a gold medalist in English from from Ravi

Shankar University. He did his Masters in Social Work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai in Social Welfare and Administration. He further did his specialization in Social Planning from the London School of Economics and Political Science and received his second gold medal. In 1999, the Hon. President of India awarded him with a National Award for his outstanding contribution to the field of Disability Rehabilitation.

ET: Development can only be sustainable when it is equitable, inclusive and accessible for all. Persons with disabilities (PwDs) need therefore to be included at all stages of development processes, from inception to monitoring and evaluation. What is the current state of this process in the country?

SG: The situation continues to be grim. Within the realm of social exclusion, PwDs happen to be the hardest hit. Though PwDs constitute at least 10% of the global population (as per WHO estimates), they remain marginalized even within the marginalized community from all aspects. Though there has been no efforts to make a detailed nation-wide survey regarding the status of PwDs in India, smaller studies undertaken by several NGOs and a few government departments go to suggest that services reach only 5 to 6% of the PwD population, the majority of which is concentrated in urban metropolitan and capital cities. This is coupled with stigma and attitudinal problems at all levels. Though PwDs are the primary stakeholders for their own development, in India 95% of the programmes are through NGOs who continue to maintain a service delivery model. Therefore the involvement of PwDs in designing, implementing and monitoring is almost non-existent.

ET: In 1995, the Government of India passed the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act (PwD Act). What are the other frameworks being presently used as reference points for describing and defining Disability in India?

SG: In addition to the PwD Act 1995, the other institutional frameworks available are the Mental Health Act 1987, Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992 and National Trust Act 1999. However the landmark guideline is the United Nations Convention for Rights for Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) 2007 of which India is a signatory and the same was ratified by the Indian Parliament in September 2008. Currently, the 1995 Act is being repealed and the new bill entitled “ Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2012” is pending in the Parliament. The most significant feature of the new bill is that it has accepted the UNCRPD definition which is a departure from the medical model to the social model. The existing Act recognizes only 7 categories of PwDs whereas the new bill once passed, will recognize 18 categories of PwDs. Needless to say there will be a significant rise in the number of PwDs in the country.

ET: It is an accepted fact that the disabled or physically/mentally challenged often have limited access to education, employment and public services. Can you elucidate some barriers to their inclusion?

SG: The programme planning for PwDs is a complex process due to the uniqueness of the disability category. No single hat fits all. Therefore, careful consideration should be made towards their accessibility to education, skill

training as well as livelihoods. The issues are immense, right from adaptation of pedagogy to the transaction method for education and training. In addition, there is an issue of appropriate technology in terms of adaptation of machines & tools to embrace an universal design. Provision of reasonable accommodation in education & work place as well as other environmental modification is yet another area that needs to be addressed on priority. Human resources also happens to be an enormous challenge, since the number of available trainers is miniscule as compared to the demand. Persons with multiple disabilities and the mentally challenged face additional problems of attitude and are neglected both from the society as well as families.

ET: What are the international practices that India can learn from to empower the disabled in the country?

SG: Unfortunately, India is far behind in recognizing and protecting the rights of PwDs. The first step is to depart from the service oriented outlook to a rights based outlook. From the government's point of view, it is still a service model and there is a strong attitude of "We will give and you take it". With the PwD Act 1995 in force, it is mandatory that at least 3% of the government budget in all departments be reserved for PwDs. While it has been reserved by all departments, even after 19 years (Act coming into force), none of the departments have made any efforts to strategize the spending. More recently, while participating in a national conference in Delhi, it was shocking to note from the Chairperson of SC/ST Commission stating that they had not made any efforts to include PwDs since it is not their subject. Unfortunately, there is no mechanism devised to monitor the spending of other departments (other than the Social Justice Ministry) and hold them accountable.

Internationally even within Asian countries, the government has made efforts to converge better inter-departmentally and as a result there is a great deal of awareness amongst all establishments. The implementation of law is very effective and measures are more stringent. The compatibility between polity and administration is of a high order particularly in Europe and America that has led to a better understanding of the subject from the human rights perspective. Research and development is yet another area which India needs to learn from both the West and some of the Asian countries such as China, Japan, South Korea and Vietnam.

ET: How does your organisation Shodhana help in paving a positive path for the disabled?

SG: Shodhana has been working on the disability issue since its inception in 2002. Shodhana was instrumental in the preparation of the 3 State Policies on Disability, has initiated and authored the national report entitled "Livelihood Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities" under the aegis of the Planning Commission and United Nations Development Programme. Currently, Shodhana is supporting the Government of Bihar, Maharashtra and Odisha in strategizing the inclusion of PwDs under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). It is working in 6 districts (12 blocks) to demonstrate livelihood options for the PwDs in rural areas. The successful implementation of the pilot will form a role model for nation-wide up scaling of livelihoods plans for the PwDs. Shodhana is also conducting a research study on sexuality and disability. The study will particularly focus on the psycho-social needs as well as the right to marriage and family of PwDs. Shodhana is actively involved in sensitizing the corporate sectors towards employment of PwDs as employees and also in supporting enterprise development.

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We Recommend

Articles & Videos

Extracted from the web world, this month we look at articles related to best practice examples for the employment of PwDs in India. While the challenges that face PwDs to be mainstreamed into the labour market are significant, there are some organizations which provide evidence that these challenges can be overcome. We have also included some recent publications released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) addressing disability.

1 Business as unusual: Making workplaces inclusive of people with disabilities, 2014

In the times that we live in today, the inclusion of PwDs in the workplace is no longer absent from the business agenda. But to ensure this, key stakeholders still struggle in implementing inclusion strategies effectively. Based on examples from 15 MNCs, employers' organizations and business networks, this report presents key factors leading to the successful inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. It also serves as a ready reckoner to those who wish to get started and take active part in transforming what it is still perceived as unusual into a natural component of the work environment.

Links:

http://www.businessanddisability.org/images/pdf/pubs/ILO_BusinessUnusual.pdf

2 Inclusion of Youth with Disabilities: The Business Case, 2014

Youth unemployment is another concern that the global economy faces, especially youth with disabilities. The ILO Global Business & Disability Network compiled a collection of positive examples from 10 companies of different sizes, sectors and countries in their efforts to train or employ young people with disabilities. Each case study provides an overview of how initiatives were set up and implemented, with practical tips and advice from managers to encourage replication of these examples of successful initiatives.

Links:

http://www.businessanddisability.org/images/pdf/pubs/ILO_YouthDisabilities.pdf

3 Disability and Corporate Social Responsibility reporting: an analysis comparing reporting practices of 40 selected multinational enterprises, 2014

CSR today forms an integral part of corporate strategy which eventually has an impact on both society and the company over the long run. The below link explores how companies are integrating disability into their CSR work,

and investigates reporting practices of 40 multinational enterprises.

Links:

http://www.businessanddisability.org/images/pdf/pubs/ILO_CSRDisability.pdf

4 Managing disability in the workplace

The ILO released its code of practice to keep in mind while managing disability in the workplace. The objective of this code is to provide a practical guidance on the management of disability issues in the workplace with a view to ensure that PwDs have equal opportunities in the workplace, improving employment prospects for them by facilitating recruitment, return to work, job retention and opportunities for advancement, promoting a safe, accessible and healthy workplace, assuring that employer costs associated with disability among employees are minimized and to maximize the contribution which workers with disabilities can make to the enterprise.

Links:

http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_103324.pdf

5 Persons With Disability & the Indian Labour Market: Challenges & Opportunities

The below link looks at a study undertaken by the ILO and aims to understand the issues facing PwDs in the Indian labour market. The study identifies strategic opportunities to improve and expand the participation of PwDs in the Indian labour market and recommends key interventions that could be pursued by the ILO in India.

Links:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/publication/wcms_229259.pdf

6 Lemon Tree Hotels

Lemon Tree Hotels is a Shell Helen Keller Award Winner 2010 for policies, practices and belief in equal rights and gainful employment for PwDs. The aspects of both interests and safety of persons with disability are duly considered. Lemon Tree now has around 75 hearing impaired people currently among its 2,000-odd employees, and is targeting 10% of its workforce, or 500 employees with disability in the next three years.

Links:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KX2laNlxmQ

7 MphasiS

Winner of the Shell Helen Keller Award 2008 for the empowerment of PwDs in the category of best employer, Mphasis in a statement states that it makes not only business sense but also common sense to recruit disabled people because the organization. The initiative to ensure persons with disability have access to all opportunities is headed by Dr. Meenu Bhambani, who is herself differently abled.

Links:

http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=7&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CD8QFjAG&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nasscom.in%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fawards%2FMphasis_NASSCOM.ppt&ei=ud-WVPLJNZTkuQSw_ILgCQ&usg=AFQjCNGuRbL5ZAeDozMeYF_aqn8Hc5pGEA&bvm=bv.82001339,d.c2E

8 Aegis Limited

A global outsourcing and technology services company, Aegis has a six dimensional Diversity Model which includes initiatives that act as enablers towards enhancing the cause of employment of disabled people: 1) Equal Employment Opportunity Policy in which the service conditions are same for disabled and others. However certain flexibilities are provided for disabled depending on their specific needs. 2) Facilities for Persons with disabilities: This includes provision of facilities that are accessible, convenient and cater to the needs of the disabled. 3) Target based commitments.

Links:

<http://www.aegisglobal.com/us/en/media/press-releases/press-releases-details/100>

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Standing Ovation

Deepalaya - Delhi



Deepalaya is a registered NGO operational since 1979 to enable the marginalized to become self-reliant. It is currently operational in Delhi, Haryana (Mewat and Gurgaon District), UttarPradesh (Saharanpur) and Uttarakhand (Almora District).

Vision

- A society based on legitimate rights, equity, justice, honesty, social sensitivity and a culture of service in which all are self-reliant.

Deepalaya's focus and sole reason for existence is the child, especially the girl child, street and disabled children.

The family of the child is the medium through which the development takes place. Organisation and sensitisation of the community is the approach through which empowerment, capacity building and social transformation are attempted.

Mission

- To identify and work alongside the economically and socially deprived, the physically and mentally challenged - starting with children, so that they become educated, skilled and aware.
- Enable them to be self-reliant and enjoy a healthy, dignified and sustainable quality of life
- And to that end, act as a resource to and collaborate with other agencies - governmental or non-governmental, as well as suitably intervene in policy formulation

Deepalaya's educational programmes are carefully designed to reflect its vision, apart from providing quality education to the underprivileged children at an affordable rate.

Through its Vocational Training Centre (VTC), Deepalaya aims to provide marketable skills to unemployed youth so that they and their families can become self-reliant. The VTC courses are specially designed to impart teamwork, decision making skills and leadership qualities upon the beneficiaries. In 2013, Deepalaya and NIIT set up the IT and soft skill 'SMART COURSE'. Through this course, students were taught computer usage (including MS Office and the Internet), English and interpersonal skills. The course was divided into three levels - Basic, Elementary and Advanced.

A Self Help Group (SHG) project in Tauru block, Mewat district in the region of Haryana was started in 1999. The objective was to use microfinance as a means to empower local women to set up micro-enterprises, thereby making them independent and respectable members of their communities. As part of their health programme, the Chameli Dewan – Integrated Rural Community Health Centre was started in 1999 to provide basic medical facilities to the children living in Deepalaya children's home. A special unit was also formed which focuses on reaching out, training and rehabilitating children with special needs by offering services, such as physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy and pre-vocational/vocational training.

Deepalaya's Institutional Care Centre was started in 2000 with the aim of giving a better life to the children living on the streets of Delhi.

Please visit Deepalaya's website: <http://www.deepalaya.org> for more information.

Deepalaya deserves a standing ovation for their mission!

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