



04 Aug 2011

Vol 5

Inside this issue:

Keeping the SHG Torch	2
Friends' Take	5
Disability with a	8
Show-off Your Stammer	9
God's Garden	11
Should I Tell My Boss..?	12
Readers Have their Say	13
हिंदी विभाग	
जिन्दगी खूबसूरत है...!	14
हकलाहट को समझें...	15

Samvad is 1

Dear Readers,

With this issue, Samvad completes one year! And what a wonderful year it has been! Interacting with IPWS, countries in the neighbourhood and our friends overseas... It has been a pleasurable journey!

This quarter, Samvad stopped to introspect on how to improvise and give a push to the SHGs in India. What are the challenges that facilitators and members are facing? What can be done to make SHGs interesting and keep going? SHG co-ordinators and members give their opinions in the story - "Keeping the SHG-torch Glowing".

TISA often collaborates with non-PWS in our SHGs and workshops. Samvad interviewed two such friends of TISA, who have recently attended communication workshops in Goa and Herbertpur. Amey Hegde and Atreyi Bhattacharya talk about their experiences while interacting with PWS in workshops.

'Disability with a Difference' gives TISA's stand on stammering as a disability. While there is a debate on stammering being a disability, Samvad thought of making TISA's views clear.

In our issues, we make it a point to feature recovery stories of PWS from across the country to inspire our readers. In this edition, we have yet another recovery story from Orissa - Biswaranjan Rout.

Many of us go through a dilemma of whether to speak out about our stammer to others, especially our Bosses. 'Should I Tell My Boss' is based on a real-life story that reflects this critical issue.

In Hindi Section, Amit Singh Kushwah tells us how to make your life beautiful by accepting the challenges of stammering in a positive way, with two inspirational articles.

Samvad looks forward to yet another year of friendship and bonding with our readers!

- Samvad Team

प्रिय पाठकों,

संवाद के इस अंक के साथ हमने एक वर्ष की यात्रा पूरी कर ली है। यह समय वास्तव में बहुत ही अद्भुत रहा है। विदेशों में रह रहे हकलाने वाले दोस्तों से बातचीत, पड़ोसियों और अपने मित्रों के साथ यह यात्रा सुखद रही है।

इस अंक में हमने भारत में स्वयं सहायता समूहों के विषय में विचार किया है। इन समूहों के कार्यकर्ताओं और सदस्यों को किन समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ता है? समूहों के कार्यों को कैसे रुचिकर और बेहतर बनाया जा सकता है? इन सभी मुद्दों पर स्वयं सहायता समूहों के समन्वयकों और सदस्यों के विचारों और अब तक के अनुभवों को एक लेख में समाहित किया गया है।

टीसा सामान्य लोगों को भी अपने स्वयं सहायता समूहों और कार्यशालाओं से जोड़ने का कार्य कर रहा है। एक इंटरव्यू में ऐसी ही दो व्यक्तियों के विचारों जो जानने की कोशिश की गई है। ये दोनों हाल ही में गोवा और हर्बर्टपुर में आयोजित वर्कशॉप में शामिल हुए थे।

इस बार हम हकलाहट को निःशक्तता मानने संबंधी मुद्दे पर एक फीचर भी दे रहे हैं। हकलाहट निःशक्तता कैसे हो सकती है? इस बारे में एक वाद-विवाद के जरिए टीसा ने अपने विचारों को सबके सामने रखा है।

हकलाहट में हुए सुधारों पर केन्द्रित एक फीचर भी शामिल कर रहे हैं। इसमें कुछ विदेशी साथियों की कहानियों को पढ़कर पाठकों को प्रेरणा मिलेगी। इसी तरह की एक और कहानी उड़ीसा के विश्वरंजन राउत के बारे में बताती है।

हम में से बहुत साथी प्रायः द्विविधा में रहते हैं कि मैं अपने हकलाने के बारे में अपने साथियों और विशेषकर, अपने बॉस को बताऊँ या न बताऊँ। इस महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दे पर एक लेख भी है जो सत्य घटना पर आधारित है।

हिंदी सेक्शन में अमित सिंह कुशवाह ने हकलाहट की चुनौती को सकारात्मक सोच के साथ स्वीकारते हुए जीवन को सुंदर बनाने और हकलाहट को सही तरीके से समझने की बात अपने दो आलेखों में की है।

संवाद अपने पाठकों के दोस्ती के बंधन के साथ अगले वर्ष में प्रवेश कर रहा है।

- संवाद टीम



Keeping the SHG-torch Glowing

Over a period of time, the attendance in the SHGs begins to diminish, there is lack of enthusiasm and the meetings cease to happen. This has been a disheartening trend in majority of the SHGs initiated till date. Samvad sought opinions of a few SHG co-ordinators and members...

“Running a SHG is a marathon and not a 100 meter dash”. This fundamental thumb rule is invariably the first lessons taught to anyone who chooses to take on this race. It also gives an idea of what is to come ahead. Perseverance, patience, motivation and focus – are the characteristics of a good marathon runner, and so also the SHG co-ordinator!

Ever since its inception, TISA has been fervidly trying to encourage self help groups across cities. The positive outcome of this drive has been a heartening response from local members volunteering as co-ordinators and taking a praiseworthy initiative to start a SHG. However, over a period of time, the attendance in the SHGs begins to diminish, there is lack of enthusiasm and the meetings cease to happen. This has been a disheartening trend in majority of the SHGs initiated till date.

Samvad sought opinions of a few SHG co-ordinators and members and tried to introspect and find ways of what can be the possible cause of SHGs getting dormant.

Expectations & Awareness

When a PWS joins a SHG, he has certain expectations and pre-notions. Many PWS may not be aware of the self-help approach, and may expect to learn some quick techniques. The members may have gone through a few disappointing therapies and it's likely that they regard SHG as yet another attempt towards a 'therapy'. Many may be having a craving for cure, and may join a SHG to find one. In such cases, it may result into disappointments when the facilitator speaks of 'acceptance' and 'no cure'.

It is therefore necessary for the facilitator to understand the expectations of the members when they join the SHG. “In the first few meetings, a first-timer is always uncomfortable sitting with other PWS, as he has spent his whole life running away from

stammering. Care has to be taken to make the members as comfortable as possible and conveying the significance of SHG” says Dhruv Kathuria, a member of Chandigarh SHG. Harish Usgaonker, who co-ordinates SHG group in Goa suggests facilitators should consider one-to-one sessions. “If such shattering of expectations and discomforts are seen, then it would be a good idea to have a one-to-one session with the member in question, and try to analyse and understand more about his past experiences and expectations. Different members are at different levels of recovery and acceptance and hence have to be dealt accordingly”.

Jai Prakash Sunda, who started the Pune SHG, and now co-ordinates the Chandigarh SHG cautions facilitators from ignoring the members expectations based on his own experiences. “Now when someone joins a SHG, he/she has some expectations which frankly I completely ignored and was most of the time bragging about ME and MY story!” he admits, referring to experiences while starting the Pune SHG.

The lack of awareness about the Self-help to the 'self' is often not understood by the facilitators. This can also be a blocking factor and a cause for loss of enthusiasm. Dr. Sachin Shrivastava, the national co-ordinator of TISA and also the co-ordinator of Herbertpur SHG emphasises on this factor. “Many of us don't realize the numerous benefits of running SHGs, to OURSELVES, leave alone the other guy! We think that SHG benefits only others- and there too, unreliably. Testimonies from people like Mr Manimaran and Jai Prakash Sunda (last ISAD paper), I guess, have not been understood or appreciated, by and large”, he opines.

Motivation

Lack of motivation is another threatening challenge which facilitators and members face, points Vivek Singh. Vivek is the



“Lack of motivation factor is the most delimiting factor which slowly gobbles a SHG down. People should be very highly self-motivated if they want to continue coming to SHG meets every week. There are other factors also like time and distance but if you're motivated enough then nothing would matter”

- Vivek Singh



"When I started Pune SHG in Jan 2009, I was lacking in social skills (which were an indirect result of my stuttering) and also I may have been in a mild depression! During my 6 month sabbatical when I worked with Dr. Sachin in Dehradun, I realized that facilitating a SHG is a science and it comes from experience and also from making mistakes"

- Jai Prakash Sunda



Chandigarh SHG has been one good examples where members take roles and share responsibilities of facilitating

founder of the first-of-it's-kind corporate SHG in an IT company in Pune. Says Vivek- "Lack of motivation factor is the most delimiting factor which slowly gobbles a SHG down. People should be very highly self-motivated if they want to continue coming to SHG meets every week. There are other factors also like time and distance but if you're motivated enough then nothing would matter".

Sujit, a member of the Pune SHG, further explains why lack of motivation begins. "Holding and not speaking their heart out and loud in the SHG meetings is one of the factors that may lead to lack of enthusiasm. This is the place I believe where PWS should speak on anything and everything which has bothered or has been bothering them in regard to stammering. And that is how they might be able to eliminate or lessen the burden of guilt, pity, anger, sadness and other emotions which they have been carrying from years".

Dr. Sachin also focuses attention on lack of attendance being a cause for facilitators being de-motivated, but also cautions that this should not be so. He adds, "Facilitating an SHG requires good understanding of and acceptance of 'Human nature' as it is, especially that of a young IPWS. If some of them don't come after 1-2 visits, let us remember that they have to fight through ages of shame, discrimination, fear and guilt. But if we stop, just because only one PWS came in the last meeting, we are missing the entire point of starting this self-help movement: it is not going to be a "quicky". Such is the nature of the problem!"

Promotion

A good and effective promotion for SHGs can do wonders, but at the same time, it is the most challenging and often an overlooked aspect of the SHG.

"We are not being 'resourceful' in promoting our SHGs. We are not using various creative ways to promote our SHG- the way many of us will do to promote other projects in our lives" thinks Dr. Sachin, and further suggests, "We ask IPWS to share their testimonies on the blog (and elsewhere) so that people get to know how

SHG helps everyone involved, in due course".

Facilitators may also consider writing interesting reviews / reports of every SHG meetings happening and posting it on the blog / social networking sites, thus promoting the SHGs and attract, educate and make more PWS aware of the SHG.

Training the facilitator

The most significant area which has to be focused on to prevent perishing of SHGs is grooming and training the facilitator. Facilitating an SHG is not an easy task and the facilitator needs to have certain knowledge, qualities and attitude for doing it effectively and successfully.

Jai Prakash Sunda puts some light on the significance of training a facilitator. "I will speak from my own personal experience. When I started Pune SHG in Jan 2009, I was lacking in social skills (which were an indirect result of my stuttering) and also I may have been in a mild depression! During my 6 month sabbatical when I worked with Dr. Sachin in Dehradun, I realized that facilitating a SHG is a science and it comes from experience and also from making mistakes. Now to speed up the process, it's better if I learn it formally from someone (which I did indirectly in Dehradun)". He further adds, "On another note, members too are facing the same struggles and challenges. So there has to be one person who knows the basics and then he can also learn a lot from internet. Hopefully as more and more people participate in our workshops, they will get a small glimpse of what an SHG is about! And hopefully they will pass on the knowledge.

Dr. Sachin too seconds the importance of formally training a facilitator. "Facilitating a SHG involves many intellectual and behavioural skills (and attitudinal skills too). Many of these can be learned in a structured way. At present this need for learning is not being appreciated enough."

To cater to these needs, TISA has initiated a few programs for the benefit of the facilitators and the PWS. Dr. Sachin briefs us through the same- "TISA is running two



Members playing a game during a SHG meeting in Herbertpur. Having fun and communication games can make the SHG an even better experience

kinds of programs (two tier): First: Communication workshop for IPWS who want to try 'self-help' approach. Second: one year distance learning course for those alumni of communication workshops, who want to become 'Facilitators' of such workshops. Jai Prakash Sunda is one example (a finished product of such a process). Dhruva Kathuria, Ashish Agarwal and Vivek Singh are undergoing this program currently".

Meeting Content

The quality and content of the meetings will also create excitement and interest into the members attending.

"We are trying to collect and document resource material for SHG facilitators. Coming up with interesting interactive communication exercises takes effort and time. TISA is trying to minimize it by sharing such ideas on blog and by documenting them in manuals etc." says Dr. Sachin while speaking on TISA's efforts into boosting the quality of SHG meetings.

Dhruv Kathuria of SHG Chandigarh shares a few ideas to face-lift the SHGs. "I think the meetings should be more formal and should be conducted at a proper venue like a school and not in parks to rope in some seriousness. Members should contribute for the venue expenses and other expenditures because when one pays for something it automatically results into commitment. Charging monthly fees to cater to expenses is not a bad idea." Says Dhruv.

Speaking of quality meetings, Dhruv further adds, "I believe most of the activities should involve practice with the 'real world' where we actually face the problem. We had a member in the Chandigarh SHG, who stopped coming because members were only talking within themselves and hardly interacted with outsiders. Members should also be assigned with duties and responsibilities for each meeting to instill a sense of responsibility towards the SHG group."

Dhruv also adds about distributing the responsibility of the facilitator. "I believe each (or few) member should facilitate some activity of the meet and the facilitator can act as a guide by providing tips".

Harish from Goa SHG also endorses the idea of grooming other members as facilitators- "The SHGs can be handicapped if they are highly dependent on only one facilitator. Hence, the facilitators should also focus on grooming the members into facilitating a few activities in the meetings, and if need arises, can take over as a facilitator in the absence of the main facilitator, or start a new SHG in other locations, so that members also have options of attending at locations of their convenience and choice".

Commitment

And finally, for the SHG to flourish, it requires commitment from the facilitator and the members.

Commenting about commitment, Dr. Sachin says, "Facilitating a SHG requires long term commitment, grit, resourcefulness and some freedom from constant pre-occupation with *I, me and my stammering*."

Sujit from Pune adds a few ways in which the facilitators and members can commit themselves towards a SHG-

"Try to inculcate what you learn in the meetings, so that you can see how meetings are helping you in your life."

"Practice goal-setting for your SHG. Setting up your goal and a timeframe of achieving that goal gives you the energy and enthusiasm to work towards them. Monitoring the progress on daily, weekly and monthly basis is also a good idea."

"Learn from others. This can be both learning from other's success and failure."

"Finally it's your commitment to change, and **CHANGE IS POSSIBLE!!**"

The SHG scene in India is still at a nascent stage, and more importantly heading forward in the right direction. The communication workshops, the distant-learning programs, the SHG manuals will go a long way to help both the present and future facilitators. PWS volunteering to take the distant-learning program is also an indication that the SHG marathon has begun. Still a long way to go, but all big journeys have begun with the first step!



Friends' Take

Amey Hegde is a management consultant and behavioural trainer in Goa. He attended the TISA communication workshop in Goa, held in April 2011. He also volunteered a session on 'Creating Positivity Within' to the participants of the workshop. Amey shares how attending the workshop and meeting many PWS inspired him

Introduce yourself to our readers. Tell us briefly about yourself, where you are from, and anything that you feel like sharing about yourself.

I am a corporate behavioural trainer & management consultant based in Goa.

How did you come across TISA and it's communication workshop?

I got to know about TISA when I read about Goa communication workshop in the newspaper.

What were your expectations before attending the workshop and interacting with PWS (people who stammer)?

I expected the workshop to be theoretical & focusing on speech therapy and confidence building.

What was your perception about stammering, before attending this workshop?

I had thought stammering was due to lack of confidence.

How was the experience at the workshop? Were there a few myths broken? Can you share a few with us?

I was impressed by the design of the entire workshop and the way it was facilitated by Jai Prakash Sunda. I liked the fact that it was a very practical workshop with techniques like bouncing, prolongation being practised throughout the workshop. Also found the concept of acceptance very interesting. Myth that stammering was due to lack of confidence got partly broken.

As a non-PWS, what do you think you can do that will help the PWS?

Firstly, I can create awareness about TISA. Also I can offer to conduct sessions for TISA on developing self-esteem, positive atti-

tude, attitude of gratitude and realizing the importance of goals in ones life.

Any message for the PWS?

The only long term solution for overcoming the stigma associated with stammering is to come together and walk hand in hand on the difficult path of acceptance.

What did you take back home after experiencing and interacting at the Workshop? or - What was your perception about stammering after the workshop?

I Got inspired by the PWS who I met & interacted at the workshop. I felt many of them were very courageous & determined to achieve their goals. Also, I was very happy to know that some of them are already walking on the path of acceptance.

Any other thing you would like to say about the workshop / to TISA ?

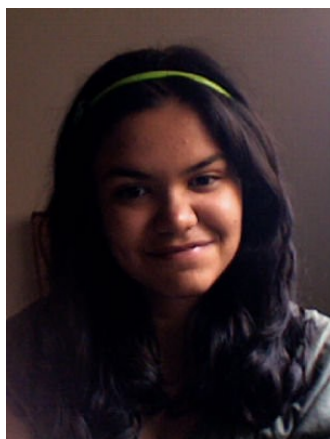
TISA is doing a great job by organizing such workshops and creating self-help groups. I am sure this will make a positive difference to the PWS across India. Keep up the great work!



Amey Hegde, conducting the session on 'Creating Positivity Within' during the Goa Communication Workshop.

I Got inspired by the PWS who I met & interacted at the workshop. I felt many of them were very courageous & determined to achieve their goals. Also, I was very happy to know that some of them are already walking on the path of acceptance.

- Amey Hegde



Atreyi Bhattacharya attended the Herbertpur Communication workshop in May 2011, along with a few Canadian students. She interacted and interviewed the participants and found the discussions very enlightening. Atreyi tells us how her experience at the workshop was full of surprises and discovering new facts about 'stammering'...

Introduce yourself to our readers. Tell us briefly about yourself, where you are from, and anything that you feel like sharing.

My name's Atreyi, I'm a 17 year old girl about to head to Delhi for university. I've pretty much lived in Dehradun all my life. Its actually a quite metropolitan 'town' and the centre for many NGOs and social groups working for progress in their respective fields. Almost every kid growing up here spends every other summer volunteering out at an institution near their house and once in a while, as it happened in my case, stumbles upon a cause they had never given any thought to, prior to the experience.

How did you come across TISA and it's communication workshop?

I volunteered to work as a Hindi-English translator with Samagra an NGO which works in collaboration with SIHI, and regularly hosts about 8-10 Canadian students who come to India to learn about the medical infrastructure in our country. One afternoon we had the good fortune of meeting with Dr. Sachin, his colleagues and students and participate in a highly engaging and enlightening communication workshop.

What were your expectations before attending the workshop and interacting with PWS (people who stammer)?

Frankly, I did not know what to expect. One might say "Hey ! stammering isn't such a big deal, you practice speaking in the mirror and deal with your confidence issues, and its fixed !". Forgive me if that's too candid a view, but most people who've never interacted with PWS don't realise the gravity of the problem. I had a friend once who stammered, and people did laugh at him in school, and the teachers would get irritated because they thought he was faking it for attention, but the boy did eventually stop stammering and his speech is quite lucid

now, like there was never an episode where he stammered the moment he was asked to stand up and answer a question in class.

What was your perception about stammering, before attending this workshop?

To be honest, I had never given much thought to 'stammering' and definitely did not know that it was a medical condition, whatever its origins might be. Like the friend I mentioned, I thought maybe everybody recovers after a while or so, and also believed the myth that stammering originates purely out of lack of confidence.

How was the experience at the workshop? Were there a few myths broken? Can you share a few with us?

First and foremost, meeting Dr. Sachin was a pleasure, no one would believe he had ever had a problem with speech, so charismatic is he! The members of TISA accompanying him all seemed shy and reserved, but there was a sense of fierce determination alike to those who had just joined or those who had nearly recovered. We were shown a couple of short films about stammering, a discussion was held and then the group of us students (nine, at this occasion) split up into teams to individually question a couple of stammerers about various aspects of their lives, like family life, work, education etc. What we learnt was actually quite surprising. It seems more often than not stammering originates as a slip of tongue in front of someone and the subsequent fear of repeating that same mistake! Its a vicious circle. Also, the myth that PWS cannot sing at all was shattered in the true sense by an excellent performance by a colleague of Dr. Sachin. It was also interesting to hear accounts of how some people stammer only in new environments where they feel uncomfortable while some stammer most when in the company of their loved ones when there is a certain level of intimacy.

The members of TISA accompanying him all seemed shy and reserved, but there was a sense of fierce determination alike to those who had just joined or those who had nearly recovered.

- Atreyi Bhattacharya

All in all, I learnt a lot more than I could ever had if I'd 'googled' the word 'stammer'. This first-hand experience was something I'd repeat many times over.

As a non-PWS, what do you think you can do that will help the PWS?

On a personal level I could be open and patient and accepting towards anyone who stammers and in future I'll be sure to recommend any person I come across with a stammer problem, to TISA. There is the option physically working with organisations like TISA (the likes of which unfortunately as I now know are extremely few in our country) and contributing as a writer/photographer/blogger etc. But I think since society as a whole needs to embrace and fight the stigma against people with a problem they have so far refused to acknowledge or regard, every single person can contribute by simply keeping an open mind and an open heart.

Any message for the PWS?

I'd just like to say that the sense of pride and the strength one achieves after fighting against and overcoming an adversity makes the toil and the turmoil well worth it. Anyone who comes in contact with you and sees your determination cannot help admiring you. After all, God handed you the troubles He did because He knew you could overcome them.

What did you take back home after experiencing and interacting at the Workshop? or - What was your perception about stammering after the workshop?

What I think now is that, yes it is a potent condition which one cannot afford to take lightly, but at the same time it becomes the responsibility of anyone related to a PWS in any manner to be supportive to the utmost

Any other thing you would like to say about the workshop / to TISA ?

Its a great job TISA is doing, I only wish it found a way to reach out to more girls!



Atreyi and Canadian students making a presentation about stammering, as learned during the interaction at the Herbertpur Communication Workshop

TISA Workshop Facilitation



Are you interested in facilitating a TISA workshop? If yes, get in touch with Sachin or JP. TISA has a certification & training system for developing facilitators for Communication workshops. This process ensures that you are equipped with necessary conceptual skills (like stuttering modification approach Vs fluency shaping techniques etc.) and facilitation skills (participatory, experiential techniques & counseling etc.) over a period of one year.

We try to ensure conformity and standards among the people who take up this labor of love. Even though TISA may not be able to compensate you for your time in monetary terms, you will certainly learn to deal with your own stammer effectively and to be able to help others- and learn a lot more than "techniques".

To enroll for this program write a mail to Jai Prakash Sunda (jaiprakashsunda@gmail.com) or Dr. Sachin Shrivastava (satksri@gmail.com).



Disability with a 'Difference'

It would be interesting to see if our government ever considers temporary, recurring conditions (like stammering) in the definition of disability. Often, only stable and permanent impairments are considered disabilities.

There has been a debate quite often on whether stammering should be recognized as a disability by law in India. While the debate will continue, as a national representation of Indian people who stammer, TISA has a clear viewpoint with respect to stammering. What is TISA's stand on stammering as a disability? What are the areas that TISA would focus on for the benefit of the IPWS?

At the outset, stammering affects 1-2 crore of Indian adults (1-2% of population) and 4-5 crore of Indian children under 14 years of age (10-15%). The cause is still being worked out- but it is known now that it is a neuro-biological disorder (not purely psychological, as was believed) inherited through genes (identified recently) and in some cases shaped by early childhood upbringing. There is no cure. It gives rise to many, diverse and complex emotional and cognitive issues and handicaps as the child grows up in a society which does not understand the issue.

At functional plain, it adversely affects education, recreation, relationships, marriage, employment, career growth and social productivity. It is accepted as a disability in USA and Nepal, not in India so far.

It would be interesting to see if our government ever considers temporary, recurring conditions (like stammering) in the definition of disability. Often, only stable and permanent impairments are considered disabilities. The important point to note is, many of us don't stammer while talking to a client or colleague but may stammer very

badly in an interview. People expect us to stammer ALL the time! But, that is not the nature of this disorder.

TISA would want to make clear certain areas which it would want the implementing agencies to take the cue. For example here are some of the accommodation we will definitely need and appreciate:

1. Option to answer in writing during formal interviews (selection, appraisal etc.) or,
2. More time to articulate our answer during interview (instead of being hurried by the panel/ interviewer). Interviews are the biggest challenge for us- largely because interviewers don't understand the issue we are facing.
3. In class room, the teacher should give more time to child to answer. Give option to write answers during Viva. The child should be encouraged, given fair chance, but not forced to participate in activity involving heavy oral effort.
4. Protection from teasing in school, workplace and other public places.
5. Stereotyping in media- Stammering has been used for cheap comedy much too often and must stop. Such depiction promotes teasing in schools and- teasing in its own turn worsens the stammering struggle of a child.

We as a community should take a broader view of disability and include stammering in its ambit.



Show-off your Stammer!

Biswaranjan Rout, an Engineering student from Bhubaneswar, Orissa struggled with his stutter like any PWS in his school and college. After a series of failed therapies, he learned how to embrace and showing-off his stammer through acceptance.

As a child, Biswaranjan Rout was a quiet, simple and humble. He trusted everyone easily, and he was scared of darkness, height and strict family members at home – his father and uncle. He had very little friends, and as a result would spend most of his time with toys. The moving toys, with glittering lights and strange sounds always interested him. He would break open the toys to find out what caused the movements, the lights and the sounds.

Consequently, in school too, he loved studying physics and nature. As a school boy, he was mischievous and always a favourite for teacher's punishments. He would also get bullied and beaten up everyday by others in class. He often felt lost, defeated and afraid.

It was in his 6th Class, when he was 10 years old, he suddenly began to discover that he stutters and by the time he was in 7th Class, it was pretty severe. Family members and relatives began to suggest the traditional remedies like talking with stones under the tongue, talking by filling the mouth with water, reading newspaper aloud and the likes. Biswaranjan never had faith in those remedies as he firmly believed that there was nothing wrong with his speech organs, but it's something to do with his brain.

Biswaranjan's first attempt with professional help was in 2005, when he was pursuing his matriculation. He went to a Speech Language Pathologist in a government institute for hearing disabled. There, he was asked to practice slow reading and repetition of syllables. He was made to listen to his recorded voice so that he learns about the pattern and nature of his stutter. Biswaranjan got excellent results within a week's time, but then there was a relapse and this time with even greater severity.

The failure of therapy resulted into his parents blaming him for not putting enough efforts. He began to feel helpless and began to remain isolated. It also affected his studies during his two years of post-

matriculation. His stammer made him feel frustrated and humiliated. He thought he was weak and always felt he was different. He also began to pay less attention on studies and career planning. He felt entangled into the viscous cycle of stuttering and as a result spoke very less.

After graduating from 12th grade, Biswaranjan made a second attempt with speech therapy, this time with yet another SLP in a medical college. There he was taught a slow-speaking style and was advised to follow this style everywhere, and then gradually increase the speed. Biswaranjan spoke very well in clinical conditions, but the moment he stepped out, the stutter would recur. The speech therapist unfortunately lacked the patience and began to pressurize him not to stammer. The SLP also took Biswaranjan as his subject for his students, and was interviewed by them.

Biswaranjan joined the College of Engineering in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. He somehow was beginning to feel comfortable with the new environment. He made new friends, talked and laughed and suddenly began to experience a feeling of being 'cured', with his new found fluency. But then came the exams, and with that came the stutter. He was again trapped in this puzzling maze of stuttering and fluency.

Biswaranjan's third attempt to find fluency was at the Stammering Cure Centre in Bangalore. The crash-course didn't do any good to his fluency, but he found solace when he met many other fellow PWS in the centre. He was relieved that he was not alone. Through one of the PWS there, he learnt about the Indian Stammering Association (TISA).

Introduction to TISA also exposed him to a lot of resources available on internet, TISA website and blog. He started reading the self-help manual, and more importantly began to practice it. He tried to record

"I no more stay hungry because I cannot place an order. I am no more afraid of public speaking, because I entertain my audience with my dis-fluency. I finally found a girlfriend who finds my stammer cute. The only thing a stammerer needs to do is stop feeling guilty and shameful, and begin to accept it".

- Biswaranjan Rout

himself while he was talking and then began to analyse and introspect. He began to write for TISA blog, and also posted his observations about himself and his recorded videos on TISA blog. Gradually, he learnt acceptance and began to deal with the emotional baggage.

While on the verge of completing his engineering studies, Biswaranjan is soon going to kick-start his career in one of the top IT companies of India – Infosys. He still stutters but he has now learnt not to lose hope.

Taking the path of acceptance, he says he has now learnt to show off that he stammers.

Stammering is no way a weakness for Biswaranjan. "I no more stay hungry because I cannot place an order. I am no more afraid of public speaking, because I entertain my audience with my dis-fluency. I finally found a girl-friend who finds my stammer cute. The only thing a stammerer needs to do is stop feeling guilty and shameful, and begin to accept it".

First National Conference on Stammering in Orissa !



TISA is pleased to announce it's first 'National Conference', to be held on 28th - 31st December 2011. The venue for this first-of-its-kind conference in India will be 'Institute of Health Sciences' (IHS), Orissa.

The mega event will be in two parts– Part 1: Optional 2-day Communication workshop (28th, 29th Dec) and Part 2: The National Conference - 'The Event' (30th Dec 2011 - 1st Jan, 2012).

IHS and TISA hereby collaborate to conduct first national conference on Stammering, to explore how self help can be more relevant and accessible to more than one crore Indians who stammer and have little support from the state or society. This conference will bring together people who stammer and people who care for them in an atmosphere of mutual exploration and learning.

Rush in your registrations early in order to help TISA to serve you better. Please check <http://stammer.in/publications/BrochureNC.pdf> to register, or email us at info@stammer.in. Do not let go this opportunity. This is your chance to stand up, speak and be heard!



God's Garden

Here is a poem which symbolically carries a message that everyone in this world is special in it's own way. The Earth is symbolized as the 'God's Garden', and we the people with our individualities are symbolized by different flowers in the garden. The poem says that even the worthless looking weeds have a quality that is special!

*Cladding the bare soil of earth,
Seeming like an elegant gown,*

*There lies the God's very own garden,
With pride He smiles, looking down.*

*The roses bloom, their brilliance they flaunt,
And marigolds have donned their vivid colours.*

*The might of the cactus continues to haunt,
Flooded with pride are tulips, heads high!
Quiet and humble, the lilies blossom in calm,*

*Charming lotuses bathe in the pond near by.
Together they sway to the rhythm of life,
Diverse, yet one under the roof of sky.*

*Down on the mud, spread throughout the land,
There is a sob and sniff, the blubber of grief.
"We don't have beauty, or colours so grand,
Punished are we, beheading our heads,
In the garden of God, we are of no need,
We are the creepers, we are the weeds,
In the garden of God, we are of no need".*

*Be like me, say the roses with a smug,
A symbol of beauty, a symbol of love,
Lest if you lay your hands on me,
I pierce my thorn that's what you deserve!*

*Be like me, roars the cactus with might,
Ruthless and tough, my message is clear,
Mess with me not, if you intend to dear,
My thorns are as sharp as a gypsy's spear!*

*Be like me, advised the sunflower,
Inspired by the strength and inferno of sun,
I follow the path of my idol as he goes,
Follow your dreams, if you want to achieve one!*

*Be like me, say the tulips with pride,
Love yourself, stand still and strong,
Beauty is my strength and I like to show off,
I say I am good, and there is nothing wrong!*

*Amidst the thunders, Mother Nature speaks,
United and together on my lap you dwell,
And that is what makes this garden so well.
And don't you ever think my dear weed,
In this garden of God, you are of no need,
You hold the soil firm with your grip,
Protecting your siblings from the gusts of winds!
In this Garden of God, everyone is special,
Because He is your maker, and his love is real !!*

- Harish Usgaonker (Goa)
(harishusgaonker@gmail.com)



Should I Tell My Boss..?

We often find ourselves in situations where it's difficult to hide our stammer or there is a need to talk about it. Such situations can result being a big dilemma, especially when our bosses are involved.

Naveen Kumar is a member of the Bangalore SHG right from the very first meeting. During the meetings, the members found his speech surprisingly fluent. He told the members that he acquired this habit when he was in seventh standard and that he was a good speaker and an actor before that. He also spoke a lot about the problems of stammering like running away from situations in which he had to speak and his struggles to hide his stammering. He was successful in hiding his stammering, and none in his company knew he stammered.

Due to a personal tragedy, he had to relocate to his native which was 100 Kms away from Bangalore. During this period, his stammering too aggravated.

At work, he was denied a promotion to the managerial post in his company. His boss felt he had some attitudinal issues as he always avoided talking to him over the phone and used to reply or converse in monologues (text messages / chat). He did this as he didn't want them to know about his stammering.

The struggle of constantly hiding his stammer was taking the toll, till Navin decided that he had had enough! And he asked a question to himself- "Should I tell my boss about my stammering?"

He turned to his self help group friends and TISA friends. He wrote to them and sought opinions on what he should do about his dilemma. Most of his friends suggested him to speak to the boss about his problem and to avoid hiding it. Though he was a bit apprehensive, in the end he decided to speak to him about this... and he did it!


Navin finally discussed about his stammering with his boss (the CEO of the company). His boss told him that he always knew about his stammering and that he was waiting for an appropriate opportunity to talk to him about this. He promised all his help to him and asked him to work on his presentation skill and prove to himself (and

not to others) that he was a good presenter.

A few days later, he talked to one more director of the company and she also told she knew about his stammering and used to communicate to him only through the mails because of the same. He always used to speak in monologues and she thought that was the best way to talk to him! She advised him to practice yoga and meditation and offered all the help.

What do we learn from Navin's story? The significance of just letting your stammer free instead of trying to hide or suppress it. We all learn it through experience, just like Charles Van Riper, a renowned speech therapist who became internationally known as a pioneer in the development of Stuttering Modification approach.

A stutter himself, Charles Van Riper struggled to get himself employed because of his severe stutter, till he found himself far away from his home, working on farms pretending to be deaf mute- all this to hide his stutter. He couldn't continue not being himself for long, and decided to go back to his home. He hitch-hiked his way back home with an old man in his car. The old man then finally asked him something that he had always been scared of- "What's your name, son, and where are you going?" While replying to him, Charles stuttered with gasping, facial contortions and body jerks! And then the old bopper started laughing outrageously. Charles was feeling angry and awful. Seeing his anger, he said, "Take it easy, son. Take it easy. I'm not laughing at your stuttering. I've been a stutterer all my life and I used to jump around and make faces like you do but I'm too old and tired to fight myself now so I just let the words leak out. And they do!" The moral to be drawn from Navin and Charles Van Riper's real life stories, is that, throughout our life, we try to talk without stuttering, avoiding it and hiding it, and ironically it all results in getting worse. We should be seeking ways of stuttering that



would be tolerable to others and less struggling to ourselves. Instead of putting our efforts into hiding it, learn to stutter effort-

lessly, so easily, that it would'nt matter! A handful of courage is all we need to begin.

Readers' Have their Say

Responses to Samvad (Vol 4). Samvad team thanks our readers for showing keen interest in our issues. We would love to hear more from our readers !

The poem on 'Vitiligo' by Mr Arvind is just awesome. Just today, I saw one person sitting on the next table in a fast food center suffering from this problem. And you won't believe, I didn't have good feelings after looking at him. Now, after reading this poem I am very guilty and shameful for my thought.

- Sakshi Goel, New Delhi

Thank You for the newsletter and a very fine and informative one at that. I was particularly impressed with the inspiring story of the Brooklyn Bridge. Stories such as these give us the wisdom & strength to overcome the hurdles life throws our way.

Right now I am working hard to get past a very nasty hurdle in my life - Chicken Pox. Yes! I am currently reeling under this Pox attack and trying hard to be positive through all the discomfort that this unattractive illness brings. But then as we know and your TISA Newsletter also reminds us - these are the little hurdles in life which we need to overcome gracefully. So I'm working on it.....

- Noella Fernandes, Goa



जिन्दगी खूबसूरत है...!

आज कि दौड़ती-भागती जिन्दगी में किसी के पास टाइम नहीं है ये सब सोचते रहने का. और अगर कोई हमारी हकलाहट के बारे में कुछ गलत कहता है तो इसकी चिंता नहीं करें. यह आवश्यक तो नहीं कि हर व्यक्ति हमारी भावना और पीड़ा को समझे.

संत कबीर ने कहा है -

ऐसी वाणी बोलिए, मन का आपा खोए,
और न को शीतल करे, आपहु शीतल होए.

आपकी बोली व बातचीत का ढंग ऐसा होना चाहिए कि सामने वाला व्यक्ति आपसे प्रभावित हुए बिना न रह सके. वार्तालाप करने का ढंग और मीठी बोली विनम्रता के प्रमुख अंग है.

हकलाहट के कारण अपनी वाणी को प्रभावी बनाने में कई चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ता है. इसके परिणामस्वरूप पारिवारिक और सामाजिक दूरी, करियर में कठिनाई के साथ ही व्यक्तित्व पर नकारात्मक असर साफ देखा जा सकता है. वहीं इन सबसे पैदा होती है निराशा, हताशा और कुंठा, जो कभी-कभी तनाव और अवसाद का रूप ले लेती है.

कहते हैं जिन्दगी चलने का नाम है. कहीं किसी मोड़ पर ठहराव या रुकावट आए तो उसे दूर कर आगे बढ़ना ही जीवन है. अगर हकलाहट के कारण हम स्वयं को कमजोर, अकेला महसूस करते हैं तो इसे एक चुनौती के रूप में स्वीकार करें.

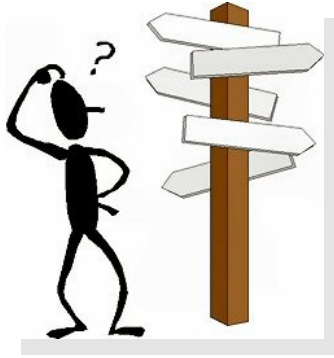
हकलाहट को सबसे पहले ठीक तरह से जानने और समझने की जरूरत है. हकलाहट क्या है? हम हकलाते समय कौन-कौन से असामान्य व्यवहार करते हैं? जैसी बातों पर गौर करेंगे तो राह कुछ हद तक आसान हो जाएगी. दूसरी महत्वपूर्ण बात है इच्छाशक्ति की. हम अपनी ओर से जितनी ज्यादा कोशिश करेंगे सफलता उतनी नजदीक होगी.

एक जरूरी बात यह है कि जिन्दगी के प्रति नकारात्मक दृष्टिकोण को बदलना चाहिए. यह ठान लें की हालात चाहे जैसे भी हों आप हार नहीं मानेंगे. कई बार लोग हकलाहट को दूर करने के लिए कुछ दिनों तक थोड़ी-बहुत कोशिश करते हैं, फिर कुछ समय बाद सब कुछ भूल जाते हैं. बहाना होता है टाइम नहीं मिलता या कोई फायदा नहीं हुआ.

बचपन में किताबों में पढ़ा था अभ्यास ही गुरु है. फिर इससे डरना कैसा? क्या बिना मेहनत किए जिन्दगी में किसी को कोई चीज मिली है भला? जिस प्रकार हमारे दैनिक जीवन में सुबह से लेकर रात को सोने तक हर काम निर्धारित है, उसी प्रकार प्रैक्टिस को भी दिनचर्या का हिस्सा बनाने से यह बोझ नहीं लगेगा.

दुनिया आपके बारे में क्या सोचती है इसकी परवाह ना करें. अरे! आज कि दौड़ती-भागती जिन्दगी में किसी के पास टाइम नहीं है ये सब सोचते रहने का. और अगर कोई हमारी हकलाहट के बारे में कुछ गलत कहता है तो इसकी चिंता नहीं करें. यह आवश्यक तो नहीं कि हर व्यक्ति हमारी भावना और पीड़ा को समझे. कहने का मतलब यह है कि जीवन को अपने चश्मे से देखें. यदि आप ऐसा करते हैं तो आपको मालूम होगा कि जिन्दगी बहुत खूबसूरत है. इसे कैसे जीना है और कैसे आगे बढ़ना है यह आपको तय करना होगा...!

- अमितसिंह कुशवाह,
सतना, मध्य प्रदेश.



हकलाहट को समझें...

निश्चित ही हकलाना कोई रोग नहीं है. इसे समझना बहुत जरूरी है, तभी तो आप इस पर नियंत्रण कर पाएंगे. साथ ही जो लोग इंटरनेट का इस्तेमाल करना जानते हैं, वे इस ज्ञान के इस महासागर में जाकर हकलाहट के बारे में सही जानकारी प्राप्त कर सकते हैं.

आजकल कई फोन आ रहे हैं. पिछले दिनों चेन्नई से एक साथी का फोन आया. उनका कहना था कि अगर हम हर समय गाने की स्टाइल में बात करें तो सिर्फ छह महीने में हकलाहट को दूर किया जा सकता है. उन्होंने आगे कहा कि टीसा के ब्लॉग में हकलाहट को विकलांगता बताया जा रहा है, इससे तो सारी आशाएं ही समाप्त तो गई हैं?

यदि इन सज्जन ने टीसा के ब्लॉग को ध्यान से पढ़ा होता तो शायद वे देख पाते कि ब्लॉग में कुछ भी ऐसा नहीं है जिस पर वे आपत्ति जता रहे हैं. ब्लॉग में कुछ लोगों द्वारा सिर्फ यह विचार व्यक्त किया गया कि हकलाहट को विकलांगता माना जाए या नहीं? दूसरी बात यह है कि टीसा का ब्लॉग हकलाने वाले लोगों को अपनी बात कहने और अपने अनुभव शेयर करने के लिए एक मंच प्रदान करता है.

हमारे देश में कई नीम-हकीम और कई प्रोफेशनल हैं जो हकलाहट को दूर करने के नाम पर खूब पैसा कमा रहे हैं. जिन लोगों को मेडिकल साइंस या स्पेशल एजुकेशन का अकादमिक अध्ययन या ज्ञान नहीं है वे भी हकलाहट हो ठीक करने का दावा करते हैं. मैं भी कई स्पीच थेरेपिस्ट के पास गया हूँ, लेकिन एक ने भी मुझे यह नहीं बताया कि हकलाहट क्या है और क्यों होती है? सब जगहों पर दो-चार तकनीकें बताई जाती हैं कि

इनका अभ्यास घर पर करना. जब तक हम स्पीच थेरेपिस्ट के पास जाते हैं तब तक कुछ अच्छा महसूस करते हैं, और जैसे ही थेरेपी लेना बंद करते हैं वैसे ही हकलाहट फिर सामने आ जाती है.

दरअसल हर हकलाने वाले कि समस्या एकदम अलग होती है. कुछ लोग थोड़े से प्रयास में ही इस पर नियंत्रण पा लेते हैं, लेकिन हर केस में ऐसा हो यह मुश्किल होता है. हकलाने वाला हर व्यक्ति बोलने में तरह-तरह की बाधाओं का सामना करता है. और सभी की समस्या एक जैसी या एक ही स्तर की नहीं होती है. मेडिकल साइंस में आज भी हकलाहट के बारे में रिसर्च चल रही है.

निश्चित ही हकलाना कोई रोग नहीं है. इसे समझना बहुत जरूरी है, तभी तो आप इस पर नियंत्रण कर पाएंगे. साथ ही जो लोग इंटरनेट का इस्तेमाल करना जानते हैं, वे इस ज्ञान के इस महासागर में जाकर हकलाहट के बारे में सही जानकारी प्राप्त कर सकते हैं. क्योंकि हकलाहट को सही तरीके से जानकर ही हम इसका समाधान पा सकते हैं.

- अमितसिंह कुशवाह,
सतना, मध्य प्रदेश.



Invitation

**With wind and the weather beating round me
Up to the hill and the moorland I go.
Who will come with me? Who will climb with me?
Wade through the brook and tramp through the snow?**

**Not in the petty circle of cities
Cramped by your doors and your walls I dwell;
Over me God is blue in the welkin,
Against me the wind and the storm rebel.**

**I sport with solitude here in my regions,
Of misadventure have made me a friend.
Who would live largely? Who would live freely?
Here to the wind-swept uplands ascend.**

**I am the Lord of tempest and mountain,
I am the Spirit of freedom and pride.
Stark must he be and a kinsman to danger
Who shares my kingdom and walks at my side**

- Sri Aurobindo

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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Send your contributions for next
volume by **15th September 2011**

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