



A Celebration of 20 Years



His Excellency, Shri Pranab Mukherjee presents the National Award to Ms Albina Shankar, Director, Mobility India.

Mobility India receives National Award for

"Outstanding Work in the Creation of Barrier Free Environment for Persons with Disabilities"

MOBILITY INDIA received the National award for 'Outstanding Work in the Creation of Barrier Free Environment for Persons with Disabilities' by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of Disability Affairs, Government of India.

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Mobility India Rehabilitation Research and Training Centre is a three-storied structure in the heart of Bengaluru City. It is a model for Accessibility, Rehabilitation, Training and Service equivalent to International Standard. It includes facilities such as signage in braille, tactile flooring, customised furniture, auditory signal in the elevator and colour schemes that benefits PWDs. The building is accessible to people with different kind of disabilities, and reflects MI's vision that "people with disabilities are an integral part of society and entitled to have equal access to education, health, and livelihood."

A visibly excited Ms Albina Shankar, Director, MI says, "It is a great accomplishment for us. The fact that it comes as a recommendation and recognition from the State in our 20th anniversary year makes it more special." Adds Ms Shankar, "The 2014 theme for the International Day for Persons with Disabilities is, 'Sustainable Development: The promise of technology', and one of the focus areas is on 'Creating Enabling Work Environments'. MI has strived towards this goal for many years now. This is an appropriate time for MI to be recognised for its role in creation of a barrier free and enabling work environment."

The award was conferred by His Excellency, President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on 3rd December, 2014, the International Day for Persons with Disabilities. Ms Shankar received the award on behalf of Mobility India.

Include Vidya Campaign flagged off in Karnataka - Every child with disability to be in school



Honourable Minister for Primary & Secondary Education, Mr Kimmane Rathnakar, at the Include Vidya Campaign at Jayanagar, Bengaluru

As the Karnataka state lead partner for the CBM Include Vidya Campaign, MI along with other organisations jointly launched the CBM Include Vidya campaign on November 21, 2014 at the Chandra Gupta Maurya playground at Jayanagar. Eight NGOs - PARIVAAR, Karnataka - A Parent's Association, KPAMRC, Seva-in-Action, IAR India, Parjayathana, Disability Network Alliance (DNA), SAMA Foundation, and Gramina Abhiyudaya Seva Samsthe (GASS) came together to support the campaign. 'Include Vidya' Campaign aims to highlight

the profound challenges faced by CWD in realising their rights to Education, and the need to include CWD in Education in India. The campaign compliments the Sarv Shikshana Abhyaan (SSA) to achieve its goal of 'Education for All'. This campaign is being organised across seven States of India.

According to Ms Albina Shankar, “Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, education programmes and activities so that all children learn and play together. We at MI believe a campaign like this supports every child with disability to be in school, to learn, play and grow together, irrespective of their diverse needs. ”

The campaign was launched by Mr Kimmane Rathnakar, Honourable Minister for Primary & Secondary Education. Other government officials present were Mr B.N. Vijay Kumar, MLA, Jayanagar, Vidhana Sabha, Mr Adoni Syed Saleem, Karnataka State Project Director - SSA, Mr K.S Rajanna - Karnataka State Disability Commissioner, Mr H.R Umesh Aradhya, Chairperson, Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and Mr B Somashekar, Member BBMP.

The event started with a ‘Walkathon’ that was flagged off by Ms Usha Patwari, Joint Director, Directorate of Disability, Senior Citizens and Empowerment. The campaign witnessed more than 1216 participants.(986 children and teachers from Bangalore South Block mainstream schools, and 230 participants from NGOs and Community Based organisations). As part of the campaign, 18 recommendations were placed before the Minister for Primary Education. As an outcome, the SSA officials looked into all the policy related to CWDs. Five of the 18 recommendations were announced on 3rd December 2014, at Bengaluru, by Ms Umashree, Minister of Women and Child Development. A circular on the need to follow accessibility guidelines has also been issued to all schools.

A study of professional skills and development needs of RTA in Nepal & India

MI took up an impact assessment study of the Rehabilitation Therapy Assistant (RTA) training programme in October-November, 2014. The assessment team comprised of Ms Emma Tebbutt, External Consultant and Physiotherapist, Ms Ritu Ghosh, Deputy Director (Training), and Ms Vennila Palanivelu, Programme Manager - Training (Therapy).



Ms Emma Tebbutt, Ms Ritu Ghosh, and Ms Vennila Palanivelu with the Mobile Therapy Unit of Tomorrow's Foundation at West Bengal

The RTA programme is one of MI's flagship courses. MI was the first institution in the country to have initiated a RTA course, which is recognised by the Rehabilitation Council of India. Till date MI has trained 136 RTA graduates from the various Indian states, and countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ethiopia among others. The 12 month programme trains students to become skilled assistants in occupational and physical therapy.

The study was carried out across 16 organisations through interactions with over 26 MI graduates at their work places. The study covered six centres in Nepal, and seven states in India namely Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Odisha, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. In this study, the team interacted with service users, and the supervisors to evaluate the competency and assess the skills of the RTA graduates. The study aimed to evaluate their skills and the professional development needs, and the impact of the therapeutic intervention on the life of PWDs. The team sought to gain insights on how to develop the RTA training programme in order to produce better results.

According to Ms Ritu Ghosh, “Through the study we observed that the graduates can indeed perform well with a continuous mentoring mechanism. The study gave us the confidence that we are on the right track. Many a supervisor at the field noted that MI graduates are performing very well at their tasks in the community. At the same time, we would like to conduct refresher courses every 2 to 3 years for our students. Based on our observations, we would like to steer the programme towards a direction which caters to the emerging needs of the students at the field.”

A visit to Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS), Jaipur



Mr D.R. Mehta, Founder and Chief Patron and his team members with Ms Haseena, Ms Daya, Ms Susaimary, Ms Hamidha, and Mr Vivekananda

The girls of the Jaipur Foot Production Unit (JFPU) Ms Susaimary, Ms Daya Suvarna, Ms Hamidha Khatoon, Ms Haseena and Senior Stores In-charge, Mr Vivekananda K (all of them having personal experience of disability) visited Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS), Jaipur in November, 2014, which is one of the largest organisation providing artificial limbs, calipers, and aids and appliances, and is famous for its limb fitment camps conducted across the world.

The women technicians at the JFPU largely belong to poor-income groups, who have been trained in the making of the Jaipur Foot at MI and subsequently provided with employment and self-reliance. This trip was an exposure to help them enhance their technical skill sets, as well as provide them the courage to go out and meet the world with confidence.

For Susaimary, this was her maiden experience of traveling by train, while for Hameeda, she was leading a team for an out station orientation programme for the first time. The team found themselves stranded in

the midst of Jaipur railway station. The station premises was not accessible, in particular for Daya who uses elbow crutches for her mobility. Vivekananda had a quick look around the station, and intelligently hired a luggage trolley to seat Daya. “While it was a little odd, and we created a spectacle of ourselves, we are proud that we could make it by ourselves against all odds,” quips Vivekananda.

At MI, the JFPU comprises solely of women technicians. On the other hand, the workshop at BMVSS is entirely run by men. Hameeda says, “When we introduced ourselves, many of them burst out laughing, as they could not believe that being women, that too with disabilities, we worked as technicians in a role similar to theirs. However later they happily oriented us about their work.” The team met Mr D.R. Mehta, Founder and Chief Patron and other key members. The team also visited the Birla temple and Babu Bazar in Jaipur.

According to Mr Rajnish Chaudhary, Programme Manager, Promotion and Development, “We wanted the team to have a look into the trends and techniques that could enhance the quality and quantity of production, and learn from the experience of the technical personnel of foot production unit of BMVSS.” They achieved all this, and more.

SAARC Conference on 'Best Practices in Rehabilitation Therapy'

MI organised a SAARC Conference, “Towards an Inclusive and Enabling Future” - Best Practices in Rehabilitation Therapy, at MI Bengaluru from 10-12 December 2014. The Conference brought together physiotherapists, occupational therapists, prosthetists and orthotists, medical practitioners, CBR professionals and policy makers from India and the SAARC region - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan (through Skype) and Sri Lanka.



Mr Ram Khoday, Ms Albina Shankar, Dr Malathi Holla, Mr Charles Prabakar and Ms Valerie Taylor at the inauguration of the SAARC Conference on 'Best Practices in Rehabilitation Therapy'

The aim was to broaden the collective knowledge base, provide cross-learning opportunities, and build collaborative approaches and solutions. MI sought to generate significant and workable ideas and reflections on how to improve rehabilitation therapy and latest trends and interventions.

Dignitaries present at the occasion were Dr Malathi Holla, International Para Athlete, and Mr Ram Khoday,

Certified Prosthetist from Canada, and Mr Charles Prabakar, President MI. According to Mr Charles Prabakar, “Having completed 20 years of service provision, and 12 years of training activity, it was only apt that we take up an initiative like this. A conference like this provides a platform to keep abreast of advancements in technology and practices and a roadmap for an inclusive and enabling future.” Mr D N Sreenivasappa, Member Secretary, Rehabilitation Council of India, was present at the closing ceremony. Dr (Mrs) Elizabeth Thomas, Governing Body Member, MI and Ms Valerie Taylor, founder of Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralysed, Bangladesh were the keynote speakers.

The three day conference saw a total of 11 Indian states, seven countries, including Pakistan who joined through skype, and 80 participants take part. One of the recommendations that emerged was the need to form a task force from the representative countries in order to formalise the interventions, approaches, and methods of rehabilitation therapy.



Mr D N Sreenivasappa, Member Secretary, Rehabilitation Council of India, giving away certificate to Mr Razi Khan Hamdard of Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA)

Inclusive Organ and Blood donation camp

An 'Inclusive Blood and Organ Donation Camp' was held at MI on December 6, 2014 to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The Red Cross Society collaborated with MI for this noble cause. A special feature of this camp was that volunteers with personal experience of disabilities were among the participants. Speaking for the occasion, Ms Albina Shankar, commented, “There are often misconceptions



Ms Saraswathi, member of staff, Mobility India participating in the blood donation camp

and stigma attached to disability. Through this camp we sought to build awareness and a positive attitude towards a noble and healthy practice like blood and organ donation. An organ donation can literally mean a new lease of life for someone. We wanted to inspire more people to come forward, and have a long term impact with such an initiative. ” The camp saw a total of 160 members participating. 95 units of blood was collected and 48 members registered for organ donation.

Regular Therapy and Barrier Free Environment empowers Rehan to access Education

Little Rehan was born a healthy child, but at seven months he suddenly took ill. He became asthmatic, had diarrhea and developed severe infection. Rehan's mother Yasmeen says, "We showed him to several doctors. One of them even said that Rehan had developed 'polio of the mind'. When all this did not make any sense, Yasmeen and her husband Mumtaz Ahmed, an autorickshaw driver, approached a MI field worker whom they had sighted in their locality. By then, Rehan was about two years old, and had not yet shown any signs of walking or talking. The MI field worker, suggested that little Rehan be brought to the MI rehabilitation centre for a detailed investigation.

At MI he was identified as a cerebral palsy child, and underwent regular therapy for two years and showed signs of considerable improvement. The rehab team also visited his house and made necessary modifications such as fixing railings on the walls. MI provided him with weekly home-based therapy, and trained his mother to handle her son. Rehan slowly showed improvement with his mobility, was able to carry out some of his daily chores like brushing his teeth and eating food. Until last year, Rehan was attending school at a balwadi, while availing the after-school coaching classes conducted by MI. This academic year, Rehan has started going to a regular school, at Yarab Nagar, Banashankari. Though at nine years, Rehan has just taken his first step towards formal schooling, his mother is happy with his progress. Rehan's younger brother Alhan too is happy that his brother has now joined him at school.

Yasmeen says, "I hold his hand and take him to school every day. Earlier, they would make him sit separately. But, at the insistence of the MI community workers, the school has now adopted a more inclusive approach." She adds, "While Rehan does need the support of railings to move around, he happily mingles and plays with his cousins and neighbours. As soon as Rehan is back from school, he wants to complete his home assignments. Whether it is 'joining the dots' or 'forming simple words', Rehan tries doing it all by himself. Recently he has also learnt to button his shirt himself." With a wide smile on her face, a visibly elated Yasmeen adds, "All this has been possible only due to MI's intervention."



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(DD/Cheques to be made in the name of Mobility India)

Run for **MOBILITY INDIA** **Make an impact. Help us raise funds.**



MOBILITY INDIA is participating in Bangalore's favourite run,
the **TCS World 10K Bangalore 2015**, being held on
Sunday, 17th May 2015.

Please join us in this run.

Increase your fitness, meet a personal challenge, or just have lots of fun while raising money for children and people with disabilities. You can drop us a line at fru@mobility-india.org, and we will book your place in the marathon, get you your bib, and provide you any other support that you may need.

Let's get running together, and make a difference!

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