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Vol 1

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Special points of interest:

- Exclusive interview with Beata Akerman, a Slovenian activist, author and a PWS
- An insight into the TISA communication workshops held so far

A New Beginning!

After about two years of consistent work at grass roots and on web, TISA is bringing out a newsletter- 'Samvād'. Samvād means a dialogue. A dialogue between this self help movement of Indian people who stammer and the society. It is also an internal dialogue: TISA family is scattered far and wide. We hope to change the attitudes both among people who stammer and those who don't, through sharing of latest objective knowledge, setting up of self help groups and through free workshops aimed at Communication, rather than Cure or fluency; above all, by de-linking stammering from shame, fear and guilt. This is a big mandate but we do not see how else can IPWS ever live and work with self respect, full creativity and contribute to the society meaningfully.

'Samvād' will be a quarterly issue to begin with. TISA's presence and activities are spread across the country. With many SHGs struggling to come up, the self-help movement seems to be coming up, albeit slowly. About four out of fifteen SHGs are meeting with some regularity. On the other hand, TISA has been receiving enormous contributions from its SHGs, its members and friends. Expert opinions, and articles from the core team, the SHG activity reports, write-ups from members, their experiences and perspectives form an ocean of valuable knowledge.

Although the internet is accessible to many of us, often due to busy schedules one might find it difficult to keep up with the pace of information being shared on the website and the blog. Hence, there was a need for an editorial screening of such huge knowledge store house. With Samvād, we attempt to bring out a digest of selected articles, stories and updates from within the country, near-by countries and from the world over. It will also be an effort to widen our reach to the stuttering community, in addition to the website and the blog.

In this first volume, we are trying to give the reader a glimpse of personal journeys,



discoveries and collective reaching out of individuals in the form of SHGs. When one person who stammers (PWS) helps another, with no thought of returns, something magical transforms them and the group. For many of us, this has been the beginning of recovery from stuttering mindset. There are some interviews too. Women who stammer are a "minority within minority", especially in a patriarchal society like ours. Please read what our women contributors- Nilukshi from Sri Lanka, Sakshi, Sherine & Mugdha from India and others, have to say. Some contributions are from friends and family of IPWS. This is a very heartening trend.

Friends from overseas- Tanveer and Hiten also have shared their wisdom to encourage TISA. TISA has decided to talk and write about stammering as much as it can: so that discussing it is no more the effort, it is at the moment. Like any other human condition and experience, society should be able to talk about it, discuss and share it. That is the first step towards 'better attitudes' & 'personal recovery'. Yet, much is left undone. We still have to develop self-reliance. We still look outwards for easy and expedient solutions, to what is essentially our own problem and a complex one at that!

Please send us an email or phone us to let us know what you think about this effort. If you like it, please pass it on to anyone who might benefit from it. Suggestions, comments, feedback and contributions would be highly appreciated. Happy Reading!

Harish
Editorial Team



Watch your Attitude!

Hiten's blog has inspired many of us across the continents for a long time. He goes to the root of the problem- not just stammering, but our attitude to life itself.

Dear **Indian PWS**,

Being of Indian origin, it is a great privilege to have been called upon by Dr Sachin Srivastava to write a few words regarding my views on stammering.

My message to you is simple. The strength to deal with stammering is in you. All you have to do is to believe it first. And then start living it.

It's all about **your** attitudes.

These will help you deal with stammering, and also be an invaluable resource when the going gets tough.

We can all shift the way we think. With some practice it will become normal behaviour.

Stammering is painful. This is clear enough. As fellow PWS you completely understand the worry, self-hate and fear I'm talking about it. You've no doubt experienced this, more times that you care to remember.

But there comes a point when you need to accept the pain, and make a conscious choice to stop creating further inner turmoil. This requires extreme courage. If you stammer covertly like me, then this can be very difficult. But it is something you must be prepared to do, in order to move on with your life.

And believe me if you look deep enough, you'll be able to take this first important step. It requires acceptance that you stammer, but also to begin to appreciate you are much, much **more** than the way you speak – here's a **change** in attitude.

Once this is done, you can treat it as a journey of self-exploration to find out who the real you, who the people around you, and indeed what the point of this life is all about. This is **another** way of thinking about it.

Imagine you're scientist, and your life is one big experiment. Along the way you'll find out a number of new things about yourself. You will learn about the parts of your life, that are already well-balanced and those areas, which you need to give more attention to.

However, by looking at your life in this way, you need to be kind to yourself – allow

yourself to make mistakes. This is another tricky one for PWS. We've spent most of our lives trying to be so perfect, that anything we believe to be less means being inadequate. However, there is tremendous fallacy with this attitude. For one, humans are **hugely** fallible. They always were, and they always will be.

Another attitude is to look at your experiences as just that – Just **learning** opportunities to grow, to figure out what works and what doesn't.

Which of the following would you prefer?

To either continue, to beat yourself up every time you make a mistake, because you weren't able to live up to a false standard, which you created?

Or to treat the experience, or situation as a learning experience, and to move on with your life?

I know which **one** I would choose. No need for any heartache. Life can be a lot more fun when you look at it like this.

With any type of change work, including dealing with stammering, our inner world can sometimes cause us havoc. Your mind will remember previous times, when you didn't succeed and tell you things like "I wasn't able to do that before. I can't do that, I stammer!"

Or your mind will conjure up pictures of you stammering in the future and will stop you from going into the very situations you need to deal with this.

Another **way** of looking at this is by understanding that memories about the past or visions about the future are not real. Therefore, their existence can seriously be doubted.

If ever you find yourself facing problems about stammering, remind yourself, you can always adopt a new attitude!

Hiten Vyas
www.stutteringhub.com

**"In other words,
stuttering is what
you do trying not to
stutter again"**

- Johnson



Writing for a Cause

Exclusive interview with Beata Akerman - a researcher, activist and now an award-winning author from Slovenia working for the cause of PWS

TISA recently interviewed **Beata Akerman**, a researcher, an activist and a PWS from Slovenia. She has written *'Izabela'*, a beautiful award winning children's book, about a princess, who stammered! One of her great personal achievements is- instead of seeking personal relief, she decided to be an activist and work for those who stammer.

Here are a few excerpts from the interview, where she takes us through the journey of her life.

TISA: Can you briefly introduce yourself?

Beata: My name is Beata Akerman. I'm a young researcher in Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana, Slovenija. I've stuttered for more than 20 years now and because stuttering is in Slovenia big stigma, I became an activist and I fight for the rights of people who stutter. Therefore I wrote many articles, I participated on television and radio shows, congresses, I have my own support group and now I published a [book](#) for children about princess Izabela who stuttered, for which I won a [special award](#) in Austria for the best international children and young people literature.

TISA: Why did you write this Children's book?

Beata: The story about princess Izabela is, at least in Slovenija, very unique. First of all because I as an author stutter and some of the parts of the story are taken from my life. Then, because if you look closely how are people who stutter present in books and movies, you'll see that the character who stutter impersonate every possible part of stereotype image there is about stuttering. The common aspect of the character that stutter in the media is that they're portrayed as shy and not very bright push-overs, or even worse, as killers, rapists, prisoners, people locked in the psychiatry. I intentionally chose a character that embodies grace, goodness, wisdom and beauty. My intention was and still is to break stereotypical image of PWS and with that help other people who stutter to reduce problems with which we are dealing

on everyday basic. The fairy tale also helps readers to accept their own speech impediment not as a deficiency but as a particularity which makes them unique.

TISA: What important changes did you notice in yourself, as you shifted from a PWS to an activist working for PWS?

Beata: I am no longer ashamed of myself because I stutter. My stutter makes me unique and I'm a stronger person because of the fact that I have this experience. I'm no longer trying to be someone who I'm not. It is a relief to finally feel good about myself, not being afraid to speak up and stand up for myself and others. So what if I stutter? There is nothing wrong with that.

TISA: What are your future plans?

Beata: Until the end of this year I'm planning to finish my second children's book, also about stammering. For a long time I wished to establish an activist group whose members would raise the awareness in the society. Because of the stigma and unpleasant social reactions, people are afraid to speak up. So I'll continue to do all the activities alone and keep hoping that someday other PWS will join me.

Catch a detailed interview on our website by following this [link](#)

**"I am no longer
ashamed of
myself because I
stutter..."**

- Beata



Message from Tanveer

Tanveer is a Software Analyst from London. He joined British Stammering Association in 2004 and got elected as the youngest trustee in 2007. Organizing a Stammering Open Day in London in 2006 changed his life...

I stammered since I was a child and it affected me greatly specially during my teenage life. My self confidence suffered. I decided to study computers as I thought it will be safer working with machines than to take a job that involves interacting with people. I moved to UK seven years back from India when a company offered me a job there in IT. I was nervous about moving to another country when my fluency was not that great. In UK, I joined the British Stammering Association. I attended its conference in 2006 in Scotland and was delighted to meet so many PWS. More than 100 of them!!! It was a wonderful experience and made many friends. I joined a London self help group, started attending other BSA and international events. These interactions slowly made me more open and self-expressed. Slowly I gained enough confidence to actually give workshops at some of the BSA events and even gave a workshop in the International Stuttering Association in Croatia in 2006. Realizing how wonderful these events are and how much I got out of them, I thought it would be great to organize one myself, especially in London.

In 2004 I also did a 3-day workshop (not aimed at stammering) called the Landmark Forum (they also have centers in India), which is designed to bring a shift in one's quality of life and address barriers we face. It was an amazing workshop which changed my perception of life and how I look at myself and others. I realized the only way I can gain confidence is by doing something, rather than waiting for the confidence to come and then do something. I like attending the BSA workshops, but now I wanted to organize one. But I had never organized a public event. I had always been a passive participant - going there and enjoying every bit of it, getting inspired but then getting back to my normal safe life. But the whole idea of this workshop was to do something I never thought I could do. I contacted the BSA to say I would like to organize a one-day conference (called Open day) in London and asked if they could help fund it. They agreed. Money was limited but it was a good start. The next challenge was to find workshop leaders, but after attending many workshops and conferences, I have made quite a few friends among the workshop presenter and managed to persuade some of them to hold workshops. With further planning and support from a few other

PWS friends, the Open Day that I organized was a huge success. More than 100 participants came and there were several workshops. More important than the workshops which were no doubt valuable, the open day became a platform for the PWS to interact and express themselves. It was during that time of my active involvement with the BSA, I decided to stand for the Trustee election. My involvement has made myself known to the PWS community in UK and I was elected as one of the BSA Trustees. Currently I take keen interest in organizing one day workshop sessions for the BSA as a BSA Trustee.

It was a long journey, but getting involved with a stammering association is one of the best things in my life. I have gradually begun to accept myself the way I am. Not only did I get a lot from the others involved with the association, but I have been able to contribute to the wellbeing of other PWS.

Since my joining the BSA, it has always been my wish that India also has its own association. I have been watching the growth of TISA with keen interest since its inception. First it was the indianPWS yahoo group and then forming a nascent website. I remember contributing a few articles to the startup website. On one of my trips to India, I met Sachin and was impressed by his dedication and vision of TISA.

I remember holding email discussions with a few founding members of TISA regarding the growth and future of the Indian Association. I stated that the best way is to start at the grass root level with various self help groups forming in different parts of the country and then joining together to form the national association. This is what that has happened. With its many self help groups in Goa, Delhi, Herbertpur, Chennai, Surat, Kolkata and many other places, TISA is truly national now and has come a long way, thanks to the dedication and 'never give up' attitude of those involved.

I want to congratulate TISA team on their new venture and wish them BEST OF LUCK.

I want the Indian PWS to get more involved with TISA and not just be a passive member waiting for TISA to change their life, but to get involved with TISA and change their attitude towards life.

[\(More\)](#)

"The stutterer must conquer his own problems. No one else can do it for him"
- Van Riper



To Try or Not To Try is the Question

Raja Poladi began a brave journey of self discovery some years back. In the process he reached out to others and Hyderabad self help group started in this process. He raises a very valid question here: how long are we supposed to keep on striving for excellence?

I have been a PWS even since I have known and continue to be. And as you would have guessed, one thing that I have received in plenty is advice. So much so that, one moment people are ignorant and as I explain to them what the disability is about, they become competent enough, instantaneously, to offer advice (and I pat myself on being such a good teacher). But I have also received some serious advice – meaning advice that I believed was seriously going to help me. I have reached well known figures like Mr. Partha Bagchi, Mr. Ajit Harsinghani and not to mention loads of stuff on the internet. I did follow their advice and I did not. I did follow to the extent I could and fairly disciplined at that but I have no doubts that my efforts could easily have been improved upon and also could have been more disciplined. But I don't regret what I did not, because I don't believe it would have made the difference (well you can argue, but this is my story). So the serious advice or what I did consider a serious advice didn't work too. And I cringed. May be not right then, but when I am down or have had a bad attack and realize that I have lost the battle yet again. And who likes a loss – is there any one? So, I asked myself an intelligent question – why fail when I can avoid failure. Why spend time, effort, expect to gain and then realize it has all gone waste? So why try when the odds are stacked so much against me? Add to that the more I try, the more I focus on your results & fluency – and such consciousness, doesn't really help the cause.

So much of what we do or are is to do with perspective or frame of mind. How much of current human evolution would have happened if the great people have not become battle hardened? Well, I agree, human evolution is not our focus – yes – and I am neither a philosopher nor a philanthropist. But is not trying the answer? For is there a better mood lifter than the most beautiful of all the 4 letter words – no, not LOVE – but HOPE? (well, I have aged, you might have

guessed, but I am sure you would agree with me). And as I think critically but positively on my previous assessment of advice that I have received – it is hard to say that I have not gained anything. Well my communication as well as fluency have definitely improved over time (most definitely in certain situations) and it's quite likely that part of it is due to what I gained from that advice. Well it may not have offered a complete solution, but armed me better and helped me demystify the problem to an extent. So should I not try? And hence the question.

Is there not a way to combine the best of both? Maintain HOPE or be better armed and not be a failure? Fortunately it doesn't take a genius to figure that failure is a function of expectation. And last time when I met Dr. Sachin at one of his workshops (that I attended as his & JP's dutiful pupil), the focus was so much on acceptance. Acceptance is probably many things – to alter the focus (from fluency to communication), to embrace the disability (it's a part of you, why hate it), to not cringe under attack etc. And I realized in my own circuitous way that the more I embrace acceptance the less I perceive failure. Yes – Acceptance isn't easy and probably requires a lot of courage – but isn't so the case with everything noble. They say if you aim for the moon, even if you miss, you'll be among the stars. Who doesn't want to be a Star?

With that realization, I say to myself – “I am not going to lose hope. I shall battle for the heck of it. I have lost battles as long as I was fighting alone with my tongue. But now I shall ally with my mind & heart.” And I ponder if “Smile & Try” is not the answer?

(RAJA POLADI is an IT professional and can be reached at rajapoladi@yahoo.com)

“Communication is much more than fluency... It is about sharing 'meaning' with others.”

News From SHGs

TISA has 15 SHGs running across the country, in different states of evolution! Here's a glimpse of activities taking place in some of the SHGs, as they explore the new ground of self-help and stammering awareness in India...

Jaipur



...A SHG meeting was conducted in Jaipur on Saturday 17-7-2010 .There were only two members Ravi, (into family business) and Siddharth, (a B.Tech student). Both I and Ravi exchanged our experiences and methods to deal with stammering .Meeting was conducted in central park and lasted for about an hour. Ravi and I decided what we will do for rest of the week to cope up with

stammering. I felt really good to meet and know a person like him .

Thank you TISA and respected moderators for giving me this opportunity through your site.

(Siddharth Sharma)
7568555488

Surat

Surat SHG welcomes two new members Vishal and Deepak. Both are young, almost at the end of their student life and started trying their luck both in terms of employment as well as marriage.

Vishal got in touch via his non-PWS friend who did some web search for stammering for Vishal and furnished him my cell number. Vishal has a good ability to maintain eye contact and is not shy of his stammering. He wants to throw himself in more and more speaking situation, a rarity in most PWS who approach TISA for the first time. He also wants to accept his stammer in front of the world and has suggested that we do a radio program on local FM station. I will be working on organizing it on one of local FM stations of Surat city.

Deepak came in touch through TISA

website and Sachin. He seems to have only articulation problem and finds it difficult to speak some particular letters. Since stammering is translated also as 'tutlana' he thinks that it is covered under TISA. I told him that TISA has a focus on stammering and I don't think that he has fluency disorder like stammering. However at some point of time I think we need to have some basic information about other speech disorders like say cluttering on our blog so that this confusion can be avoided. In any case, I invited Deepak to meet other PWS from Surat group as many feelings like shame, embarrassment, fear of speaking are strikingly common despite lack of "blocks" in case of Deepak.

(Dr Akash Acharya)

Bangalore

Holi was Ok..ok but Trek was excellent... Actually, I joined a trek group called 'Bangalore Ascender'. It is also like TISA, where people of common interest come together and go for trekking across Karnataka.

And TISA helped me in this regard. I came forward and meet new people because of acceptance. And during the introduction round since its unknown people, I started by saying "Before I give my introduction, I

will like to tell you the fact that I stammer so if anyone is not able to understand anything they can ask me to repeat it...". It helped me as I stammered less and also people asked some question. As compared to earlier experience when no one used to ask any question even if they had any doubts... (Tanoy)

See [here](#) an article in Hindu about this group.



Vishal & Deepak, Surat



A snap from the Bangalore SHG meeting, in Cubbon Park.



Chandigarh

..On 23-07-2010 at 3.45 pm I broke the ice and delivered my first speech at Toastmaster club Chandigarh. I am grateful to Dr. Sachin and Mr. Manohar from Pune for giving me strength & courage to disclose before audience that I am a stutterer, which otherwise I would not have disclosed. I started with the following words:

“ Hi, I am Jasbir, a young man in 50s trying to improve my speech, which has been giving me slips since childhood because of stuttering.”

The moment I spoke the above lines I felt so

relieved and my entire presentation of 6-7 minutes went on with full confidence without a single block. I am also thankful to Mr. Paramjeet Singh, a PWS from Chandigarh who on my request kindly spared time to attend the Toastmaster meet as a guest and see my presentation.

I further felt elevated when the evaluator gave comment that he liked my honesty and suggested only to slow down the speed a bit in future projects.

I am preparing for my second project...(Jasbir Sandhu)

Dehradun



Sir, You speak like me!

Today, we went to a school for screening of young boys, looking for any child with any kind of speech impediment especially stammering..As the boys were introducing themselves, I saw a young boy struggling with his speech and when it was my & Parmanand's turn to introduce ourselves, we bounced a bit. I could see a hint of smile on his face after our introductions..Soon after the introductions as we get prepared to play a game, the same young boy surprised me. He came up to me and said in very sweet and innocent voice - "Sir, you speak like me"..

After this we played a lot of games and I could see that the child who was holding himself back a bit, at the start of the session, suddenly changed gear and was enjoying with other kids....This incident reminds me of what once Sachin had said in response to a question being put to him by Pune SHG- "How can we help school kids ? ". Sachin's reply was - even if you

go to school and spend some time with kids who stammer and just listen to them, play with them, it will help them and today I saw it..We didn't do any therapy...Just me and Paramanand stammering openly in front of his class gave him a hint that stammering is fine..!!

Also there was another surprise from one of his classmates - "Sir why do some people speak this way ?" . My reply was - "As some people are fat, some are thin, Some are tall and some are small , there is also a variation in the way people speak, so some people stammer and some don't". I hope I am able to convey my message to fellow PWS (People Who Stammer) that please go out, talk to young people who stammer, go to schools and give a presentation to the whole school about s-s-stammering...U don't realize that how you can change the life of a young boy/girl in a positive way..! (Jai Prakash, on Sabbatical with Samagra)

Chennai



Marina beach, Under Gandhi's gaze..

The Chennai chapter meeting held on 6.03.2010 was attended by 15 PWS out of which 10 PWS were new who were attended the 1st annual conference on 20th Feb.

I have shown the progress made by the Chennai chapter existing members such as Bhattacharriah, Francin and Maheshkumar and informed to the new members that it would take minimum of one year to see substantial improvements.

All the new members have convinced that it

would take one year and assured me to come to all the meetings regularly.

We have decided to conduct meetings once in a 15 days. One meeting at YWCA and next meeting either at beach or park. We have proposed to interact with strangers during meetings at beach / park so as to get rid of fear and shame.

That's all from Chennai chapter.

Regards,

(Mani Maran)

Pune



Meditation helps!

With the lessons from my sabbatical, now I take time to search for activities on internet and choose the ones which I feel are interesting, make us think, help us break out of our inertia and are sometimes intellectually stimulating too! Now I also post the agenda on blog and email it too as there are more PWS in Pune! There are some, who know about our group and who haven't joined). I try to sell our SHG meets now to people. I try to make the agenda look cool, and then try to match the expectations in our meetings too! This is our last week's agenda:

Routine Activities for 30 minutes:

1. Meditation – 10 minutes
2. Slow reading – 10 minutes.
3. Abdominal/Deep Breathing Exercise – 10 minutes.

Special Activities:

4. [One Word Story!](#) –Time depends on the number of participant.
5. [Can you draw it?](#) – Time depends on the number of participant (Every one please bring a pen and notepad)
6. [Limerick](#) – Time depends on the number of participant.

Real life Activities:

7. Going out for stuttering Interviews – 45 minutes activity. 30 minutes debriefing. After the meeting, we went out for a lunch together and had some really interesting and fun filled discussion.

(Jai Prakash)

Jammu



Life can be a lonely trudge for a young PWS at times..

My Journey so far..

It is always a problem to go to a new place where every face is new and bright. You go to a new place with lot of expectations and all. This again can be a problem for a person who stammers because you have to start it all over again. Introducing yourself in every session or to every person you meet. We use to have Communication classes there, where each and everyone of us has to speak. You don't have any option. But it was not that hard for

me. In almost each and every session of communication classes I discussed about my stammer...

Soon my friend circle began to expand. It was altogether a new beginning for me. I didn't know that stammering can make such a huge difference (in a positive sense).

(Manpreet, Pune writes about his experiences during his training at work-place, in Mysore)

Goa



A snap from Goa SHG meeting, at Nehru Park

“What should I do now?” A number of thoughts crossed my mind. The rain had slowed down my speed. But not my determination. Something from inside told me that I should move towards Harish's office. Now, the visibility was almost zero. I went on; blinking my eyes and struggling to keep them open against the prodding water droplets.

Riding through the showers, I reached near the dock where I had to catch a ferry boat, to cross the other side of the river, on the way. As I was approaching near the dock, I saw that the ferry was just starting to leave. I sped to-

wards the dock. But little did I know that even luck was on the other side of the battle. Just when I was about to reach the dock, the ferry had left the banks. I had missed it.

Then while leaving the venue, the president of the Goa Toastmaster's Club told me and Harish that we both had done very well. She said that Harish just missed being the table topic winner by ranking second (proud of you Harish). She even told us that she had a mentor in Kuwait who was also a PWS.

(Rahul writes about his visit to the Toastmaster's Club)

Hyderabad



We have had 4 meetings in the past 2 months - 19th June, 27th June, 4th July & 18th July. All of them at the same venue - Krishna Kant Park, Yousufguda.

We have tried a range of things over the last 2 months - Voluntary stuttering, practiced Bouncing technique, Prolongation technique, Meditation, Breathing exercises & impromptu Presentations. There has been enthusiastic participation from folks on all occasions. On last couple of occasions, we have adopted the techniques from "Comprehensive

Stuttering Therapy" e-book, which has some very interesting suggestions and inputs, thanks to Mohan who shared the book with us. I have even taken a vow to practice some of the techniques in a disciplined manner and am currently into the 3rd day successfully (runs for 14 days). I am glad and thankful to each of the SHG group members that this group not only has provided me access to this resource but also provided me with motivation to give it a shot.
(Raja Poladi)

Mumbai



Romi Aurora (Mumbai), discovered new boundaries of communication during his 2-week stay at Herbertpur

We are lucky that we stammer because I feel god is preparing us for something and if we face the challenge I am sure we may succeed. Stammering itself is an art and its like learning a new language. I am sure all those who are attending the workshop have taken the right step and I am sure they will find a big change in them.

I realize that I have learned something deeper than communication- I also realize that my real challenge begins now, as I return home. I will aim high now. I will try to keep in touch with SHG in Mumbai and TISA.. I will try to pass on what I have learned to other stammerers freely and with joy.
(Romi Arora speaks about his experiences in Herbertpur)

Delhi



Hi, the Delhi SHG meeting was held on 13th December 2009 at the Central Park Connaught Place. To start with, there were Arun and myself in the meeting, Anuj had to join late. We met and discussed about how our practices were going on and what changes have we observed over the period. We both agreed that stammering is more linked to our psychology and our fear of interacting with people. It is like a vicious circle that if we stammer, we will not talk and if we will not talk (come out of our inhibitions), we will stammer. We practiced breathing techniques of 4-2-6 and meditation. Then, we practiced slow reading. After that we discussed about

the effects of our behavior towards stammering and how we can change our thought process into positive thinking rather than our mind generating negative thoughts and emotions. After this, we played an interesting game, we went to people and interacted with them using the most difficult words. Also, we created the environment of mock interviews and gave interviews to each other. At 12 PM it was time for me to leave. Arun and Anuj continued with the meeting... Such meeting are really fruitful and help us in a better way as compared to practicing in isolation.
(Deepak Sanotra)

Herbertpur



SHG goes trekking in the nearby mountains..

What happens when stammerers meet? Like others, they too talk, share jokes, have fun. This is what happens in our TISA SHG at Herbertpur. Everyone gets their fair share of attention and glory! Young people love that. Even the "not so young" enjoy sharing a funny tale. Actually, telling a story- a joke- is an important social skill for PWS: knowing how and when to deliver the punch line. And keeping relaxed, above all. What is the point in breaking out in cold sweat as you tell the most funny story?!

Yes, this art can be mastered with practice. That is what "self help" is all about..

This Sunday, we had two visiting artists! Gajendra from Roorkee and Harsh from Kanpur. Gajendra is doing B.Tech and Harsh, IIT from Mumbai. Regulars like Susheel, Raju, Vineet, Nishu and Sachin were of course there to welcome them.

Harsh who has been in Herbertpur for about six days, made a very good presentation "On Being Different". It was a very honest and frank sharing.

Gajendra too shared his insights about stammering and how he has tried to help himself- and what it meant for him to drive a bike from Roorkee all the way to Herbertpur-2.5 hours- to meet other PWS!

Finally we all played a game: a paper with a random word on it, was pinned to our back- and we had to guess it by asking questions (using our preferred technique like bouncing / prolongation etc.) from others standing around in a circle. Sachin too went for it and had tough time guessing "cell phone"!

Brahmavidya: Testimony



Dear Friends,

I'm Tejaswini from Bangalore. I'm working for a MNC Bank as a Team leader managing a group of 14 staff. I started stuttering at a young age as most of the PWS. This speech problem increased extremely about 3 yrs ago when I went through a lot of stress and pressure at work. That was the time I was desperate to get out of Stammering forever. Tried with speech Therapy, met a psychologist, practiced Reiki and many more things, but had no results. Reiki did help me for a short span.

Oct 23rd 09 I read a very interesting article "Common man uncommon lives" posted by M K Peerbhai at [link](#) on TISA's website, regarding Brahmavidya as a tool to fluent speech. I was amazed reading the article and was looking for something similar methods to cure my stuttering. I'm glad I read the article and decided to start right away with Brahmavidya by Correspondence. I noticed a slow and steady improvement in my speech from the very first few weeks of the practice. Day after day I could see a lot of changes, gaining fluency.

I no longer struggle to speak or prepare for ways to communicate. Introducing myself, talking in a group, sharing my ideas which were all a big challenge to me, today they all easily flow out. With about 4 months of practice with BV I manage to speak fluent and con-

fidently at most of the time. With continued practice I'm sure to completely cure my stammering.

How it works? Brahmavidya teaches highly effective breathing exercises and Meditation. The breathing exercise greatly increases the intake of oxygen into the body. The influx of lot of energy/oxygen into the body strengthens the chakras. When the body is charged speech becomes easy.

Another important technique is meditation-the methods of meditation taught in Brahmavidya are very powerful it relaxes and calms the mind, builds confidence and being positive. This further adds to clear speech.

Brahmavidya improves our thought processes and our outlook towards life, people; there's a great deal of strength in mind. There are lots of benefits I have gained physically, mentally and emotionally. Its a powerful tool to every individual. I'm committed to doing the exercises, spend at least 60 minutes on exercises and 30 minutes on Meditation every day. The amount of time invested is Priceless. With the guidance and great support from MK Peerbhai Brahmavidya became easier to follow.

Wish you all Happiness and Success
Thanks and Regards
Tejaswini



A Novel Hope

Nilukshi Cooray, from Sri-Lanka and studying in Asian University of Women in Bangladesh, participated in the TISA Communication Workshop held in Kolkata. Here, she writes about her perspective and experiences...

There is a general saying in the public that no one is perfect. Therefore, each and every one of us carries our own barriers and hardships throughout our life time. These difficulties can be exhibited in speaking, writing, thinking critically, body appearance or dealing with people.

Since from an early age, I had difficulties to speak fluently like the other people in the public, most of the time, I felt disappointed and vexed with my life. However, with the continuous support from my loving father, I managed my difficulty in speaking named "STAMMERING". At first, I did not feel comfortable to express my thoughts and ideas as I always stuck with words and some certain letters. Further, during my school time, because of the misbehavior of some of my friends, I thought that I will not be able to become a high profile person.

However, my negative feeling on stammering totally changed during the time when I was in the communication workshop in India (Kolkata). There, I met a doctor, two IT engineers, a hospital receptionist, three undergraduate students, and a researcher; the specialty in them was that they all stammer. The interesting point is that even though they have speech disorders, they have achieved high social status. Their invigorating life experiences provided courage for me to accomplish my goals while experiencing the complexity of life. As there is no cure for stammering, it is crucial for everyone who has speech disorders to accept the reality of their lives. Sometimes, it is true that when people laugh at our mistakes in speaking or imitate the way we speak, it brings tears to our eyes as we are born with a disability, but it is necessary to keep in our minds that if we can ignore and forgive such people who make fun of us, we also can become like Isaac Newton, Winston Churchill or Charles Darwin who struggled a lot from stammering throughout their life time.

The communication workshop aided me to practice various techniques like prolongation, bouncing, proper way of

breathing while speaking, and pausing to manage my speaking to communicate well. From the inspiring lecture on stammering from Dr Satyendra Srivastava, who is a recovering stammerer, I could realize that there are no specific reasons to have stammering. Additionally, stammering can affect one's personal identity, and when a person gets severely hurt for being a person who stammers, that person can end up committing even a suicide. Thus, there is a responsibility for each one of us who live in the same world to treat everyone equally because everyone is made in the image of God as I believe. From my perception, if people who stammer begin to enjoy positive thoughts, then these people will observe a sudden change in their speaking.

I am glad that I got the opportunity to understand the gift that God has given me to add beauty to my life through the sufferings in my life. I would like to thank my university, Asian University for Women (AUW), for giving me the chance to attend the workshop. Notably, I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Katrina Lewis for being with me like a shadow all through the happiness as well as sorrows in this process. Furthermore, I am glad that I had several nice people in AUW for encouraging me to attend this workshop. After all, I am very pleased that my best friend in AUW, Anushka Pushpamali was with me all the time when I felt so sad for being unable to present my presentations or speeches well though I practiced a lot.

Ultimately, I want to say that God has given each one of us a cross, which is hard to bear, as he kept his faith on us. Hence, we all should have bravery to live with it happily.

"Learn to Smile with Your Failures."

- Nilukshi Cooray from Sri Lanka, Asian University for Women (AUW) – Bangladesh

TISA expresses deep thanks to AUW for letting Nilukshi attend the course and to Nilukshi as well for this write up.



Niluksha Cooray, participating in the Kolkata Workshop

Many paths lead
into the stuttering
bog— and out of it.
As many people, so
many ways..



A Lecturer, Despite All Odds

Sakshi Goel, from Delhi writes about following one's dreams and courage to pursue it

I am a PWS. I am going to share my experience as a PWS. Since yesteryears I have always been taught that "being patient in life teaches everything" and during the course of time I have realized the actual truth behind it.

As a child, stammering didn't bother me much, as no one really cares. But as we grow up it starts bothering. Giving up one's life seems to be an easy solution rather than speaking in front of the masses. But with age, grows maturity and understanding, and patience develops. Nobody is just perfect in this world and none is to be blamed for any wrong that has happened.

During my graduation days, I very well remember that people used to think that I am insane and mentally ill! Those years of my life taught me things which I can never forget throughout my life. It made me bold, gave me the courage to face the world and made me a confident speaker.

Now its the time when I think of being a lecturer, despite all odds. Confidence building is not a one day affair. It has to be boosted all through, at every walk of life. Now, its not that I don't stammer. I do stammer, but now it doesn't bother me. When I teach I prepare my subject well

which gives me half of the confidence and the rest half is the mental make up. Don't look for sympathy... its just a problem like people have diabetes or asthma. Do you ever sympathize with such people? I doubt?! Just stand up confidently and realize what you are here for- your aim in life and move ahead. We just have one life to realize and fulfill our dreams. Don't give up on anything because of your stammer.

Hrithik Roshan is also one amongst us. we are no less than anyone. It's the time to pledge that whatever be the situation we will not let stammering overrule us. Good days, bad days are part of everyone's life and we have to face it. Let people think whatever they think about our stammering. We know it's no disorder, it's just part and parcel of our life. Accept happily what one can't change.

- Sakshi Goel, New Delhi

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Accept Yourself

'God has given you one face and you make yourself another!'

As rightly said by William Shakespeare, It often happens that most of us strive to build the best possible image in public but in this bargain we lose ourselves and feel unhappy in life just because we have pleased everyone around us except ourselves. But remember,

'Whether you are dark or fair,

Whether you are fat or thin

Whether you wear glasses or braces,

Or You Stutter or fumble

Accept yourself"

Acceptance sometimes sounds difficult but if you don't accept yourself nobody will.

So today take a good look at yourself and tell yourself, "I am what I am and I love myself." Remember you are a unique individual, nobody possesses your smile neither your talent nor your uniqueness. Discover yourself; know about your talents and traits.

Have confidence in yourself and hold your head high and tell yourself "This is me and All is Well"

"Whatever you are, there is no other you and nobody in the whole world can play your part as well as you do"

Ms.Sherine Karkada .



Stammering : A Blessing In Disguise

Stammering is not always about frustration, anguish and disgust. It can also teach a lot, and bring about a positive change in one's life. Mugdha Benjamin tells how Stammering has turned a blessing in her life ...

While reading the title many might wonder what in the world could be good about stammering. Kindly bear with me; I will explain it later on. The credit to the title goes to my friend Sheff who I never knew had a speech disability till now. Thanks Sheff! ... When Dr. Sachin requested me to write something for the magazine; I drew a blank and this topic took shape purely on instinct. (Did I mention that I do most things, take most decisions based on instinct and it turns out well) So hoping this too will turn out well.

Past Mugdha: "Why am I the only one to suffer..?"

Present Mugdha: "I am glad of all the struggles that I have in my life, even stammering.."



So what brought about this change of mindset? Maybe I was too sick of being lonely and depressed all the time.. And I wanted to be happy.. So I chose to be happy. Yes, life is all about choices and just a simple choice can change the course of life...I would say that stammering was a blessing in disguise because I found my calling to be a teacher.

Thanks to this speech disorder (anyways who wants 'order' in life :)); I stayed alive on books and writing. I started reading at an early age and also kept a diary from secondary school. It was my way of dealing with emotions and my stammer. And now I am glad for all those books and diaries because they helped me deal with my emotions, problems plus my language improved...

Pity is something that most people give out easily. But empathy is where you try to 'understand' and 'accept' people for who they are. Over the years I slowly and steadily chose to empathize rather than

pity. This not only helps me in understanding others but myself as well. Don't worry I am not a saint. When angry I can be as dangerous as a dragon!

The best lesson that I learnt as a PWS was acquiring a sense of humour...that is learning to laugh at myself.. Before it really used to bug me when people made fun of my stammering.. But now humour is an excellent way to deal with most situations in life. Anyways laughter adds a glow to your skin :P

Many are of the opinion that people who stammer are psychologically weak. But I want to tell them that they are WRONG. I feel it is courageous that even though speech affects our daily interaction, we still go out and live our lives every day. Stammering has taught me never to give up and keep trying.

New experiences, new risks...All I can say is that stammering prepared me for new challenges and now I am open to taking new risks. Even now I push myself to move out of my comfort zone and try new things.

Stammering is just one of the many struggles that life throws at us. Some are life-long struggles and some are just phases. If dealt with the right and positive attitude even struggles become blessings in disguise.

Bottom line is look at the bright side of all things.. We all go through struggles for a reason.. Just be positive and find your purpose in life.

A poem I wrote on an instinct. By the way it's my first poem on stammering.. Surprised at myself that considering the plethora of poems I wrote, none was on stammering. Wonder why? Anyways here it goes...

(continued on page 14...)



(... continued from page 13)

*I have a voice, but I am voiceless,
My struggles in life seem endless.
Varied emotions are raging inside me,
I am like a depthless sea,
There seems no outlet for my emotions,
Even in silence there is perpetual commotion.
Lost and alone I search for solutions,
Not knowing I can start a revolution.
The answers are in my heart and soul,
I have to find my voice to feel whole.
I will not give up and cry,
Instead I will stand up and try.*

I read this quote a long time back and tried applying it in real life: "To bring about change, be the change."

Love yourself and be happy...

- Mugdha Benjamin (Happy to be ME)

Communication Workshops

Accept Stammering but work on Communication: this has been the philosophy behind Communication workshops.

**“Courage is the first and last requisite to come out of stuttering hole...”
- A Participant**

Communication workshops conducted by TISA have been a valuable service to the community. Total 24 people have participated in the three workshops so far. A spin off benefit was that some of the participants have gone on to initiate self help groups in their city or their work place: Pune (JP), Jammu (Manpreet), Hyderabad (Raja) are some of the notable examples. These workshops were free. Participant paid only for their board and lodge to a social work institution providing logistics. Second workshop at Kolkata was set up with valuable help from Medicasynergie group of hospitals.

First workshop was of ten days duration.

Second and third were 5 days only. It seems that short but repeated modules would better suit people's needs.

In these workshops, we have covered the latest understanding of causation behind stammering and self help approaches to manage it. The focus is on helping the participants accept their stammering, rather than FIGHT it off constantly and - secondly, develop deeper insights into and skills on communication- as opposed to mere fluency. A great need is to promote & advertise these workshops among people who need them. More are being planned. [Read more](#)



Participants taking part in a group discussion during the second communication workshop in Kolkata at Medica Synergie Hospital, Mukandpur. See a news item [here](#).

**“ACCEPT
stammering...
BUT
DON'T ACCEPT
Poor
Communication!”**

Keith Visits India

Trustee BSA and Chair of Outreach, ISA , Mr. Keith Boss visited India in February, 2010 inspiring and playing a role-model to several Indian PWS while spreading the word of awareness

Trustee BSA and Chair of Outreach, ISA , and a well-wisher of TISA since it's inception, Keith visited India on a private visit, to interact with the SHGs running across the country. TISA organized this event as yet another attempt to have an open discussion about Stammering, and raise awareness in the process.

Keith's visit included the SHGs in Delhi, Herbertpur, Pune and Chennai. A few members of SHGs which were within a manageable vicinity of these scheduled venues also planned for a visit to cash the most of this opportunity. Keith Boss interacted with the print and internet media in each of the cities, gave interviews, talked with the SHG members and interacted with local schools

to spread the message of Stammering Awareness. A conference for the corporate world (Infosys, Pune and Cognizant in Chennai) were also organized which were received with an encouraging response.

Keith spoke about numerous issues like discrimination by the Employers, the role of SHGs and the SLPs, about cure and shared knowledge and ideas to help the SHGs. TISA thanks Mr. Keith Boss for his kind gesture, and looks forward to organize many such events in the future.

[\(More\)](#)



Keith Boss, with the Pune SHG members during his India visit.

Angels Unawares



Frail is our nature. Yet, we have often been judged by the world. In our turn, we too have judged others. Often on superficial grounds. This poem from Vivekanand teaches us—not to judge and to have sympathy for those who are shunned by the world, the fallen ones..the unaware angels ..

One born with healthy frame — but not of will
That can resist emotions deep and strong,
Nor impulse throw, surcharged with potent strength —
And just the sort that pass as good and kind,
Beheld that he was safe, whilst others long
And vain did struggle 'gainst the surging waves.
Till, morbid grown, his mind could see, like flies
That seek the putrid part, but what was bad.
Then Fortune smiled on him, and his foot slipped.
That ope'd his eyes for e'er, and made him find
That stones and trees ne'er break the law,
But stones and trees remain ; that man alone
Is blest with power to fight and conquer Fate,
Transcending bounds and laws.
From him his passive nature fell, and life appeared
As broad and new, and broader, newer grew,
Till light ahead began to break, and glimpse of That
Where Peace Eternal dwells—yet one can only reach
By wading through the sea of struggles—courage-giving, came.
Then looking back on all that made him kin
To stocks and stones, and on to what the world
Had shunned him for, his fall, he blessed the fall,
And with a joyful heart, declared it —

"Blessed Sin!"

- A poem written by Swami Vivekanand, on 1 September, 1898

[\(Complete Poem\)](#)

The Indian Stammering association (TISA)

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**Better Attitudes,
Through Knowledge!**

**This Self has to be achieved
through self effort!**



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For more Inspiration & Information

<http://stammer.in>

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