



A Celebration of 20 Years



Mobility India's expansion to the North East

MI has a regional resource centre in Kolkata since 1998. The centre has been focusing on rehabilitation services like prosthetic, orthotic and therapy services, along with supporting and facilitating grass root organisations in the North and North Eastern India. MI has been working in areas of capacity building, training, and assisting in setting up of P&O workshops and therapy units in the region through its Kolkata centre. But over the years, MI increasingly felt the need to have a centre at the heart of North Eastern region to have a stronger impact.

MI's foray into the North East with its very own centre at Guwahati will be a landmark development for Mobility India to take forward its vision of building an inclusive and empowered community. As with various developmental activities, the North-East region has been lagging behind the rest of India in rehabilitation

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facilities and services, and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The geographical isolation, poor connectivity and infrastructure, regional conflicts and slow economic growth have only worsened the situation.

Preliminary studies carried out by MI show that the services for persons with disabilities are often inadequate and many areas of the region have limited or no services, especially at the community level. There is often a lack of information about different government schemes. A small percentage of districts have the district disability rehabilitation centres, while the existing DDRCs do not function in a uniform manner. Concepts such as barrier free environments, employment, and vocational rehabilitation have not been implemented or are implemented in a limited way. Lack of information about service gaps and the limited role played by DPOs in advocacy and the struggles for their rights are additional challenges.

“The proposed NE office can act as a catalyst for a wider impact of MI and be seen as an example of 'best practices' for inspiring other programmes in the region. The MI/NE office will focus on promoting community-based inclusive development (CBID) and strengthening of grassroots organisations and Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs). Using Participatory Action Research and promoting networking with active involvement of persons with disabilities and their organisations will be a key aspects of the MI/NE strategy”, notes Albina Shankar, Director, Mobility India.



MI celebrates International Women's Day

MI in collaboration with Accenture observed International Women's Day on March 28, 2015. This was part of National Volunteering event for the Accenture team and close to 100 Accenture employees participated. MI



staff members, members from the community, students, and a few mothers of therapy service users were part of the celebrations.

The afternoon saw dance performances by team Accenture and karaoke singing by a MI staff member from the workshop. Some games and activities that put men in the shoes of the women were also played. Along with fun and games, the role of women in their various capacities was appreciated and acknowledged. The evening ended with gift distributions and high tea.

Central Government Officials visit MI

A group of thirty-two Deputy Secretaries representing various departments of the GOI, visited MI as a training cum exposure visit on Jan 12, 2015. The officials were part of the Institute of Secretariat Training and Management training programme. The visit was carried out in co-ordination with Akshaya Patra Foundation, Bengaluru and sought to provide an exposure to pressing social issues and difficulties faced in society to the officials, who in turn may be able to bring in changes through policies and schemes of the government. Mr S K Gupta, Under Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Group Leader, 27th Mid-Career Training of CSS officer of Deputy Secretaries level noted, “I found the process, techniques and efforts in rehabilitation of physically handicapped persons, as well in the field of training of connected professional impressive and inspiring.”

Orientation on Wheel Chair Service Delivery at Uttarakhand

A team comprising of Ritu Ghosh, Deputy Director-Training, Sama Raju, Programme Manager, Therapy and Dibyajyoti, Senior Therapist visited three top educational institutes in Dehradun, Uttarakhand in February 23-24, 2015 to conduct an orientation on the Wheelchair Service Delivery and Training as per WHO guidelines' for the teachers and the students.



In the two day orientation, a total of 150 members including faculty members and students from the Doon (P.G.) College of Physiotherapy, the Himalaya Institute of Medical sciences, Swami Rama Himalayan University, and Sardar Bhagwan Singh Post Graduate Institute of Biomedical Science & Research, Balawala, Dehradun participated. The team shared information and education materials on the needs and benefits, and existing systems prevalent on wheelchair service delivery in India. The need to change the model of wheelchair delivery from mass distribution method, to service provision was highlighted. The importance of including WST packages in the curriculum of para medical courses such as Physiotherapy, Occupational therapy, Nursing etc was discussed.

Though this orientation MI sought to create awareness in wheelchair service training, and achieve the larger goal of greater integration of wheelchair service delivery into rehabilitation services. According

to Dibyajyoti, “ We held discussions on including the WSTP-B as part of the BPT curriculum. We recommended that staff members from the colleges be deputed to attend the WSTP-B course. We discussed about the different ways of implementing effective wheelchair service provision.”



Women in Belaku tailor their own future

In keeping with MI's goal of creating income generation activities for PWDs and their families, in 2014, MI in collaboration with the Hennagra panchayat, Jigani Hobli started a tailoring unit and provided one year training to 20 PWDs, their families and other poor family members in Hosahalli. The panchayat contributed towards the monthly rent of the centre and further sanctioned money for 18 tailoring machines.

As a second phase of the project, in February 2015, the tailoring unit was shifted to Kachanayakanahalli, and the Belaku tailoring and production unit was set up. MI CBR worker, Manjula, (herself having personal experience of disability) carried out several home visits and oriented the women in the locality and the Sangha members to form this unit. Manjula and her team realised that many women, especially ones having a personal experience of disability, or attending to a disabled member at home, were often unable to take up work outside their houses. She motivated these women to come together and start the tailoring unit.

Anita and Sharada were existing members of the *Ashakirana Angavikalara Sangha*, and the *Kaveri Angavikalara Sangha* in Hosahalli. They along with five other members formed the core team. While Anita has a personal experience of disability, Pallavai is the mother of a spina bifida child. Likewise Sharada's husband has a speech and hearing problem. Along with the tailoring tasks, individual tasks have been allotted to each member. Sharada handles teaching, cutting and stitching. Shweta is in charge of the attendance book, and record of details such as hours of work by each member, number of collars stitched etc.

Anita's Story

31 year old Anita was affected by PPRP and clubfoot and was working as a PCB assembler in a factory at Bommanahalli. One day on her way to work, she got knocked down by a speeding truck, and had to give up her job. For her treatment at Live 100 hospital, Anita underwent plastic surgery as well as insertion of rods in her legs.

Desolate and frustrated, Anita was at home for over nine months. At this point in time, Manjula and her team came to her rescue. She gave Anita the hope and motivation, and held the promise of a future where Anita could regain control of her life. MI provided her assistance of



Rs 10,000 towards her surgery costs, and provided her with a wheelchair, a walker and a toilet chair. Anita not only made the effort to step out of her house, and take on a new challenge. She looks after the documentation and book keeping, and also heads the Belaku tailoring unit.

Says Anita, "After the accident, I was very depressed, and had even contemplated ending my life. My one leg was already affected, but after the accident I lost the entire use of my legs, and had to give up my job. I did not think I would get a chance to regain control of my life. Now at this tailoring unit, I work from 9.00 AM to 5.30 PM, and have regained my confidence and mental stability. In the evenings I spend time with my son, and I am happy that I am able to take on my family responsibilities. Next year, I hope to send him to a good school, and support my husband further in running the household. I am thankful to MI for supporting me, and giving me the necessary skills to get my life back on tracks." Anita today actively participates in social activities of her community. She has become a spokesperson and a resource persons on health and disability issues.

While the panchayat is contributing towards the rental of the three room premises, MI is paying an honorarium to the teacher. The members believe that in the near future they will be able to take on these costs by themselves, as the income generation at the unit has begun to gain momentum through stitching orders. Recently the members attended a four day training programme at Padma garments, and Omex garments. They were trained on aspects of production, shirt finishing, problems and issues related to sewing machines and stitching procedures. Further to the training, the unit has begun to receive orders.

MI oriented the members on maintaining records of income and expenses. The unit has opened an account with Bank of India in order to carry out their transactions smoothly. CBR Manager, Smita Nischith along with other field staff members, have been regularly hand holding them to ensure the team understands the processes in maintaining these books. Armed with the tailoring skills and the administrative know-how of running a mini profitable enterprise on their own, these daring young women look forward to making a mark with their enterprise.

MI hosts workshop on

"Wheelchair Service Training Package - Basic Level"



Mobility India conducted a five day training programme on 'Wheelchair Service Training Package - Basic Level' at its centre in JP Nagar, Bangalore, from March 23 - 27, 2015. The programme was conducted in association with USAID, World Vision, and Advanced Partners and Communities.

A team of qualified Physiotherapists, and Prosthetics and Orthotists from MI conducted the programme, focusing on building the skills and competency in basic level wheelchair service delivery.

Healthcare and rehabilitation professionals from institutes across the country such as Spastic Centre, Uttar Pradesh; BCM Hospital, Uttar Pradesh; ISIC, Institute of rehabilitation sciences, New Delhi; Herbertpur Christian Hospital, Uttarakhand; Christian Medical College and Hospital, Tamil Nadu were among the participants.

Participants were given hands on training with wheelchairs at the workshop. Mr Anil D Almeida, who works as a system operator in Sensor Engineering and also a wheelchair lawn tennis player was one of the individuals who was assessed and provided with a new wheelchair at the workshop. Says Almeida, “I have been provided with a wheelchair which is best suited for my needs. Being a sports person, I often travel. The new wheelchair will be easy for me to carry along while travelling in flights and trains. The team gave me an overview of how to maintain wheelchairs better.”

According to Radhika Subramanian from Herbertpur Christian Hospital, Uttarakhand the practical sessions made her understand the real-world problems in prescribing a wheelchair. All the participants undertook an online examination on the last day of the course. The ones who cleared the test, won themselves a certificate from the International Society for Wheelchair Professionals.



No mountain too high, No river too wide



Dr. Rajalakshmi S J, hailing from Bangalore is a typical youngster who loves her work and her city. She loves taking long drives in her modified car, singing, painting, designing clothes and treating herself to KFC. She enjoys the company of her friends, and on holidays she likes visiting malls, eating out and watching movies. All this, while being wheelchair bound.

After completion of her bachelor's degree in dentistry Rajalaxmi met with a road accident when travelling to Chennai, and lost mobility in both

her lower limbs. Initially she was reluctant to use the wheelchair and rejected it for almost six months. She then realised that she would remain 'stuck in time and place', if she did not come to terms with her situation.

Apprehensive, reluctant, but ready to fight the odds against her, she adopted the wheelchair, and there has been no looking back since then. Soon after the incident, she took up a fashion designing course, and a post graduate programme in psychology. Rajalaxmi went on to win herself a MDS seat in the Government Dental College, Bengaluru, after a lot of petitioning, MDS seat in the Government Dental College, Bengaluru, after

a lot of petitioning, and completed her Master of Dental Surgery with a gold medal. Today Dr Rajalaxmi owns a dental clinic and has a well-established practice of her own.

Seeing her academic excellence and aspiration to become a peer trainer, MI proposed her name for the 1st WSTP-B level program under ACCESS project held in September 2014. She was also part of 2nd WSTP-B level program held in March 2015, as a trainer. She motivated the participants with a message that a user could achieve anything if he/she has 'wheels and will' with them.

Another feather in Rajalaxmi's cap has been winning the 'Miss India - Wheelchair 2014' title held in Mumbai. She was one among the seven participants selected from over 200 applicants across India. Rajalaxmi left no stone unturned, to ensure that she emerged the undisputed winner at the pageant. When asked whose life she would want to live if given another chance, she responded by saying that she would want to re-live her own life.



Rajalaxmi is undoubtedly a role model for many. Today she travels across the world and lives life in her own terms. She brims with a smile as she says, “Recently I took a trip to Ladakh, and it was indeed beautiful. I am also proud that I conducted a school dental camp sponsoring the event myself.” While much of Dr Rajalaxmi's success comes from her own talent and passion, she credits MI for helping her in her journey. “MI tried to make me walk with orthosis, provided me with continuous therapy, and eventually taught me to embrace the wheelchair. The team was there for me at every step, or should I say, in every turn of the wheel.”

Donate

- Developmental Aid per unit Rs.4,000
- Assistive Devices (Calipers, artificial limbs, crutches, walkers)..... Rs.2,000-5,000
- WheelchairsRs.8,000-9,000
- Nutritious foodRs.1,000-2,000
- Therapy servicesRs.2,000-4,000
- Education per child per year.....Rs.2,000-5,000
- Any amount you wish to contribute

I am donating ₹ by Cheque/ Demand Draft number
towards

I would like to introduce a friend.

Pin.....Telephone: E-mail :

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

A second chance at life – The Story of Suhani

Ashok works as a driver who ferries school children from their homes to school and back. In 2010, while on his way back home after dropping the children, he heard the cry of a baby. He stopped his vehicle, and found an infant lying abandoned near the bush. He took the infant to a nearby hospital and got her thoroughly examined. Luckily she did not have any bruises or injuries. However the infant was diagnosed as a cerebral palsy child. Ashok went on to own the abandoned child and named her Suhani, meaning pleasant and beautiful.



In 2013, Suhani was identified and assessed by the Manav Vikas Kendra, a partner organisation of MI, Kolkata during a survey. MI has helped set up the therapy unit at Manv Vikas Kendra, Jharkhand with tools and equipment, and has also trained two personnel as Rehab Therapy Assistants. During the assessment it was found that Suhani remained in a lying position most of the time at home, unable to sit, stand or walk. The rehab team has since then been providing regular therapeutic interventions and training her in functional activities, along with teaching her father how to carry out the exercises at home.

Ashok brings Suhani to the Kendra every day, holding her hand and helping her take one step at a time. Suhani enjoys spending her time at the centre. She undergoes therapy in the form of exercises and play activities in order to improve her gross motor activities. She has learnt to understand basic instructions. She also tries carrying out simple day to day activities by herself.

In the afternoons, Suhani spends time with her family and younger sibling at home. Together they make a picture perfect family. At home, parallel bars have been fixed with locally available materials in order to help her improve her mobility. According to Suhani's father, Ashok, "There is lot of improvement after the therapy. With a little prompting and hand holding Suhani is making steady progress." Suhani is now five years old, and is able to sit, walk and stand with support. Ashok plans to send his daughter to school next year, along with continuing the therapy interventions.

MOBILITY INDIA REHABILITATION RESEARCH & TRAINING CENTRE

1st & 1st 'A' Cross, 2nd Phase J. P. Nagar,
Bengaluru - 560 078
Phone : +91-80-26492222 / 26597337
Ext - 9 (Reception)
Telefax : +91-80-26494444 Ext - 110
e-mail@mobility-india.org

REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE

P-91, Helen Keller Sarani, Majerhat,
Kolkata - 700 053
Telefax : +91-33-24013914, 24012190
mik@mobility-india.org

RURAL RESOURCE CENTRE

#26/287, Forest Nursery Road, Basaweshwarnagar,
PWD Colony, Chamarajanagar - 571 313
Phone : +91-08226 222375
michrrc@mobility-india.org

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

#26/287, House no. 2, Bhola Baba Path,
Six Miles Flyover, Khanapara,
Guwahati - 781 022
Phone: 7086.044.450
mine@mobility-india.org