

Aakar Asha

Centre of Excellence for enabling the physically disabled

Team: *Dr. Bharatendu Swain, Mr. C. Anjaneya Reddy, Dr. Bipin Indurkha, Mr.O.P.Jagetia*

There are an estimated 50-80 million Indians who are disabled (World Bank), 49 % of who are physically disabled. There are at least 4.5lakhs physically disabled people (census 2001 estimates) in the state of Andhra Pradesh alone. The existing public health care infrastructure has the capacity to cater to just 2.5% of them, the rest doomed to a fate of disability, social isolation and hopelessness. The rehabilitation of Physically Disabled persons has been viewed through a narrow prism and is currently relegated to the care of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, who naturally view it as a social and economic problem. This is unfortunate in a civilized society, especially knowing that 70% of these nameless disabled people can be restored to near normalcy with the help of appropriate surgical intervention or appliances.

The genesis of our idea is a simple resolve to remove undesirable physical disability from our society, a motivation to leverage our professional expertise to bring a change to the lives of thousands of disabled people, who would have never even dared to dream a normal life.

Our idea aims to be able to tackle this huge problem in a multi dimensional and a truly integrated approach by awareness and demand generation at the community level through various community mobilization approaches, developing and sustaining community level rehab care through creation of a cadre of rehab care givers in private and government setups, enhance availability of surgical and rehab care through training of professionals; setting up a Centre of Excellence for tertiary level surgical reconstruction and rehab care, along with a device development center aimed at developing high quality, cost effective rehab devices adapted for the Indian population.

A movement aimed at 'direct enablement', beginning with a comprehensive Enablement Centre, is envisaged. Reconstructive surgery, Medical Rehabilitation, Community Outreach and a Device Development Centre will be integral components. The project has two phases- in the first phase with 75 beds, we shall be able to perform seven thousand surgical corrections, medical rehabilitation of six thousand persons, reach out to 15 Lakh people in the community, train 500 health care providers. With the second phase adding another 125 beds, we shall be able to perform ten thousand surgeries per year.

Besides the obvious social impact, the awareness, education and service delivery will unleash a demand from the current population of physically disabled who have coped with their problems. Current efforts in job creation will undergo a quantum jump due to enablement. The Device Development Centre will initially make appliances and later, develop next generation appliances to enable the physically disabled to use their limbs and to walk.

With a capacity utilization of 60%, we shall achieve break even in 3 years. The business model is inspired by the Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai and proposes to treat 60 % of patients free and 40 % at less than market rates. We will aim to replicate this model and scale up this movement by inspiration, enfranchisement or delivery.

Dr. Bharatendu Swain is currently working as a Senior Consultant Plastic Surgeon at Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad. He is a Managing Trustee of the N.Swain Memorial Trust since 2001 and is also among the Board of Directors of Aakar Asha. Education qualifications include MBBS; M.S. (Surgery); M.Ch. (Plastic Surgery); Microsurgical Fellow, Adelaide, Australia.

Mr. C. Anjaneya Reddy (1943), formerly of Indian Police Service has served in various capacities in the Government of A.P. and Government of India at Senior Executive levels. He is a Trustee of the N.Swain Memorial Trust and is a Director of Aakar Asha.

Mr. Bipin Indurkha has been with IIT-Hyderabad since 2004. Educational qualifications include BE (Electronics) from REC, Bhopal (MP), ME (Electronics) from Philips International Institute of Technological Studies, Eindhoven (The Netherlands), and Ph.D. (Computer Science) from University of Massachusetts, Amherst (USA). Mr. Indurkha spent about twelve years teaching at various universities in the US, most of which was at Boston University. After that he was at Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, Japan for over eight years.

Mr. O.P. Jagetia has been into General Management in various industries for the last three decades. He has held senior positions in the corporate world: CEO of Anrak Aluminum Ltd (J/V of Penna Group and Rakia of UAE), MD & CEO of Hyderabad Industries Ltd (CK Birla Group), Full-time Director of Nagarjuna Fertilisers & Chemicals Ltd., President & CEO of Zuari Cement Ltd (J/V of KK Birla Group and Italcementi Group of Italy), CEO of Banas Cement (KK Birla Group). He grew up in Tata Management culture in ACC Ltd., where he worked in different capacities in HO and factories for some 19 years.