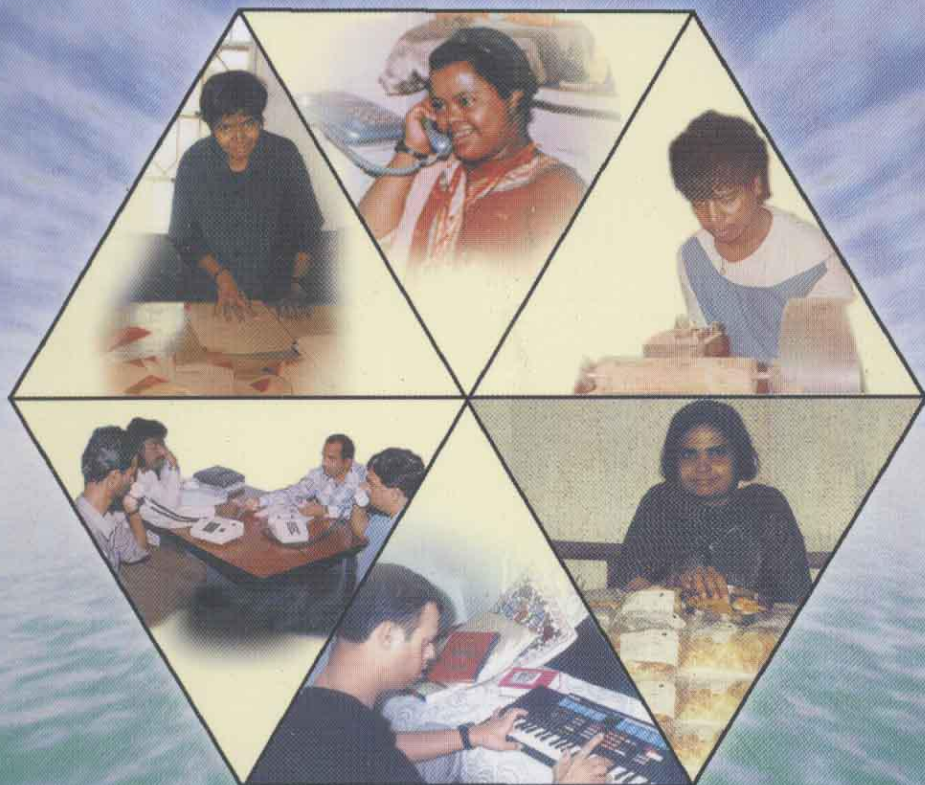


# HOPE BEYOND HOPE

## SOME SUCCESS STORIES

**Employment leads Persons with  
Mental Retardation towards independent living**



A.T. THRESSIAKUTTY  
Dr. L. GOVINDA RAO

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We express our sincere thanks to our clients, the persons with mental retardation, who contributed much towards the publication of this book.

We acknowledge the cooperation of the service centres and the parent organizations in the collection of the data to prepare this book to create an awareness on the abilities of persons with mental retardation.

We thank one and all who helped us to complete this work successfully.

**Dr. L.Govinda Rao**  
Director, NIMH &  
Co-ordinator

**A.T.Thressiakutty**  
Project Co-ordinator  
"Development of Employment  
Awareness Materials"

# PREFACE

The book "Hope Beyond Hope" Some Success Stories is an outcome of the project "Development of employment awareness materials for persons with mental retardation". The book contains a brief history and the concept of the vocational rehabilitation services at the National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad (NIMH) with a few success stories of the employed mentally challenged persons.

The book has 4 chapters. The first chapter explains the conceptual framework and the various stages of vocational rehabilitation services at NIMH. The institute promoted various models of vocational rehabilitation. Supported employment in open competitive situation is one of the models. The job retention in supported employment has been analysed and given in chapter 2. NIMH also developed group employment model. Under this model 18 group employment centres were organized in different parts of the country with the support of the parents and the community. The result of the SWOT analysis has been narrated in chapter 3.

Twenty two success stories of persons with mental retardation, are narrated in chapter 4. They are not stories but real life events of the persons with mental retardation. Each story gives you a specific message as you read and reflect. The purpose is to create an awareness on the capabilities of persons with mental retardation.

We request the readers to write to NIMH to give the success stories known to them which will inspire everyone to contribute towards the independent living of persons with mental retardation.

**Dr. L.Govinda Rao**  
Director, NIMH &  
Co-ordinator

**A.T.Thressiakutty**  
Project Co-ordinator  
"Development of Employment  
Awareness Materials"

## CHAPTER - 1

# Vocational Training and Employment Services at NIMH

The National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, popularly known as NIMH, was established at Secunderabad, in the year 1984 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India.

The vision of NIMH is that the quality of life of every person with mental retardation is equal to other citizens in the country; in that they live independently to the maximum extent possible.

NIMH mission is "through constant professional endeavours, empowering the persons with mental retardation to access the state-of-the-art rehabilitation intervention viz., educational, therapeutic, vocational, employment, leisure and social, sports and cultural programmes and full participation".

NIMH values equal opportunities, protection of rights and full participation of the persons with mental retardation. NIMH believes in participation of the persons with disabilities, parents, professionals, employees and other stakeholders in the rehabilitation programmes that are client focused.

The institute developed indigenous service models based on research and development activities of the institute. These models have become the part of the curriculum of the professional courses. So far home based, community based, group parent training, early intervention services, special education models, vocational models-transition from school to work, have been developed, which are widely used in the country.

# A Model towards Adult Independent Living of persons with mental retardation

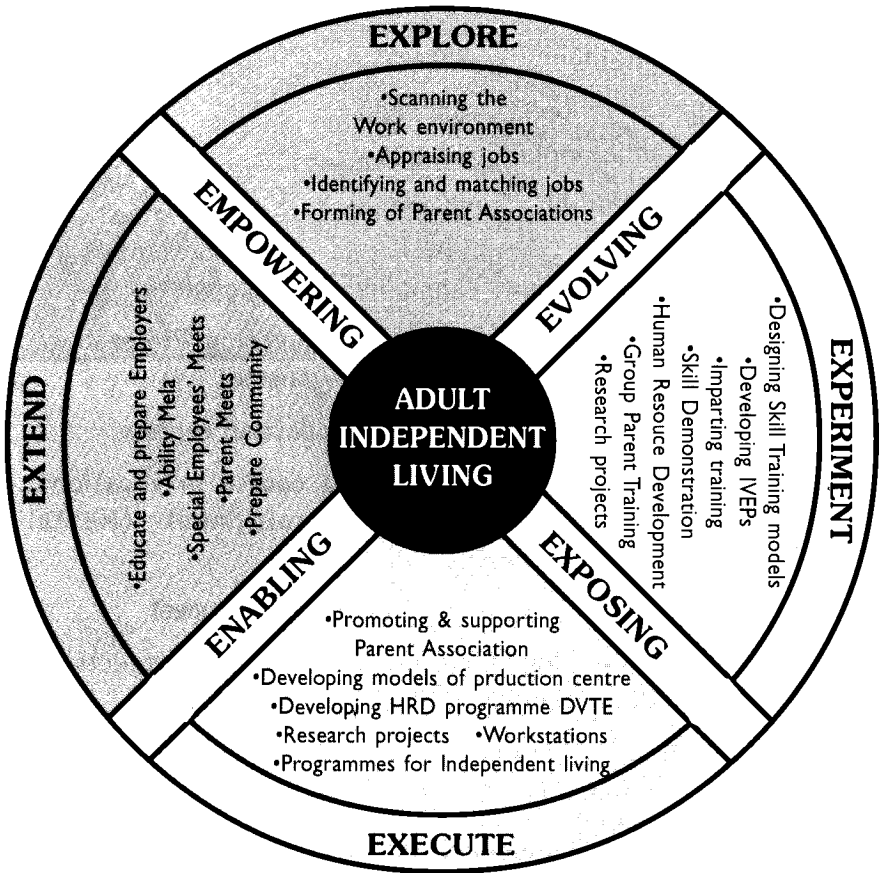


Diagram No. 2

## **EXPLORE (Period : 1985-91)**

### **A. Scanning and Appraisal**

It has been observed that children who are in the school system need to be prepared for a quality of life for which alternative forms of services are to be worked out. As per Edgar (1980) most of the children without alternative form will remain unemployed. It is therefore necessary to develop programmes for preparing the child, parent and the society so that the student gets the right training as well as the required support right from the school. This process is normally understood as transition and the student is prepared to be evolving herself/himself into the work and life activities. The work environment was scanned during the period to appraise the jobs and identify with the potential skills of the persons with mental retardation.

During this period the major job sites were Montessori equipment's manufacturing factory, printing presses and other small scale industries. The major finding during this stage was that persons with mental retardation can retain a job successfully if systematic training and support services are provided. Chapter 2 gives more information on job retention of persons with mental retardation in supported open employment.

### **B. Identification and Matching of jobs**

In addition to workshops and seminars on job identification, systematic efforts were made to identify suitable jobs in government and non-government organizations. Suitable jobs were identified in the Indian Railways, Postal and Telecommunication Departments and other public and private sector industries.

It was found that a number of unskilled, skilled and repetitive jobs are available in all the above departments. But there was a great need to demonstrate the capabilities of persons with mental retardation to perform the jobs in various job sites.



## ***EXPERIMENT (PERIOD 1992-97)***

### ***A. Skill Training***

The process to place the persons with mental retardation on the work site involves various programmes which are to be planned thoughtfully and implemented skillfully. One of the techniques in designing the training modules for the persons with mental retardation is based on the principle of place, train and follow-up (PTF) or train, place and follow-up (TPF) depending upon the need of the specific case. The designing of the training module and subsequent development of Individual Vocational Education Plan (IVEP) will help the persons with mental retardation to expose themselves to the work situation. In the experiment phase itself the outcome will be seen as "exposing" of the persons with mental retardation to the job, work environment, people, community, work lay out, buildings and structures and the society at large.

### ***B. Skill Demonstration***

The parents groups were organized to initiate production centres for persons with mental retardation. These organizations trained and engaged persons with mental retardation to manufacture the stationery and other items which are used in the Railways, AG's office, HMT, BHEL and other departments and firms. These centers demonstrated the work abilities of persons with mental retardation. Employment created a change of attitude towards persons with mental retardation. They were excited when they started getting payment for their productive work. Chapter 3 explains about the demonstration centers and group employment.

### ***C. Human Resource Development***

NIMH has organized 12 short term courses at National level to introduce the recent trends in vocational rehabilitation services. Professionals from all over India attended these courses. The theoretical part was synchronized with practicals through case work and field visits. This helped improve the remunerative employment of persons with mental retardation.

## ***EXECUTE (Period 1994-97)***

### ***A. Identification of Enabling Strategies***

In this phase of executing the models developed under the experiment phase, the emphasis is on creating enabling conditions. This process helps the field to provide enabling environment for the persons with mental retardation to take up the jobs. During this phase, the outcome is on creating enabling conditions. The strategies adapted are developing models, restructuring work environment, vocational curriculum development, developing HRD programmes, developing certificate courses in order to build the capacities to provide necessary technical and organizational support in the vocational training and employment, and undertaking research and projects development.

### ***B. Organization of production centers***

After organizing the demonstration centers, a multicenterie development project was prepared and implemented at select centres in each region in the country. Under this project 18 group employment centers were started in different parts of the country with parents and community support. SWOT analysis report is given in chapter 3.

### ***C. Human Resouce Development***

#### ***DVTE(MR) course and Special Employees National Meet***

As there was a great need for trained vocational instructors, one year diploma course in vocational training and employment (Mental Retardation) was started in the year 1995. Currently the qualified vocational instructors are working in various vocational centers.

Work stations and vocational curriculum development will serve as a practical class for the adults with mental retardation with a set curriculum and evaluation process. These practicals are designed in a simulated environment. The workstations have the provision for graduating the adults with mental retardation according to skill acquisition and application with a duration of one year. With standardization of Vocational Education by designing a curricula

for the vocational training of the persons with mental retardation it is expected that on the lines of the schools system standardization in the area of vocational training can take place over the years. The workstation concept also as in the case of school system pre-supposes that every adult who enters in the vocational training will be graduated out after the completion of the designed training in the vocational training centers.

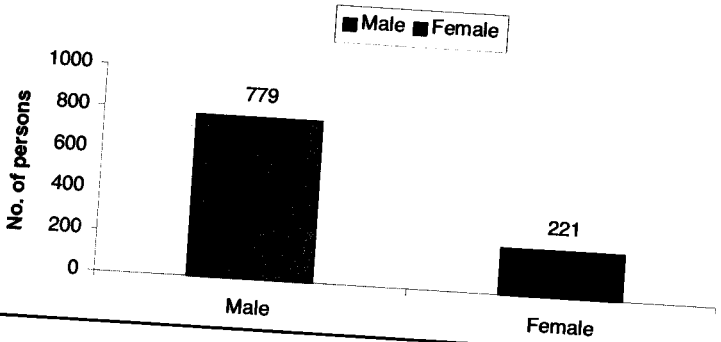
### ***EXTEND (Period since 1995)***

It is necessary to spread the technology in order to reap the fruits of scientific development of vocational models and HRD programmes. This will prepare the society to provide space to the persons with mental retardation to convert their capabilities into earning capacity. Thus the process outcome expected out of this phase is of empowering the persons with mental retardation. During this phase the community is prepared by undertaking educational programmes for the employers, for the key government authorities and immediate neighbourhood. HRD activity has been increased in this phase. Certificate course has been introduced to impart advanced techniques to the vocational instructors working in the field with emphasis on innovation and marketing management. The programmes in this phase include organization of the Ability Melas, Special Employees Meets, National Parents Meets, Exhibitions, Multimedia, Printing and Publication of Manuals. The ultimate objective is to empower the persons with mental retardation to live independently as far as practicable.

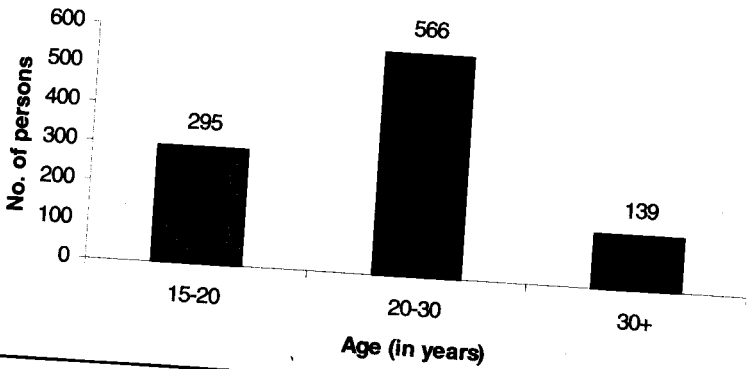
NIMH initiated special employees national meet for persons with mental retardation who are on remunerative jobs and who had demonstrated their skills on 133 jobs as shown in Table - 1. So far eight such meets have been conducted. More than thousand persons with mental retardation attended the meets. The data is given below. Few success stories are also included in chapter 4. National Parent Meets are organised to educate the parents on vocational training. So far, Ten National Parent Meets have been conducted at different locations in the country.

# Particulars of Special Employees attended the National Meets (1995-2003)

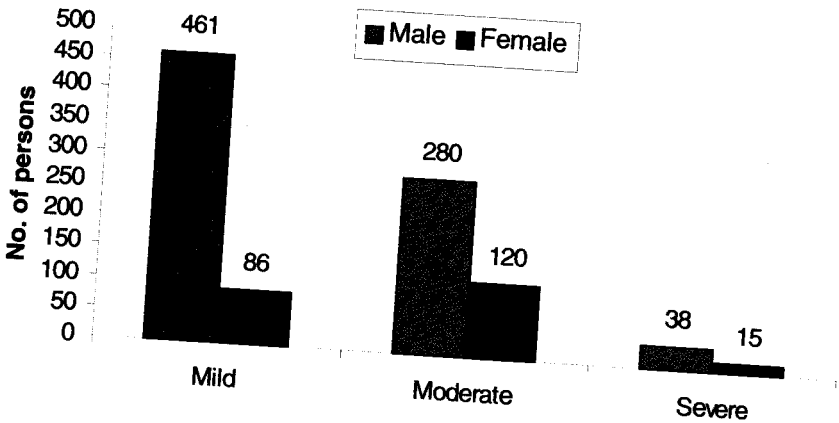
## Gender Wise Distribution



## Age Wise Distribution



## Category/Gender Wise Distribution



**Table - 1**

**LIST OF JOBS DEMONSTRATED BY THE SPECIAL EMPLOYEES  
DURING THE NATIONAL SPECIAL EMPLOYEES MEETS AT NIMH**

1. Public telephone booth assistant
2. Managing petty shop
3. Stationary shop helper
4. Candle making
5. Book binding
6. Screen printing
7. Poultry farm helper
8. Fabric painting
9. Tailoring
10. Xerox machine operator
11. Preparation of cleaning materials
12. Masala making
13. Canteen helper
14. Soft toys making
15. Papad making
16. Helper in bakery
17. Agriculture work
18. Packing fruits
19. Sweet box preparation
20. Salesman
21. Garlands making
22. Grazing cattles
23. Embroidery work
24. Pot hangers making
25. Labelling utensils
26. Needle work
27. Clay work
28. Photo lamination
29. Despatch section assistant
30. Helper in printing press
31. Helper in bicycle shop
32. Packing
33. Helper in marriage function hall
34. Attender
35. Drawing and painting
36. Helper in workshop
37. Catering assistant
38. Saree folding
39. Beedi making
40. Factory labourer
41. Helper in electric shop
42. Wire cutting
43. Rubber tapping
44. Tiles making
45. PVC chappal finishing work
46. Tabla master
47. Gate keeper
48. Marble cutting
49. Gardener
50. Plastic moulding
51. Coir mats preparation
52. Receptionist cum telephone operator
53. House keeping
54. Cardboard boxes making
55. Spindle machine operator
56. Waiter in restaurant
57. Tin polishing
58. Stapling
59. Cleaning pulses
60. Helper in nursing unit
61. Ready made garments sales
62. Sanding work
63. Scribbling pad making
64. Chappal making

65. Envelope making
66. Filling Ayurvedic medicine in capsule
67. Watch assembly
68. Drilling machine operator
69. Library assistant
70. Thermocol work
71. Key chains preparation
72. Umbrella assembling
73. Ward boys
74. Worker in service station
75. Assembling electrical goods
76. Special educator aide
77. Packing fruits
78. File making
79. Covers/envelop making
80. Paper bags preparation
81. Woolen mat making
82. Greeting cards making
83. Weaving work
84. Delivery of finished items
85. Imposing
86. Stapling
87. Spiral binding
88. Rakhi making
89. Dolls making
90. Diya decorations
91. Balloon making
92. PVC pipe bending
93. Chair caning
94. Aracanut shell removing
95. Cooking activities
96. Wooden toys making
97. Weighing and packing
98. Craft activities
99. Flower making
100. Scooter mechanic
101. Tie and Die
102. Washer man
103. Juice making
104. Waterman
105. Door to door sales
106. Making earthen pots
107. Sweet packing and selling
108. Data entry operator
109. Office boy in Pathology laboratory
110. Measuring and packing
111. Helper in animal husbandry
112. Block printing
113. Cross stitch work
114. Horticulture
115. Wire chair and spring chair fitting
116. Soap making
117. Orchid growing
118. Spray painting
119. Pickle making
120. School bus attender
121. Umbrella cloth stitching
122. Labeling the coconut oil bottles
123. Coconut husk painting
124. Polishing
125. Agriculture helper
126. Making newsprint carry bags
127. Gift packing paper and tags
128. Coir mat making
129. Hotel boy
130. Jute work
131. Billing in petrol bunk
132. Library assistant
133. Helper in Magneto Theraphy Unit

As per the report of the high power committee constituted by the Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, to identify the jobs for the persons with disabilities in the private sector, 52 jobs were identified as shown in Table-2

**Table - 2**  
**OCCUPATIONS IDENTIFIED FOR PERSONS WITH MENTAL  
RETARDATION IN PRIVATE SECTOR**

S. No.	N.C.O.	Occupation	Physical Requirements
1.	351.90	Helpers in Stores	H,L,PP,S,SE,ST,W
2	358.20	Peon, Office Boy	S,SE,ST,W
3	399.40	Gummer Teleprinting	F,H,S,SE,RW
4	430.30	Shop Assistant	F,S,SE
5	450.10	Petrol Pump Salesman	F,H,SE,ST
6	541.90	Sweeper, Cleaners and Related Workers	B,H,L,PP,S,SE,ST,W
7	542.10	Water Carrier	H,L,SE,ST,W
8	551.60	Presser Hand	B,L,SE,ST
9	560.90	Saloon Boy	B,H,L,S,SE,ST
10	640.24	Labourer (Plantation) (Nursery Worker, Plant Worker, Weeding Worker, Spraying Worker, Picker/Pucker)	B,PP,SE,ST,W
11	641.35	Milk Dairy Attendant	B,F,PP,S,SE,ST,W
12	651.10	Live Stock Worker	B,F,PP,SE,ST,W
13	652.10	Gardener General	B,F,KC,SE
14	752.90	Bobbin Cleaner	F,S,SE
15	779.63	Bottling/Crowning	F,S,SE,ST
16	782.20	Cigar or Cheroot Roller Helper	F,L,PP
17	811.10	Carpenter, General	B,F,KC,S,SE,ST
18	811.90	Carpenter, helper	H,S,SE,ST,W
19	812.90	Furniture Polisher	H,S,SE,ST,W
20	819.45	Fret Saw Machine Operator	H,S,SE,ST,W
21	819.350	Toy Maker, Wood	B,F,S,SE
22	842.90	Assemblers, Other	B,F,S,SE,ST
23	881.90	Jewellery Helper	B,F,S OR ST,SE
24	911.20	Envelope Maker	F,S,SE,ST
25	921.10	Job Printer	F,PP,S,SE
26	922.20	Mono Operator	B,F,S,SE
27	927.10	Book Binder	B,F,KC,PP,S,SE

S. No.	N.C.O.	Occupation	Physical Requirements
28	929.50	Silk Screen Painter	B, F, S, SE
29	939.50	Painter Mate	B, F, PP, S, SE, W
30	942.30	Caner	B, F, PP, S, ST
31	949.58	Candle Maker	F, PP, S
32	949.90	Card Board Box Maker	F, S, ST, SE
33	959.20	White Washer	B, F, SE, ST
34	963.20	Cleaner Motor Vehicle	B, F, SE, ST
35	976.10	Packer, hand (Carton Assemblers, Wooden Case Nailers)	B, F, S
36	976.50	Packing Asst.	B, F, S, SE
37	979.30	Liftman	S, SE, ST
38	*	Photostat Machine Operator	F, L, S, ST
39	*	CAD/CAM Programme Operator	F, S, SE
40	*	Computer Accessory Assembler	F, S, SE
41	*	Data Entry Operator	F, S, SE
42	*	E-commerce Teller	F, S, SE
43	*	E-commerce Accountant	F, S, SE
44	*	Internet Server Administrator	F, S, SE
45	*	Courier	L, S, SE, ST, W
46	*	Plate Maker (Printing)	F, L, S, SE, ST, W
47	*	Packing Machine	B, F, S, SE
48	*	School Bus Attendant	H, SE, ST
49	*	Diamond Cutter and Polisher	F, S, SE
50	*	Canteen Attendant	F, H, S, SE, W

\* = NCO numbers not available

### ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE LISTS OF OCCUPATIONS PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- B Work performed by bending
- F Work performed by manipulating (with fingers)
- H Work performed by hearing / speaking
- KC Work performed by kneeling and crouching
- L Work performed by lifting
- PF Work performed by pulling and pushing
- S Work performed by sitting (on bench or chair)
- SE Work performed by seeing
- ST Work performed by standing
- RW Work performed by reading and writing
- W Work performed by walking



Some of the activities demonstrated during  
**Special Employees National Meet**



Cardbord  
Box Making

Assistant in  
Horticulture



Cross Stitching



Composing



Helper in shop



Woolen work

Chair  
manufacturing  
(Welding, caning  
etc.)



Umbrella Assembling



Playing Music Keyboard



Bottle Labelling

## **The issues identified in the Special Employees National Meet**

A variety of jobs were demonstrated by the employees. The awareness on the need for payment for the work done by persons with mental retardation has been improved remarkably.

When analysed the data, the following issues were found :

1. Low wages
  - 6% of people get above Rs.2000/-
  - 12% of people get between Rs.1000/- to Rs.2000/-
  - 80% get below Rs.1000/-
2. Less number of non-traditional employment activities. The traditional activities donot lead the trainee to the status of a paid employee.
3. Less chances for career development
4. Problems in systematic training and evaluation
5. Less chances for community interaction
6. Low priority for transition from school to work

### **Research projects**

Based on the issues identified during Special Employees National Meets two research projects were developed and completed

1. Transition of persons with mental retardation from school to work
2. Development of employment awareness materials for persons with mental retardation

These projects mainly aimed at the issues pointed out earlier.

- 1. Transition**
- 2. Job identification**
- 3. Integration in open supported employment**

## 1. How to tackle the issues?

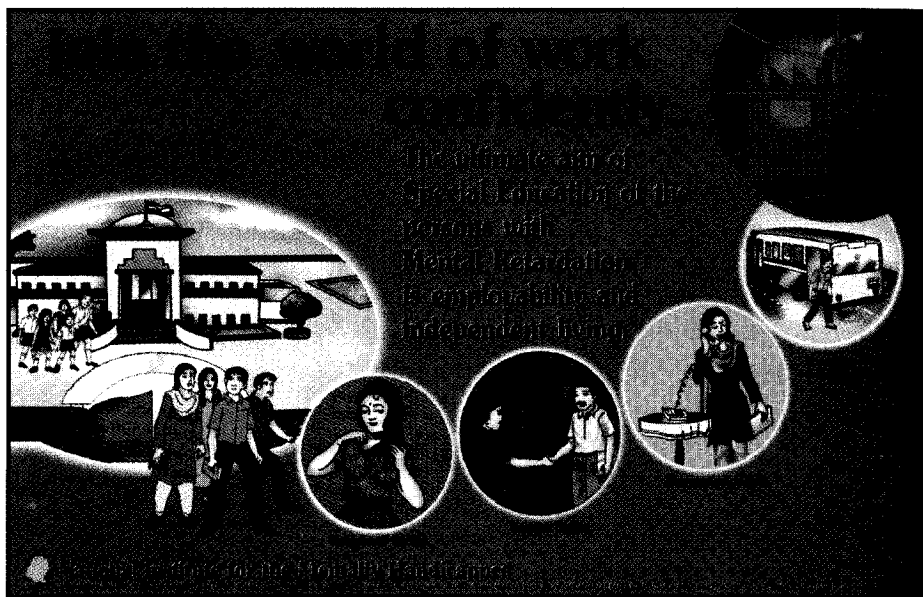
By implementing transition from school to work

- Develop individualized vocational transition plan at pre vocational level
- Prepare parents by creating awareness
- Make it mandatory to achieve the ultimate aim of special education.

The following books were printed as an outcome of the project.

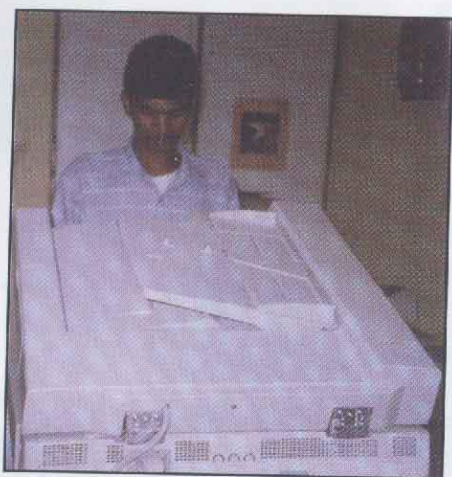
1. Transition of persons with mental retardation from school to work - a guide
2. Curriculum for vocational education - series 1
3. Curriculum for vocational education - series 2
4. Curriculum for vocational education - series 3

Posters on Employment of persons with mental retardation also were prepared.

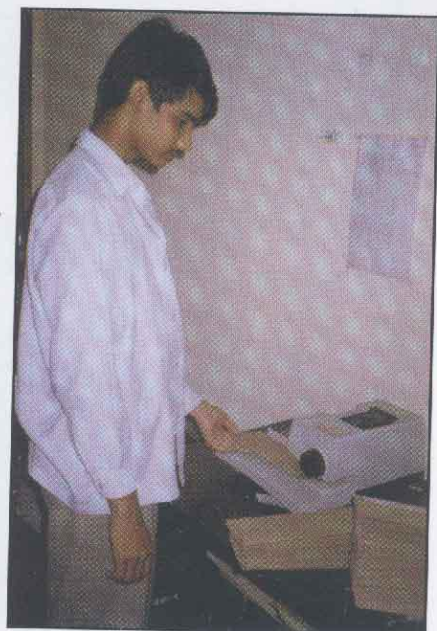


**Transition from school to work  
Training at NIMH**

**Under the project  
“Transition from  
school to work”**

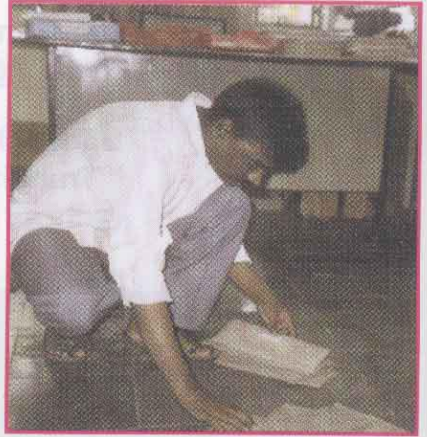


Photocopying



Operating  
Franking Machine

Training in office despatch section, pasting address



Office boy training

Arranging files in order





**TRANSITION  
FROM SCHOOL  
TO WORK  
TRAINING AT  
AHMEDABAD**

Cutting packing  
material



**TRANSITION  
FROM SCHOOL  
TO WORK  
TRAINING AT  
CALICUT**

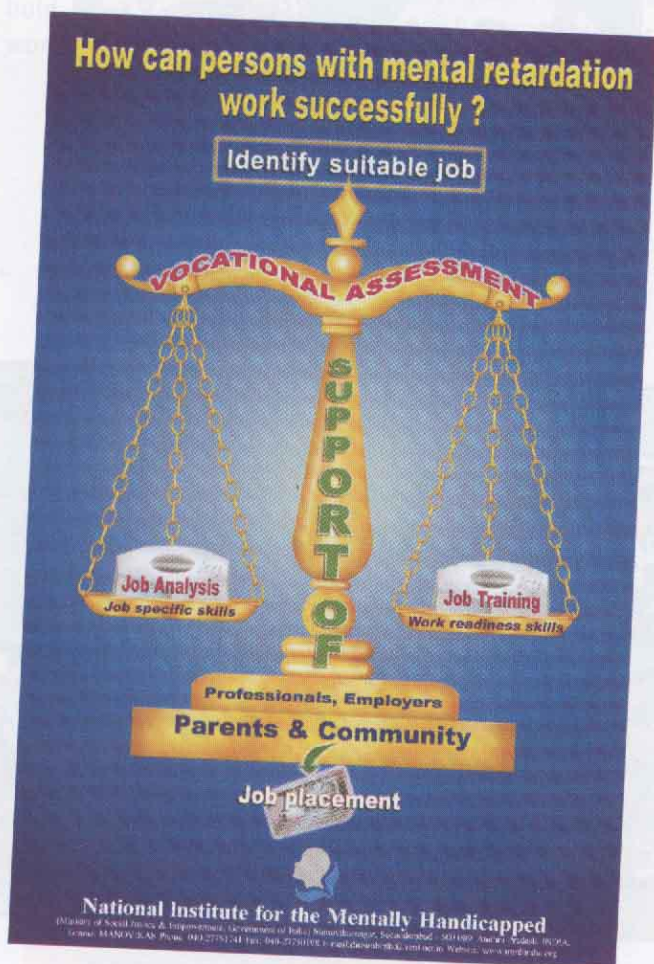


Umbrella assembling



## 2. By identifying suitable jobs

- Criteria for job identification
  - a. Match the trainee skills with the job specific skills
  - b. India is a very large country with 75% population living in the villages. Every village has its own occupations. Therefore, compilation of all the suitable occupations for persons with mental retardation is a herculean task.
  - c. Geographical proximity is a very important criteria. Identify jobs within 5 kilometers of radius where the persons with mental retardation live.





HELPER IN CARPENTRY

**Persons with Mental Retardation can perform a number of repetitive, unskilled and semiskilled tasks in any worksite**



CANTEEN HELPER



LEAFY VEGETABLES (PALAK) BUNDLING



BINDING



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**RURAL OCCUPATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION**

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### 3. Integration

By changing attitudes / misconceptions towards the employment of persons with mental retardation such as

- Can work only in sheltered workshops
- Cannot maintain quantity and quality
- Do not need money, just engage them in some activities
- Can do only repetitive unskilled tasks.

Research and experience show that people with mental retardation can hold a job in open employment with proper support services and work adjustment.

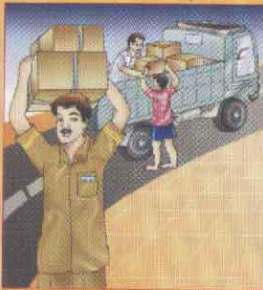
**Allow persons with mental retardation  
to work with others.  
Let them live in the community.**



SCREEN PRINTING



HELPER - DEVELOPING FILM



LOADING & UNLOADING



PACKING BOOKS



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# Look Beyond !



## In persons with Mental Retardation

### See their abilities, not the Disabilities

**National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped**

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## The realization of the vision of NIMH

“The quality of life of every person with mental retardation is equal to other citizens in the country; in that they live independently to the maximum extent possible”. The purpose of the vocational rehabilitation services at NIMH is to realize this dream.

Success stories in chapter 4 reveal how the above dream has been realized in the persons with mental retardation. Meet them and see their abilities.

## CHAPTER - 2

# Job Retention of Persons with Mental Retardation in Supported Open Employment - an Analytical Study

### 1.0 Introduction

Vocational training plays an important role in the overall plan of the education for persons with mental retardation. In order to maximize their potential for employment, they must be educated, trained for the world of work and this training must begin at an early age and continue through successful employment. It is not a one step process, but rather requires movement through different stages, school instruction, planning for the transition from school to work, and placement into meaningful employment.

The characteristics of traditional vocational training programmes and work adjustment services necessitated further investigation when professionals begin to probe the actual outcome of the service delivery system and explore alternative vocational training practices. A community referenced approach provides a strong functional relationship between service delivery and targeted outcome and takes a more active role in providing optional employment opportunities for clients with disabilities.

Since 1986, from a supported work approach to competitive employment has been practiced at the National Institute for the

Mentally Handicapped. Detailed data is collected from a 10 year study period of placement of 50 persons with mental retardation in supported open employment. The study examines particulars of individuals who continued supported employment in open situations over six months. Quality of employment, job retention and employers' perceptions are discussed in this chapter.

## **2.0 Supported Open employment - Definition**

The supported work model offers an approach to employment which differs in several ways from traditional approaches to employment for individuals with mental retardation. First of all, it is designed for a population which has historically been denied community based and well paid employment opportunities. Secondly it is a place, train and support model. Because of their disabilities, they need intensive ongoing support to perform in a work setting, particularly at worksites in which persons without disabilities are employed. (Developmental Disabilities Act of 1984)

Supported competitive employment is one model of supported employment (Wehman and Kregal, 1985). It is an employment approach for individuals with disabilities which enables them to be placed, trained and supported in open employment in integrated environments with the assistance of a professional "job coach" or employment specialist services. In the supported open employment model, an employment specialist accompanies the new employee to the job site from the first day of employment and provides intensive job site training, advocacy and support (Moon Goodall, Barcus and Brook, 1986) Gradually the job trainer reduces the time and intensity of training he or she provides the employee.

Job site training consists of 3 phases. Orientation and assessment, initial skill training and stabilization (Barcus, Brook, Inge, Moon and Goodall, 1987) In the present study, job site training included direct instruction of job duties and related non-vocational skills as well as agency advocacy that promotes the workers adjustments to work environment for job retention.

### 3.0 Objectives of the Study

- ❑ To identify suitable jobs in the open employment where persons with mental retardation can be placed and trained.
- ❑ To create an awareness among employers to motivate them to give job opportunities for persons with mental retardation.
- ❑ To assess the quality of employment and work behaviour of persons with mental retardation.
- ❑ To find out the effectiveness of on-the-job training approach for persons with mental retardation.
- ❑ To analyse the data of job retention of the persons with mental retardation placed on supported employment in open competitive situations.

### 4.0 Method

#### 4.1 Selection of Subjects

Subjects of this study were 50 persons with mental retardation who were registered at the National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped (NIMH). Generally the persons above 18 years of age who had a measured intelligence score below IQ 70 and exhibited a willingness to work were selected as potential job candidates.

The demographic variable available on each candidate (Table-3) were collected from the case record during the time of registration of NIMH and the time of placement. The prerequisite skills of the candidates were assessed in specific areas such as personal, social, functional academics and prevocational. An 80 item check list (IJDR-89) was used for the assessment of generic skills for selection of employment sites.

## 4.2 Job Site Setting

The job sites selected for placement activities have been limited by availability of jobs and willingness of employers. The different categories of placement sites were 8 factories, 5 printing presses, 2 offices and 4 shops.

## 4.3 Criteria for Selection of Suitable Jobs

The unskilled and semiskilled jobs which have minimum supervision and nil assistance but without any involvement of risks were selected for this study. The unskilled and semiskilled jobs which were performed by a group of people were selected because the necessary assistance and supervision were available with in the group itself. In case the failure of performance of some jobs, though easy to perform, but seriously affected the functioning of the firm, such jobs were not selected. The environment in which the jobs were to be performed also was given importance. The jobs which were performed in risky and dangerous environment were avoided due to the essential need of physical and mental alertness to safeguard oneself in the job site.

Table-3

### JOB SITES & SUBJECTS - PARTICULARS

Sl. No.	Job Sites	No. of persons placed	SEX		SEVERITY		
			Male	Female	Mild	Mode rate	Sev ere
1.	Factories/ small scale industries	32	29	3	24	5	3
2.	Printing Presses	12	12	-	09	3	-
3.	Offices	02	02	-	02	-	-
4.	Shops	04	04	-	03	1	-
	Total	50	47	3	38	9	3
	Percentage		94	6	76	18	6

The details of job sites and job assigned to the subjects of this study are given in table 4.



Table-4

DETAILS OF JOB SITES AND JOBS ASSIGNED

FACTORIES	JOBS ASSIGNED
<b>1. Companies</b>	
a. Toy manufacturing factory	1. Spindle moulding
b. Blade manufacturing company	2. Drilling
c. T.V. assembling unit	3. Wire winding
d. Fan assembling unit	4. Cutting into sizes
e. Carpentry unit	5. Assembling
f. Card board cartons making unit	6. Packing
g. Furniture manufacturing	7. Stapling
h. Bottling unit	8. Painting
	9. Labeling
	10. Gardening
<b>2. Printing Presses</b>	
a. Hi - tech - mechanized machine	1. Cutting on cutting machine
b. Medium size	2. Perforation
c. Small size	3. Helper in ruling
4. Binding	
5. Setting paper (imposing)	
6. Labeling	
7. Creasing	
8. Delivery of items	
9. Screen printing	
10. Lamination	
<b>3. Offices Despatch sections</b>	
	1. Stamping
	2. Packing
	3. Marking
	4. Photocopying
	5. Cyclostyling
	6. Operating generator
	7. Arranging for meetings
<b>4. Shops</b>	
a. Supermarket	1. Packing
b. Chicken shop	2. Arranging
c. Medical shop	3. Transferring
d. Hotel waiter	4. Fetching required items
e. Delivery of food items	

#### ***4.4 Selection of Employment Site***

Once accepted as eligible candidates, employment sites were selected on the basis of the availability of an appropriate job into which they can be placed and trained. The job was arranged in a manageable distance from the candidates' place of residence. If several candidates were available for one job, the one who closely matched the skill requirements was selected.

#### ***4.5 Support Services***

Since 1986 a supported employment model has been practised by NIMH. This approach is characterized by the intervention of a professional staff at the job site who initially make a job placement which is followed by intensive 1:1 training provided until the individual becomes independent. At that point, a gradual fading of staff is implemented. Additional related services are provided for any particular need which threatens continued employment.

#### ***4.6 Job Retention Criteria - Indicator of Success***

A successful vocational outcome is defined as retention in employment for 6 months, after 2 weeks observation period from the date of first placement. The development of a six month history is viewed as a first step indicator of success toward continued employment in the community (Hill et.al, 1985). Direct job site training, advocacy and follow up services were provided for all 50 subjects placed on job for this study.

#### ***4.7 Curriculum and Training***

Job analysis was prepared for the jobs identified. It included core work routines, episodic work routines, work behaviour and work related skills. This was used as the curriculum and evaluation tool for on-the-job-training at the job site.

#### ***4.8 Stages of Training***

Before starting intensive training at the job site, the subjects were kept under observation for two weeks. At this stage mainly the interest of the subjects and the parental cooperation were observed by the employer and the professional incharge of placement and on-the-job-training. Based on this report, decision was made whether the trainee is to be considered for intensive on-the-job-training. Those who were considered, were given on-the-job-training using the job analysis as curriculum and evaluation tool prepared for each trainee at the job site. During the stage of on-the-job-training, stipend was given to the trainees as reinforcement and as right which is otherwise available to non-disabled persons. As and when the trainees achieved the required skills, the employer increased the stipend and allowed them to continue on the job.

#### ***4.9 Measuring Job Retention***

Retention for a total of at least 6 months was selected as the dependent measure. This means that the candidates reaching the successful outcome would have worked for at least only six months and one day. For other early candidates the length of entire programme, that is as and when they were placed.

### **5.0 Discussion**

#### ***5.1. Job Retention***

Out of 50 candidates placed in different small scale industries, currently 31 are continuing. 13 of them moved in group and self employment. 6 of them were terminated due to inappropriate work behaviours.

The number of candidates placed at printing presses were 12. Since the employer was not willing to increase the stipend, 5 of them joined in other presses and one candidate discontinued. The remaining six are currently continuing on the job.

The candidates who are placed at the office despatch section was treated on par with other employees. The persons who were placed at the shops are currently continuing. The details are given on table 5.

**Table - 5**  
**JOB RETENTION**

Sites Employment	No. of persons placed	Continuing	Moved in other job sites	Terminated
1. Factories	32	19	8	5
2. Printing Presses	12	06	5	1
3. Office	02	02	-	-
4. Shops	04	04	-	-
	50	31 (62%)	13 (26%)	6(12%)

Out of 50 candidates, nine of them continue on the same jobs for 10 years. Twelve of them have 5 years job experience. Thirteen of them are continuing on the job for 2-4 years where as 12 of them newly joined and have an experience of more than 6 months. Data is shown in table 6.

**Table - 6**  
**DURATION WISE JOB RETENTION OF PERSONS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION**

Above 10 years	9
Above 5 years (5-9 years)	12
Above 2 years (2-4 years)	13
1 year	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>

## 5.2 Work Behaviour

A 5 item checklist which includes physical appearance, personal interaction, communication/social manners, regularity/punctuality and quality and quantity aspects. (NIMH-VAPS-1998), was administered.

The work behaviours were compared between the 3 groups of candidates - 1. Continuing 2. Moved in group and self employment 3. Terminated. The continuing group had a score of 88%. The terminated group scored below the satisfactory level. Poor work behaviour was the main reason for termination from the job.

## 5.3 Quality of Employment

Quality of employment was rated based on a 10 item checklist (table-6). The employment of 46% subjects were rated above satisfactory level. 36% subjects scored satisfactory level. The remaining 18% subjects had a score of below satisfactory level.

The main reasons for below satisfactory level rating were wages, less opportunities for advancement and status enhancing work activities.

**Table - 7**  
**QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT**

Sl.No.	AREA
1.	Reasonable wages
2.	Interaction with non-disabled workers
3.	Opportunities for advancement
4.	Status enhancing work activities
5.	Non segregating environment
6.	Community Participation
7.	Self confidence
8.	Family acceptance
9.	Community Neighbourhood acceptance
10.	Independence in life

#### ***5.4 Employer's Perception***

The data on work behaviour assessment was collected from each employer. It revealed the employer's perception on the candidate's work performance. A cross relationship was found between the individual's performance in the areas of regularity, punctuality and progress in speed of work and job retention which is positive.

#### ***5.5 Effectiveness of on-the-job Training***

After generic skills training the candidates were directly placed for job site training. It started after two weeks observation of the fitness of the candidates in the particular job sites and tasks which they had to learn and perform. The supervisor and coworkers were instructed the methods and the job trainer continued with the visits and faded as and when each candidate achieved the required specific skills to continue on the job. The study conducted by Hill. et.al (1985) suggests that a supported work model is effective for persons with varying demographic characteristics and backgrounds. The same was followed in the present study and found effective.

Although the present study did not include controlled group, effectiveness of on-the-job training and support services for job retention were analysed on the basis of the previous work history of the subjects. 12 candidates out of 50 had back ground of discontinuing from jobs due to lack of professional support during training period. The approach in the present study helped them to continue on-the-job. The employers requested assurance of professional support before accepting the proposal of on-the-job training and placement of persons with mental retardation.

## ***5.6 Change of Parental Perceptions***

<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
Child like	Adult
Foolish people	Responsive people
Weak-dull	Gaining of self confidence and courage
Good for nothing	Can cooperate with others
	Can maintain discipline in a given situation
Presenting problems	Have much to contribute
Needing us to speak for them always	Have a voice of their own

## ***5.7 Impact on overall life of Special Employees***

### **DISCIPLINE**

Follows daily schedule, punctuality, regularity  
Improvement in personal skills, cleanliness  
Likes to dress up better

### **SOCIALIZATION**

Better interaction  
Better communication skills  
Have friends, visits friends  
Learned Sports and cultural activities  
Travels by himself

### **FAMILY LIFE**

Contributing member of the family  
Speaks family matters  
Buys things for home  
More respected  
Too busy... tells "no time"






## **FUNCTIONAL ACADEMICS**

Relates money and work  
Uses pocket money  
Knows 'saving, the concept of "Bank.....  
Probation, overtime....  
Permanent, bonus.....  
Buys gift articles for friends....  
Buys clothes... selects.....

## **BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS SOLVED**

Wandering, tendency to suicide, masturbation..... stopped  
Restlessness  
Dullness.... Overeating  
Unnecessary talking, self talking  
Problems followed fits

## **6.0 Observations**

-  If given a chance to work, with proper support systems, persons with mental retardation can retain a job in open competitive situations.
-  Job training procedures should be individualised.
-  Although remuneration is low, integration, family and community acceptance and independence in day to day life help improve the quality of life of persons with mental retardation.
-  Appropriate work behaviours are necessary to sustain on a job. The persons with mental retardation are able to exhibit appropriate behaviours in a given situation.
-  The perceptions of employers are gradually changing. The special employees are accepted.



## 7.0 Suggestions

- ✎ Courses can be developed for persons with mental retardation the high functioning mild category for unskilled and semiskilled jobs.
- ✎ Duration of the training should be longer and flexible.
- ✎ Major part of the training should be in actual job site that is on-the-job training.
- ✎ As persons with mental retardation lack skills to plan, execute and manage, the entrepreneurs who start self employment can be motivated to appoint the trained persons with mental retardation to assist them with reasonable wages.
- ✎ Home science, textile, printing and assembling related jobs are suitable to them.

## 8.0 Conclusion

Supported employment on competitive situations provide remunerative jobs for persons with mental retardation. Courses can be developed and utilized for systematic training through workstations and also on actual, job sites with professional, parental and employer's cooperation.

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## CHAPTER - 3

# **Group Employment for Persons with Mental Retardation with Parents and Community support**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The ultimate aim of special education for the persons with mental retardation is employability and independent living. By developing occupational competence through efficient vocational guidance and training, it is possible to lead them towards meaningful employment. There are different types of employment which suit the different categories of persons with mental retardation.

It is envisaged that the persons with mental retardation should be mainstreamed as far as possible into the community. To achieve this goal, there is a need for providing open employment opportunities for them. It may not be possible to mainstream all categories of persons with mental retardation as it is necessary that one should have an ability to communicate basic needs, get along with fellow workers and produce goods at an acceptable speed and quality for successful vocational survival. The persons with mild and moderate mental retardation have potential to learn to adapt themselves to open employment. Other categories need continuous support and guidance of an understanding supervisor which is provided in sheltered work shop conditions.

Sheltered workshop has its own limitations to provide remunerative employment, parents and community interaction and overall personality development of the trainees. The group employment is a modified version of sheltered employment. It is organized by a group of parents with the support of the community and professionals. It provides vocational skill training, remunerative employment, community interaction and personality development of persons with mental retardation. All categories of persons with mental retardation in small groups are engaged in productive activities on commercial line which brings profits out of which the special employees and supervisors are paid.

When they find better opportunities, they gradually move towards open and supported self employment. Others continue in the production centers which provide group employment and job related activities.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To form parents association and organise group employment for persons with mental retardation in collaboration with non Government organisations to serve as demonstration centres.
- To demonstrate the feasibility of employing persons with mental retardation in wide variety of jobs relevant to the local socio-economic conditions and market trends.
- To create an awareness in the community on the capabilities of persons with mental retardation.
- To gain the community support for the functioning of the production centres.
- To evaluate the opportunities and strengths of the project and suggest evaluation based strategies to improve the functioning and to develop a vocational training and employment model for persons with mental retardation.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

The developmental project on group employment was implemented at 4 stages.

- Stage 1      Organisation of Model Centres.
- Stage 2      Demonstration of group employment at various parts of the country.
- Stage 3      National level training programmes and consultancy services to promote group employment.
- Stage 4      Transition from group employment to open, supported and self employment.

#### **3.1    *Stage-1 Organisation of Model Centres***

The Data of local persons with mental retardation above 15 years registered at NIMH from 1985 to 1990 was collected.

The data was analysed in terms of geographical areas where the cases were residing, level of mental retardation and current status.

The cases were grouped according to the areas where they lived.

The family background was analysed and the supporting agencies in the community were identified.

3 areas, 3 supporting agencies and the persons with mental retardation belong to the selected 3 areas were identified.

1. Secunderabad - South Central Railway
2. Yousufguda, Hyderabad - Accountant General Office Staff Colony
3. Jeedimetla (Balanagar) - HMT.

The following parents self help groups were formed.

1. Parents Association of South Central Railway employees children with mental retardation.
2. Parents association of A.G. 's employees for the Welfare of the mentally retarded children - A.G.'s Colony, Yousufguda, Hyderabad.
3. NIRMAN Parents Association for the Welfare of the mentally retarded children - HMT Campus.

The following actions were taken :

1. The projects were prepared for group employment.
2. The support was requested from the agencies for accommodation, funds and marketing.
3. The trainers were trained at NIMH
4. Market survey was conducted.
5. The products were identified and raw materials were purchased.
6. Formally the programme was inaugurated.  
(See the particulars of demonstration centres in the list of production centres-appendix-1)

### ***3.2 Stage-2 Demonstration of Group Employment in various parts of the Country***

During the period of 3 years duration (1994-97), 18 demonstration centres were organised in different parts of the country with the financial and professional support of NIMH. (appendix-2)

*Criteria for selection of collaborators*

- Priority was given to the parent organisations from rural and urban areas.
- Few NGOs were selected from remote rural areas
- State wise distribution also was taken into consideration.

State wise distribution is given on table 8. While state of Andhra Pradesh has 5 centres, state of Orissa has 2 centres managed by a NGO and a parent group, other 11 centres are spread out in 11 states, one centre in each state as shown on the table. Delhi parent groups are running 2 centres in Delhi. Twelve of them are functioning in urban areas and the rest six were organized in rural areas. Thirteen out of Eighteen centres are managed by the parent self help groups. It is praise worthy that two of them are rural based parent groups. Other than parent groups, four non Governmental organisations from remote rural areas of Bihar, Kerala, Orissa and Karnataka also came forward to take up this project and organise group employment for persons with mental retardation.

**Table - 8**

**PARTICULARS OF DEMONSTRATION CENTRES  
STATE-WISE DISTRIBUTION**

S. No.	State	No. of Centres	Parent Group	NGO	Rural	Urban
1.	Andhra Pradesh	5	5	-	2	3
2.	Bihar	1	-	1	1	-
3.	Delhi	2	2	-	-	2
4.	Gujarat	1	1	-	-	1
5.	Haryana	1	1	-	-	1
6.	Karnataka	1	-	1	1	-
7.	Kerala	1	-	1	1	-
8.	Manipur	1	1	-	-	1
9.	Orissa	2	1	1	1	1
10.	Tamil Nadu	1	-	1	-	1
11.	Uttar Pradesh	1	1	-	-	1
12.	West Bengal	1	1	-	-	1
		18	13 +	5	6 +	12

### **3.3 Stage-3 Sharing Information**

By conducting training programme on vocational training and employment at demonstration centres and different parts of the country, the information was shared at national level.

To create an awareness on group employment and to try out its feasibility, 5 days training programmes were organised at NIMH and various demonstration centres. Appendix 3 gives the details of those programmes conducted during the past 8 years.

Each programme had around 35 participants including parents, professionals and interested social workers. As a result, about 700 persons were oriented towards the new trends in remunerative employment.

The training programmes included theory and practicals. Visit to the demonstration centres and parents panels motivated the participants to organise group employment programmes in their own respective places. This created an overall awareness on meaningful vocational training and employment of persons with mental retardation.

Content of the programme is given below :

Introduction to vocational training and employment.

Transition from school to work.

Vocational assessment, job analysis and evaluation procedures.

Types of employment.

Organisation of group employment.

Visit to production centers.

Parents and special employees panel.



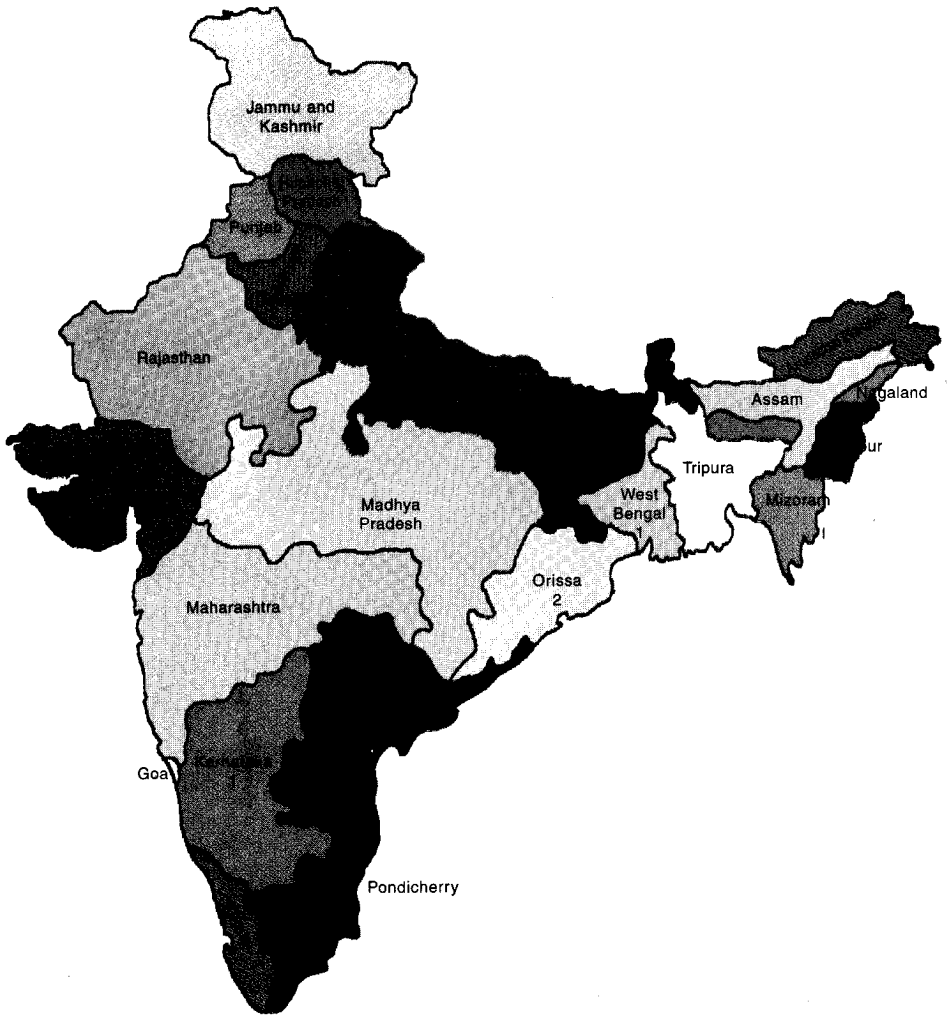
Strategies for organisation of production centres :

- Two representatives of voluntary organisations/parent self help groups who were willing to take up the project were invited to NIMH for a discussion.
- A visit to the demonstration centres was arranged for the representatives.
- They were guided to conduct market survey, to identify suitable products and to prepare a project proposal.
- NIMH examined the viability of the project before sanctioning the financial assistance.
- Concurrently the NGOs were guided to motivate parents and to organise parent self help groups to run the production centres.
- The training programmes were arranged at NIMH for the trainers who were selected and sponsored by the collaborating agencies.

### ***3.4 Stage - 4 Transition from Group Employment to Open, Supported and Self Employment***

The persons with mental retardation who were placed at the training cum production centres learned different types of trades and job related skills. They realized their capabilities and gained confidence. The parents found better employment opportunities. With the help of the professionals, parents and community, they gradually started moving from the group employment situation to open and supported self employment. This trend happens at the 3 demonstration centres initiated at Secunderabad. The following data reveals this trend. (table-9).

# VOCATIONAL CUM TRAINING-CUM-PRODUCTION CENTRES STATE-WISE DISTRIBUTION



**Table - 9**  
**DEMONSTRATION CENTRES**

S. No.	Centre	No. of MR persons trained	No. of persons moved to open and self employment
1.	Aakanksha (South Central Railway campus, Secunderabad)	94	26
2.	Lekhadeep, AG's Colony, Hyderabad	58	8
3.	NIRMAN, HMT Campus	32	22
		184	56

The persons with mild mental retardation are gradually moving towards open supported employment. Few persons with moderate mental retardation help their parents in their own family business. If they can find a better employment, the persons working in production centres are encouraged and helped to move from the group employment setting. The persons who cannot move from the group setting are allowed to continue as long as they want to work and earn at production centres. This trend is expected at all other demonstration centres.

#### **4.0 GROUP EMPLOYMENT ON-THE-MOVE**

The dissemination of information on group employment, through short term training programmes for professionals and parents resulted in organisation of many production centres in various parts of the country. There is a continuous request for consultancy services from various NGOs from all over India. The list of these centres also is given in appendix-5.

## **5.0 TRADES AVAILABLE AT VARIOUS PRODUCTION CENTRES**

Based on the possibility of marketing, profitable products were selected for production on commercial line. The trades identified were :

- Stationery items - note books, file covers, envelopes etc.,
- Screen printing, printing, greeting cards preparation
- Lamination.
- Textile based items - stitching decorative items - hand kerchiefs, aprons, pillow covers, bed sheets etc.,
- Weaving
- Candles, diyas
- Masala items.
- Mushroom cultivation
- Package items (thermocool, sweet boxes)

The NIMH Vocational Assessment and Programming System was used for systematic training and evaluation.

## **6.0 BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROJECT**

As it is a project for vocational training and employment, persons with mental retardation above 15 years are the direct beneficiaries of the project.

The model centres admitted and trained about 200 persons in three projects at Secunderabad. About 50 persons moved from the production centres for better employment. The admissions are also going on.

The demonstration centres were required to admit 10 to 20 persons depending on the production and profit. 16 centres have 15 to 20 special employees.

Two centres were not able to tap community resources and require parents involvement. They admitted about 5 to 10 trained. Remuneration is also not on regular basis.

Currently about 500 special employees are benefiting out of the developmental project.

The number is on-the-increase from all categories of persons with mental retardation.

## **7.0 EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT**

Evaluation was conducted at different levels using different strategies.

### **7.1. The Project Coordinator's Visit**

The centres were visited by the project coordinators. Professional support was extended in preparation and implementation of the project. First hand information through personal visit was used to determine the validity of SWOT analysis.

### **7.2 Reports from the Project Collaborators**

A proforma was prepared and sent to all the collaborators to collect the information on the project.

### **7.3 Training Programmes**

The local, state level, regional and national level programmes were organized to collect the information and comments from the participants of the training programmes. Visit to the demonstration centres was a part of the training programme. When the demonstration centres were selected as a venue for the training programmes, it provided an opportunity to improve its functioning.

### **7.4 Workshop for the Collaborators**

At the end of the developmental project, a 3 days workshop was organized for the representatives of the collaborators.

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### ***7.4 Workshop for the Collaborators***

At the end of the developmental project, a 3 days workshop was conducted in October 1998 by inviting representatives from 21

centres. The representatives shared their experiences in running the production centres. A proforma was given to the representatives for facilitating SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis). Their responses were tabulated and discussed. Evaluation based strategies were suggested to improve the functioning of the group employment programmes.

## **8.0 CHANGE OF PERCEPTION**

The perceptual changes were discussed during the workshop. The main changes expressed by the parents are :

If given a chance persons with mental retardation can work, earn and become less dependent.

The parents and the public should not carry on the impression that the persons with mental retardation are good for nothing.

To a certain extent, they are serious people with aspirations in life.

## **9.0 SWOT ANALYSIS**

### **9.1 Procedure :**

Strengths - Weaknesses - Opportunities - Threats Analysis has been conducted. While strengths and weaknesses exist within the organization or individuals, opportunity and threats reside in the environment. Based on this concept the parents were asked to identify their strengths and weaknesses and opportunity and threats.

The representatives of the model and demonstration centres of group employment were requested to discuss and report the opportunities they got, the strength they gained, the weakness they experienced and the threats they faced when they were organising and managing the group employment projects.

The reports were tabulated and cross analysed. The evaluation based strategies as per SWOT Analysis are discussed below.

### **1. Which Threat can be countered by which strength**

It is shown on the SWOT analysis matrix. The strength is more than the threats they faced. The joint approach with a sense of responsibility, togetherness, satisfaction and optimism can help them to overcome the threats of non cooperation, lack of coordination and petty politics. The improved quality of products, marketing and capital can beat the threats of poor entrepreneurship, low price, limited capital and low wages.

The improvement in special employees brought by the devoted management of parents with faith and prayer can remove the petty politics and strive for Government and community support.

### **2. Which opportunities can be harvested by which strength**

The opportunities for gaining self confidence and spirit of love and service will further strengthen the sense of responsibility, togetherness, satisfaction and optimistic attitude of parents. The improvement in the special employees observed in personal communication social interaction and community living skills which helped in the overall personality development of special employees will be helpful to harvest the opportunities of parental involvement by tapping the various resources in the community and creating an awareness in the public.

### **3. Which opportunities are not making use of which weaknesses**

It is really an important point to be seriously considered in SWOT analysis to sort out strategies for improvement.

Though there is a place for special employees to work and earn which brought a tangible improvement in them, more efforts are not made to find innovative ways and means for diversification of activities by tapping community resources to expand the



opportunities to pay better wages and to increase the number of beneficiaries. More parental involvement with peer group interaction can motivate majority of parents to avoid the disinterest and non cooperation which affect the group as a whole.

#### **4. Which threat gets aggravated by which weakness.**

Five out of eighteen projects are not having the expected output. The main reason was that the opportunities and strength were not used to their advantage. The threats and weaknesses cultivated the pessimistic attitude in the organisers. Lack of time and petty politics of few parents resulted in the low attendance in parents meeting and non cooperation of siblings. Financial constraints and absence of own land and building aggravated the weaknesses of lack of space, diversification of activities and lack of efforts for expansion. Therefore the management is to be trained to consider their strength and opportunities to overcome the feelings of threats and weaknesses. In fact the opportunities and strength are much more than the weaknesses and threats. It is evident in the matrix which is tabulated on the basis of their own experiences listed during the workshop.

## **9.2 RESULTS**

Based on the objectives the following points are discussed as per the results achieved through this project.

### **1. The efficiency of parent group**

The three model projects are totally managed by the parents self help groups. They showed their efficiency in organising, tapping resources from the community and training of the special employees.

Aakanksha and Lekhadeep are frequently visited by Government officials, professionals, Philantherapists and media persons. The group employment centres are live demonstration of the capabilities of persons with mental retardation.

## **2. Community support**

It is evident that without the support of the community, these projects cannot exist. The community support is tapped in different ways such as funds, accommodation, training, marketing and utilization of various community services.

## **3. Outcome of the project**

Outcome is determined on the basis of benefits for beneficiaries, opportunities and strength. The weaknesses and threats also cannot be ignored. All the three model centres are progressing currently with an increasing number of special employees with increased payment.

Out of 18 demonstration centres, 12 centres are managed by the parent groups. Except three, all other parent groups are currently progressing in their venture.

## **4. Capability of persons with mental retardation**

The persons with mental retardation gradually learned the trades depending on their intellectual level. The quality and quantity of production improved. Parent's perceptual changes are revealed in the SWOT analysis.

## **5. Community awareness**

As many centres are supported by various agencies, community awareness becomes part and parcel of the project.

## **9.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The tried out group employment model is demonstrated at national level. The parent groups and NGOs from urban and rural areas were instrumental in many ways for the total rehabilitation of persons with mental retardation.

- The outcome of the project depends on the active involvement of parents and community.

- As the strength and opportunities are more than weakness and threats, it can function as forward looking organisation with better results.
- The centres are not restricted with a closed environment of a sheltered workshop. Opportunities are given to the special employees for skill development, community interaction, leadership training and community living skills. They are also encouraged to move from the group employment situation to open, supported and self employment environments. The special employees who are unable to move, continue to work in the group employment centres and earn their living.
- It is community based, skill oriented and remunerative.
- Training in management and organisational aspects will help improve the efficiency.
- The model is on-the-move.

## GROUP EMPLOYMENT - DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

1992-94

<p>1. Aakanksha - South Central Railway Campus, Mettuguda supported by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✎ NIMH, Secunderabad</li> <li>✎ South Central Railway management</li> <li>✎ South Central Railway women's welfare organisation</li> <li>✎ Managed by parents association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✎ No financial support is given by NIMH Initiation and organisation including arranging funds from the community were carried out by NIMH staff.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Lekhadeep - A.G.Colony, Qtr. No. 49 and 50, Yousufguda, Hyderabad. Supported by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✎ NIMH</li> <li>✎ Accountant General's Office</li> <li>✎ Philantherapists</li> <li>✎ Community</li> <li>✎ Managed by Parents Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✎ Initiation and organisation were carried out by NIMH. After one year of successful running, NIMH extended financial support</li> </ul>
<p>3. Nirman - HMT Campus, Jeedimetla, Hyderabad supported by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✎ NIMH</li> <li>✎ HMT - Machine tools and lamp division</li> <li>✎ HMT - Ladies Association</li> <li>✎ Community</li> <li>✎ Managed by Parents Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✎ Initiation and organisation by NIMH. After one year of successful running financial support is extended by NIMH.</li> </ul>

**GROUP EMPLOYMENT COLLABORATORS**

1994-95	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Service Centre for the Disabled, Titlagarh - Orissa</li> <li>2. Muskan - Association for the welfare of the mentally handicapped, Delhi</li> <li>3. Akshaya Surya Kiran Parents Association, Macherla, Guntur Dt. A.P.</li> <li>4. Paul Chauravit Centre, Manipur</li> <li>5. STAR Vocational Centre, St. Annes, Singanallor Coimbatore</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Rural service agency in Rehabilitation</li> <li>✍ A Parents Association for the welfare</li> <li>✍ A rural parents group engaged in rehabilitation services</li> <li>✍ A parents association functioning in Manipur</li> <li>✍ An N.G.O. in Rehabilitation service</li> </ul>
1995 - 96	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Divya Shanthi - KGF, Karnataka</li> <li>2. Ashajyothi - UP Parents Association Lucknow - U.P.</li> <li>3. Mercy Home, Wynadu</li> <li>4. Bhagalpur Vikalanga Service Kendra, Bihar</li> <li>5. Aastha, Vocational Centre, Ahmedabad</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ An N.G.O. in rehabilitation service</li> <li>✍ A Parents Association for the Mentally Handicapped persons</li> <li>✍ A rural NGO in rehabilitation service</li> <li>✍ A parents group for the welfare of the handicapped</li> </ul>
1996-97	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mentaid, Calcutta</li> <li>2. Vikasa, Hyderabad, A.P.</li> <li>3. Manzil, New Delhi</li> <li>4. Kiranam, Hyderabad, A.P.</li> <li>5. Red Cross, Haryana</li> <li>6. Swayam Seva, A.P.</li> <li>7. Abhilasha, BHEL, Hyderabad</li> <li>8. Home &amp; Hope, Rourkela, Orissa</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ A parents group for the welfare of the handicapped</li> <li>✍ -do-</li> <li>✍ -do-</li> <li>✍ -do-</li> <li>✍ -do-</li> <li>✍ A rural parents group</li> <li>✍ A parents group for the welfare of the handicapped</li> <li>✍ A parents group</li> </ul>

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES****Dissemination of Information**

Name of the agency (Venue)	No. of programmes	Type of programme
1. NIMH, Secunderabad	2	National level
2. NCERT - Delhi, (Demonstration centre, Muskaan, Delhi)	1	Regional level
3. Service centre for the disabled, Orissa	1	Regional level
4. Mercy Home, Wynadu, Kerala	1	State level
5. Akshaya, Macherla, A.P.	1	State level
6. B.M. Institute - Demonstration centre - Aastha, Ahmedabad	1	Regional level
7. Paul Chaurajit, Manipur	1	State level
8. Manochaitanya Pamencap Godavarikhani, Andhra Pradesh.	1	State level
9. Jeevodaya, Nagpur	1	State level
10. Missionaries of charity, Calcutta	1	National level
11. Pavani Institute, Vizag	1	Local level
12. Rotary school, Kanjankad	1	Local level
13. Swashraya, Samuchaya, Mysore	1	Local level
14. May flower, Nagpur	1	Local level
15. Indrayani, Akola, Maharashtra	1	State level
16. Modi foundation, Delhi	1	Local level
17. Ashajyothi, Indore, M.P.	1	State level
18. Parents group, Cochin, Kerala	1	Local level
19. Suryakiran, Pediguralla, A.P.	1	Local level
20. Holy Cross College Trichy, Tamilnadu	1	Local level
21. Balavikas, Trivandrum	1	State level

## THE GROUP EMPLOYMENT- ON-THE-MOVE WITH TECHNICAL SUPPORT

1996 - 98

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| 1.  | Aasha South Central Railway,<br>Vijayawada Division | -- SCR, Vijayawada Division and<br>parents group           |
| 2.  | Manochaitanya-Pamencap,<br>Godavarikhani, A.P.      | -- A rural parents Assn. with the<br>Govt. company support |
| 3.  | Karunodaya, Keas<br>organisation, Eluru, A.P.       | -- A rural NGO in rehabilitation<br>service                |
| 4.  | Pavani Institute,<br>Vishakapatnam                  | -- A urban NGO in rehabilitation<br>service                |
| 5.  | Rotary school, Kanjangad,<br>Kerala                 | -- An NGO in Rehabilitation service                        |
| 6.  | Swashraya Samuchaya, Mysore                         | -- A parent association                                    |
| 7.  | May flower, Nagpur                                  | -- An NGO started by a parent                              |
| 8.  | Indrayani, Akola, Maharashtra                       | -- An NGO in rehabilitation service                        |
| 9.  | Modi foundation, Chetna,<br>Delhi, Meerut           | -- An NGO in rehabilitation service                        |
| 10. | Ashajyothi, Indore, M.P.                            | -- A parent effort   |
| 11. | Missionary Brothers of charity,<br>Calcutta         | -- Missionaries in rehabilitation<br>service               |
| 12. | Deepthi, Cochin                                     | -- A parent effort   |
| 13. | Suryakiran, Peduguralla,<br>Guntur Dt. A.P.         | -- A parent association                                    |

# GROUP EMPLOYMENT FOR PERSONS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION WITH PARENTS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SWOT ANALYSIS - FORMAT

**1. OPPORTUNITIES (for parents, Mentally Retarded persons and community)**

- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 1.  | 11. |
| 2.  | 12. |
| 3.  | 13. |
| 4.  | 14. |
| 5.  | 15. |
| 6.  | 16. |
| 7.  | 17. |
| 8.  | 18. |
| 9.  | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

**2. THREATS**

- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 1.  | 11. |
| 2.  | 12. |
| 3.  | 13. |
| 4.  | 14. |
| 5.  | 15. |
| 6.  | 16. |
| 7.  | 17. |
| 8.  | 18. |
| 9.  | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

**3. STRENGTHS**

- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 1.  | 11. |
| 2.  | 12. |
| 3.  | 13. |
| 4.  | 14. |
| 5.  | 15. |
| 6.  | 16. |
| 7.  | 17. |
| 8.  | 18. |
| 9.  | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

**4. WEAKNESSES**

- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 1.  | 11. |
| 2.  | 12. |
| 3.  | 13. |
| 4.  | 14. |
| 5.  | 15. |
| 6.  | 16. |
| 7.  | 17. |
| 8.  | 18. |
| 9.  | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

5. The outcome of the project
6. Do you think your centre is a model centre ?
7. Measures to improve the centre
8. Any other



## STRENGTHENING GROUP EMPLOYMENT THROUGH EVALUATION - BASED STRATEGIES

<b>OPPORTUNITIES (For Mentally Retarded (MR) Persons, Parents (P), Community (C))</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A place to work and earn (MR)</li> <li>2. Self confidence (MR+P)</li> <li>3. Spirit of love and service (MR+P+C)</li> <li>4. Parents interaction (P)</li> <li>5. Vocational guidance (MR+P)</li> <li>6. Leisure time and cultural activities (MR)</li> <li>7. Work related skill training (MR)</li> <li>8. Work behaviours training (MR)</li> <li>9. Vocational skill training (MR)</li> <li>10. Community participation (C+P+MR)</li> <li>11. Parents involvement (P)</li> <li>12. Peer group support (MR+P)</li> <li>13. Feeling of togetherness (MR+P+C)</li> <li>14. Community awareness (C+P+MR)</li> <li>15. Sense of responsibility (MR+P+C)</li> <li>16. Opportunities for better jobs (MR)</li> <li>17. Tapping community resources (MR+P+C)</li> <li>18. Public awareness (C+MR+P)</li> <li>19. Social interaction (MR+P+C)</li> <li>20. Parent to parent guidance (MR+P)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Non cooperation of Government</li> <li>2. Income tax problem</li> <li>3. Problem of marketing</li> <li>4. Bias, prejudice and antagonism of few neighbours</li> <li>5. Demand to sell at lower price than market price</li> <li>6. Low wages</li> <li>7. Limited finance</li> <li>8. No grant-in-aid for trainers</li> </ol>

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sense of responsibility</li> <li>2. Feeling of togetherness</li> <li>3. Satisfaction</li> <li>4. Positive attitude towards mentally retarded children</li> <li>5. Faith and prayer</li> <li>6. Joint approach - unity</li> <li>7. Devoted and dedicated management</li> <li>8. Remarkable improvement in special employees (communication, functional academics, independent travel, social interaction and money concept)</li> <li>9. Improved quality of work</li> <li>10. Improved quantity of work</li> <li>11. Increased capital</li> <li>12. Forward looking organisation</li> <li>13. Full time service of few parents</li> <li>14. Personality development of special employees</li> <li>15. Companionship</li> <li>16. Support of Government</li> <li>17. Support of professionals</li> <li>18. Community support</li> <li>19. Shared responsibility</li> <li>20. Neighbourhood awareness</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complaint of few parents</li> <li>2. Low attendance during parents meeting</li> <li>3. Non cooperation of siblings</li> <li>4. Same activities</li> <li>5. Limited beneficiaries</li> <li>6. Lack of efforts for expansion</li> <li>7. Trial and error method</li> <li>8. Lack of skilled trainers</li> <li>9. Lack of space</li> <li>10. Lack of diversification in production</li> <li>11. Lack of transportation facility</li> <li>12. Lack of time for parents</li> <li>13. Lack of openness of few parents</li> <li>14. Petty politics</li> <li>15. Lack of entrepreneurship</li> <li>16. Lack of coordination</li> </ol>

**SOME SUCCESS STORIES**  
**of**  
**Persons with**  
**Mental Retardation**

## A Responsible Sister

As both the parents are no more, Diana feels, it is her responsibility to take care of her younger brother and sister. She gives pocket money to her brother and sister.

Diana is a 36 year old lady with moderate mental retardation. You may be wondering how can a moderately retarded person give pocket money. Diana does it. She gets the pension of her father. She works at Aakanksha, a training cum production centre established in Railway Campus, Mettuguda, Secunderabad. Out of her earning and father's pension, she is able to be a **"care taker"** of her younger brother and younger sister.

It is interesting to understand Diana. Seven years ago, she lost her mother. It was a big shock in her life. She got into a kind of depression. Her younger brother and sister did not leave her. What did they do?

You listen to Diana

*"My little brother and sister brought me to the National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped. NIMH staff was very kind to us. They guided us in every aspect of life. Finally, I was referred to Aakanksha, started by the Railway parents because my father was a Railway employee. As I started working, I improved. I was very happy to receive my monthly stipend. My brother struggled a lot for my admission into Aakanksha and to get my father's pension. Now you listen to my brother".*



## Diana's brother Bernard speaks -

"When we lost our parents, I never want to neglect my sister though she is mentally retarded. Suddenly, I realized my responsibility towards my sisters when I lost my father and mother. Diana is mentally handicapped and Sophia is physically handicapped. How to rehabilitate them? I was really in a dilemma.

Since I am their brother I should be the legal guardian. But our law does not accept it unless it comes through the court. It was in 1992. The National Trust came into existence only in 1999. So it was not so easy for the brother to become a legal guardian for his mentally handicapped sister. Somehow I managed as a guardian and I got her admission in Aakanksha. After two years of struggle, she was able to get my father's pension also.

***I have a request for all the parents who have mentally retarded children. When you are alive, you may please appoint a guardian for your mentally handicapped children. The National Trust shows the way. Do not forget to do this. Otherwise, your children have to struggle the way I struggled.***



## Now let us listen to Diana's sister Sophia

"Diana is my elder sister. I respect her as my elder sister. I give her all assistance to go to work and come back, and also take care of her personal needs. She always says, "I have to find a boy for you to get you married". Diana feels it is her responsibility.

When my parents passed away, I was idle. I am grateful to my brother who tried a lot for me to get a job in the Railways on compassionate grounds, because my father was a Railway employee, my brother is also working. Three of us work hard. Now we live together. We are happy. Diana wants both of us to get married and settled".



*"We want to say something to you. If you have a handicapped brother or sister, please include him/her in your family. Let them be a part of your family".*

# An Emerging Leader

Mr.Sanjay is an emerging leader of the special employees with mental retardation. The thirty three year old Sanjay lost his father five years ago. Being the eldest son of his parents, they expected a lot from Sanjay. It took a long time for the parents to realize that their expectations were high and beyond the capacity of their son, Sanjay.....



## Sanjay made an effort.... Let us listen to Sanjay

“When my parents found that I was very poor in my studies, I was brought to NIMH..... At the first sight I did not like NIMH, because I could not identify myself with the people who come to NIMH.

As I am the eldest son, I wanted to work and earn. I was placed at Kaybee Equipment Factory, Moula-Ali in 1987. I learned simple jobs like sanding, operating moulding machine, drilling machine and gardening. Do you believe, since 1987 I am working in the same place.....15 years completed in 2002.

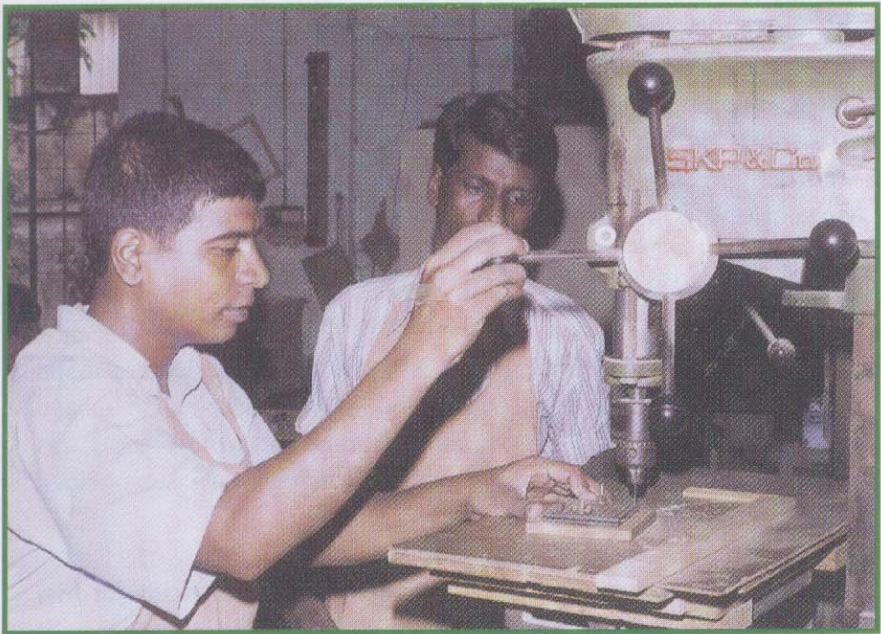
I saved a part of my wages, bought a piece of land and got married. Now I am the proud father of a cute daughter. I stay with my mother and I have the responsibility of taking care of my wife, daughter and mother..... *If I could get a government job..... this is my ambition.*

*I talk for my friends who are poor in studies. We are labeled as mentally retarded, but I don't like to be called mentally retarded.*

*I need respect ..... "Hum kisi se kum nahin hai" (We are not inferior to anyone).*

### **Let us listen to the employer of Sanjay**

Once the employer shared an event..... Sanjay started coming late to work. The employer enquired the reason. Sanjay said, "My father is ill and bed ridden due to paralysis..... I have to give him bath and breakfast before I leave for work".



*We often think persons with mental retardation are a burden to their families. But they can be a great help to their parents especially when they are aged. As Sanjay works for a long time at Kaybees, the employer and co-workers have a special concern for him. For further details, you can meet him at Kaybee Equipment Factory, Moula-Ali, Hyderabad.*





## All what I have accomplished

Sanjay was diagnosed as a child with Down Syndrome with implications of physical and mental restrictions on his development. Sanjay's parents refused to accept this verdict and brought him up just as one would an average child. He went through all the discipline, training and demands on correct responses expected of other family members. He was admitted in regular schools.

Sanjay is a quick learner and has a wide range of achievements to his credit. He is excellent in yoga. He makes and sells handicrafts. He knows basic cooking and can take care of himself, if left alone for a couple of days or more. He travels independently in public transport. He has mastered some of the rudimentary office skills and is appreciated for his work in the two offices in which he is presently working as an Office Assistant.

### Educational progress

Sanjay had normal schooling till he was ten years. He had good memory and used to get excellent grades in memorizing tables and also spellings, though his overall comprehension of subjects was weak. Exposure to normal schools during the formative years helped him to cultivate various skills.

His physical features and slurred speech made it difficult for him to make friends easily and at times invited ridicule. However with support from teachers, parents and sibling, Sanjay, instead of withdrawing himself, became more outgoing and reached out to others to be of help to them.

## There were some positive developments

- Improvement in reading, writing and arithmetic
- A noticeable increase in vocabulary
- Better dress sense
- Participation in games and plays on an equal basis
- Better memory for simple tables and spellings
- Ability to communicate in local language
- And most important, a sense of self-worth



He could not cope with the academics after a stage, and so at 11 years, he was shifted to special schools. In the special schools, he was ahead of his class as he could pick up the simple academics much better than the other children. After the normal schooling, Sanjay did not find the environment there challenging enough, and often expressed unwillingness to attend the school.

## The effect of that was

- His learning improved, he started writing letters to relatives/friends
- Better self-expression even with strangers
- Took initiative in helping fellow students with their work, be a model for them.
- Developed an interest in yoga.

## Vocational Training 1992-1998

Sanjay joined the job development course at Spastics Society of Karnataka in 1992. The course helped him to develop skills in screen printing and office skills, besides stitching and embroidery.

### Positive Developments

- ☞ Learnt new skills typing, Xeroxing, letter writing, screen printing, bamboo crafts, weaving
- ☞ Relating dates to events
- ☞ Displayed prominent sense of humour as a social skill
- ☞ Increased interest in dressing well (Choose colours and clothes which suited him).



At Arunodaya Centre for Children with Differential Ability, Lucknow, he had an opportunity to practice the skills learnt. Made handicrafts and marketed them in neighbouring schools and colleges. Became a role model for fellow students. Even

taught physical exercises to children at a nursery school. Learnt the value of money. He is a deep person and does not share his feelings very easily, but he works constantly to improve his communication and interpersonal skills.



He persisted in his efforts to be understood, by all and sundry. He kept a diary and noted down money transactions and addresses and phone numbers of friends. He now knew the difference between costly and cheap and the value of money.

In 1998, he had an opportunity to visit the United States and work as a volunteer assistant coordinator in the CMHS (Centre for Multicultural Human Services).

His job involved sorting and classifying documents. Logging on to the computer, typing letters (few lines), labels and printing them. Photocopying, faxing, distributing notices in different departments. Keeping the documents in specific order and dispatching them. Despite his poor perception and concentration, he was able to carry out his tasks well. He learned to identify and correctly utilize various denominations of foreign currency, travel in metro rail and bus independently, and also benefit from the guidance of his Supervisor. He became so popular with his gentle humour and winning manners, that a farewell party was hosted for him.

### Work Experience

In Hyderabad, he worked briefly at the Magneto-therapy Centre and assisted those who gave treatment to patients. He began to communicate with patients and others in local language to adjust to strangers and keep composure over their inquisitive behaviour, and take the Supervisor's help when patients expressed doubts about his competency.



At present he works as a trainee in the reception office of NIMH. His job involves

Filing, guiding cases to the right specialists, carrying files and messages between departments, cutting prescriptions on given lines from a large sheet and clipping it to the file, receiving and conveying phone messages.

The enlarged interaction with people from all walks of life and all parts of the country has made him a balanced extrovert.

In the evenings he works part time at the local unit of the Microcredit Summit Campaign, carrying out secretarial jobs like checking and sending emails, faxing and posting letters after entering them in dispatch register, keeping office in order. He has minimal supervision and earns Rs. 550/- p.m. and operates his bank account.

## OTHER SKILLS



**Yoga** became a passion with him after he learnt it at BHEL school, Bangalore. He got books from the library and mastered the postures himself. At Arunodaya Centre, he served as model during yoga classes.

**Music and acting** are a passion with him. Infact his monoacting at an RDSO programme at Lucknow, helped to correct public misconceptions about differently abled being a incapable lot, and also drew him many roles in skits and plays. He also adeptly plays the electronic keyboard.



**Handicrafts** is his forte. His neat and orderly work, attention to detail and aesthetic sense has helped to market his products. He also markets self made gift wrapping paper bags and gift envelopes. At Arunodaya, he made rakhis, purses, spectacles cases, besides diwali diyas very attractively.

### **Awards**

Sanjay won prizes for sports and spelling contests in school. At Arunodaya (RDSO, Lucknow) he was awarded for teaching PT to Bal Vidya Bhavan students.



He was awarded a prize at the National Employees Meet for playing five different tunes on the electronic keyboard.

### **Independent living skills**

Sanjay is able to cook complete meal, use simple gadgets of daily use including gas stove cautiously, and keep a clean and orderly house. His charming manners and thoughtful attitude has won him many friends and invitations for spending vacations with them. He is deeply spiritual and enjoys meditation. He enjoys all he does and maintains a balance in all his activities. He is conscious about nutrition and exercise and enjoys guiding others on this.

### **Home front**

With both parents working, he manages the homefront, making shopping lists and purchasing items, deciding the menu, and giving opinions on how to organize outings and parties. Entertaining visitors on his own. Standing up for himself, when misunderstood.

### **Ambitions**

Sanjay loves acting, loves being among people and loves being of help to others. And his dream is to be an actor. From school onwards, he has taken part in variety of activities like fancy dress, skits, monoacts, dances, etc, with a deep sense of involvement. He loves to be neat and orderly in every facet of his life, and believes in sprucing up the place be it home or office, the house he is visiting. He likes to take decisions and plan and organize things. He is sure to go places with such capabilities.

***The best thing that can be said about him is, that he has significantly corrected public misapprehensions about the persons with mental retardation.***

### **Awards**

Sanjay won prizes for sports and spelling contests in school. At Arunodaya (RDSO, Lucknow) he was awarded for teaching PT to Bal Vidya Bhavan students.



He was awarded a prize at the National Employees Meet for playing five different tunes on the electronic keyboard.

### **Independent living skills**

Sanjay is able to cook complete meal, use simple gadgets of daily use including gas stove cautiously, and keep a clean and orderly house. His charming manners and thoughtful attitude has won him many friends and invitations for spending vacations with them. He is deeply spiritual and enjoys meditation. He enjoys all he does and maintains a balance in all his activities. He is conscious about nutrition and exercise and enjoys guiding others on this.

### **Home front**

With both parents working, he manages the homefront, making shopping lists and purchasing items, deciding the menu, and giving opinions on how to organize outings and parties. Entertaining visitors on his own. Standing up for himself, when misunderstood.

### **Ambitions**

Sanjay loves acting, loves being among people and loves being of help to others. And his dream is to be an actor. From school onwards, he has taken part in variety of activities like fancy dress, skits, monoacts, dances, etc, with a deep sense of involvement. He loves to be neat and orderly in every facet of his life, and believes in sprucing up the place be it home or office, the house he is visiting. He likes to take decisions and plan and organize things. He is sure to go places with such capabilities.

***The best thing that can be said about him is, that he has significantly corrected public misapprehensions about the persons with mental retardation.***

# A Shop Owner

## Listen to the parents of Kanya

**Childhood :** Our daughter Kanya was born to us 24 years ago. She got an attack of fits when she was three years. We treated her at Nilopher hospital, later she was referred to NIMH. Though she was 9 years, she depended on us for everything - eating, toileting, bathing and so on. The professionals diagnosed her as a child with severe mental retardation.

**Schooling :** We had expectations. Therefore, we tried our best to get her admitted to a normal school. As she was not able to cope up, she was brought to NIMH for group activities. Later she got admitted to NIMH, Special Education Centre. She continued there till she completed her 18 years.

**After Schooling :** We were in a great dilemma. With a very low income; we had to maintain Kanya and her two younger sisters. Frantically we were in search of a job where Kanya also could be engaged. Finally we were helped to submit a project for a small shop to Catholic Health Association of India, Secunderabad. The project was sanctioned. We started a small shop out of Rs.15,000/- in the year 1994. We were looking for a chance to improve the shop. Later we came to know about National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation. (NHFDC) We applied for improvement of our shop. NHFDC sanctioned Rs. 50,000/-. With this amount we were able to improve the shop to a certain extent.

**What does Kanya do ?** Kanya is a helper in the shop since 1994. She is aware that it is her shop. She learnt to give items which the customers ask. She has improved in self help, communication and social skills. Her sisters also happily involved in the day to day business.



**KANYA SAYS, "IT IS MY SHOP..... I WANT TO MAKE IT BIG".**

**Do you believe this, "A female with severe mental retardation can be engaged in useful economic activities".**



# Silent but Efficient

Venkat Narasimha is not able to talk. This is the major problem which he faces. But he can make others understand his needs.

Venkat was sent to the normal school when he was 5 years of age. Within two months, he was removed from the school due to the problem in communication and comprehension. Again his parents tried to get him admitted, but could not succeed. His parents, though they had to work hard to bring up their children, they wanted their son to be educated. They sought admission for Venkat at Andhra Mahila Sabha Special School at the age of 8 years. Venkat continued special education for 6 years. At the age of 14 years, he was admitted at the Special Education Centre, NIMH.

## Now let us listen to Venkat

*"I liked NIMH. I was very active and regular. I always remember my teacher. As I reached 17 years of age, the Principal was about to terminate me from the school. I was lucky to be selected to undergo training under the project 'Transition of persons with mental retardation from school to work'. I was placed at NIMH library for on-the-job training. During the initial stage I was given a stipend of Rs. 25/- per day.*

I got excited when I received the first cheque and opened an account at Punjab National Bank, Manovikasnagar. I was delighted to sign, count the working days and calculate my monthly stipend. After one year training, my stipend increased upto **Rs.1500/-**. Currently I have an amount of **Rs. 10,000/-** in the bank. My parents are very proud of me. Do you want to know what I do in the library as a helper.



- ☞ Assisting in arranging books
- ☞ Transferring books and other items
- ☞ Distributing papers and books
- ☞ Getting tea for staff
- ☞ Entering book numbers and collecting tokens while distributing books
- ☞ Xeroxing.
- ☞ Setting papers for pinning

If you don't believe me, please come and see me at NIMH, library as long as I am there. Of course it is training period with stipend.

## OTHER TALENTS

I am good in floor hockey. I went to Chandigarh, Pondichery with the team and won prizes.

Accept me as I am. I may not talk the way you can.....but I can communicate and make you understand my needs, feelings etc. in my own way. My future depends on your concern and acceptance. Give me more chances, I will be grateful to you.

You may think how you heard these words. *There is a language beyond words... the language of heart... the language of body.... the language of expression.... Listen carefully..... Definitely you will hear these words from Venkat.*

# NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

Ugender is a person having Quadriplegia with Athetoid movements. His four limbs are affected. Therefore he has severe problems related to movement and eye hand coordination. If you observe him, you can see his conscious effort to bring his hands together to say 'Namasthe'. It takes more than two minutes for him. He has moderate mental retardation also. With all his limitations, Ugender made many things possible. Though it takes more time, he eats with his hands. He moves on buttocks, he can move on a wheel chair with a little support. Even he attends a group employment worksite at Secunderabad and earns a part of his living. How?



South Central Railway files are prepared by persons with mental retardation. When thousands of files are prepared on a division of work manner, there are many simple repetitive tasks. Ugender pastes the red calico corner pieces. Do you want to know, how he learned it?

*Ugender was kept at home till the age of 29 years due to his severe disabilities. When Aakanksha, the production centre, was started near his home in the year 1992, his 73 year old mother took the initiative to bring Ugender to the centre. She made a conscious effort to teach him to paste the corner pieces on cardboard files. It took around 6 months for him to master the skill. Nevertheless, he learnt it he continued to do it and earned money. He was excited.*

Later his friends from the work centre volunteered to bring him on a wheel chair. Ugender enjoyed the company of his friends and his work.

Ugender's father passed away. He continues to live with his aged mother in the ground floor of his house. His brother stays in the first floor. Ugender expects the continued support of his brother's family... That is the consolation of his mother.

There is always an anxiety and tension for the aged parents when their mentally retarded children stay with them. They expect the support of their normal children... How far it is possible? in what way? Ugender's family is an example for this situation.

*Ugender's mother made possible many things for Ugender. Let us congratulate Ugender and his mother.*



*Ugender is receiving the prize during the Special Employees National Meet. See his friends and mother*

# A SELF APPRAISAL

My name is Rock Kodhand Born at Nilophar Hospital Hyderabad on 18th December, 1964. My fathers name is Shri Kodhand Ramaiah, my mother is Mrs. C. Kodhand and I have a younger sister Ruth Kodhand, now Ruth Xavier. I am a person with mild mental retardation. I also have problem of stammering.

I started my schooling at IDPL Colony, then shifted to Kothwal's School at Marredpalli and then I was admitted into Gabrids School in 1978. Due to some trouble with other children in the School I joined the Hyderabad welfare Centre Run by Mr. Amos for a brief period of one and a half year and then joined Hyderabad special School at Secunderabad, in 1981 and was there till 1985. Then finally I joined NIMH in 1985 and was there only, till 1991 and was shifted to NIRMAN organised with the help of the parents of the handicapped children and the HMT Management, to make people to learn, to work and earn something.

My working and earning started at NIRMAN in 1992. I was doing some small jobs like sleeve making, cap cleaning and cap denting on a machine for the HMT Lamps division and was getting a small payment of Rs. 250/- per month.

On 27th January, 1997 my father started an STD/ISD booth opposite IDPL Colony for me to run the business and earn something independently. Under his guidance. I was having a collection of Rs. 500/- per day on an average. Out of this income, after paying the phone bill, Electricity bill and shop rent I was getting an average income of Rs. 2000/- per month. This business I could not continue longer due to the fall in STD rates drastically and the collection dropping to almost half of the earlier income and the business becoming, more in the night after 8-00 p.m. till late in the night (past 00-00hrs.), Therefore I closed the STD Booth and joined NIMH again as a trainee in November, 2000. I help NIMH staff as an office boy. I am paid a stipend also.



My hobbies are that I love travelling particularly by bus I never feel tired travelling in bus. I love watching TV particularly cricket matches and fighting pictures. Mostly I watch Telugu pictures when there is no cricket match on the TV. I love to wear different types of caps My family consists of my mother, father, sister, her husband and her little daughter (My Niece). I love all of them and the little one the most.

I have participated in many programmes launched by various organisations under the patronage of NIMH such as Ria Flower Arrangement in 1983. I have participated in the integration rally organised by the National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped on 8th December, 1993. I have attended the special employees National Meet on 8th-10th January, 1997 organised by the NIMH at Secunderabad. I have participated in District Special Olympics organised by A.P. Association for the Welfare of the Mentally Retarded conducted at R.R.C.C. Grounds Secunderabad from 18th 21st December, 2001. I have also participated in many such programmes organised by NIMH.

*I have no big future plans. I like to help the staff in NIMH where my entire life has been moulded. I hope and pray to God Almighty for all who helped me to grow.*

**- ROCK KODHAND**

*dt. 15-4-2002*

## “A DANCER IS BORN”

Prasanna has very unique parents, that does not mean that others do not have. They try their best to get everything possible to make their only daughter Prasanna happy. There is no need to tell that it was an unbearable experience to know that their daughter is affected with mental retardation. *But the efforts put by her parents, Mrs.&Mr.Krishnakumar, talk volumes.*

Prasanna's parents brought her to NIMH. Under the guidance of NIMH, they initiated a parents self help group at Godavarikhani, Ramagundam, Andhra Pradesh. Her father works at Singareni Collieries. Her mother teaches in the normal school, but her daughter is denied admission due to mental retardation. What to do?

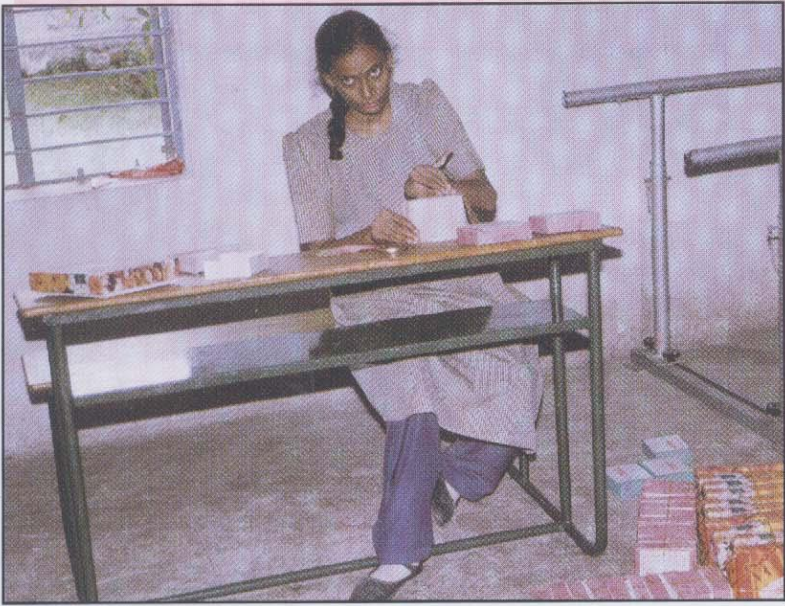
The parents association initiated a special section in the normal school where Prasanna's mother is a teacher. Prasanna also started going to the special section with her mother since 1987.

As she grew, the anxieties of the parents also have grown.... They found the daughter is not going to cope with their expectations by passing SSC, Degree and so on. Therefore, they decided to open up an vocational unit, where their daughter can learn vocational skills.

Mr.Krishnakumar did not sit quiet. He cannot.... He visited various vocational training units in Secunderabad. He convinced the Singareni management. Within no time a building was constructed.



The entire orders of stationary items of the company was taken, one of the SCCL employees, Mr.Venkat Ramana, was sent for vocational instructors training at NIMH. After he returned, they started the production centre.



Mr.Krishna Kumar was able to get the centre inaugurated by Shri Chandra Babu Naidu, the honourable Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Prasanna got trained in the production centre In addition to the work, Prasanna performs classical dances. When she dresses up for Bharat Natyam, she looks very smart and she enjoys dancing. Mr.Krishnakumar wishes everything not only for his daughter but considers all other children with mental retardation.

*Let us wish all the best to Prasanna and to her loving parents.*





# HAVE TRUST



Keeping secret over the solutions/ingredients and method of production is an important aspect of success in business. *A business man has no reservation to take the help of a mentally retarded person in the production unit.*

This is what happens with Varghese Who stays near a company which manufactures balloons. The company is near the Paduva Rehabilitation Centre, Kerala, a group home for the adults with mental retardation. When the home incharge approached the balloon company they did not have a very reservation to include the mentally retarded persons in the company because they were sure that these people are not going to leak the secret of their business. One among the mentally retarded persons was Varghese.

He is involved in colouring, cleaning and packing of various types of balloons in polythene bags. He is paid for his work. A part of his earning is used for his lodging and the rest is saved in the bank.

*Thus the colourful balloons make the life of Varghese colourful. He enjoys working in the small scale industry.*



***Dear Manufacturers of small scale industries, if you don't want your business secrets to leak, you can trust the mentally retarded persons by employing them in semiskilled and unskilled repetitive tasks. They will do very honestly the works for you.***

The major problem of the mentally retarded person, is the low intelligence. They cannot go through the pros and cons of the activities to bring you any harm.

Once they learn the task, they continue to be involved in the activity, till it is completed. They cannot sit idle, you have to continue to give them work to keep them occupied.

***Don't be afraid that your secrets will be disclosed.***

# An Young Man *with self confidence*

Patel Mayur Vithalbhai is a 27 year old person. He attended the normal school till the age of 17 years and discontinued. He has undergone vocational training at Blind People's Association, Ahmedabad.



Since 1995 he is working at Asha Mandir telephone booth, opposite Devedarshan drive in road, Ahmedabad. He sells water bottles, chocolates, biscuits and bread. He is able to dial the number for the customers, billing, collecting money etc. And he is being paid Rs. 3000/- per month.

## **Let us hear from the parents**

"We remember the day when he was born in our family. We were very excited to have a son. We had also wonderful dreams for him. The moment Mayur started scoring very low marks in his examinations. We were worried about his studies, we arranged

tuition and extra support, but he could not cope up. As he is the only son, we were anxious and consulted Psychiatrist and Psychologist. From them we came to know about his condition. After the initial shock, we started accepting his condition and provided appropriate training and support”.

His father is a retired officer, but not worried about Mayur today. Mayur is able to run his own telephone booth and currently he is earning Rs. 3000/- per month. He takes care of his parents and participates in all social and religious occasions.

***His father says, “work environment taught him many skills. He gained self confidence and improved his social and communication skills. He learned the value of money”.***

Mayur feels ***“I can also work and earn like any other people. I am a contributing member of the family. I will come up in life”.***



## “I Want to be a Film Artist”

“I want to become a film Artist”. This is the ambition of Lathi, a 19 year old girl with mild mental retardation. She is very much interested in dancing. Lathi does not miss a chance to perform dance in any occasion. When she dances, one cannot forget her mother standing behind the scene and motivating her....

### Lathi talks .....

“I am Lathi Abraham running own printing press in Hyderabad. I can speak Malayalam, Telugu, Hindi and English. I like dancing, singing, sports and other cultural activities. I have performed dance many time on stage. I participated in several sports and cultural events such as Special Olympics National Games 1995 in Hyderabad and at Chandigarh in 1998. I won prizes in National Festival of Music and dance performed in Delhi. I received many gold medals, shields, trophies and appreciation certificates.

I stay with my parents and elder sister. All my family members love me and help me in learning and improving.



### Parents talk....

I am the mother of Lathi, a short and smart young girl. By birth itself we recognized her as a down syndrome baby with slow

development. We have taken pains to train her to be a normal girl as far as possible.

She attended normal school for about 3 years and discontinued as she could not even hold a pencil properly. We took her to NIMH at the age of 6 years. First she was given admission in group activities and related service till the age of 16 years. As we have our own press, simultaneously she underwent vocational training once in a week. Gradually we increased the days to attend to the works in our printing press. Thus the transition from school to work occurred and she adjusted to her working place. Her work includes binding and screen printing. She helps in domestic activities like cleaning the vessels, decorating rooms, moping etc. She saves Rs. 500/- per month in her bank account. She is very proud to hold her own pass book and account.

After placing in our own printing section her speech is much clear. She talks freely with everyone. As the children grow they will have their own dreams.....

***Lathi wants to become a traffic inspector to control the traffic in Mettuguda area, Secunderabad. Lathi expressed this, see the crowd and difficulty one faces to cross the road.***

Lathi wants to act and sing with her favourite stars, Anupam Kher and Usha Uthup.

To be frank, if given a chance, she can perform a small role in a picture as a baby sister.

I am really proud of my child. She has talent to interact with people. Though she works in our press, she always has a soft corner towards the entertainment area. I wish if she can get a chance!!!



When I think of her future. I am worried..... who will take care of her? She needs help in decision making and problem solving situation. Otherwise she is independent.

# **JAMES** speaks from **Paduva Group Home**

Hello! I am James Mathew born in Kerala and got training to remove the shells of Betal Nuts at Paduva group home. Currently I am getting a stipend of Rs. 700/- pm in addition to my stay expenses at the centre.

## **Early years of James**

James was born in Kerala as the youngest son of Mrs & Mr. Mathew. His developmental milestones were delayed. He studied upto 7th standard. As he was poor in studies, he discontinued his studies.

## **Let us listen to his rehabilitation incharge**

“Though James is a person with mental retardation, he has normal physical development. He has ability and stamina to work. In fact he himself wanted to do something and to be engaged himself in meaningful activity. He was given the chance to observe various work opportunities at the centre and the neighbourhood. He showed interest in betal nut cleaning. Kerala is a place where plenty of betal nut trees are available. Therefore, he was given training in betal nut cleaning. He enjoys doing the work. He cooperates with others and listen to others. He does not want to sit idle”.



## Listen to his parents

The parents observed James weakness in studies. Though he was sent to the school, they had to discontinue his studies due to his failure in academic subjects. Parents also realized that, he needs vocational training and a job for his livelihood. They admitted him in Paduva Rehabilitation Centre.

## What is next?

*James is happy in Paduva Home. He is disciplined. He has a little saving. The future will be based on James interest to continue at Paduva home. If he is willing to go back to the house and engage in some other activities, it is acceptable to the parents. But what will happen after the parents. He might continue in the group home as it has all the facilities just like a sweet home.*



# A Tabala Master

**“How much you pay?”**

This is the question usually asked by Mr. Ramesh when he is asked to play tabala for any occasion. Who is Ramesh? A young man with mild mental retardation having a very special talent of playing tabala. Of course, he is not able to learn the theoretical part in tabala from a musical college. But he passed the practicals in tabala and working at the National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad as a tabala master on a honorarium basis.



You may have an interest to know more about Ramesh. His father was a poojari of a temple and the family members are staying with the father in the temple premises. Realizing the problem of Ramesh, parents brought him to NIMH. His special talent was identified. It was found that he accompanies the bhajan groups for religious ceremonies. He was always paid for his programme. That is the way he learned to demand for his work.

*There is a misconception existing among the parents, the professionals and the employers of persons with mental retardation. "There is no need to pay for their work. Just engage them in something,. They can either count the money or use it". This is the usual comment. It may be a fact that they are not be able to count and make a purchase and get correct balance. But they have the aspiration to work, earn their living and stand on their feet. Please don't forget this aspect when anyone employs a person with mental retardation in his/her business.*

What does Ramesh do in the school? Let us listen to the staff, Special Education Centre, NIMH.

"Mr.Ramesh, Tabala Master, joined in June 1993 and he was given a time-table to take music classes for the mentally retarded children attending the special school under the supervision of Mrs.G.Radha, Special Teacher. He was provided class-wise time-table with regular intervals to conduct the class systematically. Each class was given half an hour timing to train the mentally retarded children. He was also asked to train children for other cultural programmes and his performance is well appreciated by many of the audience. He used to play on special occasions. He has been associated with the Tabala in many of the NIMH cultural programmes. Recently, he

has developed the habit of asking permission like other staff and wish to work like other staff. His saving account has been monitored by his family members and he is unable to understand the maintenance of accounts. Whenever money is in hand he



used to spend lavishly. He often goes outside for bhajans and special programmes but he is very particular to collect his share of remuneration. He has a problem of articulation. Clarity is very poor. In the month of October, 2001 he participated in Special Olympics National Games at Pondicherry and got 1st prize in individual event and 3rd prize in team event. He shows interest in all Special Olympics events and got various district level medals which permit him to participate at National level. Whenever he goes for outside assignments, he needs a little supervision. His family members are happy with his performance. He is an accepted earning member of the family. This is what any retarded person needs as he grows up”.

***Don't hesitate to pay reasonably when persons with mental retardation are employed.***

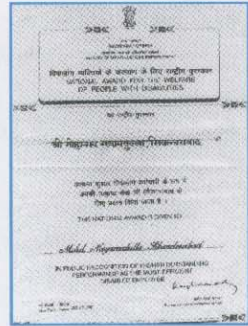
***Many parents ask about the interest and aptitude of their mentally retarded children before selecting a job. There are very few people with very special talents like singing, art and craft work, sports, mechanical assembling, computation skills etc. These talents should be taken into account while selecting a job. But this kind of very special inborn interests and aptitudes are seen in very few people.***

Congratulations Ramesh! You are blessed with a special talent of playing tabala.

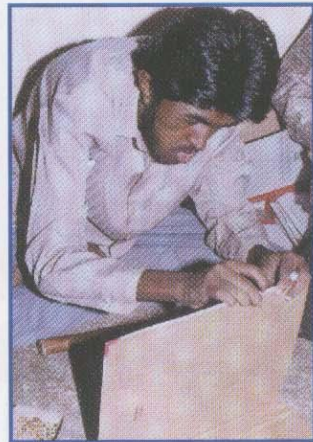
Don't forget your share of remuneration whenever your talent has a demand.

## “I am proud of **MY SON**”

“I am proud of my son”, this is what Naimathulla’s father said, when he was given the **National Award as a Best Special Employee** in the category of mental retardation during the year 1998.



Naimathulla had two mentally retarded brothers. One of them passed away. His father was very much disturbed due to the three sons with mental retardation in his family. When Aakanksha, a production centre for the persons with mental retardation was started in the railway campus by the parents of the mentally retarded children of Railway Employees, Naimathulla joined the centre and learned to make stationary materials. After the working hours, he used to work at his grand father’s public telephone booth. Exposure to various job opportunities helped him to realize his potentials. Later, he left the production centre and started working



in a screen printing unit. Thus he became a full time worker in the telephone booth and screen printing unit for which he was awarded as the best employee in the category of persons with mental retardation.

***Naimathulla is a good athlete.*** He had a chance to go to USA, for the international special Olympics and he won a gold medal.



In any special occasions, he proudly wears the jacket which he got during the international special Olympics and shares his experience.



Naimathulla was felicitated during the National Special Employees Meet at NIMH, for receiving National Award. He tells his friends that ***everybody should work and earn their living and stand on their own feet. He is a role model to others.***

# A NATIONAL AWARDEE

## Mr.Rajkumar speaks

I am Mr. Rajkumar , aged 24 years presently working at Lekhadeep Centre for the last 7 years. I belong to Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. I can speak Telugu, Hindi and can comprehend English also. My parents were informed about my condition at the age of 10 years as my scholastic performance was poor despite 6 years of regular schooling. As per the suggestion and guidance of neighbours. I was taken to NIMH with complaints of poor performance in studies. I was diagnosed as a person having Mild Mental Retardation. My parents have taken pain to train me and tried for my rehabilitation. Particularly my mother's contribution in training me is to be highly recognized.

## About my study

I attended normal school for about 6 years and then underwent training at NIMH for 2 years followed by 6 months of Intensive training in Book binding at **Sree Ramana Process (Printing Press)**, Secunderabad. While working in a press simultaneously I underwent prevocational training once a week at NIMH. Then I switched over to Lekhadeep centre run by parents of persons with mental retardation at around 14 years of age. After 2 years of vocational training I gained employment in the same organization initially as office boy since 1-5-95 with consolidated pay of Rs.750/- p.m.



Later on, the employers gave me additional duties in printing section.

### **About the work**

I am happy with my present job in a press. My tasks include as cutting machine operation, preparation of file boards, envelopes etc. besides the purchase & supply of material and also dealing of financial matters with customers. Presently I draw a monthly salary of Rs.1500/- pm. Under the able guidance of staff, employers, colleagues and support of NIMH, *I received National Award of Best Disabled Employee in the year 1999 from the Honorable President of India Shri K.R.Narayanan on 3-12-1999 at New Delhi.*

### **What my parents feel**

My parents feel very happy, proud and satisfied as I am able to lead a normal life. It has been the result of efforts from Lekhadeep, NIMH for which I am very grateful and I wish the same cooperation may be extended in future also.

### **My family**

I stay with my parents and an elder sister, all my family members love me and help me in learn and improve.

### **My hobbies**

I like cricket, chess, sports and athletic and cultural activities. I participated in various sports. I listen to music, watch films. I have participated in several sports and cultural events held for persons with mental retardation such as Special Olympic National Games in Chennai, and in 1998 at Chandigarh, Special Employees National Meet, National Festival of Music and Dance, Cultural programmes at NIMH & Lekhadeep and won prizes, medals and received appreciation certificates.

### **My future dreams**

I want to keep my talent and hope to continue the same in my future life also.

## Horizon is the Boundary

*"Hello, I am Devika. I am an artist".* Beaming and full of confidence.... this is how Devika introduces herself today!

When she was born in 1980, the Doctor told her parents... "You have to prepare yourself for a life long problem. Your child will never be able to do anything much".

Instead of being the voice of doom, this statement was like a catalyst and a challenge to Devika and her family to prove everyone wrong. Devika was 5 months old when it was confirmed that she was a child with Downs Syndrome. It was still too late for early intervention. Family, grand parents, sibling, neighbours and friends all worked together to use every opportunity to give her maximum stimulation. She responded well and together they delighted in watching her grow.

She began going to a neighbourhood nursery school before she could walk. *Everyone loved having Devika around.* She could make you laugh and forget your troubles and she had a soft corner for those less fortunate than herself.

Devika was introduced early to working with her hand. She enjoyed paper mache and clay and paint. She showed a great feel and aptitude for these tactile media. She was also part of a pre vocational training programme (at Jan Madhyam) from the age of 10 years. This programme contributed greatly to her understanding of the larger world, the relationships in the world of work and the whole business of earning money.

Later she took a formal apprenticeship with a ceramist and learnt pottery and how to throw pots on the wheel. When she put up a stall in the exhibition to display her pots, Her teachers asked her not to sell the pots. But when the visitor approached and wanted to buy, her first question was *"How much are you going to pay?"* That is the way she started learning marketing skills.





Devika is constantly adding to her skills and growing in capacity. Today Devika has become an accomplished muralist and is able to design and execute murals independently. As a teacher, she is popular with her students. Her duties are :



- Arrangement of the classroom and training material
- Working one to one with the trainees
- Planning and reporting with the teacher incharge
- Product development
- She has to manage a group of children and sometimes-young adults and teach them craft.

It could be a paper bag, paper mache, toy, clay pot or a mural. She is able to plan on the basis of a crystal clear understanding of the capacity or the lack of it in each student. She also paints T-shirts and sells them at fairs and melas.

Devika is proud to be earning and holding a bank account. She uses her won resources for her paint and art material and derives a sense of accomplishment and independence. As I read over this page, there is a sense of joy, success and achievement. But it has not been a cake walk. Devika has to battle with a double disability being a woman and person with intellectual challenge.

Not too long ago.... Frustrated at failed holiday travel plans, she packed a haversack and set off on her bicycle. When we ran after her, she said "I am going off on a holiday..... all alone".

We wish she could. We wish she could drive off in her car. Devika has dreams and desires and it is us, society, that told her back but not Devika. For Devika, the horizon is the boundary.

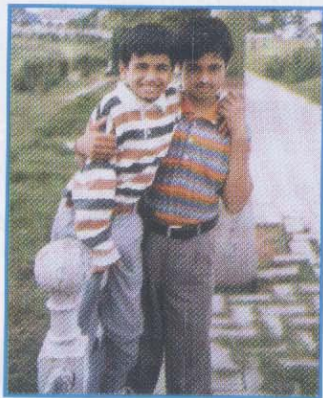
# Specially Abled - Not Disabled

I was born in Nasik on 12 October, 1988 to Lt.col Yadu Suri, an Army Officer, and Darshika at the end of an uneventful 9 month full term pregnancy. After a normal delivery, my parents - as all parents do, looked forward to my coming in this world as I was their first born and the first grandchild of my grand parents. It came as a surprise or rather a shock for all of them when my chacha, Dr. Sanjay Suri, a pediatrician, told them that I was a Downs Syndrome baby - a result of a mutation that caused a trisomy on the 21st chromosome. Probably due to design or default I was named Rishabh which is the second note on the musical scale. As all downs syndrome persons go - I too am very fond of music.

After the initial shock of non acceptance and late acceptance, that I had Downs Syndrome, my parents coped up quite well with the 'problem' that they had been straddled with. We Downs Syndrome people are trusting, caring, and we love music. We do not want sympathy but empathy and understanding.

The initial years of my life was spent travelling from one institution to another starting with the KEM Hospital, Parel, Mumbai to early intervention at the Jaivakeel School. Those days we were staying at Nasik with my grand mother, Dr.Prem Suri, who was a constant physical and emotional support for all of us.

In 1992 a new person came into my life. My brother, Abhinav was born who has been my friend, philosopher and guide although the difference of almost 4 years in our ages.



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*(This article has been written by Lt.Col VY Suri, father of Rishabh Suri aged 14 1/2 years in first person echoing his families and sons thoughts)*

Since my father was in the Army, we had to travel a lot with frequent transfers every 2 to 3 years. It was around 1993 that my parents discovered NIMH. We, as a family, would travel to Secunderabad and stay at the cottages from wherever we were. Be it Nasik, Lucknow, Pune, Delhi, Ladakh or Jodhpur - one week was always spent at NIMH. The special educators at NIMH would instruct my parents and they in turn would teach me. This teaching was from the basic self help skills to eating and social behaviour. Emphasis was laid on my speech therapy, physiotherapy and my overall well being.

*Someone or the other would always accommodate me in their school purely out of pity and it got to be known that I was different. Some parents even thought that their children would become like me if they associated or played with me. We, Downs Syndrome children, have no malice in us and love is to be shared. The*



*word hatred does not exist for us. Sometime in 1998 the headmistress told my parents that I could no longer be accommodated in their school. My mother left her job as a teacher and for us, it was collapsing. We were helpless till the Army started the ASHA School at Jodhpur. I had to stay at home for better part of a year and would crave for school because I say Abhinav get ready and go every morning. In my limited vocabulary I would point to the bus and say 'School' and all it brought was tears to the eyes of my helpless parents.*

Call it a blessing in disguise, but this is the time my parents introduced me to swimming as a part of hydrotherapy. To say that I was frightened of water would be an understatement. I was

terrified. It was then with the perseverance of my parents and seeing my little brother swim, that I started venturing into this strange and unknown world. I actually started liking it.



My father was transferred to Secunderabad in November, 2000. With a little help from NIMH, I was admitted to Gitanjali Devshala. I owe my change in behaviour, personality and academic development to this august institution and my teachers Rama Atluri and Vijaya Murli. After joining gitanjali Devshala, my avenues and horizons widened and I was introduced to sports like Karate, Basketball, badminton, Cycling and Swimming. I went upto the state level in athletics in the Special Olympics. I was once again initiated to serious swimming and with my father as my coach, I started progressing. He went about my training in a military like fashion and who can ignore his sergeant majors voice when I would want to take it easy. I would swim 4-5 hours a day spaced out in the morning and evening with a very high protein diet. We had tense moments when just 2 months before the Special Olympics - Bharat, I had a terrible ear





infection. With the assistance of the best ENT specialists and lots of antibiotics, training started again. I won Gold in the 50 meters breast stroke and Silver in the 50 metres free style.

In the last week of October, 2002 SUVUS India sent me to represent the country for the Downs Syndrome swimming champions at reading in England. The travel by air to a foreign land, meeting a variety of people and winning three medals was the icing on the cake

or should I say the topping on the Pizza.

### City boy beats Down syndrome Rishabh swims to win 3 medals at Olympics



Photo: Suresh Datta

Haryana, Nov. 9: City boy Rishabh Singh fought the debilitating Down's Syndrome and overcame the odds to become the youngest swimmer and only Indian to win three medals at the recent International Olympics for Special Children.

Rishabh, 14, beat youngsters from 15 countries in 25, 50 and 100 metres freestyle swimming at Norwich, UK, from October 23 to 26. Rishabh had earlier won the gold for breast stroke at the National Games at Bangalore from September 1 to 4.

Down's Syndrome is a chromosomal anomaly. It is accompanied normally, an extra 21st chromosome

results in an developmental retardation of the mind. It is a genetic disorder.

His father, Col. V. V. Singh and his mother, Mrs. Rishabh Singh, said they have a special love for sports and the great success Rishabh has achieved gives his mother a new meaning to life.

Rishabh started his swimming classes when his father, after also winning a gold medal at the World Cup in 1989, "is inspired by a family member who has a disability and can't do anything special," said his mother. "I was inspired to start swimming when I was 10 years old," said Rishabh. "I was inspired to start swimming when I was 10 years old," said Rishabh.

By Parthiv Gupta



*I hope when your parents read this, don't ever feel that you have been cursed with a disabled child but have been chosen by God, Bhagwan or Allah as privileged person to be blessed with a differently 'abled' child.*

# VICTOR

## - A Senior Citizen



Victor would have retired from his job if he would have been a Government servant. ***He is a senior citizen with severe mental retardation.*** He started working in his forties and holding a work record of 16 years. You may wonder what kind of work a senior citizen with severe mental retardation can do?

When NIMH started in the year 1984, Victor's father brought his two retarded children to NIMH. Victor's sister Jacintha is also a female with severe mental retardation. As Victor has no other impairments and problems other than mental retardation, he was placed at Montessori equipment factory.



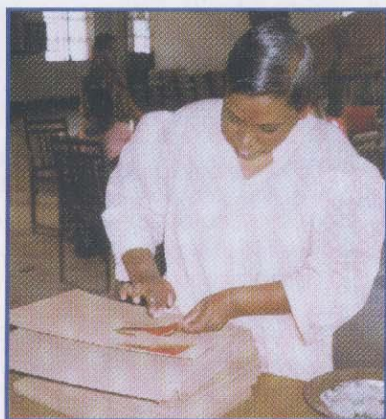
Everybody had a doubt whether he would be useful for any work. Slowly he picked up a repetitive task to smoothen the surface of the wooden cut pieces using a sand paper. The factory was near by his residence. So he was able to walk to the factory and attend to his work daily from 8.30 am to 5 pm with a lunch break. He was proud to give his thumb impression for his first salary. He wanted to sign. He could not learn to write but he learned to work in a factory. When he received his first stipend, his father was in tears.

***He said that he never expected that his son could ever bring a salary packet. Victor gave pocket money to all the family members out of his earning. Literally everybody was in tears.***

Victor continued in the factory for 9 years. As years passed, the factory manager felt that, Victor is gradually becoming weak and his memory is also fading. At that point he was transferred to a group employment site. Seeing a senior citizen, the supervisors showed a little reluctance. Being with him for a week at the work place, currently everybody is comfortable with his behaviour and work. He does very simple tasks in stationary preparation. His sister also accompanies him to the work place. Both of them earn a part of their living.

Victor and Jacintha stay with their brother's family. *When everybody goes to work, Victor and Jacintha also get ready to go to work. They are no more a burden to their Kith and Kin. In the absence of their parents Victor and Jacintha have a place to go to work. They have a disciplined life and routine to follow.*

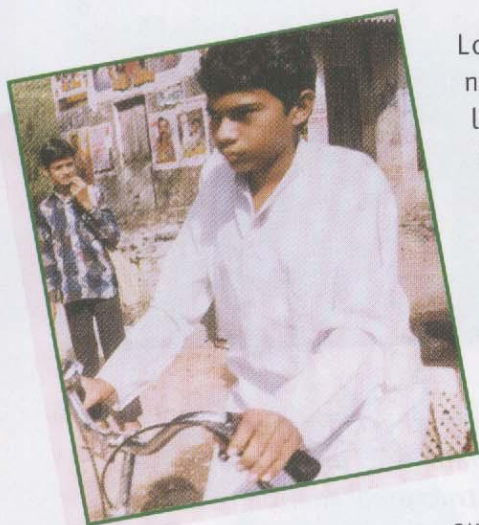
*Going for a regular job and receiving salary/stipend makes a lot of difference in the lives of persons with mental retardation.* Irrespective of the severity of their disabilities, they can be trained to be engaged in productive activities.





# KIRAN

## - *A Ray of Hope*



Look at Kiran. He looks quite normal. He rides a bicycle. But he lives "in his own world". What does it mean? You call him, he does not look at your face... you talk to him, he does not respond.... Though he can ride a bicycle, he does not independently attend to his own personal needs such as eating, dressing, toileting etc. Why? Kiran is a 22 year old young man with severe autistic behaviours. How to train

him to be active in his life? It was a challenge before the parents of Kiran who lives in Macherla, a small town in Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh.

Kiran's parents brought him to NIMH, they identified the problem during his infancy. It was really a very painful experience for them. With professional guidance, they begin their efforts to bring a change in Kiran. Kiran's parents started a special school - "Surya Kiran" near his home. He started attending the special school. Parents made an effort to identify special children in their area and provided special education at Surya Kiran. Trained teachers were appointed. Days, months and years passed. As Kiran reached the age of 15 years, the parents thought of vocational training. They started a retail shop attached to the special school. Currently, Kiran is engaged in the shop to fetch items for the customers. He has a daily routine. He may require a little help to fetch the correct item, but he is made to do it.



*It is challenge to train the children with autism. But, one should not loose heart. Innovative methods, structured environment bring changes in the persons with autism.*

Kiran's parents become a role model to all the parents of autistic children. They started many special schools in Guntur District for the special children. Thus, Kiran become a ray of hope for the special children live in the remote villages of Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh.

# Srimati - A Classical Singer



\_\_\_\_\_ years old Srimati is a female with moderate mental retardation. For any occasion, when Srimati is requested to sing, she is ready. She has no hesitations. She has a lot of demand for this and she is proud of it. Realizing her interest and talent, her parents encouraged her by sending her to learn classical music. Let us appreciate the efforts of her parents.

In addition to singing, she attends a work place and earn a part of her living. Out of her earning, she buys her clothes and gives gifts during various occasions. She has a saving account also. It is interesting to know one of the occasions. Srimati knew that the family was planning to celebrate her brother's son's first birthday in a grand way. She requested the supervisor at the work place to help her to buy a tricycle for her nephew on his first birthday. She went to the shop, selected a tricycle, purchased it out of her earnings and presented him during the celebration.

***In future, he may become the guardian for Srimati! Who knows?***

The persons with mental retardation has aspirations in life just like any other persons. It is the responsibility of the parents, teachers and the community to understand their needs and aspirations in life and to fulfill them by

***Identifying and recognizing their special talents***

***Giving opportunities to express***

***Respecting their rights***

***To work and earn***

***To select and buy personal items***

***To have friends***

***To celebrate important days in life.***



# SIRISH

made many things possible



## Look at Sirish

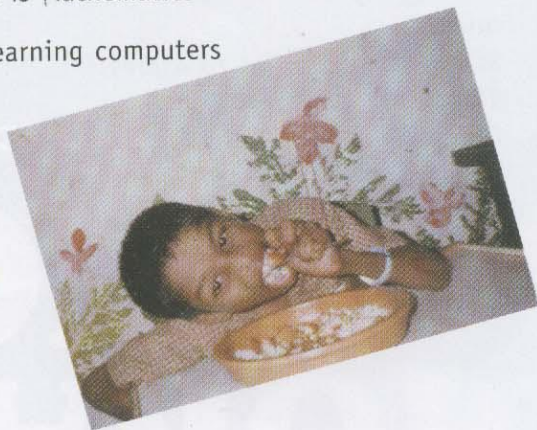
Do you believe that  
SIRISH made  
many things possible?

## His mother says :

'Sirish is practically  
independent in self care skills'

## His teacher at Vidyasagar reported

- 'Sirish' is bright in academics and highly motivated in other areas such as art, craft, reports and social skills.
- His favourite subject is Mathematics
- He is interested in learning computers



- He uses the mouse, play games and navigates through programmes on CDs.
- He learned to operate MS Word, can save his file, retrieve it and delete it.

Sirish is bright in academics. How do you know as his oral and written expressions are limited?

Sirish answers long and short questions pointing to the answers in the text.

He can read fluently. He is able to learn spellings.

He is able to make himself understood in all general areas.

Sirish wants to appear examination conducted by the National Open School. He is aspiring for a better job to be fully engaged.

***No doubt, Sirish is a model to the young people with spasticity and athetosis.***

Congratulations to the parents of Sirish. The parents especially the mother's acceptance, hope and untiring effort made all the difference.



# An young man of **VALUES**

Sai Jagannath is an young man with mild mental retardation. What kind of values he has in life. His way of life and his expressions reveal values in his life.

After his training at the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre, Hyderabad, Sai was placed at Sree Ramana Process Pvt. Ltd, Secunderabad. He continues to work there since 1996. Currently he earns Rs. 750/- per month.

Sai is very sincere and hard working. When he was asked the reason for his hard work, he said,

**“I have to earn, save money and take care of my parents”**

His employer says-

- Sai is pleasant and cooperative,
- Does not sit idle,
- Wants to learn more skills,
- Even prefer to work over time for money.
- He is regular and punctual

Co-workers have a great regard for Sai.

## **What he does in the press?**

- \* Operates cutting machine
- \* Sets the printed paper
- \* Does binding works
- \* Helps in film making
- \* Packs the finished products
- \* Goes to deliver the finished products



Once it was observed that Sai was in tears. When enquired, he said that his placement officer is retiring. When he was probed again, "Why do you want to cry?"

Sai said, " **Relationship**"

Again enquired,



*"What do you mean by relationship? Where is it?"*

Sai pointed his hand towards his heart..... and said, "here..... Relationship"

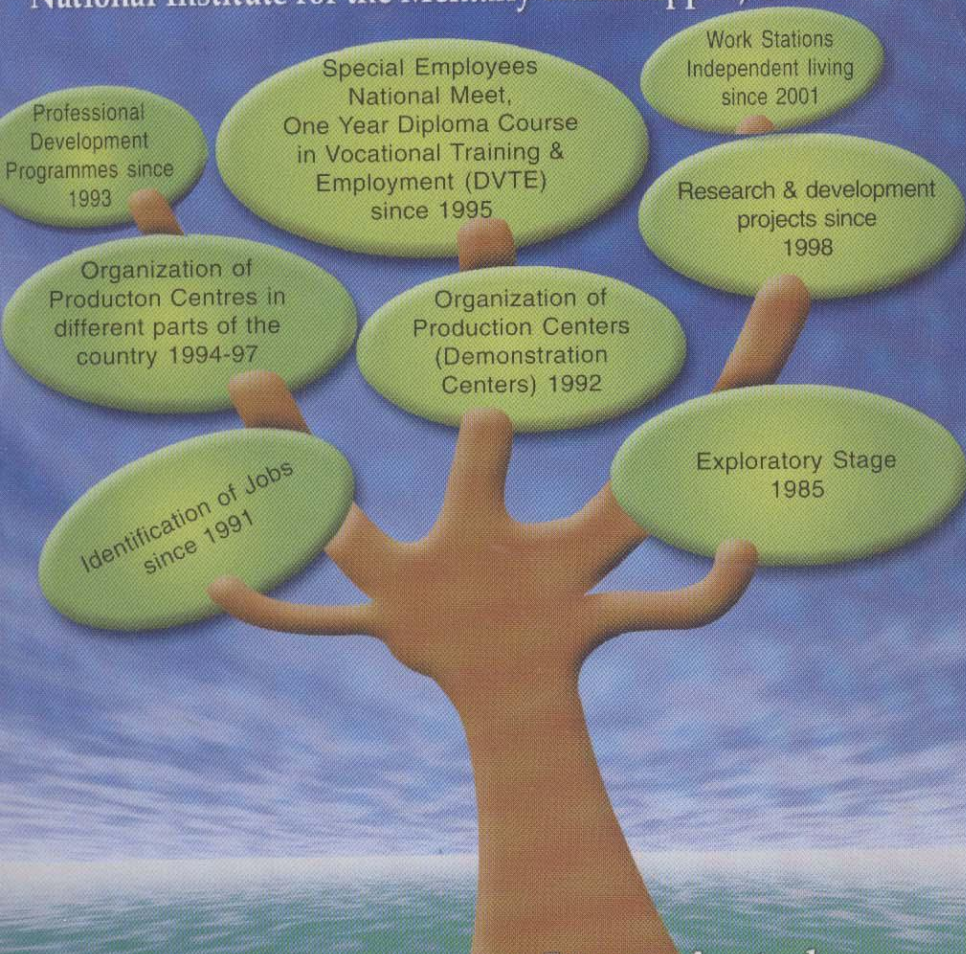
A mentally challenged person teaches us the value of relationship. It comes from the heart.

Sai's parents are proud to have him and also being a role model for the mentally challenged.

A mentally challenged person can work sincerely, can be co-operative with his co-workers, can lead a discipline life and above all, he too can have "Values in life".



# The Growth of Vocational Training and Employment Services for the persons with Mental Retardation at National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad



A seed was sown. It germinated,  
watered and manured ....  
It started growing ....  
Continues to bear fruits...

**A HOPE for persons with Mental Retardation**

Prepared under the project  
"Development of Employment Awareness Materials  
for persons with Mental Retardation"

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