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Best wishes to all our readers on the occasion of 'Holi' - the festival of colours. And while we celebrate colours let us continue with our journey of exploring knowledge and information. This quarter, Samvad features Miriam Mondlin, an Aesthetic Realism consultant from New York (USA). Miriam introduces us to the concepts of Aesthetic Realism and talks us through her take on the neurological aspects of stuttering. This year the Academy Awards (Oscars) saw "The King's Speech" bag four awards. Miriam also has a detailed review on this movie.

We then have a few opinions on the 'Toastmasters International' - an international initiative that brings together who want to excel in communication skills and leadership qualities. Has it helped the PWS? Is it advisable for the PWS? Look what some of the PWS who have experienced or has been members of the Toastmasters club have to say.

We have a very wonderful story of the 'Brooklyn Bridge'. Read this inspirational story about how an Engineer was laughed at when he dreamt about constructing the Brooklyn Bridge, and how the engineer gathers a team and completes the 'near impossible' task despite being seriously disabled because of an accident.

Tanveer from UK shares his opinions and viewpoints about stammering in his article - "Some Thoughts about Stammering".

In the poetry section we have a couple of wonderful poetry. While one poem explores 'Acceptance', there is another (Hindi) which salutes all those who never give up and face their fears.

In Hindi Section, we have an article titled 'Haklana' by Dr. Sachin Shrivastava. A special feature by Amitsingh Kushwah putting light on the challenges faced by handicapped women and girls.

Enjoy reading this edition of Samvad!

- Samvad Editorial Team

रंगों के महापर्व होली और भारतीय नववर्ष के अवसर पर सभी पाठकों को हमारी शुभकामनाएँ. उमंग और उत्साह के इन पलों के साथ ज्ञान और जानकारी की खोज का सिलसिला जारी है. संवाद के इस अंक में न्यूयार्क की एस्थेटिक रियलिस्म सलाहकार मरियम मोंडलिन के एक विशेष फीचर को शामिल किया गया है. इसमें मरियम ने एस्थेटिक रियलिस्म की अवधारणा पर प्रकाश डालते हुए हकलाहट के न्यूरोलोजिकल पहलुओं पर चर्चा की है. इस साल 'दा किंग्स स्पीच' फिल्म को चार ऑस्कर पुरस्कार मिले हैं. मरियम ने इस फिल्म की विस्तृत समीक्षा की है.

'टोस्टमास्टर्स इंटरनैशनल' एक अंतरराष्ट्रीय पहल है. यह संचार कौशल और नेतृत्व क्षमता का विकास करने के लिए लोगों को मंच उपलब्ध कराता है. यह क्लब हकलाने वाले व्यक्तियों के लिए कितना मददगार है इस पर कुछ साथियों ने अपने अनुभव साझा किए हैं.

'ब्रुकलीन ब्रिज' की एक प्रेरणात्मक कहानी भी इस अंक में हम दे रहे हैं. कहानी में आप पढ़ेंगे कि एक इंजीनियर दुर्घटना में निःशक्त होने के बावजूद अपने सपनों को पूरा करने के लिए टीम को साथ लेकर काम करता है और 'असंभव' को 'संभव' करने की उसकी कोशिश कामयाब होती है.

यूके के तनवीर ने अपने लेख में हकलाहट के बारे में अपने विचार व्यक्त किए हैं.

कविता खंड में दो कविताएँ शामिल की जा रही हैं. अंग्रेजी में एक कविता हकलाहट की स्वीकार्यता के महत्व को रेखांकित करती है, वहीं हिंदी की कविता हकलाहट की चुनौती का सामना करने वालों को सलाम करती है.

हिंदी सेक्सन में डॉ. सचिन श्रीवास्तव का लेख 'हकलाना' दिया जा रहा है. अमितसिंह कुशवाह का एक खास फीचर निःशक्त महिलाओं और लड़कियों की समस्याओं पर केन्द्रित है.

आशा है कि आप सब इस अंक को पढ़कर आनंदित होंगे.

- संवाद सम्पादकीय टीम.

Special points of interest:

- ✓ Review on King's Speech
- ✓ Brief Report on Recent communication workshops



Genes and 'Something Else'

Miriam Mondlin, a consultant on the faculty of the non-profit Aesthetic Realism Foundation, introduces us to the little known concept of Aesthetic Realism, and how it can help us deal with our stutter. TISA also sought her opinion on neuro-biological aspects of stammering.

These findings are interesting, but they are not the decisive cause of stuttering. I do not believe that the neuro-biological approach in general goes deep enough to explain and identify the decisive cause of stuttering. I will try to outline some of my reasons for saying so here.

To comment briefly on some of the things I read, Dr. Drayna found that some members of a family with a certain gene stutter, and some don't. But logically, if the gene is the determining factor, then everyone with the gene should stutter. Questions that must be asked are: Why do some people stutter who have the gene and others don't? Why do people without the gene stutter? I believe that something not genetic—a way of seeing the world—is the decisive cause. As that way of seeing changes—as it did in me—stuttering diminishes and ends.

It is important that in an article on the British Stammering Association website, Dr. Drayna himself "cautioned that most human medical problems are a combination of genes and 'something else,' such as environment or learning."

As to brain scans, they show us activity going on in the brain while a person is stuttering but they do not show that this activity is the cause or the basis of what is going on. For example, when persons learn how to speak with more fluency the brain scans look different. This is a clear showing that neuro-biology is not the immutable, decisive cause of stuttering. It may well be the result. This quotation shows that neurobiologists don't feel their findings are definitive:

"The exact meaning of all these findings continues to be illusive, especially because we do not yet completely understand the neural linkages among the areas that have been identified as playing a part in stuttering, or how these areas interact with cerebral regions that produce speech in general. From our findings we have learned, however, that the brains of people who stutter are indeed different from the brains of those who do not and that those differences appear to be confined to the functions of speech-motor planning (and, perhaps, production) and internalized auditory feedback. Whether these differences are present at the genesis of stuttering, or are the by-products of our adult subjects' years of stut-

tering practice, awaits imaging studies with children, which are on the horizon.... At this point in the short history of brain imaging research in stuttering, the clinical significance of the findings is untested."

-- *The Brains of Adult Stutterers: Are They Different from Non-stutterers?* by Janis Costello Ingham and Roger J. Ingham, California – from the ISAD Online Conference 2002.

As to the "Internalized Auditory Feedback" Ingham and Ingham refer to; isn't this how we evaluate what we hear from ourselves? And isn't this affected by what Aesthetic Realism explains is our attitude to the world (which includes ourselves)? I believe our fluency depends on how much we want the world and ourselves to be a team—to work well together—to engage each other and add to each other.

Further, an article on the BBC website also doesn't want to say that neuro-biology is the decisive cause of stuttering—but rather may be a result of it:

Brain scans revealed that when the two areas - already thought to play a role in language - tried to communicate with each other, the activity was 'mistimed.' However, it is not known whether these brain differences are the cause of the condition - or simply changes experienced as a result of living with it for years.

"Mistimed activity" happens only when a person stutters and not at other times. While the brain is affected, could the effect—in this case a mistiming between the two areas—be caused by something that does not begin in the brain. Could it be caused by what Mr. Siegel describes as "a self which hesitates to meet what he's talking to and to have what he's talking to meet him"? And, if, after learning about this fight in himself, a person's attitude to the world changes, and he sees it more as a completion of himself, could not the mistiming change too? The reasoning of Aesthetic Realism was careful and accurate as to me, years ago, and I believe it to be definitive.

Meanwhile, I want to say clearly: Aesthetic Realism is not medical. It is philosophic and thoroughly rooted in scientific method. On pp. 322-323 of *Self and World*,

(Continued on Page 3...)

Questions that must be asked are- Why do some people stutter who have the gene and others don't? Why do people without the gene stutter? I believe that something not genetic- a way of seeing the world- is the decisive cause.

- Miriam Mondlin

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Mr. Siegel writes what I see as true and is important in answering the question:

One can say that, in stuttering, the tongue, the lips, the throat, and the nerves do not function as a good physical team. The question then arises, Why the dysfunction? Does the crucial cause lie in the malformation of any or all of the mentioned phases of the organism? Aesthetic Realism sees the important cause of stuttering as the attitude of the stuttering self as a whole to what it meets. However, the presence of what are termed "physical factors" can willingly be granted. Coal, for example, may not reach a cellar because the window of the cellar was not open; because the chute refused to work; or because there was labor trouble—a strike, for example. The effect in each instance would be the same: coal would not reach the cellar. ...In the instance of stuttering the decisive cause is most often a conflict in the self making for hesitation on the part of the self to manifest what it is.

As I am saying in this article, I've learned from Aesthetic Realism, and it's true of my own life, that the central thing in expression depends on how much we welcome the world as different from ourselves, how much we want to be affected by it—and how

much we want to push it away—see it as a bad job, have contempt for it. To communicate we need to affirm our relation to what is not ourselves, we need to feel that what isn't ourselves can add to us—otherwise, why speak? If we have a fight in us about it, it may result in stuttering. It can also show itself in other ways—nervous shuffling, blinking, speaking too fast, or speaking so softly we make sure we're not heard.

I've seen some of TISA's writing online, and I feel that you want very much to be of use to the Indian people on this subject. I heartily encourage you to study Aesthetic Realism. The knowledge I write of is so needed by the people of the world. If you haven't already, visit www.AestheticRealism.org. The issue of *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known*, #1751 titled "[Stuttering & the Human Self](#)" is online. I recommend that you obtain a copy of *Self & World, An Explanation of Aesthetic Realism* by Eli Siegel. [[Definition Press, NY](#)]. Chapter 11, *A Philosophy of Self and Disease*, is where Mr. Siegel discusses stuttering. You will see how carefully he reasons. Nothing is taken for granted.

- Miriam Mondlin

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About Miriam Mondlin

Miriam Mondlin is a consultant on the faculty of the not-for-profit [Aesthetic Realism Foundation](#) in New York City. Her article, "How My Stuttering Ended," which was part of a public seminar titled "What Interferes with Your True Expression?" has been published on the websites of the "Canadian Association for People Who Stutter," (1999-2006); "The Stuttering Homepage" of the Minnesota State University, and in the *Rock*

Island Argus and other newspapers. Mrs. Mondlin studied in classes with Eli Siegel, poet, critic and founder of Aesthetic Realism, in which he lectured on the poetry of the world, literature, science, art, music, economics and the questions of the human self. Her study continues in classes taught by Ellen Reiss, Aesthetic Realism Chairman of Education.



What Isn't Himself!

An interesting review of the Oscar-award winner - 'The King's Speech', from an Aesthetic Realism expert— Miriam Mondlin. Miriam reminds us of a few scenes in the movie, and explains how it relates with Aesthetic Realism...

As a person who has studied and written on the subject of stuttering and its cause for many years, I am thrilled by the film which has received 12 Oscar nominations, *The King's Speech*, starring Colin Firth and Geoffrey Rush. It tells the moving story of how Australian-born speech therapist, Lionel Logue helped King George VI overcome his painful stutter when speaking in public.

As a child and a young woman, I suffered from this speech impediment and was able to identify with much of the torment experienced by the King. The film also has me value even more the fact that my own stuttering ended through my study of the philosophy Aesthetic Realism in classes with its founder, poet and critic Eli Siegel. In this article I discuss some aspects of the film: what is presented about stuttering and Logue's approach to it, and show how it ratifies what I have seen to be Eli Siegel's definitive explanation of its cause.

I learned that stuttering wasn't my private torment or curse but arose from an inaccurate way of seeing the world and myself, which could change. To my great relief Eli Siegel explained that stuttering is just one form of the central conflict every person has--between respect and contempt for the world, and it has an ethical and philosophic basis. "Stuttering," he writes in his book *Self and World*, "is a collision" of the desire "to be other, to be related," and the desire "to be a snug, perfect point, capable of dismissing anything and everything."

I believe Logue's love of the beauty of words, very much the poetry of Shakespeare, and his delight in acting was an important factor in his work. Every person, I learned, wants to put together the opposites in ourselves that are made one in the world and in all art. "The world, art and self explain each other," stated Mr. Siegel, "each is the aesthetic oneness of opposites." In stuttering there is a disjunction of many opposites—stoppage and flow, hiding and showing, public and private, for and against, going forward and holding back.

In a lesson, Eli Siegel explained to me: "The way we are friendly to what is different from ourselves, and then hope to see it as hostile affects us in ways we don't know. Do you think this could contribute to stut-

tering?" While many things in a person's life can give rise to stuttering, such as a trauma or shock of some kind, I've seen that one's attitude to the world is the definitive factor in every instance of stuttering no matter how it began. An aspect of Logue's method deals with the opposites of *for* and *against*. At one point Logue asks the duke about how he sees his father and brother, and he refuses to say what he feels. Logue then asks him to put words to his favorite song, which happens to be "Swanee River" to express his thoughts about his older brother, whom he resented. He is asking him to give something he's been inwardly angry about, beautiful, outward form—through a melody he likes. He also encourages him to curse in a lively fashion, sometimes with melody, to help him express himself.

I love the exact, respectful, and beautiful way Eli Siegel got to the heart of what a person who stutters feels to himself—in these magnificent sentences from 1946:

A stutterer is a person who doesn't want to talk and at the same time wants to very much. A babbling brook joined with Death Valley is something like what goes on in a stutterer's mind.

Screenwriter David Seidler had a deep hope to understand stuttering more himself and to have people know what it actually feels like. We feel the "babbling brook joined with Death Valley" palpably in the character of King George VI, played greatly by Colin Firth. In the beginning of the film there is a close-up of his quivering lips, showing dramatically that desire to go forth, while at the same time his teeth are tightly clenched. There is bursting forth and shutting down, side by side.

Geoffrey Rush is wonderful as the speech therapist. We feel Logue's lovable unconventionality, his humor, and his beautiful conviction that the duke can stop stuttering. And we see his good will. Logue is willing to look ridiculous, even pompous, if necessary, and to risk the duke's getting angry at him, which he does, to get him to express himself in a proud way.

In "A Philosophy of Stuttering" Mr. Siegel stated:

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In expression, we have to give ourselves to people. This is much harder than many of us believe. It involves thinking that what isn't us is on our side. If a stutterer could believe that what wasn't himself was on his side, there wouldn't be stuttering.

At the end of the film, in a very moving scene, as the king is about to give the speech on worldwide radio, leading the British nation into World War II, Logue has the king feeling that *what isn't himself is on his side* when he says "Forget everything

else and just say it to me. Say it to me, as a friend." This enables the king to see that the outside world, in the form of Lionel Logue, as "on his side," and it enables him to speak to a nation at such a momentous time.

The greatest hope of every person, whether he or she stutters or not is to see what isn't ourselves—the world, and people, as on our side. I know for a fact that the education of Aesthetic Realism makes this possible.

- Miriam Mondlin

Communication Workshops in Goa, Herbertpur



TISA conducted a 3-day communication workshop in Goa, on 22nd to 24th April, 2011. The workshop was housed at YMCA Goa, and hosted by the Goa YMCA Toastmasters Club, along with the TISA Goa chapter. The workshop was facilitated by Jai Prakash Sunda, a Board Member and Trustee of TISA. The workshop was attended by 16 participants and 2 co-facilitators.

The workshop introduced the participants with various techniques like bouncing, prolongation, pausing and other block correction techniques. Like all TISA workshops, this workshop too looked at curing the stuttering mindset rather than focussing on fluency. Acceptance was introduced to the participants and its significance in the path to recovery was covered. Another concept that was introduced to the participants was – 'Voluntary Stuttering'. The participants were taken out in groups in a shopping mall and were given an exercise of practicing voluntary stuttering with strangers. For most of the participants it was a liberating experience.

Another highlight of the workshop was a group drama activity. Participants acted out a drama on a pre-decided script, and the same was video recorded and reviewed. Many more interactive exercises and sessions of video recordings, impromptu speeches and recording and communication games helped the participants in taking the leap out of their comfort zone and step into a new journey of acceptance while desensitizing the emotional baggage associated with stammer.

The workshop was also co-facilitated by Dr. Farida Dias, a Psychotherapist and President of Goa YMCA Toastmasters Club, and she delivered a session on the 3 A's – Acceptance, Awareness and Attitude, followed by a puppet-show exercise. Mr. Amey Hegde, a Behavioural Trainer and Management Consultant for Corporates also volunteered to co-facilitate and delivered a motivational session on 'Attitude of Gratitude'. The Workshop was covered by a local news channel – Goa 365 and local daily like 'Herald'.

Another workshop has been initiated by TISA in Herbertpur and is waving successfully presently. The Herbertpur Workshop commenced on 2nd May, and promises to be yet another fun-filled, exciting and learning experience for the participants. Read a more detailed report on the Herbertpur Workshop in the next edition of Samvad.



Exploring Communication with Toastmasters

A Toastmasters is a club of people who come together to hone their public speaking and leadership skills in a friendly atmosphere. A lot of PWS have also joined here and shared their experiences. Samvad tried to introspect and find out more about the club, it's activities and how it may have helped the PWS.

If you have to do public speaking or a presentation, and if your heart starts to beat faster in anxiety, your hands start shivering and you wish that it wasn't you who were doing it, then it isn't because you are a PWS. Even people with 'normal' or 'fluent' speech experience such feelings. Public Speaking is the most dreaded thing amongst many of us. And it was because of this that in 1924, Ralph C. Smedley, Director of education for YMCA in Santa Ana, California (USA) decided to form a club to train people in public speaking and leadership qualities, which he named as "Toastmasters Club". More clubs then began to form and eventually Toastmasters Club became Toastmasters International giving affiliation to other clubs across the globe!

A Toastmasters is a club of people who come together to hone their public speaking and leadership skills in a friendly atmosphere. A lot of PWS have also joined here and shared their experiences. The Toastmasters magazine has also featured quite a few articles on members who joined the club despite stutter and made it big! So as we hear a lot about this club, Samvad tried to introspect and find out more about the club, it's activities and how it may have helped us, the PWS, from a few PWS who are members of the Toastmasters Club or have experienced it as guests.

Manohar Mikkili a Build / Release Engineer for Sungard, Pune joined Toastmasters to get over his fear of public speaking. Manohar says his first experience with Toastmasters was nerve wracking and scary! Joining Toastmasters provided him an opportunity to discover his hidden speaking abilities he already had. His first speech, says Manohar, was exhilarating and liberating.

Rahul Raut Desai, a 21 year old student of Electronic Engineering from Goa, joined Toastmasters to improve his communication skills with spoken English and also to face his public speaking fear. Rahul dreams of becoming an orator and Toastmasters Club, he believes is a great platform where he can learn the right lessons from the experienced members.

How does joining a Toastmasters club help a PWS? Manohar opines that it helped him communicate by getting over the inner turmoil that he experienced in his mind

because of his stammering. "I am a covert PWS. As such, I always had a problem speaking with ease holistically. Although at a superficial level, there is no struggle, but a lot of inner turmoil is experienced. Toastmasters gave me a platform to express myself with clarity, gathering my thoughts and putting them in sentences on the fly, and above all, being at ease in front of the crowd". Rahul is of the firm opinion that Toastmasters should not be mistaken as a substitute for SHGs – "Toastmasters is not a place where you work on your stammering. Certainly, we cannot expect the self-help atmosphere we have in SHGs. But being a member in this club has helped me to get over my anxiety while delivering presentations in a formal environment. It has helped me to time my speech delivery and also taught me that communication is also about body gestures, voice modulation and listening. Overall, it helped me with my college presentations and thanks to Toastmasters accompanied with the self help in SHG meetings, the after-effects of a stammering experience is slowly starting to diminish.

Jai Prakash Sunda, is a board member of TISA and is dedicated to self help movement by co-ordinating SHGs and workshops across the country. Jai has visited a local Toastmasters Club as a guest. Says Jai, "In Toastmasters, the language for communication is English which is very obvious as the club was started in the west. So people who don't have English as their first language (or are really poor at English), Toastmasters is not really a place to be. Some of us just fall for it by listening to some good speakers in the club, without realizing why they are good speakers. One of the most important things to be a good communicator is clarity of thoughts. Now, clarity of thoughts comes from reading, writing and sharing / discussing. So, Toastmasters may help only if you have got these basic things in place".

Stammering apart, does Toastmasters help in overall personality development? Mr. Jasbir Sandhu, a Toastmasters member in Chandigarh and also an SHG co-ordinator believes that Toastmasters helps one to work on their confidence – "We have felt

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- Manohar Mikkili



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- Rahul Raut Desai



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- Jai Prakash Sunda

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neglected, unappreciated, unacknowledged at some point of our lives. As students, we study hard and get good grades, as professionals we work hard to get highly paid. But is that enough? We yearn to be seen, to be recognized and be appreciated- by our management, by our peers and by our parents. When that doesn't happen, we begin to develop a sense of inadequacy, which gnaws at our confidence. This is where Toastmasters makes a huge difference. The greatest benefits of this club are not only in acquiring communication or leadership skills but in gaining confidence". Manohar also shares a similar opinion – "Toastmasters or SHG meets or any other group activities have helped me in faking confidence in front of the audience. I believe in: "fake it until you make it". I have now become a master of faking, the benefits of which I am reaping on professional and personal fronts".

To sum it all, Toastmasters is a good place for developing public speaking skills, leadership skills and other aspects of communication. But we should also not overlook on the fact that Toastmasters evaluations are

devoted to 'fluency'. Pauses in one's speech may be looked as a drawback. A Toastmasters club is certainly not a place which would encourage us to practice 'voluntary stuttering', or the evaluators may not guide us on how to handle blocks. This is where the SHGs play a pivotal role. SHGs provide a friendly environment to work on the emotional baggage we carry along with our stammering - shame, guilt and avoidance. It's the SHGs where we help ourselves and others in handling the blocks and working on stammering effortlessly.

So, Toastmasters may be a good place to sharpen and polish your public speaking skills, leadership skills and build your overall personality, but not without practicing acceptance and desensitizing yourself from the emotional baggage accumulated as a result of stammering. Toastmasters club may be a great platform for many of us to get over our fears, but at the same time for others, it might make matters worse by reminding them of their deficiencies. Covert stammerers may take a step backwards by resorting to switching of words to appear fluent. But Toastmasters can certainly offer us ways to explore our communication, once we are comfortable with our stammer and ready to play with it.



Determination and Persistence

This is a real life story of engineer John Roebling building the Brooklyn Bridge in New York, USA back in 1870. The bridge was completed in 1883, after 13 years.

In 1883, a creative engineer named John Roebling was inspired by an idea to build a spectacular bridge connecting New York with the Long Island. However bridge building experts throughout the world thought that this was an impossible feat and told Roebling to forget the idea. It just could not be done. It was not practical. It had never been done before.

Roebling could not ignore the vision he had in his mind of this bridge. He thought about it all the time and he knew deep in his heart that it could be done. He just had to share the dream with someone else. After much discussion and persuasion he managed to convince his son Washington, an up and coming engineer, that the bridge in fact could be built.

Working together for the first time, the father and son developed concepts of how it could be accomplished and how the obstacles could be overcome. With great excitement and inspiration, and the headiness of a wild challenge before them, they hired their crew and began to build their dream bridge.

The project started well, but when it was only a few months underway, while he was surveying the site, his foot was crushed by a loose piling and he soon died of tetanus. His son, Washington, took up the work. And a terrible task it was -- plagued by accidents, deaths, and the paralyzing caisson disease. Caisson disease was caused by the pressure variations in the huge caisson piers in the East River. In 1876 it caught up with Washington Roebling. He was no longer able to walk, or even to talk.

"We told them so." "Crazy men and their crazy dreams." "It's foolish to chase wild visions."

Everyone had a negative comment to make and felt that the project should be scrapped since the Roeblings were the only ones who knew how the bridge could be built.

In spite of his handicap Washington was never discouraged and still had a burning desire to complete the bridge and his mind

was still as sharp as ever. He tried to inspire and pass on his enthusiasm to some of his friends, but they were too daunted by the task.

As he lay on his bed in his hospital room, with the sunlight streaming through the windows, a gentle breeze blew the flimsy white curtains apart and he was able to see the sky and the tops of the trees outside for just a moment.

It seemed that there was a message for him not to give up. Suddenly an idea hit him. All he could do was move one finger and he decided to make the best use of it. By moving this, he slowly developed a code of communication with his wife - Emily Roebling.

He touched his wife's arm with that finger, indicating to her that he wanted her to call the engineers again. Then he used the same method of tapping her arm to tell the engineers what to do. It seemed foolish but the project was under way again.

For 13 years Washington tapped out his instructions with his finger on his wife's arm, until the bridge was finally completed. Today the spectacular Brooklyn Bridge stands in all its glory as a tribute to the triumph of one man's indomitable spirit and his determination not to be defeated by circumstances. It is also a tribute to the engineers and their team work, and to their faith in a man who was considered mad by half the world. It stands too as a tangible monument to the love and devotion of his wife who for 13 long years patiently decoded the messages of her husband and told the engineers what to do.

Often when we face obstacles in our day-to-day life, our hurdles seem very small in comparison to what many others have to face. The Brooklyn Bridge shows us that dreams that seem impossible can be realised with determination and persistence, no matter what the odds are.

Courtesy - <http://academictips.org/blogs/>

In spite of his handicap Washington was never discouraged and still had a burning desire to complete the bridge and his mind was still as sharp as ever. He tried to inspire and pass on his enthusiasm to some of his friends, but they were too daunted by the task.



Some Thoughts about Stammering

Iceberg is characterized by the fact that 10% of the iceberg floats on the water and hence visible to us. For us that seems like the whole of iceberg. But actually 90% of the iceberg is under the water, which we don't see. Similarly the blocking and repetition in speech of a PWS is noticed by others, and for them this is what stammering is. But we all PWS know, its not as simple as that

Modern research has indicated that one of the major factor or cause so stammering is that signal from brain (telling us to speak) is sometimes incorrectly transmitted to our motor system (the physical system by which we speak). This neuro-motor de-synchronization results in stammering. This may be due to genetic reason or otherwise. What happens is that when a baby starts growing up, the neuro-motor interaction does not develop smoothly. This explains why stammering is higher in children. Slowly this neuro-motor system stabilizes and in many cases becomes perfectly synchronized. But in few cases, this does not synchronize perfectly. This explains why only 1% adult stammers compared to 10% children. Yes, sometimes few people do develop stammering in their adulthood. This might be due to a neuro-motor de-synchronization occurring in adulthood. Why it occurs is still unknown.

Now let's talk briefly about the stammering iceberg. I won't talk much about it, as you will find more information about it online. Iceberg is characterized by the fact that 10% of the iceberg floats on the water and hence visible to us. For us that seems like the whole of iceberg. But actually 90% of the iceberg is under the water, which we don't see. Similarly the blocking and repetition in speech of a PWS is noticed by others, and for them this is what stammering is. But we all PWS know, its not as simple as that.

On top of our 'actual' stammering, which is the neuro-motor de-synchronization, over the years we develop shame, fear, worry and other emotions which result in a psychological layer. This Psychological layer results in more stammering. This Psychological layer becomes very large during our teens and under pressure, that sometimes our actual neuro-motor de-synchronization becomes insignificant but our Psychological layer is so big that we have 'significant' overall stammering (simple example is note how much fluently can you talk in front of a mirror and then in front of a crowd). On top of this, we develop ways of trying not to stammer- like the way we contour our face to force out the word, change breathing pattern to force the words out, tense our muscles etc , all in

order to not to stammer, but actually results in more stammering. This is what we call 'Physiological' stammering. So the over-all stammering becomes huge. Hence what actually stammering (the neuro-motor de-synchronization) is only a small part (tip of iceberg i.e. 10%) compared to the over-all iceberg.

It is very difficult to 'cure' this neuro-motor de-synchronization. However one must note that we can always work on this psychological and physiological stammering. Proper breathing techniques and other things speech therapist use, work on the physiological stammering. I would put yoga and other therapies in this category too. NLP, probably yoga, self acceptance, building up of confidence etc work on the psychological stammering. Then we are left with the small part-the actual stammering due to neuro-motor de-synchronization and we then notice that this neuro-motor de-synchronization is actually very tiny and in most cases, we will be happy to live with this. I know its not easy to remove the psychological and physiological stammering, as it has become a habit, a sub-conscious part of us, but its not impossible. Many recovering PWS have proven that.

There has been some misconceptions I would like to clear up: Stammering does not arise from imitating a stammerer, even by a child. This misconception has led to prevention of stammering children to be befriended by other non-stammering children by parents of the non-stammering children. There is no scientific evidence that imitating another stammering can result in stammering.

Stammering does not have to be genetic. Nobody in the family might have stammering but you might have it. That does not rule out genetics though. It is possible that there might be someone generations above you (whom no one knows about today) and the gene is passed on to you (and many others) and somehow in you the gene has become active or so to say dominant.

Nervousness is not the original cause of stammering. Yes, a PWS feels nervous be-
(Continued on Page 10...)

(... Continued from Page 9)

cause of his stammering and this of course increases his stammering, but is not the original cause.

Stammering does not originate from any fear. Yes, some severe trauma or shock may result in neuro-motor de-synchronization, but usually the person

would recover. This is why some people who suffer from stroke develop stammering. Many people believe that they develop stammer after a fearful incident in childhood, but this is usually not true.

- **Tanveer Rameez Ali**,
PWS and ex-Trustee of British Stammering Association (2007-2010)
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On World Vitiligo Day, I Have Something to say...



*In God's good world, no jokes
There are simply all kinds of folks
Some are fair, some are brown
Some are poor, some wear a crown
But a few, in a hundred just two
Have on their skin
May be the chin
Or on their shin
A patch of white
Like a dappled light
Light! Did you say Light!
The patch looks lovely bright.*

*But for many
This patch of light
Is not a good sight
Mother's freeze!
Father's trapeze!!
What sin's we did
To deserve such a kid.*

*The first reaction
Is to hide and cover*

*Let not anyone discover!
Don't show your charms
Cover your arms
Wear long sleeves
In the sultry heat.*

*Difficulties count
Anxieties mount
All specialists fail
Tall claims derail!
Then everyone is set
On the Internet
Where Quacks loot
They need the boot!*

*Soon the white patch
Grows and spreads
The sun makes it
A little red
But touch it, tickle it,
Lick it, twitch it,
It feels like any other
Patch of skin
A little faded perhaps
Otherwise all akin.*

*The story begins now
For we must question how
A white patch on the face
A bit of skin on the surface
Can become so sore
And affect the core!
How can it traumatize?
How can it paralyze?
(Continued on Page 11...)*

(... Continued from Page 10)

HIV and AIDS

*Let us face
Are threatening
To wipe out
The human race
But how can Vitiligo
Harmless, not even skin deep
Can cause a trauma so deep?*

*It's time we spoke the truth
And nailed the lie.
Vitiligo is not a disease
It is just a state where
The body's share
Of Melanin
Color pigment
Grows a little thin.
That's ALL.*

*People with Vitiligo
And God has been kind
Have a very healthy body
And an equally healthy mind
So move AHEAD*

*Learn More, Care More
Share Skills, Change Lives*

*We've split the atom
But not our prejudice
It's time to celebrate
Our differences
Celebrate the confluence
Of Ying and Yang
Of Dark and White
The splendid hues of
Differences and dignity*

*Nature hates monocultures
Both of the body and the mind
You will find this strewn on leaves
Most leaves are dark, others pale
But a few leaves are both dark and pale
These leaves are often overrated
Scientists call them variegated.*

*So if you ever meet
A child with a white patch
She might be sulking
Miserable, in a catch
Make her feel great
Touch her soul
Lift her self-esteem
So that she feels liberated
And her spirits
Can soar.*

- Arvind Gupta

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हकलाना

हकलाना क्या है? लोग क्यों हकलाते हैं? यह एक अनसुलझी गुत्थी है। भारत में कोई एक करोड़ लोग (यानि एक प्रतिशत) इस समस्या के साथ जी रहे हैं। इनमें महिला व पुरुषों के बीच एक व चार का अनुपात पाया गया है। बचपन में यह ५ से १५ प्रतिशत बच्चों को प्रभावित करता है। कोई भी समुदाय, वर्ग, जाति या क्षेत्र इस से अछूता नहीं। मगर इस स्वास्थ्य समस्या के कई पहलु काफी विचित्र हैं, जैसे- चिकित्सा विज्ञान में अभूतपूर्व तरक्की के बावजूद इस वाणी विकार के लिये जिम्मेदार कोई भी कारण निश्चित रूप से अभी तक नहीं ढूँढा जा सका है। बहुत से कारणों को सम्मिलित रूप से प्रतिपादित किया गया है- आनुवांशिक, बचपन में बोलने से जुड़े अनुभव, बचपन का वातावरण, कुछ बच्चों में दिमाग में भिन्न किस्म की तंत्रिकाओं का होना (न्युरोफिजियोलॉजिकल कारक) आदि।

दूसरी बात, यह समस्या विभिन्न रूपों में प्रकट हो सकती है। इसकी कोई निश्चित छवि या सीमा नहीं है। पी डब्ल्यू एस (पीपल हू स्टेमर) यानी हकलाने वाला व्यक्ति एक क्षण बोलने में बिल्कुल लाचार और दूसरे ही क्षण सामान्य ढंग से बात करता मिल सकता है। कुछ व्यक्ति बाहर से शान्त मगर अन्दर, शब्दों से सन्घर्ष करते रहते हैं जबकि कुछ अन्य स्पष्ट रूप से शब्दों से जूझते सुनाई और दिखाई पड़ते हैं। कुछ क्षण पश्चात वे संभवतः वही शब्द बड़े आराम से कह पायें। कुछ ऐसे व्यक्ति फ़ोन पर बात करना बेहद कठिन पाते हैं जबकि अन्य शायद रेस्तराँ में ऑर्डर देना या बस में गन्तव्य का नाम बता कर टिकट लेना कहीं ज्यादा कठिन पाते हैं।

तीसरे, पी डब्ल्यू एस की स्वयं के हकलाने के प्रति प्रतिक्रिया व दृष्टिकोण। कुछ हकलाने वाले व्यक्ति अपनी समस्या को सदैव छिपाने में प्रयासरत रहते हैं। असफलता, कुंठा व हीन भावना से जूझते रहते हैं। समस्या से बचना (अवॉइडेंस) उनकी सोच व चरित्र का अंग बन जाता है। जहाँ अन्य रोगों को सामाजिक बातचीत के दायरे में देखा जाता है, वहीं इस समस्या पर बात करना वे बेहद

कठिन पाते हैं। चूँकि यह समस्या इकसार बनी रहने के बजाय आती जाती रहती है, इसलिये इसे छुपाना संभव होता है और व्यक्ति खुल कर इसे कभी स्वीकार नहीं कर पाते।

चौथे, सामाजिक प्रतिक्रिया: किसी को हकलाते सुन कुछ लोग बेचैन, परेशान या हैरान हो जाते हैं और यह सब उनकी भाव भंगिमा में जाने अन्जाने प्रकट हो जाता है। कुछ अन्य लोग इसकी नकल उतारते हैं या मज़ाक बनाने लगते हैं। ये सभी प्रतिक्रियाएं हकलाने वाले व्यक्ति की समस्याएं बढ़ाती हैं। बहुत कम ही लोग इस बात को समझ पाते हैं कि यह मिर्गी जैसी एक अस्थायी प्रक्रिया है, जो उस क्षण, उस व्यक्ति के वश में नहीं है। कुछ लोग हकलाना इतना अरुचिकर पाते हैं कि वे ऐसे व्यक्तियों को काम पर भी रखना पसन्द न करेंगे।

पाँचवें- शायद ही अन्य किसी रोग में इतने बोगस इलाज देखने को मिलते हों जितना हकलाने के लिये। जुबान को विशेष सांप से कटवाना, जुबान के नीचे रखने के लिए विशेष पत्थर, जादुई जड़ी बूटी, टंग टाड़ (जुबान की जड़ का) आप्रेशन आदि। आधुनिक वाणी चिकित्सा (स्पीच थैरेपी) ऐसे चमत्कारिक उपायों से कहीं ज्यादा कारगर है मगर इसमें भी, असावधान होने पर, महीनों के बाद भी पुरानी आदतें व समस्याएं पुनः लौट कर वापस आ सकती हैं। तो इस समस्या के लिये हम क्या कर सकते हैं?

१. स्वयं को समस्या के साथ स्वीकार करें

ऐसा करने पर हम निरन्तर जूझने, छिपाने की प्रवृत्ति तथा शर्म के अहसास से मुक्त हो जाते हैं और तब हमारा मन व मस्तिष्क खुल कर बोलने के लिये आज़ाद हो जाता है। कई व्यक्तियों ने माना है कि समस्या को स्वीकार करने के बाद उनकी वाणी निश्चित रूप से बेहतर हुई है। मगर इसके लिये हमें स्वयं से ईमानदार और विनम्र बनना पड़ेगा। हमें यह स्वीकार करना पड़ेगा कि इस जीवन के सतत 'नाटक' में हर किसी को भिन्न भिन्न भूमिकाएँ मिली हैं। इन भूमिकाओं में कभी

फायदा तो कभी नुक्सान छिपा हो सकता है मगर ये दोनों ही वस्तुतः अस्थाई हैं। जब हम अपनी भूमिका स्वीकार कर लेते हैं तो कोइ सन्घर्ष नहीं रह जाता। अन्यथा, हकलाने वाला व्यक्ति सदैव 'सामान्य' व्यक्ति की भूमिका अदा करने का प्रयास करता रहता है जिससे उसके मन में एक द्विविधा (रोल कॉन्फ्लिक्ट) बनी रहती है। इस दिशा में पहला कदम है- अपने निकटस्थ लोगों (पत्नी, पति, माँ, बाप, घनिष्ठ मित्र) से इस बारे में बात करें। फिर धीरे धीरे इस विश्वास के दायरे को बढ़ाएं।

३. बचने की प्रवृत्ति से छुटकारा पाएं

दिन प्रति दिन हकलाने से बचने के लिये हम कई चीजों से कतराते रहे हैं जैसे- कक्षा में जवाब देना, अजनबियों से बात करना, फ़ोन करना या फ़ोन का जवाब देना, नेतृत्व वाली भूमिकाओं से बचना आदि। कठिन शब्द के बजाय कहने में आसान शब्द का प्रयोग करना, भले ही उससे अर्थ कुछ भिन्न हो जाए, औरों की मौजूदगी में प्रश्न न पूछना, अपनी बात न रखना आदि। बचने (अवॉइडेंस) की ये सारी छोटी छोटी हरकतें हमारे बुनियादी डर को इतना मज़बूत बना देती हैं कि यह हमारे जीवन के सभी पहलुओं में हावी हो जाता है। नाते रिश्तों में, काम धन्धे में भी हम खतरा लेने से परहेज़ करने लगते हैं। इसका एक ही इलाज़ है: ठीक उल्टा करना शुरू करें, मगर पहले छोटी बातों से। जब बोलना है तो बोलें- उचित अवसर का इन्तज़ार न करें। मीटिंग में स्वयं ही पहल करें, प्रश्न पूछें, विभिन्न जिम्मेदारियों के लिये वालंटियर करें।

३. संचार या प्रवाह ?

संचार का बुनियादी अर्थ है अपनी बात दूसरे को समझा पाना। इसके लिये धाराप्रवाह वक्ता होना जरूरी नहीं। मगर संचार सिर्फ़ बोलना ही नहीं है। संचार के अन्य पहलुओं पर भी अपनी पकड़ बनाएं : मनोयोग से सुनना, चेहरे व शरीर की भाव भंगिमा (बॉडी लैंग्वेज) का समुचित प्रयोग, आँखों से सम्पर्क बनाये रखना आदि। जहाँ भी उपयुक्त हो, मुस्करायें। अवसर के अनुसार दृश्य श्रव्य माध्यम का प्रयोग करें। क्या आप सचमुच दूसरे व्यक्ति को अपने विचारों से छूना चाहते हैं- यदि हाँ, तो आपका

हकलाना कभी बाधा नहीं बनेगा। ऐसी सकारात्मक सोच बनाएं।

४. शांत मन, बेहतर संचार

जब हम बात करना चाहते हैं तो कथ्य के साथ साथ कुछ अनचाहे विचार भी मन में चले आते हैं, यथा - मैं इस शब्द पर अटकूँगा या उस शब्द पर ? अगर ऐसा हुआ तो श्रोता क्या सोचेगा ? आदि। इस तरह की दुःश्चिन्तायें बोलने की प्रक्रिया में बाधक बनती हैं और वही होता है जिससे हम बचना चाहते थे। ये डर, ये चिन्तायें आखिर आती कहाँ से हैं ? ये सारे नकारात्मक विचार अतीत में बोलने से जुड़े बुरे अनुभवों से उत्पन्न होते हैं, यहाँ तक कि इनका संबंध सुदूर बचपन के अनुभवों से भी हो सकता है। इनसे निपटने का कारगर तरीका है- नियमित आत्म विश्लेषण और ध्यान। हर संस्कृति में मनन, ध्यान के द्वारा उस शान्त मनोदशा में पहुँचने की परंपरा है जहाँ ऐसे काल्पनिक भय व संवेगों से निपटा जा सकता है।

५. बोलने का बेहतर तरीका

टैप रिकॉर्डर, कैमरा फ़ोन आदि द्वारा किसी से फ़ोन पर बात करते हुए स्वयं को रिकॉर्ड करें। अन्यथा आइने के सामने फ़ोन पर बात करते हुए अपने को देखें। जब आप किसी शब्द पर मुश्किल महसूस करते हैं तब आप क्या करते हैं ? उस क्षण को लम्बा खींचें या उसे पूरी तरह फ़ीज़ कर दें। इस तरह यह जानने का प्रयास करें कि उस क्षण में क्या होता है, आप क्या करते हैं? आपकी आवाज़ कैसी होती है? आपका चेहरा, हाथ व अन्य भाव भंगिमा कैसी होती है? क्या गले या सीने की मांसपेशियाँ में तनाव ज्यादा होता है, ऐसे क्षणों में? क्या हमारी पलकें झपकती हैं? अब इसी हरकत को दुबारा जान बूझ कर करें, पूरे अहसास के साथ; पहले धीरे, फिर तेज़; कम तनाव फिर बहुत ज्यादा तनाव के साथ आदि; यानि उस अनचाही हरकत / प्रतिक्रिया की खूब गहराई में समझ बनायें और उस पर नियन्त्रण बनाना शुरू करें। यह सब कुछ एक आइने के सामने करें। इसी तरह गहरी सांस लेकर, सांस छोड़ते हुए बोलना भी जरूरी है। हम शब्दों पर अटकने के डर से पहले ही अपनी सांस को रोकना शुरू कर देते हैं। यह वाणी के लिये बुरा है। पेट से (सीने के बजाय) निरन्तर गहरी सांस लेते

रहना मन को तनावमुक्त व हमारे प्रवाह को बेहतर बनाता है। इसी तरह मौन के क्षणों को भी बात चीत में शामिल करना सीखें।

६ स्वयं सहायता समूह:

स्वयं सहायता समूहों से जुड़िये या इन्हें अपने आस पास शुरू करें। केवल दो व्यक्तियों से भी ऐसे समूहों की शुरुआत की जा सकती है। निःशुल्क तथा बेहतरीन मदद देने और प्राप्त करने का ये बहुत अच्छा तरीका है। ये समूह प्रायः वयस्क पी डब्ल्यू एस द्वारा चलाए जाते हैं। इनमें स्पीच थिरैपी सीखने और उसका अभ्यास करने का समुचित माहौल होता है।

७ विविधता को स्वीकार करें:

अन्ततः समाज क्या कर सकता है इस बारे में? समाज की एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका है: हकलाने से जुड़ी समस्या का लगभग नब्बे प्रतिशत सामाजिक प्रतिक्रियाओं पर निर्भर है; कई पी डब्ल्यू एस ने इस बात को स्वीकार किया है कि अगर उनका परिवार, साथी व अन्य परिजन उनके हकलाने को खुले मन से स्वीकार करते तो उनकी समस्या कहीं ज्यादा आसान हो जाती। क्या हम हकलाने को जीवन की अन्य विविधताओं की तरह स्वीकार कर सकते हैं? इसके बारे में बात कर सकते हैं? व्यवहार में इसका मतलब होगा:

१. जब आप किसी पी डब्ल्यू एस से बात करें तो खुद धीरे और आराम से बात करें।

२. अपनी निगाहें न फ़ेरें। ध्यान निरन्तर उसकी बात पर रखें- न कि चेहरे की असामान्य प्रतिक्रियाओं पर।

३. समझ न आने पर जरूर पूछें। पर उसकी बात बीच में न काटें। उसे अपनी बात आराम से कहने दें।

४. ऐसे बच्चों से बात करते समय, बहुत से सवाल एक साथ न पूछें। उन्हें अपनी बात पूरी करने दें, फिर कुछ क्षण रुकें और तब आराम से पूछें।

५. बच्चे की समस्या पर वस्तुनिष्ठ ढंग से चर्चा करें, कभी इसका मजाक न बनाएं।

लेखक:

डॉ. सत्येन्द्र श्रीवास्तव हर्बर्टपुर में स्पीच सपोर्ट ग्रुप चला रहे हैं।

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मानसिकता बदले तो बात बने...

सोफिया न सुन सकती है, न बोल सकती है... और भारत के गरीब परिवार की सदस्य होने के नाते उसका भविष्य काफी चुनौतीपूर्ण है. ऐसे किसी देश में जहाँ विकलांगता अपने आप में गरीबी का कारण हो सकती है और लैंगिक असमानता एक परम्परा बन गई हो, वहां सोफिया जैसी लड़कियों को पुरुषों जैसी आजादी और सामाजिक अधिकार मिलने की उम्मीद कम ही है.

एक सर्वे से पता चला है की भारत में 5 करोड़ विकलांग हैं, जिसमें तकरीबन 2 करोड़ की संख्या विकलांग महिलाओं की है. जिस समाज में लड़कियां पैदा होना ही अपशगुन माना जाता हो यदि उसी समाज में एक विकलांग बालिका का जन्म हो तो समाज का उसके प्रति नजरिया क्या होगा इसकी कल्पना करना आसान ही होगा. जिन परिवारों में विकलांग लड़कियों का जन्म होता है उन परिवारों में कुंठा और निराशा छाई रहती है. उन्हें यही चिंता रहती है कि इस लड़की का क्या होगा, उसका विवाह किस प्रकार होगा, आगे का जीवन वह कैसे काटेगी, किसके सहारे जिएगी? इसी प्रकार और भी बहुत सारे सवालों का जवाब ऐसे परिवारों के पास नहीं होता.

विकलांग बालिकाओं की शिक्षा के प्रति परिवार का नजरिया सकारात्मक नहीं होता. ज्यादातर परिवारों की आपस की राय यही होती है कि उनका पढ़ना-लिखना बेकार है, क्योंकि इन लड़कियों को रोजगार तो मिलने से रहा. वहीं विकलांग लड़कियों के लिए शिक्षा और व्यावसायिक प्रशिक्षण प्राप्त करने के अवसर सीमित होते हैं. नेत्रहीन, बधिर और मानसिक मंद लड़कियों के लिए विशेष स्कूलों, संसाधनों और प्रशिक्षकों की

आवश्यकता होती है, जो भारत में आसानी से उपलब्ध नहीं हैं.

सामाजिक समारोहों में विकलांग लड़कियों को नहीं ले जाया जाता. इस बारे में उनकी सोच होती है कि यदि उसे शादी में ले जाएंगे तो परिवार की बदनामी होगी और लड़की के साथ लोग दुर्व्यवहार करेंगे. इस उपेक्षा से इन लड़कियों में तनाव की स्थिति उत्पन्न हो जाती है. वे चिड़चिड़ी हो जाती हैं, उनके व्यवहार में रूखापन आ जाता है.

विकलांग महिला परिवार पर निर्भर रहती है. उसे आम जरूरत तक के सामान के लिए दूसरों के आगे हाथ फैलाना पड़ता है. विकलांग महिलाओं के बारे में आम धारणा यह बनी हुई है कि वे बाहर जाकर काम करने में असमर्थ हैं. लोगों की दलील होती है कि ऐसी जगहों पर जहां आम आदमी भी यात्रा करने से पहले एक बार सोचता है, विकलांग महिलाओं और लड़कियों का जाना कठिन और खतरनाक है.

इसके अलावा, इमारतों, सड़कों, परिवहन और शौचालय सुविधाओं का विकलांग महिलाओं की आवश्यकता के अनुकूल न होना भी एक बड़ी बाधा है. इसके बावजूद भी विकलांग महिलाएं यदि काम के लिए निकलती हैं तो उन्हें उचित मजदूरी नहीं दी जाती. समाज इस बारे में भेदभाव वाला रवैया अपनाता है.

विकलांग लड़कियों के परिवारों को उनकी शादी के लिए और भी परेशानी का सामना करना पड़ता है. समाज की यह सोच है कि एक विकलांग महिला की शादी भी विकलांग पुरुष से होनी चाहिए, ताकि वह उसकी भावनाओं की कद्र कर सके, उसकी देखभाल कर सके. यदि किसी विकलांग महिला की शादी आम पुरुष के साथ होती है तो परिवार

को बहुत सारा दहेज़ देना पड़ता है। इसके बाद भी उसके पति और परिवार को यह आशंका बनी रहती है कि वह अपने बच्चे को संभाल पाएगी या नहीं। इसलिए विकलांग महिलाओं की शादी या तो किसी शादीशुदा इंसान या किसी बूढ़े पुरुष के साथ कर दी जाती है।

इन सब चीजों के अलावा समाज और परिवार का नजरिया भी उनके प्रति गैरजिम्मेदाराना होता है। परिवार या रिश्तेदारों के ऊपर निर्भर रहने के कारण उनके साथ दुर्व्यवहार किया जाता है। ताने कसना और अपमानित करना तो आम बात है। यहाँ तक कि उनके साथ ऐसे व्यवहार भी किए जाते हैं जो अपराध की श्रेणी में आते हैं, जैसे गाली-गलौच करना, मारपीट करना और यौन शोषण आदि।

विकलांगता की गंभीरता के साथ ही विकलांग महिलाओं और लड़कियों की कठिनाइयाँ भी बढ़ती जाती हैं। मानसिक मंदता या बहुविकलांगता से ग्रस्त महिलाओं को कभी हद तक जीवन भर दूसरों की देखभाल और मदद की दरकार होती है। इन्हें अपने ही परिवार द्वारा ठुकरा दिया जाता है, और वे अनार्यों की तरह जीवन जीने को मजबूर होती हैं।

विकलांग महिलाओं और लड़कियों की स्थिति में बदलाव लाने के लिए सरकार और बहुत सी स्वयंसेवी संस्थाएँ कभी प्रयास कर रही हैं। उनके द्वारा स्थापित स्कूल, व्यवसायिक प्रशिक्षण केन्द्रों और रोज़गार के

लिए की जा रही कोशिशों तथा इस दिशा में हुई तकनीकी प्रगति की बदौलत विकलांग लड़कियों की स्थिति में सुधार अवश्य देखने को मिल रहा है। अब ये महिलाएँ आम महिलाओं की तरह समाज के सक्रिय सदस्य के रूप में अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज कराने में सफल हो रही हैं। बस इन्हें जरूरत है थोड़ी सी मदद की।

अब समाज को भी एक जिम्मेदाराना रवैया अपनाना होगा। अगर हर स्तर पर मानसिकता बदलेगी तभी विकलांग महिलाओं के प्रति रवैये में बदलाव आ सकता है। लोगों को विकलांगता के प्रति जागरूक और संवेदनशील बनाकर ही विकलांग महिलाओं को समाज में समान अवसर, पूर्ण भागीदारी और सुरक्षित जीवन उपलब्ध कराने की दिशा में कारगर कदम उठाए जा सकते हैं।

आज जरूरत है कि विकलांग लड़कियों की शीघ्र पहचान करके उनके लिए संसाधन जुटाए जाएँ। उन्हें शिक्षा, प्रशिक्षण और पुनर्वास के पर्याप्त अवसर प्रदान कर सशक्त बनाने में मदद की जाए। विकलांग महिलाओं के अधिकारों के संरक्षण के लिए मौजूदा नीतिओं और कानूनों को मजबूत बनाने की जरूरत है। इसके बाद हम देखेंगे कि सरकार और समाज के साझा प्रयासों से विकलांग महिलाएँ समाज का एक हिस्सा बनकर आम नागरिक ही तरह जीवन-यापन कर सकेंगी।

- अमितसिंह कुशवाह,

व्याख्याता, विशेष शिक्षा, इंदौर।



Thou Blessed Dream

**If things go ill or well —
If joy rebounding spreads the face,
Or sea of sorrow swells —
A play — we each have part,
Each one to weep or laugh as may;
Each one his dress to don —
Its scenes, alternative shine and rain.**

**Thou dream, O blessed dream!
Spread far and near thy veil of haze,
Tone down the lines so sharp,
Make smooth what roughness seems.**

**No magic but in thee!
Thy touch make desert bloom to life.
Harsh thunder, sweetest song,
Fell death, the sweet release.**

- Swami Vivekananda

(Written to Miss Christine Greenstidel from Paris, 14th August 1900.)

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**Better Attitudes,
Through Knowledge!**

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



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