

**INCLUSIVE SOCIETY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:
ROLE OF NONPROFIT ORGANISATIONS OF INDIA IN
BRINGING DIVYANGJANS INTO MAINSTREAM**

**Harpreet Kaur,
Research Scholar,
Department of Political Science,
Panjab University, Chandigarh
Email id: harpreet0561@gmail.com**

ABSTRACT:

The United Nations adopted the 2030 agenda for sustainable development which covers the total 17 goals to be achieved. The subjects of poverty, health, hunger, education, equality, clean water, clean energy, economic growth, sustainable cities, environmental concerns, peace and justice including others are covered under the sustainable Development goals.

As the year 2030 approaches near, it's high time to confront the global issues which are blocking the way of sustainable development. One among such issues is the absence of an inclusive environment for disabled. 15 % of the world's population possesses some form of disability. And looking at the multiple hurdles in their way towards overall development, the United Nations sets the goal of inclusive societies to bring the persons with special abilities into the mainstream. Taking this problem into account, the research paper aims to explore, how far have the most renowned nonprofit organisations in India reached in bringing the disabled population into the mainstream? The secondary sources of data have been used for studying the

role played by the organisations in bringing the empowerment of Divyangjans.

Keywords: Inclusive Society, Sustainable Development, Nonprofit Organisations, Divyangjans

INTRODUCTION:

“Social inclusion is understood as a process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities for all, regardless of their background, so that they can achieve their full potential in life. It is a multi-dimensional process aimed at creating conditions which enable full and active participation of every member of the society in all aspects of life, including civic, social, economic, and political activities, as well as participation in decision-making processes.”

(Mayanja & Hayzer, n.d.)

Inclusive society is such where none of the members of society is found to be marginalised and everyone is getting equal rights. The United Nations is working towards creating such an inclusive society by setting various developmental goals for the marginalised sections. Member countries of the United Nations are contributing by taking various measures towards the fulfilment of these goals. Among various marginalised groups such as women, old persons, migrants, minorities and others, persons with special abilities are acting as a key group that needs social inclusion. This research paper confines its focus upon the person with special abilities who are lagging behind in their overall development. Thus the study aims to explore the role played by the national award winning, nonprofit organisations for

uplifting the persons with special abilities. (*Year Wise National Awards*, n.d.)

ROLE PLAYED BY NONPROFIT ORGANISATIONS IN BRINGING DIVYANGJANS INTO MAINSTREAMS

The nonprofit organisations are found to be dealing with the social and economic challenges confronted by Divyangjans in India. Various initiatives that have been taken by the organisations for the development of Divyangjans are listed below.

1. Providing Equal Educational Opportunities: Inclusive education is all about providing equal educational opportunities to children with special abilities without any discrimination. (Meijer & Pijl, 2002, 1-2) Indian government has taken various initiatives for inclusive education under the new education policy 2020. (*National Education Policy 2020*, n.d.) On the other hand various efforts have been taken by the nonprofit organisations to bring new techniques in teaching which helps in meeting the different needs of Divyangjans.

Deepstambh Foundation is a non-profit organisation that works in the field of education for orphans, economically weaker sections, transgenders and persons with special abilities. With a mission of inclusive education in his mind Yajurvendra Mahajan established Deepstambh Foundation. The founder of the organisation was moved by the fact that persons with special abilities lose their hope of being self-sufficient due to various hurdles in their way of development. Hence he decided to uproot all the challenges that are coming in the way of their education and intellectual development.

For providing educational opportunities, the organisation has set libraries in the rural areas. Along with that they provided free books and scholarships to Divyangjans. Library and reading rooms are facilitated with audio books, Braille books and e-books that are open for the students all the time. In order to deal with the problem of limited opportunities in higher education for Divyangjans, the organisation aims to motivate and provide them with the opportunities of higher education. Hence training for higher secondary level education is provided along with courses of graduation, postgraduate and PhD. At the same time, the organisation lays focus on providing coaching for the government examinations. They ensure total accessibility of education, by employing different learning techniques. They also provide accessible study materials, and in order to address their language related concerns, English, Hindi and Marathi languages are used in teaching and training purposes. (*Manobal New*, n.d.)

Balvantray Mehta Vidya Bhawan follows the path of Sher-e-Punjab, Lala Lajpat Rai and imparts quality education while ensuring the inclusion of children with special abilities. The separate general and special wings have been created to give a fair attention to the needs of special students. The endless efforts of integration of Divyang and the regular students, has bore fruit in the form of educational advancement of Divyang students. (Balvantray Mehta Vidya Bhawan, n.d.)

Amar Jyoti trust provides for the betterment of not only Divyangjans but they aim to impart education to the weaker sections as well. For the said purpose Amarjyoti has been serving in the field of Inclusive

education since 1981. The courses have been developed by keeping in mind the needs of children with special abilities. Indira Gandhi National Open University recognizes the organisation as a special education centre which imparts open education for the Divyang students. (*Amar Jyoti Research and Rehabilitation Centre, 2020*)

To prevent any technological gap, Digital literacy programmes have been launched by Sarthak with an aim of teaching them about the use of computers, smartphones, online payments etc. Training for Visually impaired persons has been given regarding the usage of VI softwares such as, NVDA and Jaws. (Sarthak Educational Trust, n.d.)

2. **Teachers Training:** Covering all the aspects of educational development, the Deepstambh foundation further lays its focus upon teachers training in special education. The organisation ties up with the schools and colleges to provide for the teacher training programmes. They adopt special techniques of education that would benefit the students with special needs. (*Manobal New, n.d.*) Balvantray Mehta Vidya Bhawan also looks after the needs of inculcating new teaching techniques into the teachers in a similar manner. (Balvantray Mehta Vidya Bhawan, n.d.)
3. **Skill Development and Placement:** Sarthak Educational Trust is at the peak of providing skills to persons with special abilities. The trust works at the PAN India level having various branches of the organisation spread across the nation. It has provided skill training to more than 60,000 Divyangjans. While making efforts for their placements they have placed more than 35,000 Divyangjans. In addition to that, the Job Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Training

program has been organised, where divyangjans are provided skill training in the skill labs established by the organisation. In addition to that, Rozgarsarathi app is an online job portal created by the trust for availing all the information pertaining to the government and private jobs for Divyangjans. (Sarhak Educational Trust, n.d.)

Deepstambh Foundation, Mahatma Gandhi Seva Sangh, Balvantray Mehta Vidya Bhawan and Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust also provide various vocational training programmes to the students for their self-reliance. Computer training, communication skills, handicraft training and marketing communication including Candle making, envelope making, paper recycling, beautician courses are provided to the students which would further help them in becoming self sufficient. Apart from that, Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust lays its focus upon the Spoken English course and career counselling for Divyang Students.

4. Sports and Abilympics: Abilympics is an Olympics of abilities possessed by divyangjans and India has made a reputed place at the international level by showcasing their abilities to the world. In association with National Abilympics Association of India, Sarhak aims for preparing the persons with special abilities to participate in international Abilympics held after every four years. In the International abilympics held in the year 2023, India created history by winning 7 medals in total. (*10th International Abilympics 2023, 2023*)

Along with Sarhak Foundation, Amar Jyoti Charitable trust also places great emphasis upon the Abilympics. Likewise Deepstambh

Foundation has emphasised indoor and outdoor sports activities. Students associated with the organisation have achieved strength and confidence in them. Mrunal Pandey from Deepstambh Foundation is a visually impaired person. With the help of the guidance provided by the foundation, she was able to reach at national and international level sports events. She won a bronze medal in chess at the Para Asian Games for Persons with Disabilities. (*Manobal New*, n.d.)

5. Spreading Awareness about Disability: With a vision of securing dignified life for Divyangjans in India, Non profit organisations endeavour to spread their message of inclusion of persons with special abilities into the mainstream. Amidst all the negative perceptions regarding disability, the Mahatma Gandhi Seva Sangh and Sarthak Education Trust, ensures for creating sensitisation towards disability by organising awareness camps, workshops, seminars, webinars and Guest lectures. (Mahatma Gandhi Seva Sangh, n.d.)

The Sarthak education trust also provides digital solutions for the concerns of persons with special abilities. All the information regarding types of disabilities, disability certificate, disability pension, UDID cards, including their health, education and employment has been provided at the Digital information portal of Sarthak.

Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust New Delhi has set mechanisms for providing guidance to the parents of Divyangjans and sensitised them about the subject of disability. They guide the parents for tracking the early signs of behavioural and physical abnormalities. All of these efforts have brought the parents together which leads to the formation of parent support groups. These parent support groups serve a great

- need to the parents of Divyang children. It provides a common platform for the parents to share their experiences and learn from the other parents who are dealing with a similar set of circumstances with their children. Under the social work department of the Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust, house visits are made for the counselling of the parents of children with special abilities. They are made aware of the governmental schemes and policies benefiting Divyangjans (*Amar Jyoti Research and Rehabilitation Centre*, 2020). Just like other NGOs, Deepstambh foundation equally disseminates awareness regarding benefits of education in the rural areas. (*Manobal New*, n.d.)
6. Distribution of Assistive Devices: Mahatma Gandhi SevaSangh in association with District Disability Rehabilitation Centre organises the camps under ADIP scheme. The camps at regular intervals provide for the free distribution of assistive devices and artificial limbs along with other materials. The devices are distributed followed by screening of persons with special abilities. Such camps serve as a boon for the Divyangjans falling in economically weaker sections. (Mahatma Gandhi Seva Sangh, n.d.) Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust also makes efforts for distributing assistive devices to Divyangjans.
 7. Providing Treatments through Various Therapies: Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust New Delhi is not just confined to the educational needs of persons with special abilities, rather they provide medical facilities in their premises at free or subsidised rates. Physiotherapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy, are some of the major initiatives taken by the medical wing of the organisation. (*Amar Jyoti Research and Rehabilitation Centre*, 2020) In addition to that, Dohsa

Hou camps have been organised by Balvantray Mehta Vidya Bhawan for their psychological rehabilitation. Dohsa Hou is a Japanese technique brought by Gosaku Naruse which involves the use of relaxation techniques for reducing the psychological and physical tension. It helps in the body movements in persons having cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and other physical disabilities. (Imura et al., 2016, #)

SUGGESTIONS:

The Government of India has taken various steps for bringing the persons with special abilities into the mainstream. India became a signatory to the UN Convention on Rights of persons with disabilities, and later revised the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act in 2016. Various schemes have been implemented by the government with an aim of providing help to the needy population of persons with special abilities. But the lack of awareness about all these governmental initiatives serves as the major problem. Hence it is suggested to raise the awareness regarding all the matters of disability among the masses.

To move further ahead the focus should be laid upon providing governmental support to nonprofit organisations working in the field of disability. New milestones can be achieved if the government strengthens its bond with the nonprofit organisations and other welfare oriented institutions. This partnership can bring manifold benefits that can help in the inclusion of Divyangjans into the mainstream.

CONCLUSION:

After exploring the work done by the nonprofit institutions in the field of disability, it could be said that the organisations are moving in the right

direction towards inclusive societies where no one is left behind. Various innovative measures that have been adopted by the organisations, provide help to the persons with special abilities in attaining self sufficient lives. Innovative measures adopted by organisations such as IDEA (India Disability Empowerment Alliance) not only demonstrates the dedication behind serving the persons with special abilities in India but it also shows the capabilities of Indian Civil Society Organisations that can bring change at larger levels.

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