



Presenters:

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Honorary Research Fellow, University of York, UK

Banerjee, Ruma
Seva in Action

Aravind, Sajma
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Natarajan, Poonam
Chairperson, National Trust. Tbc

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About Presenters:

Sonali Nag is a clinical psychologist with an interest in cognitive science. She is a Research Fellow at University of York, UK and has recently been awarded the very prestigious Newton International Fellow of the Royal Society (UK) for her work in India. Her research is concerned with language and literacy development especially for children in resource poor communities. As an Associate Director at The Promise Foundation, she has for the last 15 years, worked in the field of special needs and community and school based interventions, partnering with government departments and NGOs. Her expertise is also regularly extended as an international consultant to agencies such UNICEF, Asian Development Bank and the ILO. Sonali's association with career counselling programmes at The Promise Foundation has been as a research partner, a faculty and a sounding board for new ideas!



Sue Stothard has over 17 years' experience working in the field of literacy and language skills in children. Sue completed her PhD at the University of York, UK in 1992, the focus of her research being reading comprehension difficulties in children. Since then she has worked on a variety of reading-related projects including: investigating the long-term effects of early language impairments, conducting literacy assessments at Dyslexia Action, UK and working as a Consultant to the Literacy Clinic at Newcastle University, UK. Sue is currently an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of York, UK. For the last three years she has worked with Professors Maggie Snowling and Charles Hulme, developing the York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC). The YARC is a new suite of reading assessments for children aged 4-16 years and is published by GL Assessment.

Ruma Banerjee is the Director and Secretary of the voluntary organization, Seva- in-Action. She is a psychologist and has a specialization in Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) from the Institute of Child Health, University of London. For the past 25 years she has been working in the field of CBR and inclusive education (IE). She has experience in teacher training in the UN supported Government of India projects of DPEP, Janashala and SSA. Ruma's research titled 'Understanding Inclusive Practices in Karnataka' has informed the development of the draft policy for IE for the Government of Karnataka. She is an Executive Council member of SSA, Karnataka and has worked in various committees of the Ministries of Social Justice & Empowerment and Human Resources Development. She has authored a book titled 'Hand Book for Inclusive Education for Parents' and contributed a chapter in the book titled 'Education & Children with Special Needs: From Segregation to Inclusion' (Hegarty and Alur, Sage).

Shanti Raghavan is the Founder and Managing Trustee of Enable India, a nonprofit organization that works for the economic independence and dignity of persons with disability across India. She has 12 years experience in the software industry. More recently, Shanti is known as a social entrepreneur and is the recipient of the prestigious Ashoka fellowship awarded to social entrepreneurs across the globe for their innovative and practical ideas to bring about large-scale social change. Shanti is also the recipient of the NCPEDP-SHELL HELEN KELLER AWARD IN 2005 for employment of disabled. She is also the recipient of the Karmaveer Puraskar award in 2007 and Sadguru Gnanananda Award in 2008. She is a visiting faculty at Centre for Social Initiative and Management. She has been a speaker for employment and training of the disabled at various conferences of NASSCOM, CII, Techshare and international conferences such as Indo-US conference.

Title of Paper: **Re-thinking support: the hidden school-to-work challenges for individuals with Special Needs**

Abstract:

Young people with Special Needs that have emerged out of either a developmental disorder, a physical disability or multiple disabilities, face challenges during the transition from school into further education and work. This symposium will attempt to go beyond the visible areas of difficulties (such as lack of mobility support and adaptive resources) to look at less explored aspects of transition. The first paper will present the results of a study that documented the hidden epidemic of dropping literacy levels in Secondary Schools in the UK, a finding that will find an echo in the state of secondary school attainments in many developed and developing countries. The second paper will present the results of an Indian survey that compared the career preparation status of young people with special needs with peers who had no known diagnosis of special needs, showing a profile of vulnerabilities that are both peculiar to the life stage as well as to the diagnosed special need. The third paper will present the work of the Government of India's response to supporting citizens with Special Needs in the country, particularly highlighting the work of the National Trust. The



work of the Trust is of interest not just because it serves one of the largest special needs populations in the world, but also has developed innovative and cost effective methods to draw in community and home based networks to sustain services. The final paper is on the issues associated with skill development and preparation for entry and successful integration into the world of work, presented through a disability specific curriculum that has evolved out of the work of the Indian NGO, EnAble India. What is particularly interesting in this approach is the marrying of the 'formula of success' that drives both large corporate and the small and medium size businesses, with the equity filled workplace that can serve the person with special needs. Together, we hope to use the symposium to re-think the framework for supporting young people with special needs in their transition into work.

Title of Paper 1: The rate, identification and impact of reading difficulties in adolescence.

Presenter: Dr. Sue Stothard, GL Assessments and University of York, UK

Abstract:

Longitudinal studies indicate that reading difficulties during adolescence have a negative impact on school attainment and future career prospects. This effect is particularly marked for students from socially disadvantaged groups (Maughan, 1995). For example, young adults with persisting reading difficulties are more likely to be unemployed or employed in manual occupations, compared with adequate readers.

This presentation will report the findings of a research study investigating reading skills in a large representative sample of adolescent readers. 39 UK schools representing a range of socio-economic and geographic backgrounds participated in the study. 1230 students aged 11-16 years were given the York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension Secondary Test (YARC Secondary). The YARC assessments included Single Word Reading, Reading Fluency and Passage Reading. Passage Reading involved reading a series of fiction and non-fiction passages. At the end of each passage the students were asked a range of comprehension questions which tapped literal, inferential and vocabulary-based comprehension skills. Each student was also asked to give a short summary of the passage, making clear what the main points were.

The results of this study indicate that there is great variability in reading skills within secondary school students. Within each year group, students were identified with reading ages below the 8 year level. These students' reading difficulties will impact across the curriculum and influence their future career prospects. A substantial proportion of these poor readers were unknown to their schools. This suggests that there is considerable unmet need with regard to literacy problems in adolescence.

Within this sample, reading difficulties were more prevalent amongst students with English as an additional language and students with a moderate to high level of social deprivation. This presentation will report the rates of decoding difficulties and reading comprehension difficulties observed in state maintained schools in England. It will also compare the incidence of reading difficulties observed in students with English as a first language and the rates observed in students with English as an additional language. These findings have important implications for school counsellors who guide students into higher education and other post-school options.



Title of Paper 2: Work orientation and career choices: a survey of special needs

Presenters: Ruma Banerjee, Seva in Action and Sajma Aaravind and Esther Sallo, The Promise Foundation.

Abstract:

This paper will present a survey documenting the work orientation and career choices among 14 to 18 year olds with diagnosed special needs and compare the findings with earlier published data on similar issues among age peers with no such diagnosis. The survey assessed issues ranging from career decision making status, career preparation status, perception of barriers to career development, the young person's own and his parent's perception of career possibilities, sense of self efficacy and, where reported, experience of anxiety and uncertainty. Both quantitative information from likert-type scales and qualitative analysis of young people's narratives will be used to understand the survey data. The presentation will go on to interpret these findings in the context of what may be the key issues for planning career counselling for young persons with special needs, particularly in contexts where counselling services are not easily available.

Title of Paper 3: Supporting individuals with developmental and multiple disabilities to make a transition into meaningful livelihoods.

Presenter: Poonam Natarajan, Chairperson, National Trust. Tbc.

Abstract:

In this presentation the various schemes and innovative programmes developed at the National Trust will be presented. The National Trust is the body mandated by the Government of India, under the Ministry of Human Resources Development, to particularly focus on the services needed for children and young people with 4 specific disabilities: Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Intellectual disabilities and Multiple disabilities. The Trust has pioneered schemes for life insurance, livelihood planning and marketing of products produced by persons with Special Needs. These and other programmes of the National Trust will be presented with special mention of why even the best laid out programme fails to reach the most needy.

Title of Paper 4: Development of employability skills for persons with disability - Model and case studies

Presenter: Shanti Raghavan, EnAble India.

Abstract:

Employability skills of persons with disability require a deeper understanding of the impact and consequence of the disability which goes much beyond the obvious. In spite of the stress levels and high expectations in companies and work places, it is possible to develop people with disabilities to really compete with others. This is possible through:

1. A thorough analysis of the jobs available, a realistic understanding of the specific job roles involved, the company's expectations and a well articulated training programme which has the goal of employability for these jobs.

2. Trainers upholding the values which are the real formula for success.
3. Innovation in teaching methodology and teaching aids.

The biggest issue for persons with disability is the manifestation of the disability in other forms and therefore the need for a framework to inform a Disability specific curriculum.. The paper will touch upon what such a curriculum can provide.

- 1 Real world exposure in many forms: Reason for this is the lack of exposure that persons with disability have sometimes because of isolation, and not "seeing or hearing" the world, and not being included in "learning from the environment" which mostly others get automatically.
- 2 Reinforcing missing elements due to disability: Persons with disability may not have access to situations of regular social interaction, may have specific issues with communication (e.g., spellings for visually impaired do not get reinforced by "seeing", sentence construction for hearing impaired do not get reinforced by "listening")
- 3 Generic building blocks training: By ensuring life education, life skills training, and developing the generic building blocks which will help the disabled in any job (e.g., building logical reasoning, analytical skills, attention to detail, process discipline, self learnability, problem solving)
- 4 Spirit of Competitiveness: Through real projects, simulations and providing a bottom line approach, trainees get ready for the real world and have an edge over others!

These ideas will be presented through case studies from the work of the Indian NGO, EnAble India.