

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

January 2022 – March 2022



**School for Potential Advancement and Restoration of Confidence
(SPARC) India**

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SUPPORTED BY:-



INTRODUCTION

School for Potential Advancement and Restoration of Confidence (SPARC)-India is a non-profit organization with its Head Office in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh (UP) and has been in its existence for 25 years now. The Founder Director and Chairperson, Dr. Amitabh Mehrotra is himself having Cerebral Palsy (CP) with mild spasticity since birth and it was his cherished dream to work for the cause of disability. He did his Post graduation from Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai and served Corporate and CSOs in Bihar and UP. Recently, he completed his PhD from Department of Psychology, University of Lucknow and was awarded PhD degree in Applied Psychology. At present he is nominated as member in Steering Committee of State Election Commission, Government of Uttar Pradesh and nominated as member (renewed) of State Coordination Committee on Disability. He is also member of State Advisory Board on Disability of Uttar Pradesh.

SPARC-India was formed in 1995 and registered in July 1996, as a voluntary organization which aimed to empower people with various disabilities especially people with CP. SPARC-India started its Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program in the year 1996 for persons with disabilities (PwDs) in the urban slums of Lucknow. The thrust of the program was on health and medical rehabilitation, formation of Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) / Self-Help Groups (SHGs) of PwDs & their families and to establish linkages with the government schemes.

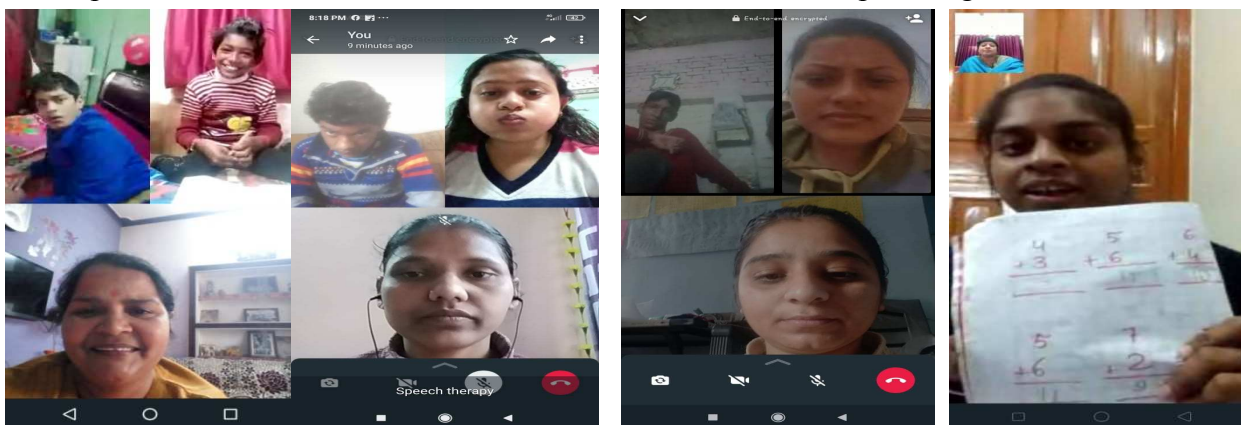
In due course of time, SPARC-India gradually established Jyoti Kiran School (JKS) for children with CP in the year 2003. Recently, SPARC-India has been aligning itself to the philosophy of 'Inclusion'. It emphasizes that inclusive environments will help in minimizing segregations and deep rooted misunderstandings and prejudices between the children with disabilities (CwDs) and non-challenged sections of the society. In 2005, SPARC-India setup a Vocational Training and Placement Cell for PwDs to provide placement services to them. SPARC-India has immense experience in imparting vocational training and skill development programs for PwDs.

SPARC-India established Uttar Pradesh Viklang Manch (UPVM) to develop a support system for CwDs / PwDs to help them exercise their statutory rights and avail entitlements. SPARC-India has provided counselling to approx. 12000 community members, vocational training to about 2500 PwDs and has created self-employment opportunities for more than 1200 PwDs and their family members.

JYOTI KIRAN SCHOOL (JKS)

RESTART OF ONLINE CLASSES

Due to the pandemic restrictions that were imposed by the govt. Jyoti Kiran School was closed for the offline classes and the online classes started from 7th February 2022 for the students so that their online education and online therapy sessions could resume. Students and parents were excited that the online classes were restarting and actively participated in them. The teachers and therapists discussed the time schedules of the students with their parents/guardians.



PEA POD PEELING ACTIVITY

Pea pod peeling activity was conducted as part of the online Saturday Activity on 12th February 2022. The main aim of the activity was to improve the fine motor movements and eye contact in the students. Since the activity was conducted at home so the best available resource was the seasonal vegetable pea. Peeling of pea pods to obtain peas was a very interesting activity for the students and they enthusiastically participated in the activity. Some of the students were supported by their parents and siblings in the activity. Pranjal Srivastava, Akshita Singh, Abhinav Gupta, Ritik Rawat, Nawed Akhtar, Pragya, Uvaish, Anshi Singh and Vicky Kashyap participated in the activity.



SPRING CLEANING ACTIVITY

A *spring cleaning activity* was organized as part of the online Saturday Activity on 19th February 2022 for the students of JKS. All the students had to help their parents and siblings as much as they could in doing the daily work of their house like cleaning the house, folding the clothes, keeping the items of the house organized, cleaning



the stuff, dusting etc. The main aim of the activity was to do ADL activities which would not only help the students but also inculcate a habit of cleaning the area of living and a sense of achievement in helping their parents. The students actively participated in the activity and enjoyed the household work. Pranjal Srivastava, Deepali Gautam, Sivan Rajput, Raj Shekhar, Pragma and Adarsh Ranjan participated in the activity.

PALM AND THUMB PAINTING

Palm and thumb painting activity was organized as part of the online Saturday Activity on 26th February 2022 for the students of JKS. The main aim of the activity was to improve fine motor development and bring out the creative side of the students. Students participated in the activity with great enthusiasm. Some students who could not conduct the activity on their own were supported by their parents and siblings. Pragma, Uvaish, Anshi, Ayush Srivastava, Vicky, Ritik, Nawed, Raj Shekhar, Shivan, Deepali and Tauhid participated in the activity.



YOGA ACTIVITY

Yoga Activity was organized as part of the online Saturday Activity on 5th March 2022 for the students of JKS. The students did various yoga pose and *pranayam* in the activity. Along with this the parents and teachers told the students about the various benefits of doing yoga and *pranayam* daily and how it increases immunity in the body to fight against various diseases. The photos and videos of the activity were shared by the parents in the WA group of their ward's class. Pranjal, Tauhid, Suraj Yadav, Pragma, Anshi and Yash Maurya participated in the activity.



HOLI DRAWING / CARD MAKING ACTIVITY

Holi drawing / card making activity was organized as part of the online Saturday Activity on 12th March 2022 for the students of JKS. The students according to their abilities made drawing of different things that represent Holi celebration. Parents and guardians not only supported them but also told them about the importance of the festival. Some students also made water gun (*pichkari*) out of paper. Pragma, Ritik, Shivan, Gungun, Deepanshu, Ayush Srivastava, Adarsh and Suraj Yadav participated in the activity.



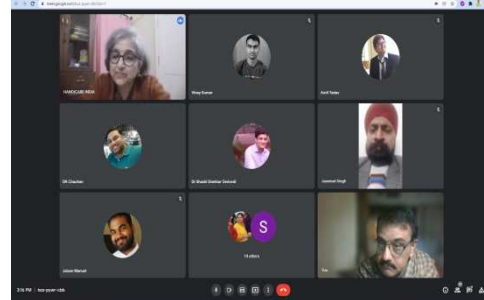
PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Amitabh Mehrotra (Founder Secretary cum Director, SPARC-India) participated in various webinars and meetings which were organized by various organizations on virtual platforms. The list of them is given below:-

STATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING ON ACCESSIBLE ELECTION

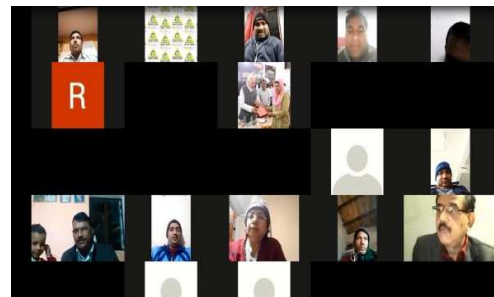
A *state steering committee meeting* on Accessible Election was virtually (on Google Meet) held on 16th January 2022. The consultation meeting was held to identify ways to ensure accessible elections for PwDs.

Dr Amitabh Mehrotra (Founder Secretary cum Director, SPARC-India) participated in the event.



WEBINAR ON ACCESSIBLE VOTING FOR PWDs

A *webinar* (on Zoom) on “Accessible Voting for PwDs” was held on 22nd January 2022 to motivate and facilitate accessible voting for PwDs. It is very important to ensure active participation of PwDs in elections and to include them in the mainstream. This session was moderated by **Dr Amitabh Mehrotra** (Founder Secretary cum Director, SPARC-India and Member of the State Steering Committee for Elections



in UP) and the convener of the event was **Dr Kshama Srivastava** (Director, Shubhasheesh Shiksha Avam Vikas Sewa Sansthan, Raebareli, Member of SNAC-UP, National Trust Member ZCC, Rehabilitation Council of India). The Key Note Speaker at the webinar was **Ms Smita Sadasivan** (Accessibility Consultant, Election Commission of India).

Ms Sadasivan in her address told everyone that there is a govt. order since 2004 for availability of ramp and provision for caregiver/companion to assist the PwD at the voting booth. Government has conducted various consultations with PwDs at both national and state level to identify the needs of PwDs. She further spoke about different facilities provided by govt. viz wheel chair, ramp, volunteer to help in navigation at the polling station, postal ballot, PwD app etc. She further added that a PwD who needs assistance in casting vote can fill form 14a which can be received from the presiding officer and also the caregiver/companion can immediately cast vote after the PwD. The session was attended by about 33 participants.

VIRTUAL MEETING WITH IIT CHENNAI TEAM

A *Virtual meeting* (Google Meet) was held on 21st February 2022 with IIT Chennai for understanding the role of Technology to improve the quality of lives of PwDs. **Mr Justin Jesudas** and **Mr Samson Daniel** from IIT Chennai, **Dr P K Seth** (Vice President, SPARC-India), **Dr Amitabh Mehrotra** (Founder Secretary cum Director, SPARC-India) and team members of SPARC-India participated in the meeting.

Some of the points discussed in the meeting were:

- How digitalization can transform the lives of persons with disabilities (PwDs).
- Any available technology for HI which is available as everyone does not know sign language
- Any available technology for writing, hand coordination
- Any available technology that can read mind and express their thoughts (esp. for CP and Autism)
- Any available technology for students that can understand but are unable to clearly respond
- Tele-rehabilitation
- Accessibility of new available technology



Mr Yesudas shared that they have been working on assistive technology for the loco-motor needs of persons with disabilities. He added that details of problem statement could be discussed in future in presence of engineers. He also assured that he could share any other information if available on the above topics. Dr Mehrotra added that officially IIT Chennai could act as knowledge partners of SPARC-India in developing user friendly and affordable technology for children with disabilities and requested if a MoU can be signed with IIT Chennai in this regard. Dr Seth suggested that engineers or students of IIT Chennai could visit SPARC-India to better understand the concerns and develop technology accordingly.

VIRTUAL MEETING ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING

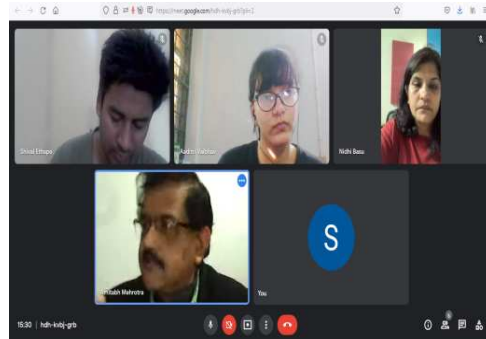
A Virtual meeting (Zoom) on Vocational Training of persons with neurological disability was held on 22nd February 2022. The resource person in the meeting was **Mr Anil Joshi** (Retd. IIM Professional and President of Parents Association of persons with Mental Impairment at National level), who is also a parent of a Down syndrome girl. The meeting was attended by parents of some students of JKS and staff



Mehrotra (Founder Secretary cum Director, SPARC-India) was invited as guest. He addressed the passed out trainees to follow the concept of inclusion in their respective countries and communities. More than 90 participants were present in the meeting.

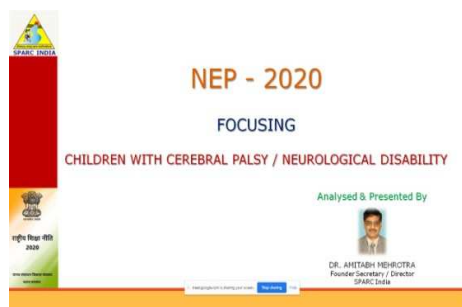
MEETING WITH IIT KHARAGPUR TEAM

A Virtual (Google Meet) *meeting with IIT Kharagpur Team* was organized on 4th March 2022 to identify the future prospects of collaboration in regards to the volunteer participation of IIT Kharagpur students. **Ms Aaditri Vaibhav** (Secretary Community and Crisis Subcommittee, Students' Welfare, Technology Students' Gymkhana, IIT Kharagpur), **Mr Shival Ethape** (IIT Kharagpur), **Ms Nidhi Basu** (Director, LOGICBOX Communications Pvt. Ltd.) and **Dr Amitabh Mehrotra** (Founder Secretary cum Director, SPARC-India) were present in the meeting. Ms Basu and Dr Mehrotra explained the programs that are currently running at SPARC-India and the areas of the programs where the volunteers of IIT Kharagpur can render support. Ms Basu suggested the development of Apps viz. SPARC-India App, Jyoti Kiran App and Livelihood App.



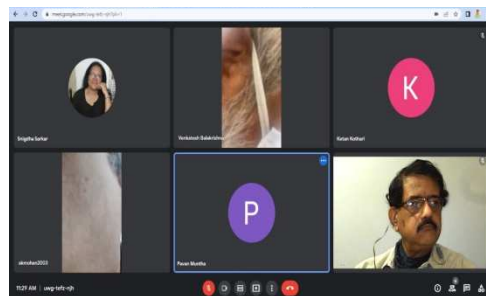
NATIONAL LEVEL CRE WORKSHOP (VIRTUAL)

Rehabilitation Society of the Visually Impaired (RSVI), Lucknow Virtually (Google Meet) organized *a two day National level CRE workshop* on “Disability Rights and Status in India, Policy and Programs which was approved by Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), New Delhi on 4th and 5th March 2022. **Dr Amitabh Mehrotra** (Founder Secretary cum Director, SPARC-India) was invited as a speaker on the second day of the event. Dr Mehrotra spoke on the topic “NEP 2020: focusing on Children with cerebral palsy / neurological disability”. The convener of the event was **Ms Shraddha Srivastava** and the coordinator of the event was **Mrs Rinki Sharma**. About 25 participants were present in the meeting.



WEBINAR CONDUCTED BY IFRA

A Virtual (Google Meet) meeting was organized for Disabled Welfare Schemes and Expenditure in Uttar Pradesh on 12th March 2022. The meeting was organized by IFRA (Indian Forum for Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology). **Dr Amitabh Mehrotra** (Founder



Secretary cum Director, SPARC-India) is a member of the group and was invited to join the webinar. The objective of the meeting was to start the budget analysis in all departments and identify if there is a provision of 5% budget allocation for Rehabilitation of all Persons with Disabilities. It was mentioned that in this regard Andhra Pradesh is the only State which is practicing this. Total six members were present in the meeting.
